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Berkeley Symphony 21/22 Season

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We are deeply grateful to our talented musicians as well as our loyal audiences, patrons, donors, and partners whose support has made it possible for us to return to the concert hall to celebrate five decades of adventurous music-making.

Our opening concert tells a story of rebirth and communal renewal, from Morton Gould’s “Protest” from *Spirituals for Orchestra*, to Sibelius’ *Finlandia*, and John Adams’ *Lollapalooza*. The concert concludes with Stravinsky’s *Firebird Suite*, a timeless work celebrating collective reemergence and renewal.

We are also thrilled to present a World Premiere commission by Derrick Skye made possible through the generous support of S. Shariq Yosufzai & Brian James. *As Water, Freedom* is an exploration of the intersecting identities we have as individuals and collective groups and illustrates how we can celebrate differences while still finding common ground in our unique identities.

For centuries, music has served as a powerful vessel for self-expression that has the potential to elevate a single voice, idea, or commentary and impact change. This season revels in programming that celebrates and honors a variety of cultures and musical genres and reminds us that Berkeley Symphony is for everyone.

I look forward to sharing this historic season with you, as we set the stage for the next fifty years of innovative programming at Berkeley Symphony. —Joseph Young
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continues on page 10
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On May 23, 2021, Berkeley Symphony suffered a tremendous loss with the passing of our longtime principal oboist, dedicated board member, dear friend, and colleague Deborah Shidler.

“Deb inspired and contributed to my growing affection for the Symphony during my first few visits to Berkeley. Her contributions in various settings with our orchestra were immeasurable. She was a beloved orchestra and board member who truly cared for this organization. We all will cherish the musical memories Deb has shared with Berkeley Symphony during her 30 seasons.”—Joseph Young, Berkeley Symphony Music Director

“Deb filled the hearts and souls of thousands of people in our community. As a beloved teacher and mentor, she nurtured the talent and education of countless students far and wide. Our world is a much better place because of Deborah Shidler. We are eternally grateful to have been graced by her presence for these past 30 years.”—René Mandel, Berkeley Symphony Artistic Director

Deb received her B.M.E. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and her M.M. from Yale, where she met her future husband, David Burkhart. She was a full-time acting member of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, principal oboist with Walnut Creek’s Festival Opera, and second oboist with Symphony Silicon Valley. She was also a frequent performer with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra and the San Francisco, Oakland, and California Symphonies. And for twenty-three years she commuted to Orange County, where she was a member of the Pacific Symphony.

Deb was as gifted and devoted a teacher as she was a player. She was on the faculty of California State University Sacramento and CSU East Bay as well as Chabot College. Previously, she taught at the University of California at Davis. She also taught/coached at CalCap Chamber Music Workshop, Bocal Majority Double Reed Camp, and California Youth Symphony.

Deb lived very much in the moment and always for others, with a bottomless reservoir of inner strength and determination. Her impeccable musicianship, zest for life, keen wit, and joyful laughter were as uplifting as they were contagious. She is deeply missed by her husband, parents, sisters, brother, nieces, nephews, and extended family, as well as countless friends, colleagues, and students.

Berkeley Symphony has established a fund in Deb’s honor. All proceeds go toward the sponsorship of the Berkeley Symphony Deborah Shidler Principal Oboe Chair. Please help support the fund and ensure that Deb’s love for Berkeley Symphony plays on. Visit berkeleysymphony.org for more information.
Today’s Program

Joseph Young  Conductor

Mark Grey  Soundscape #1: Rise Up!

Morton Gould  “Protest” from Spirituals for Orchestra

Mark Grey  Soundscape #2: Celebration!

