



## **BERKELEY SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES 2019-2020 SEASON**

### **JOSEPH YOUNG LEADS IN FIRST SEASON AS MUSIC DIRECTOR**

**SEASON HIGHLIGHTED BY WORLD PREMIERES FROM XI WANG AND DERRICK SPIVA JR. IN ADDITION TO FIVE BAY AREA PREMIERES BY BRYCE DESSNER, MARY KOUYOUMDJIAN, GUNTHER SCHULLER, BERND ALOIS ZIMMERMANN AND ROXANNA PANUFNIK**

**Programs Also Feature Guest Artists Pianist Conrad Tao, Mezzo Soprano Kelley O'Connor and Trumpeter Sean Jones; Collaborations with the San Francisco Girls Chorus and Berkeley High Jazz Combo; Five Chamber Series Performances Showcasing Berkeley Symphony Musicians and Bay Area Artists; a Rare Performance of *Shango Memory* by Olly Wilson; and Orchestral Masterworks by Beethoven, Ravel, Brahms, Milhaud, Gershwin and Prokofiev.**



**Berkeley, CA – June 18, 2019** – Music Director Joseph Young and Berkeley Symphony announced today its 2019-2020 season including four Symphonic Series subscription concerts and five Chamber Series subscription concerts. Recently appointed as the orchestra's new Music Director, Maestro Young will lead a season that includes world premieres by Chinese composer Xi Wang and Los Angeles-based composer Derrick Spiva Jr.; the Bay Area premiere of Bryce

Dessner's *Voy a Dormir* featuring the return of mezzo soprano Kelley O'Connor; the Bay Area premiere of Mary Kouyoumdjian's *Become Who I Am* in collaboration with the San Francisco Girls Chorus; a debut appearance by trumpeter Sean Jones in two Bay Area premieres including Bernd Alois Zimmermann's Trumpet Concerto and Gunther Schuller's *Journey into Jazz* with the Berkeley High Jazz Combo; a rare performance of *Shango Memory* by former UC Berkeley professor and ground-breaking composer Olly Wilson; and the return of pianist Conrad Tao performing Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major.

Firmly established as a presenter of major contemporary orchestral masterworks, Berkeley Symphony combines the music of today with cultural treasures from the classic repertoire. The 2019-2020 season further demonstrates its innovative exploration of the past and present with a combination of contemporary works and orchestral classics such as Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Brahms's Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, Darius Milhaud's *La création du monde* and Gershwin's *An American in Paris*.

Maestro Young was appointed as Music Director of Berkeley Symphony in April 2019 following a highly successful debut appearance in January 2019. Due to a last-minute cancellation, Maestro Young stepped in at a moment's notice with only two days to prepare an ambitious program of works that included a Hannah Kendall world premiere, Bernstein's Symphony No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra, and Britten's Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes*. Berkeley Symphony musicians, audiences and critics alike were unanimous in their praise, with Joshua Kosman of the *San Francisco Chronicle* commenting that "Young's ability to tackle at short notice not only Kendall's world premiere but also significant works by Britten and Bernstein was an impressive display."

"It gives me enormous pleasure to lead Berkeley Symphony into a new era, beginning with an exciting season that builds upon a storied history of adventurous and unique programming," said Music Director Joseph Young. "This season celebrates the work of diverse living composers of our time, many with close connections to the Bay Area. With two world premieres and five Bay Area premieres and a selection of masterworks from the classic repertoire, we look forward to exploring these musical pathways together with our dedicated audiences."

Berkeley Symphony opens the 2019-2020 season on **Thursday, October 24, 2019** with the return of pianist Conrad Tao performing Ravel's beloved masterwork Piano Concerto in G Major. This appearance marks Tao's third with the orchestra following his February 2016 debut and most recent performance in December 2017. Regarding his debut, *San Francisco Classical Voice* said that he "knocked socks off Berkeley audiences" in a performance of Beethoven's Concerto No. 5 while the *San Francisco Chronicle* praised his "showmanship with graceful



phrasing and elegant rhetoric” in performances of Rachmaninoff’s *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* and Liszt’s *Totentanz*. Opening the program is a rare performance of Olly Wilson’s *Shango Memory*, a work inspired by the Yoruban god of thunder and lightning. With a rich musical background that included jazz and orchestral performance, electronic media and academic studies of African music, Wilson wrote a large body of works performed by orchestras all over the world including the New York Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Moscow Philharmonic. In 1970, he served as professor of music at UC Berkeley where he taught until his retirement in 2002. As part of the upcoming global celebrations of Beethoven’s 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, Berkeley Symphony will conclude the program with the composer’s most enduring masterwork, Symphony No. 5 in C minor.



