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BERKELEY SYMPHONY WELCOMES FIVE NEW MUSICIANS TO ITS CORE ORCHESTRA FOR THE 2022-23 SEASON

New musicians include Principal Oboist Ben Brogadir, violinists Isabella Amador, Julia Churchill, and Sarah Elert, and Assistant Principal Second Violinist Mijung Kim

BERKELEY, CA (October 27, 2022) – **Berkeley Symphony** announced today that five new musicians will join the core orchestra for the 2022-23 season. The new additions include Principal Oboist **Ben Brogadir**, violinists **Isabella Amador**, **Julia Churchill**, and **Sarah Elert**, and Assistant Principal Second Violinist **Mijung Kim**. They will all make their debuts as members at the upcoming *Symphony II: Connections* on April 2, 2023.

“I’m thrilled to welcome Ben Brogadir, Isabella Amador, Julia Churchill, Sarah Elert, and Mijung Kim to our orchestra family,” said **Joseph Young**, Music Director at Berkeley Symphony. “I’m excited to get to know each of them and unify their great talents with the unique musical bond that is the Berkeley Symphony.”

Ben Brogadir, Principal Oboe

A native of San Diego, California, Benjamin Brogadir currently holds the position of Principal Oboe with the Berkeley Symphony. In high demand on both oboe and English horn, he has made appearances as a guest musician with the San Francisco Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Opera, San Diego Symphony, and Pacific Symphony. This also includes performances as guest principal oboe with the San Francisco Symphony during their 2022 summer season. Brogadir served as principal oboe of the 2021 Ojai Festival Orchestra and has participated in numerous international music festivals including the Pacific Music Festival, Music

Academy of the West, Aspen Music Festival, Music from Angel Fire, Colorado College Music Festival, and the National Orchestral Institute.

In the International Double Reed Society's 2021 Fernand Gillet-Hugo Fox Oboe competition, Brogadir, being the only American candidate, was one of five finalists and received an honorable mention. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with globally esteemed artists such as Emanuel Ax, James Conlon, David Geber, Karyn Dreyfus, Nokuthula Ngwenyama, and Pedja Mužijević. A graduate of the Colburn Conservatory, he received his Bachelor of Music degree studying under the second oboe of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Anne Marie Gabriele and former principal oboist Ariana Ghez. Brogadir went on to receive a Master of Music degree at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music under the mentorship of Eugene Izotov, principal oboe of the San Francisco Symphony. His other principal teachers include SF Opera Principal Oboe Mingjia Liu, San Diego Symphony English horn Andrea Overturf, and Daniel Stolper former instructor of oboe at Interlochen Arts Academy.

Isabella Amador, violin

Isabella Amador is a violinist and teacher based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She recently completed her B.M. and M.M. in violin performance at the University of Michigan, where she studied under the tutelage of Danielle Belen and Fabiola Kim. She performed as concertmaster of both U-M university orchestras, as well as the campus orchestra for non-music majors. She is passionate about chamber music and especially loves performing recently-composed works. As the first violinist of the Converge String Quartet, she worked directly with student composers, performing and recording many of their works for the first time. As a soloist, she has performed with the Ann Arbor Camerata, Lincoln's Symphony Orchestra, and the Omaha Symphony Orchestra. Isabella has taught students ranging from elementary school to college students, and has led orchestra sectionals for high school and college orchestras. As a new resident of Silicon Valley, she is quickly establishing a teaching studio in the area. She has spent her last few summers at music festivals including The Kneisel Hall Chamber Festival and School, and the Aspen Music Festival. Currently, she is studying with Simon James at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In her free time, Isabella enjoys hiking, trying new restaurants, and playing video games.

Julia Churchill, violin

Born in the Marshall Islands, Julia Churchill was adopted into a musical family and grew up in Newton, Massachusetts. Julia began studying violin at age four and attended the New England Conservatory Preparatory School for 13 years. She received an M.M. from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music under the tutelage of Paul Kantor after completing her B.M. in Violin Performance with Renée Jolles at the Eastman School of Music. Julia's participation in youth orchestras led to performances in Boston's Symphony Hall and Carnegie Hall, as well as on tour in concert venues including the Berlin Philharmonie, Concertgebouw, the KKL Luzern, and Dvorak Hall. In addition to having a deep love for orchestra, Julia enjoys collaborating and developing relationships through chamber music and community engagement. During her final year of graduate school, Julia served as Houston Symphony's Community Embedded Musician Fellow, engaging with young musicians and members of the Greater Houston area. Her love for chamber music developed at Greenwood Music Camp, which she attended for nine summers as a student and one as a counselor. She has also attended Bowdoin Music Festival and Cremona

International Music Festival and was a member of the Orchestra of the Americas' Baltic tour in 2016. In her free time, Julia enjoys being with family, crafting, reading, and spending time with her newly adopted four-year-old dog, Byrd.

Sarah Elert, violin

Originally from Annapolis, Maryland, Sarah began studying violin at age five and made her solo debut with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra at age sixteen. Sarah holds a MM from Boston University and a BM from the University of Colorado Boulder and recently received an Artist Diploma in Orchestral Studies through the San Francisco Academy Orchestra. She currently holds a position as principal second violinist of the Vallejo Symphony, and frequently performs with other groups throughout the bay area. Sarah has previously held positions with several orchestras, including the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra and Midland-Odessa Symphony and Chorale, and has attended several prestigious festivals, most notable of which include the National Repertory Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, and Icicle Creek Chamber Music Institute. Her major teachers include Polina Sedukh, Bayla Keyes, and Harumi Rhodes.

Mijung Kim, Assistant Principal Second Violinist

A native of Seoul, Korea, began to study the violin at the age of seven. Mijung Kim holds both her B.M. and M.M. degrees in Orchestral Music from Ewha Women's University and studied the Professional Studies Diploma Program with Professor Wei He at San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She was a member of the Seoul Youth Orchestra for four years, played at Cheonan Philharmonic Orchestra as a first violin from 2010 through 2017, and at the Stockton Symphony from 2019 to 2022. She is also a founding member of the Viva String Quartet. Currently, she is a member of the California Symphony Orchestra and a substitute member of the San Francisco Ballet.

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 performing, premiering, and commissioning new music that reflects the culturally diverse people and the heady creative climate of its home city.

In the 2019-2020 season, Berkeley Symphony entered a new era under the leadership of Joseph Young, the Orchestra's fourth Music Director in its 50-year history, following a highly successful February 2019 debut that was acclaimed by critics and audiences alike. In addition to building on the Orchestra's artistic innovation, creativity and adventurous programming, Maestro Young is committed to amplifying the voices of underrepresented composers and artists as well as continuing to tell diverse stories that reflect the local Berkeley community.

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