Derrick Skye  As Water, Freedom
Berkeley Symphony commission;
World premiere made possible through the generous support of S. Shariq Yosufzai & Brian James

Jean Sibelius  Finlandia

INTERMISSION

John Adams  Lollapalooza

Igor Stravinsky  Firebird Suite
I. Introduction and Dance of the Firebird
II. Dance of the Princesses
III. Infernal Dance of King Kastchei
IV. Berceuse (Lullaby)
V. Finale

Today’s concert is being recorded and the on demand video will be available on Overture+ beginning February 20, 2022. Subscribers and ticket holders will receive an email with access details. Today’s concert will be broadcast on KALW 91.7 FM on Sunday, April 10th, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

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Program Notes

**Mark Grey**
Born January 1, 1967, in Evanston, IL; resides in Petaluma, CA

**Soundscape #1:**
*Rise Up!*
Duration: 5 minutes
First Performance: This is the premiere

**Soundscape #2:**
*Celebration!*
Duration: 1 minute
First Performance: This is the premiere

The two soundscapes, *Rise Up!* and *Celebration!*, were commissioned to celebrate Berkeley Symphony’s 50th Anniversary Season.

According to sound designer Mark Grey, “*Rise Up!* opens the performance transporting the audience into the center of an angry protest, something which I found myself in, by chance, in 2017. I was arriving back from a European tour and landed at San Francisco International Airport during the beginning of the Muslim travel ban. Deep from within U.S. Customs and Border Protection, I could hear waves of noise coming from the foyer, like the sound of a distant stadium crowd roaring. As I walked through the exit, I was confronted with 2,000 people yelling in full voice, outraged, with super-charged intensity—a life-changing experience.”

The second soundscape, *Celebration!,* honors the human spirit and the people who stand up for social justice.

**Morton Gould**
Born December 10, 1913, in Richmond Hill, N.Y.; died February 21, 1996, in Orlando, Florida

**“Protest” from *Spirituals for Orchestra***

Composed: 1941
First performance: February 9, 1941, at the WNYC Festival of American Music
Duration: c. 4 minutes
Scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 2 percussionists, piano, harp, and strings

“I grew up, like most other kids, on cowboy ballads, jazz, spirituals, carols, hot dogs, high school proms, vaudeville shows, band concerts in the park, and all the rest of it,” Morton Gould once said. “So it was natural for me to use that musical language when I began to compose.” Eclectic and prolific, he became a trailblazer in bridging the gaps between different musical genres and expectations, writing music meant to be enjoyed. Starting out as a child prodigy in early-20th-century New York, Gould synthesized influences from early cinema (for which he played piano in his youth), vaudeville, Broadway, jazz, the heyday of classical radio, television, and the concert hall. He contributed a body of musical compositions to all of these environments. Gould was also widely active as a conductor (he made more than 100 recordings), pianist, and...
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arranger and devised programs that combined popular and classical components.

The recipient of a Pulitzer late in his career (in 1995) for the serenade Stringmusic, Gould drew on the legacy of African American spirituals at various points. We hear an early example from his orchestral music—the fourth movement from his 1941 Spirituals for Orchestra (also known as Spirituals for String Choir and Orchestra), which he premiered at a festival in New York. “I have tried to write music the way one speaks,” he explained. “I tried to make it as direct and simple as possible . . . My starting premise was that our spirituals develop a wide gamut of emotions, musically. These emotions are specifically American. The songs range from strictly spiritual ones that are escapist in feeling, or light and gay, to those having tremendous depth and tragic impact. My idea was to get five moods, widely contrasted in feeling.”

What to listen for

Gould limited himself to using “fragments of folk tunes here and there” rather than wholesale quotations from well-known spirituals. The “Protest” movement contrasts starkly with the preceding “humorous” one, titled “Sermon” and styled as “a sort of lyrical folk tale.” He described “Protest” as “bitter, grim, and crying-out”—indeed, the score is marked to be played “Brutal and Crying Out.” The string orchestra plays the role of a wordless choir, punctuated by fierce exclamations from the rest of the ensemble and developing into a march-like procession.