The season continues on **Thursday, February 6, 2020** with a world premiere by Xi Wang and two Bay Area premieres by Bryce Dessner and Mary Kouyoumdjian. The new work by Xi Wang is part of the League of American Orchestras’s 2015 Women Composers Commissions supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. The first of two Bay Area premieres includes *Voy a Dormir* by highly sought-after American composer Bryce Dessner. His rapidly expanding catalogue of works includes commissions by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Kronos Quartet and Eighth Blackbird, as well as a 2016 Golden Globe nominated score for the motion picture blockbuster *The Revenant*. Based on texts from the poetry of Argentinian feminist Alfonsina Storni, *Voy a Dormir* received its world premiere in February 2018 by the Orchestra of St. Luke and mezzo soprano Kelley O’Connor who returns for her second appearance as soloist with the orchestra. The second Bay Area premiere features the return of GRAMMY Award-winning San Francisco Girls Chorus in a performance of *Become Who I Am* by Armenian-American composer Mary Kouyoumdjian which commemorates the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and Voting Rights Act. Her music has been described as “eloquently scripted” and “emotionally wracking”



by *The New York Times* and draws upon her heritage and background in experimental composition. Concluding an evening of works that explore the finding of one’s voice is Brahms’s Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68, a work that took the composer almost twenty years to complete.



Two more Bay Area premieres are highlighted on **Thursday, March 26, 2020**, including Gunther Schuller's *Journey into Jazz* and Bernd Alois Zimmermann's Trumpet Concerto. Both works, steeped in jazz tradition and compositional style, feature debut guest artist, trumpeter Sean Jones. Since 2015, Sean has been a member of the SFJAZZ collective following positions with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and lead trumpet with Wynton Marsalis. Among his numerous orchestral appearances are Cleveland Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony and Youngstown Symphony. Berkeley Symphony welcomes local students from the Berkeley High Jazz Combo who will share the stage with Sean Jones for *Journey into Jazz* for narrator, orchestra and jazz quintet. Gershwin's popular classic *An American in Paris* rounds out the program.

Maestro Young and Berkeley Symphony conclude the 2019-2020 season on **Thursday, May 14, 2020** with a program that celebrates the human spirit and the pursuit of mutual understanding as a pathway to peace. The centerpiece of the evening is a world premiere by American composer Derrick Spiva Jr. Using a diverse combination of musical styles and influences, the work will explore the layers of intersecting identities as individuals and collective groups, and illustrate the celebration of these differences while still finding common ground. Alongside this work is the fifth and final Bay Area premiere of the season, *Three Paths to Peace*, by British composer Roxanna Panufnik, a work that combines Christian, Jewish and Islamic music traditions to tell the story of Abraham and Isaac. The final work on the program is Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5 in B-Flat Major, of which the composer wrote, "I conceived of it as glorifying the grandeur of the human spirit ... praising the free and happy man - his strength, generosity, and the purity of his soul."



**Berkeley Symphony Chamber Series** continues this season with five intimate chamber concerts presented on Sunday afternoons at the Piedmont Center on September 22, 2019; November 3, 2019; January 19, 2020; March 15, 2020 and April 19, 2020. These concerts showcase members of the Orchestra alongside special guest artists from the Bay Area in a selection of works for small ensemble from classical and contemporary repertoire. Full repertoire will be announced at a later date.

Recognized by the League of American Orchestras as one of the country's top music education programs, **Berkeley Symphony's Music in the Schools (MITS)** will provide comprehensive, age-appropriate music curriculum to over 4,600 Berkeley public elementary, middle school and high school students. Under the leadership of Education Director Ming Luke, students benefit from a rich and varied series of educational sessions that include hands-on class sessions, ensemble coaching and masterclasses, and four annual Family Concerts that provide opportunities for students, families and community members to experience a Berkeley Symphony concert together. Programming is provided free of charge for all participating students and their families. Family Concerts will be held on Saturday, November 2, 2019 and Saturday, April 18, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. at Longfellow Middle School in Berkeley.

