



**BERKELEY SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES STRATEGIC REALIGNMENT OF KEY ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

**René Mandel Leads Artistic Planning and Production as Artistic Director and Spearheads Major Donor Fundraising**

**Jim Tibbs Leads Organizational Strategic Planning, Staff Management, Budgeting and Implementation of Fundraising Programs as Executive Director**



**September 16, 2019 – Berkeley, CA** – Berkeley Symphony and Board President S. Shariq Yosufzai today announced a strategic realignment of key artistic and executive responsibilities that builds upon the respective strengths and expertise of its current leadership team. After eight years as Executive Director and Artistic Director, René Mandel will now devote his full-time efforts to the role of Artistic Director, working in close collaboration with Music Director Joseph Young to bring his artistic vision to life. Building on his deep relationships in the community, Mandel will also drive major donor fundraising, a key component in achieving the organization’s artistic goals. Former Associate Executive Director Jim Tibbs moves into the role of Executive Director and will be responsible for a variety of administrative tasks including strategic planning, budgeting, staff management, fundraising and achieving earned revenue targets. Young, Mandel and Tibbs will continue to work in partnership to realize and fulfill Berkeley Symphony’s mission.

“With Berkeley Symphony entering into an exciting new era under Music Director Joseph Young, we have an opportunity to take full advantage of the unique skill sets that both René and Jim have exhibited during their time with the organization,” said Board President S. Shariq Yosufzai. “The decision to realign the key artistic and executive responsibilities was very much a collaboration between leadership, staff and board so that both René and Jim could be allowed to play to their respective strengths. As a professional violinist and industry leader, René will bring a greater level of artistic clarity, allowing for a more unified partnership with Joseph who leads Berkeley Symphony’s artistic vision. And with enormous experience and insight as an executive leader, Jim will bring a wealth of insight from outside the classical music industry that not only allows René to more effectively fulfill the artistic ambitions of the organization but also provides us with a fresh new perspective for the future. We look forward to enjoying the fruits of this powerful leadership team at our helm.”

“Berkeley Symphony has earned its reputation as a trailblazing organization that is not afraid of bucking the trend, as demonstrated by its adventurous programming in its nearly 50-year history. Similarly, exploring a different approach to how a symphony orchestra is led is simply another step in the organization’s evolution as we navigate an ever-changing landscape,” said Artistic Director René Mandel. “I am thrilled to dedicate more of my attention toward the artistic goals of the organization, an area that is very close to my heart as a performing violinist. This could only be accomplished through the wonderful partnership and mutual admiration that has developed between Joseph, Jim and myself. For me, this is the most natural progression we could take and a significant one for the next stage of Berkeley Symphony’s success.”

“For the past seven months, I have had the pleasure of working alongside René, who has brought great success to Berkeley Symphony,” said Executive Director Jim Tibbs. “Our partnership blossomed from the outset with our respective skills and experience blending perfectly. It is with great excitement that we can build further on this foundation and I am honored to take on this new role with Berkeley Symphony. I look forward to continuing to work with René, Joseph and our talented musicians; Shariq Yosufzai and the entire Board of Directors; and our dedicated administrative staff.”

René Mandel was appointed Executive Director of Berkeley Symphony in August 2011 following roles as Artistic Administrator, Orchestra Manager and Principal Second Violin. Highlights include creating the Berkeley Symphony and Friends Chamber Series; ending the previous six seasons with a surplus; and serving on both search committees that recruited former and current Music Directors Joana Carneiro and Joseph Young, respectively. As an accomplished professional violinist, René was a member of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and an active musician in the Hollywood studio industry. In the Bay Area, he was a founding member of New Century Chamber Orchestra and currently performs often with the San Francisco Symphony as a substitute violinist.

Prior to joining Berkeley Symphony as Associate Executive Director in January 2019, Jim worked in the residential remodeling industry as Senior Vice President of Sales and Business Development for two local firms. The first twenty-eight years of Jim's professional career were spent in the men's apparel industry, first as

a Buyer and Merchandise Manager for Macy's and then later, as the Senior Vice President of Men's Merchandising, Sales, Design and Licensing for the Dockers brand at Levi Strauss and Company. Jim has served on the Berkeley Symphony Board of Directors and is an active member of the Corporate Council for Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

Firmly established as a presenter of major contemporary orchestral masterworks, Berkeley Symphony combines the music of today with cultural treasures from the classic repertoire. Since its founding in 1971, the Orchestra has gained an international reputation for its adventurous programming and became known for premiering the music of international composers and showcasing young local talents. Joseph Young was recently appointed as Music Director succeeding Music Director Emerita Joanna Carneiro and makes his official debut at the 2019-2020 season opening night concert on October 24, 2019. Upcoming season highlights include world premieres by Xi Wang and Derrick Spiva Jr.; five Bay Area premieres by Bryce Dessner, Mary Kouyoumdjian, Gunther Schuller, Bernd Alois Zimmermann and Roxanna Panufnik; and guest artists Conrad Tao, Kelley O'Connor and Sean Jones.

#### **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.

**PHOTO CREDITS**

René Mandel / Louis Bryant Photography

Jim Tibbs / Louis Bryant Photography

**PRESS CONTACT**

Brenden Guy

Marketing and Public Relations

(415) 640-3165

[brendenguy@gmail.com](mailto:brendenguy@gmail.com)