Derrick Senam Eugene Skye
(formerly Derrick Spiva, Jr.)
Born November 19, 1982, in Los Angeles
Resides in Los Angeles

As Water, Freedom

Composed: 2019-20; rev. 2021
First performance: This is the world premiere
Duration: c. 12 minutes
Scored for 2 flutes (1st doubling piccolo and alto flute, 2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, 3 percussionists, harp, 5-string electric bass, and strings

“M y music always seeks to build bridges between different communities, through sound”—this artistic credo guides Derrick Senam Eugene Skye in his various roles as composer, conductor, musician, consultant, and educator. It is even embedded in the name of the Los Angeles-based new music collective and arts organization he founded in 2015, Bridge to Everywhere, of which he is artistic director. In addition to his work as a composer, Skye is sought after for his expertise in enhancing relationships between orchestras and other ensembles and the communities they serve.

Skye, who studied at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the California Institute of the Arts, celebrates the creative potential opened up by celebrating cultural diversity. His engagement with a rich spectrum of global cultural practices informs every parameter of his musical language. Skye’s compositions characteristically cross-pollinate...
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Western classical vocabulary with elements from the music and dance of West Africa and Hindustani classical music (with a special focus on how complex rhythmic cycles are implemented). Likewise woven into his compositions are threads from Persian and Balkan musical traditions.

This range of cultural influences is no facile eclecticism: it mirrors Skye’s self-understanding as an artist whose heritage blends Ghanaian, Nigerian, British, Irish, and Native American roots. After becoming more aware of those roots, and to mark Juneteenth last year, he legally changed his name from Derrick Spiva, Jr., to Derrick Skye. Having traced the family surname back to his enslaved ancestors, he determined to take control of his name and what it projects. “Senam” (God’s gifts” in the Ghanaian Eve language) reclaims his African roots and pays homage specifically to the music and dance from Ghana that he has studied closely. “Skye” honors a longstanding enthusiasm for astronomy and symbolizes boundless horizons.

Various forms of collaboration are similarly viewed as models of bridge-building in Skye’s artistic practice. He weaves together not only different musical idioms but different disciplines, resulting in an output that includes solo, chamber, orchestral, and choral compositions, scores for film, and music for dancers. (Skye has even composed pieces for synchronized swimmers.)

This season has been especially active for Skye. The Los Angeles Master Chorale recently gave the live performance premiere of his choral work Ready, Bright (for which an accompanying film was made). In May, the Chicago Sinfonietta will premiere To Be a Horizon, the third part in a major ongoing work titled the Prisms, Cycles, Leaps Suite, which he describes as a “search for beauty in life and nature through multiple and varied yet cyclical experiences.” Skye is also at work on a collaborative “hyper-opera” involving audience and performer biofeedback and neuroscience research exploring the healing power of music.

This Berkeley Symphony commission is made possible through the generous support of S. Shariq Yosufzai & Brian James. Skye completed As Water, Freedom just before the pandemic halted performance and, during lockdown, revised and expanded the score.

The premise, as in Skye’s work overall, is that musical collaboration—and the literal collaboration of diverse styles and languages in the same piece of music—can offer a model for “harmonious relationships” between people. As Skye writes in his note to the score: “As Water, Freedom is meant to illustrate sonically how we might be able to celebrate differences while still finding common ground in our identities, both individual and collective (solo and ensemble).”

**What to listen for**

Skye characteristically layers a profusion of musical identities in the piece, allowing them to intersect and mutually influence each other—much as the “fluid identities” that we have “as individuals and collective groups” over time “shift and develop.” The musical influences he singles out comprise “West African music, Indian classical music,
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Dastgāh-e Māhur [a modal system] from Persian classical music, Eastern European folk music, and American vernacular music.”

Another idea that guided Skye’s concept for the piece is a layer of audience interaction, with cueing from the conductor to use body percussion and voices to simulate the sound of rain. This “rain effect” will be realized by the live audience in future iterations but is being presented as an audio track in this performance. This “philosophical pondering in the rain” launches the piece.

Call-and-response and “conversational” elements also inform the musical substance. According to Skye, these “cascade through different soloistic lines between instruments throughout”—listen for melodic lines that travel through the orchestra and then combine in a spirit of solidarity. Skye refers to “the deconstruction of many thoughts to the arrival of a single thought.” He also incorporates elements of a music and dance piece from the Dagaaba people in which he has participated to ponder the multiplicity with which a single idea can manifest itself.