#### **TICKET INFORMATION**

**Subscriptions to the Symphonic Series** are on sale now. Four concert subscriptions range from \$49 to \$288 and can be purchased by calling the box office at (510) 841-2800 or visiting <http://www.berkeleysymphony.org>.

**Subscriptions to the Chamber Series** are on sale now. Five concert subscriptions are available for \$125 and can be purchased by calling the box office at (510) 841-2800 or visiting <http://www.berkeleysymphony.org>.

**Single tickets to the Symphonic Series** range in price from \$15 to \$96 and will go on sale August 1 through the box office at (510) 841-2800 or visiting <http://www.berkeleysymphony.org>. Discounted \$10 single tickets are available for students with a valid ID.

**Single tickets to the Chamber Series** are \$30 in advance and \$35 at the door. Tickets will go on sale August 1, 2019 through the box office at (510) 841-2800 or visiting <http://www.berkeleysymphony.org>.

All **Family Concerts** are offered free of charge. (Suggested donation: \$10 adults/\$5 students).

For further information on Berkeley Symphony, please visit <http://www.berkeleysymphony.org>.

Media contacts are listed at the end of the release.

### **ABOUT JOSEPH YOUNG**

Joseph Young is increasingly recognized as “one of the most gifted conductors of his generation.” In recent years, he has made appearances with the Saint Louis Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Colorado Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Bamberger Symphoniker, New World Symphony Orchestra, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música, and the Orquesta Sinfonica y Coro de RTVE (Madrid), among others in the U.S. and Europe. Currently, Joseph is the Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Artistic Director of Ensembles at the Peabody Conservatory. In this role, he leads the programming and direction of all Peabody Conservatory instrumental ensembles. Joseph became the Resident Conductor of the National Youth Orchestra (USA) in 2018.

In his most recent role, Joseph served as the Assistant Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony where he conducted more than 50 concerts per season. Mr. Young also served as the Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, where he was the driving force behind the ensemble’s artistic growth. Previous appointments have included Resident Conductor of the Phoenix Symphony and the League of American Orchestras Conducting Fellow with Buffalo Philharmonic and Baltimore Symphony.

Joseph is a recipient of the 2015 Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award for young conductors, an award he also won in 2008 and 2014. In 2013, Joseph was a semi-finalist in the Gustav Mahler International Conducting Competition (Bamberg, Germany). In 2011, he was one out of six conductors featured in the League of American Orchestras’ prestigious Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview.

Joseph completed graduate studies with Gustav Meier and Markand Thakar at the Peabody Conservatory in 2009, earning an artist’s diploma in conducting. He has been mentored by many world-renowned conductors including Jorma Panula, Robert Spano and Marin Alsop with whom he continues to maintain a close relationship.

### **ABOUT BERKELEY SYMPHONY**

Berkeley Symphony is unique among Bay Area and American orchestras for its commitment to

innovation, community, and excellence. Founded in 1971 in the intellectual and artistic nexus of Berkeley, California, the Orchestra is committed to premiering and commissioning new music and champions women composers, sustained by the supportive musical environment of Berkeley, the East Bay, and the San Francisco Bay Area. From the outset, the people behind Berkeley Symphony's culture and programming were attuned to the culturally diverse people and the heady creative climate of their home city.

Thomas Rarick, a protégé of the great English maestro Sir Adrian Boult, founded the orchestra in 1971 as the Berkeley Promenade Orchestra. Reflecting the spirit of the times, musicians performed in street dress and at unusual locations such as the University Art Museum. When Kent Nagano became the music director of the orchestra in 1978, he charted a new course by offering innovative programming that included rarely performed 20th-century works and numerous premieres. The renamed Berkeley Symphony Orchestra gained an international reputation for its adventurous programming, and became known for premiering the music of international composers and showcasing young local talents. Berkeley Symphony entered a new era in January 2009 when Joana Carneiro became the Orchestra's third Music Director in its 40-year history. In 2016, Berkeley Symphony and composer Anna Clyne were awarded a Music Alive grant for a three-year composer residency, designed to immerse Clyne and the Symphony in the creation of new work, collaboration with other Berkeley arts institutions, music education, community outreach and multidisciplinary activities. Joseph Young succeeds Music Director Emerita Joana Carneiro in the 2019-2020 season after Maestro Carneiro announced her intent to step down as Berkeley Symphony's Music Director at the end of the 2017-18 season following nine seasons at its artistic helm.