Additional inspirations include African American work songs and “It’s a Man’s World” by James Brown—“the recognition of what one cannot be.” The concept of “developing a mantra” and “the ultimate change the mantra was meant to make” become the focus before As Water, Freedom concludes with an ode to diversity, music eliciting “the joy of recognizing the different ways to perceive one concept.”

Jean Sibelius
Born December 8, 1865, in Hämeenlinna, Finland; died September 20, 1957, in Järvenpää, Finland

Finlandia, Op. 26
Composed: 1899; rev. 1900
First performance: November 4, 1899, in Helsinki, with the composer conducting
Duration: c. 9 minutes
Scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, and strings.

The theme of music as protest plays a role in the turn-of-century work Jean Sibelius wrote as he was carving out an artistic identity in his 30s. The galvanizing emotional appeal of Finlandia became associated by his contemporaries with Finnish patriotism—which, at the time, was inseparable from protest against political oppression by Russian overlords.

Sibelius actually grew up speaking Swedish, but his music would become known for its evocation of the timeless mythic world of the Kalevala, an epic compilation of ancient Finnish myths. His earliest large-scale works for orchestra mined its rich lore, and he became part of the circle of artists known as Karelianists, who celebrated Finland’s indigenous cultural traditions.

The reference is to the Karelia region on the eastern Finnish coast (bounded by the Gulf of Finland and Russia and a contested territory even to this day). A land of breathtaking, diverse natural beauty, Karelia is where the oral
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tradition of the *Kalevala* had continued unbroken. Sibelius traveled there to study Finnish folk song and *runo* (bardic) traditions.

At the time ruled by Russia as a “grand duchy,” the Finns were facing sudden new restrictions and censorship as a result of measures instigated by Czar Nicholas II. *Finlandia* originated as one of a group of pieces Sibelius composed for a special benefit to support free speech. Each piece accompanied texts intended to illustrate a pivotal historical moment of Finland’s past. Sibelius recognized the enduring power of the last of these, initially titled *Finland Awakes!*, and adapted it as an instrumental piece for concert performance, selecting the censor-friendlier title *Finlandia*. It quickly established itself as the musical standard-bearer of Finnish pride and will for self-determination.

**What to listen for**

Ominous chords growl from the low brass, reinforced by thundering on the timpani. A grimly determined hymn is passed among different instrumental groups. All of this turns out to be the preludial preparation for faster-paced, brightly optimistic music that in turn segues into a stirring, solemn anthem, played with folklike simplicity by the winds. The bright music returns and merges into a grand apotheosis of the anthem that continues to exert an arousing effect regardless of the listener’s passport.

**John Coolidge Adams**

*Born February 15, 1947, in Worcester, Massachusetts*

*Resides in Berkeley*

**Lollapalooza**

*Composed: 1995*

*First performance: November 10, 1995, by the City of Birmingham Symphony led by Simon Rattle*

*Duration: c. 7 minutes*

Scored for piccolo, 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 tenor trombones, tuba, timpani, 4 percussionists, piano, and strings

That Berkeley’s own John Adams turns 75 in a little over a week (on February 15, to be exact) can come as a bit of a shock. Could it be that composing music that ripples and pulsates with tremendous energy—*Lollapalooza* offers an instant dose of these Adamsian qualities—accomplishes what countless self-help books vainly promise, bestowing the stamina and unwavering curiosity we envy in the young?

Whatever his secret, Adams remains as boundlessly active as ever, composing, conducting, mentoring—doing everything except resting on his laurels as one of the most significant figures in American music. His early orchestral pieces, written for Bay Area listeners, paved the way for a rebound of audience engagement with contemporary composition, while his operas helped spark a Renaissance of American innovation in the genre. Adams continues to expand on his work in these and other fields.
with such recent scores as his third piano concerto (Must the Devil Have All the Good Tunes?) and the currently in-progress operatic treatment of Antony and Cleopatra (to his own libretto fashioned from Shakespeare).

Meanwhile, Adams’ activities as a responsible and committed musical citizen have led to important mentoring relationships, commissions, and other forms of advocacy—Adams curated the Ojai Festival last summer, celebrating its 75th anniversary not with a replay of his own works but a program that platformed a wide diversity of young composers who are recreating the musical landscape and winning new audiences.

Several Adams compositions attest to fruitful collaborative friendships. It was as a gift for conductor Simon Rattle’s 40th birthday that he wrote the wildly Dionysian Lollapalooza in 1995—one of a group of brief but enormously effective orchestral pieces in his catalogue that often serve as concert openers. This is vintage Adams in the sense that it pulls the listener in at first encounter yet is by no means a “simple” piece; repeated hearings reveal ever-new angles.

The title, which is also used as the name of an annual, multi-genre music festival in Chicago, appealed to Adams because of its unpindownable etymology: “just that vagueness may account for its popularity as an archetypical American word,” he notes, adding that “it suggests something large, outlandish, oversized, not unduly refined” and, according to H.L. Mencken “may have originally meant a knockout punch in a boxing match.”

What to listen for

Adams taps into the word “lollapalooza” as a musical source, using the internal rhythm (short-short-short-LONG-short) as a rhythmic motto. After a riffing ostinato introduction, trombones and tubas spell this motto out, accentuating the bluesy E-flat in C—C—C—E-flat—C. Other motivic ideas enter into the fray and loop through the piece, layering rhythmic tracks atop one another and building into a kind of frenzied ecstasy. Adams characterizes Lollapalooza as a “dancing behemoth” that presses forward until it ends “in a final shout by the horns and trombones and a terminal thwack on timpani and bass drum.”

Igor Stravinsky

Born June 17, 1882, in Oranienbaum, Russia; died April 6, 1971, in New York City

Firebird Suite (1919 version)

Composed: 1909-10; rev. 1919
First performance: June 25, 1910, in Paris, as part of the Ballets Russes season (complete ballet)
Duration: c. 20 minutes
Scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd briefly doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano/celesta, and strings

Much as Finlandia became a calling card for the young Sibelius, The Firebird marked Igor Stravinsky’s
breakthrough to international success when it was premiered a little over a decade later, in 1910, as part of Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes season in Paris. Indeed, the Symbolist-inspired Diaghilev took a major risk by asking a 20-something unknown to write the music for a large-scale ballet. Stravinsky hadn’t even been his first choice but was a backup who turned out to be reliable.

Diaghilev’s strategy was to capitalize on the Parisian fondness for all things Russian that was so trendy at the time. Certainly he had a winning topic in The Firebird, which offers a gorgeously stylized version of an old Russian folk-tale merged with a potent symbol from Slavic myth. The public ate it up, making young Igor into a genuine sensation.

Stravinsky would soon want much more control over every aspect of his collaborative endeavors. But, exceptionally, he had to work with a ready-made scenario handed to him when he composed The Firebird. The ballet’s scenario involves a good-versus-evil struggle between the noble young protagonist, Prince Ivan, and an ogre-like figure known as the Immortal Koschei or Kastchei (among the various transliterations of the Russian name), whose victims are liberated when Ivan brings about his downfall.

Ivan’s success, however, is owed to the intervention of the spectacularly enchanting titular bird (sporting one of designer Léon Bakst’s marvelously colorful costumes). Kastchei’s wizard-like powers have allegedly made him deathless. The story’s great paradox illustrates how the life-affirming power of the miraculous Firebird (with mythological links to the phoenix) undoes the spell of his immortality, preparing the way for a utopian new dawn.

Stravinsky himself emerges as a wizard of the orchestra in the score he crafted for The Firebird. The original full-length ballet, the source of the 1919 suite we hear, calls for a lavish orchestra, but Stravinsky simplified and pared it down for this version. Ever the practical businessman, he later prepared still another, longer concert suite in 1945, thus creating a supplemental source of income from this widely performed music. The Firebird remained among Stravinsky’s proudest achievements.