Berkeley Symphony has introduced Bay Area audiences to works by upcoming young composers, many of whom have since achieved international prominence. Celebrated British composer George Benjamin, who subsequently became Composer-in-Residence at the San Francisco Symphony, was first introduced to the Bay Area in 1987 when Berkeley Symphony performed his compositions *Jubilation* and *Ringed by the Flat Horizon*; as was Thomas Adès, whose opera *Powder Her Face* was debuted by the Orchestra in a concert version in 1997 before it was fully staged in New York City, London and Chicago.

**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**BERKELEY SYMPHONY 2019-2020 SEASON**

**Symphonic Series**

**Symphonic I: Celebrating a New Era**

Thursday, October 24, 2019, 7:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley, CA

Joseph Young, conductor

Conrad Tao, piano

**Olly Wilson:** *Shango Memory*

**Maurice Ravel:** Piano Concerto in G major

**Ludwig van Beethoven:** Symphony No. 5 in C minor

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**Symphonic II: You Have a Voice**

Thursday, February 6, 2020, 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley, CA

Joseph Young, conductor

Kelley O'Connor, mezzo soprano

San Francisco Girls Chorus

**Xi Wang:** World Premiere

**Bryce Dessner:** *Voy a Dormir* (Bay Area Premiere)

**Mary Kouyoumdjian:** *Become Who I Am* (Bay Area Premiere)

**Johannes Brahms:** Symphony No. 1 in C minor

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**Symphonic III: New Perspectives**

Thursday, March 26, 2020, 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley, CA

Joseph Young, conductor

Sean Jones, trumpet

Berkeley High Jazz Combo

**Darius Milhaud:** *La création du monde*

**Gunther Schuller:** *Journey Into Jazz* (Bay Area Premiere)

**Bernd Alois Zimmermann:** Trumpet Concerto (Bay Area Premiere)

**George Gershwin:** *An American in Paris*

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**Symphonic IV: Pathways to Peace**

Thursday, May 14, 2020, 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley, CA

Joseph Young, conductor

**Roxanna Panufnik:** *Three Paths to Peace* (Bay Area Premiere)

**Derrick Spiva, Jr.:** World Premiere

**Sergei Prokofiev:** Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major

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**Berkeley Symphony Chamber Music Series**

*Full Repertoire to be announced at a later date.*

**Program I: Brahms to Bartok**

Sunday, September 22, 2019, 4:00 p.m.

Piedmont Center for the Arts, Piedmont

**Stuart Canin**, violin

**Angela Lee**, cello

**Markus Pawlik**, piano

**Program II: Ysaye: Six Sonatas for Violin Solo**

Sunday, November 3, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

Piedmont Center for the Arts, Piedmont

Florin Parvulescu, violin

**Program III: Beethoven to Rindt**

Sunday, January 19, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Piedmont Center for the Arts, Piedmont

Emanuela Nikiforova, violin

Stephanie Bibbo, violin

Darcy Rindt, viola

Samsun van Loon, cello

Stacey Pelinka, flute

**Program IV: Gershwin to Adams**

Sunday, March 15, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Piedmont Center for the Arts, Piedmont

Matthew Szemela and friends

**Program V: Mozart to Shostakovich**

Sunday, April 19, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Piedmont Center for the Arts, Piedmont

René Mandel and Friends

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**Public Outreach Concerts**

**“Meet the Symphony” Family Concerts**

Saturday, November 2, 2019, 10:00 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, April 18, 2020, 10:00 a.m. & 11:30 a.m.

Longfellow Middle School, Berkeley

Tickets: Free (Suggested donation: \$10 adults/\$5 students)

**PHOTO CREDITS**

Joseph Young / Jeff Roffman

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