What to listen for

Stravinsky cleverly juxtaposes music to suggest an “exotic,” supernatural realm—the tonal language associated with the Firebird herself—with the diatonic simplicity of folk song that represents the mortal world. The former relies on an alternative to conventional Western harmony—it’s known as the “octatonic” scale because it takes a combination of eight symmetrically alternating whole and half-steps to divide the octave. Stravinsky had become well-versed in manipulating its strange harmonies through his mentor, Rimsky-Korsakov, a pioneer of this musical strategy. In 1902, Rimsky even premiered his own operatic treatment of the core legend (Kashchey the Deathless).

Spooky conjurings low in the strings, at first barely audible, set the scene for Kastchei’s magic but illusory garden. These are the grounds where Prince Ivan first encounters the Firebird, whose
signature music of shimmering trills and dazzling colors is unmistakable. Ivan captures the creature but spares her life, so in gratitude she gives him a feather to summon her in time of need. (The role, traditionally gendered as female, was created by the great ballerina Tamara Karsavina, though Diaghilev’s star dancer Vaslav Nijinsky himself initially wanted the part.)

The music takes a pastoral turn to depict a group of 13 princesses held captive by Kastchei as they perform a ritual folk dance. (Stravinsky later recalled that he conceived the idea for *The Rite of Spring* while finishing work on *The Firebird*, though it got set aside in the meantime to take up another Russian-themed story—*Petrushka*.) Prince Ivan falls in love with one of the princesses and determines to free her from Kastchei’s spell, but his menacing guardians are roused into action and the evil sorcerer commences to turn the interloper into stone.

This is the point in the ballet when Ivan summons the Firebird, who weaves her own spell that compels the fiends to perform an “Infernal Dance” (shades here indeed of *The Rite of Spring*) marked by violently explosive rhythms. They collapse in exhaustion, and part two of the Firebird’s intervention takes place as they are lulled by a lullaby (first played by the bassoon) and she shows Ivan how to vanquish his enemy by destroying a hidden egg that contains his soul (well before the Harry Potter phenomenon).

Like Klingsor’s Magic Garden in *Parsifal*—another potent source for Symbolism and its offshoots—Kastchei’s “insubstantial pageant” fades. The Suite’s finale is the music from the short concluding scene. It begins with a solo horn (associated with Prince Ivan) that heralds liberating sunlight’s arrival and the wedding of Prince Ivan and the Princess. The horn intones a folk melody that is clothed with increasing orchestral splendor, while the Firebird’s complex harmonies come back for a final say in the closing measures.

*Program notes ©2022 Thomas May. Notes on Soundscapes #1 and #2 are by Mark Grey.*
Music Director Joseph Young

Praised for his suavely adventurous programming, Joseph Young is increasingly recognized as “one of the most gifted conductors of his generation.” Joseph is Music Director of Berkeley Symphony, Artistic Director of Ensembles for the Peabody Conservatory, and Resident Conductor of the National Youth Orchestra–USA at Carnegie Hall.

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 Sinfónica y Coro de RTVE (Madrid), among others in the U.S. and Europe.

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 whom he continues to maintain a close relationship.
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-S.F. Chronicle

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Composer Bios

John Adams

Composer, conductor, and creative thinker—John Adams occupies a unique position in the world of music. His works stand out among contemporary classical compositions for their depth of expression, brilliance of sound, and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes. Works spanning more than three decades are among the most performed of all contemporary classi-
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cal music, among them *Nixon in China*, *Harmonielehre*, *Doctor Atomic*, *Shaker Loops*, *El Niño*, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* and *The Dharma at Big Sur*.

His stage works, all in collaboration with director Peter Sellars, have transformed the genre of contemporary music theater. Of Adams’ best-known opera, the New Yorker magazine wrote “Not since *Porgy and Bess*’ has an American opera won such universal acclaim as ‘Nixon in China’.”

Nonesuch Records has recorded all of Adams’ music over the past three decades, with numerous Grammy awards among them. A new recording of the complete *Doctor Atomic*, with Adams conducting the BBC Symphony, was released in July 2018, timed to coincide with the Santa Fe Opera’s new production.

As conductor, Adams leads the world’s major orchestras in repertoire that from Beethoven and Mozart to Stravinsky, Ives, Carter, Zappa, Glass and Ellington. Conducting engagements in recent and coming seasons include the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Berliner Philharmoniker, the Cleveland Orchestra Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Wiener Symphoniker and BBC Symphony. He leads Rome’s Orchestra of Santa Cecilia in his oratorio *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* in October 2018.

A new piano concerto called *Must the Devil Have All the Good Tunes?* was premiered by Yuja Wang in March of 2019 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel. The same month the Dutch National Opera presented the European premiere of Adams 2017 opera about the California Gold Rush, *Girls of the Golden West*.

Born and raised in New England, Adams learned the clarinet from his father and played in marching bands and community orchestras during his formative years. He began composing at age ten and his first orchestral pieces were performed while just a teenager.

Adams has received honorary doctorates from Yale, Harvard, Northwestern, Cambridge and The Juilliard School. A provocative writer, he is author of the highly acclaimed autobiography *Hallelujah Junction* and is a frequent contributor to the New York Times Book Review.

Adams is Creative Chair of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

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Mark Grey

The music of American composer Mark Grey has been commissioned or premiered by such organizations as The Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, The New
York Philharmonic, The National Opera of Belgium La Monnaie | de Munt Opera, Carnegie Hall, Cal Performances, The Los Angeles Master Chorale, Kronos Quartet, Berkeley Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Green Bay Symphony, California Symphony, The Los Angeles Children’s Chorus, and several others along with festivals at Ravinia, Cabrillo, OtherMinds, Perth International, and Spoleto. Grey was commissioned by La Monnaie | de Munt to write an evening-length grand opera FRANKENSTEIN which premiered in Brussels during the spring of 2019. In January 2020 his work Rainbow Bridge for 100 electric guitars premiered outdoors on the grounds of Circus Maximus as part of the Rome Festival. Grey is also an Emmy Award winning sound designer having premiered major opera and concert works worldwide over the past 30 years.

Morton Gould

Born in Richmond Hill, New York, on December 10, 1913, Gould was recognized early on as a child prodigy with the ability to improvise and compose. At the age of six he had his first composition published. He studied at the Institute of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School), but his most important teachers were Abby Whiteside (piano) and Vincent Jones (composition). During the Depression, teenaged Gould found work in New York’s vaudeville and movie theaters.

Gould’s childhood experience of watching parades of military veterans marching through his city’s streets to the cheers of thousands of spectators, engendered a lifelong admiration of those who serve in our armed forces and a special attachment to marching band music. When he was rejected by the Army for health reasons, he turned his talents to writing memorable music for concert and marching bands.

When Radio City Music Hall opened, the young Gould was its staff pianist. By the age of 21 he was conducting and arranging a series of orchestral programs for WOR Mutual Radio. He attained national prominence through his work in radio, as he appealed to a wide-ranging audience with his combination of classical and popular programming. During the 1940s Gould appeared on the “Cresta Blanca Carnival” program and “The Chrysler Hour” (CBS), reaching an audience of millions.

At a time before the term “crossover music” wasn’t even an idea, Gould’s music transcended and crossed the set lines that separated “serious” from “pop”, orchestral from band, ballet from chorus, Broadway from television, doing so when it was not only rare, but not always deemed acceptable.
He integrated jazz, blues, gospel, country-and-western, and folk elements into compositions which bear his unequaled mastery of orchestration and imaginative formal structures.

Gould was always open to innovative forms of creating music. As early as 1978, he made records for the Chalfont and Varese Sarabande labels using a new technology that would change the creating and marketing of music forever: digital recording.

His music was commissioned by symphony orchestras throughout the United States, the Library of Congress, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the American Ballet Theatre, and the New York City Ballet. Gould’s talents as an arranger are featured on a series of recordings recently re-released by BMG.

As a conductor, Gould led all the major American orchestras as well as those of Canada, Mexico, Europe, Japan, and Australia.

A member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) since 1939, Gould served on the board from 1952 until his death and was president from 1986 until 1994. He also served on the board of the American Symphony Orchestra League and on the National Endowment for the Arts music panel.

Morton Gould was a firm believer in the intellectual rights of all artists and as the dawn of the internet took shape, he used his position at ASCAP to actively lobby on behalf of the rights of all creative people to be recognized and paid for their works.

Derrick Skye

Derrick Skye is a composer and musician based in the Los Angeles area who often integrates music practices from different cultural traditions around the world into his work with classical music communities. The Los Angeles Times has described his music as “something to savor” and “enormous fun to listen to.”

During his studies at the University of California, Los Angeles and the California Institute of the Arts, music across many cultures became an integral part of his musical vocabulary.

Skye studied classical music with Ian Krouse, Alex Shapiro, Paul Chihara, Randy Gloss, and David Rosenboom while also studying West African music and dance with Kobla Ladzekpo; Persian music theory with Pirayeh Pourfar and Houman Pourmehdi; Balkan music theory with Tzvetanka Varimezova; and tala (rhythmic cycles) in Hindustani classical music with Swapan Chaudhuri and Aashish Khan.

Skye’s music has been commissioned
and/or performed by ensembles including Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Albany Symphony, Berkeley Symphony, Dayton Philharmonic, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Cantori New York, Cecilia Chorus New York, Yale Glee Club, University of Oregon, University of Colorado, Boulder, The National Orchestral Institute, Sphinx Virtuosi, Bridge to Everywhere, Los Angeles Electric 8, the Salastina Music Society, Lyris Quartet, Super Devoiche (Bulgarian Women’s Choir), and Lian Ensemble (Persian Ensemble).

Skye has given pre-concert talks and workshops about the use of non-Western music in his compositions at UCLA, USC, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Skirball Cultural Center.

He received the New Music USA Award in 2010 and 2011 and was awarded a composer residency with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (LACO) through New Music USA’s “Music Alive” program with LACO for the 2015/16 season.

He served as a panelist for the 2019 League of Orchestras Conference, and previously spoke at the 2016 League of Orchestras Conference on the topic of how classical music orchestras can forge stronger relationships with their diverse communities.

Skye serves as Artistic Director of the new music collective and arts organization Bridge to Everywhere.

Skye is an American who has Ghanaian, Nigerian, British, Irish, and Native American ancestry. His ancestry and identity have led him to claim and develop an “American” aesthetic that incorporates many cultural influences into his work, reflecting the diverse communities he is part of. Skye passionately believes in music as a doorway into understanding other cultures and different ways of living. Through learning the music of other cultures, the opportunity for dialogue rather than conflict between strangers is opened, and our society can become one with less conflict due to cultural misunderstanding. He is deeply invested in fostering creative and effective collaboration between artists of different disciplines and traditions.
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, 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 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.

After an extensive search, Joana Carneiro was selected in January 2009 to be the Orchestra’s third Music Director in its 40-year history. Maestra Carneiro further enhanced Berkeley Symphony’s reputation for innovative programming before stepping down after a successful nine-season tenure.

Berkeley Symphony ushered in a new era with the appointment of Joseph Young as the Orchestra’s fourth Music Director, following his highly successful and critically acclaimed debut appearance as guest conductor in January 2019.

Joseph Young returns to the stage as Music Director for the historic 50th Anniversary season which celebrates the Orchestra’s rich history, showcases diverse programming from familiar, reimagined classics to the music of today, and looks toward an exciting future of artistic innovation.
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During the COVID-19 pandemic, Berkeley Symphony partnered with the Berkeley Public Library to launch Reading Is Instrumental—a free online video series for children which combines storytelling with music. Reading Is Instrumental is co-produced with the Berkeley Public Library Foundation and has received over 32,000 views since it was launched.

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