



Music Director Joseph Young
Artistic Director René Mandel
Executive Director Kate Kammeyer
1942 University Avenue, Suite 104, Berkeley, CA 94704

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PRESS CONTACT: Julie Richter | julie@julierichter.co | 480.818.8022

BERKELEY SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS SHIKIRI HIGHTOWER-GASKIN AND RIGEL ROBINSON

BERKELEY, CA (November 10, 2022) – Today, **Berkeley Symphony Board President Paul Bennett** announced the appointment of Board Members **Shikiri Hightower-Gaskin** and **Rigel Robinson**.

“We are thrilled to welcome two influential members of the Berkeley community to the Board of Directors. They both exude a passion for Berkeley Symphony’s longstanding legacy of innovation and inclusion, and bring diverse backgrounds and a deep understanding of the community that we serve,” says Bennett.

“As Berkeley Symphony embarks on its next chapter following its 50th anniversary season, Shikiri and Rigel’s leadership and experiences will help continue our mission to celebrate Berkeley’s unique and diverse community through music,” adds Kate Kammeyer, Berkeley Symphony Executive Director.

Born in San Francisco and raised in Berkeley, **Shikiri Hightower-Gaskin**, (she/her) brings her varied background, unique perspective, and diverse experience to Berkeley Symphony. She is a communications specialist at Blue Shield of California Foundation, focused on developing and implementing grants and strategic communications to break the cycle of domestic abuse. Shikiri is a trained journalist with master’s degrees in journalism and business. Her career includes working as an entrepreneur in the fashion industry for more than 15 years, co-founding and running a family foundation for 10 years, and working as a freelance journalist. Shikiri has great empathy, top skills, and a can-do attitude with a strong track record in reporting, public relations, marketing, social media, community outreach, fundraising, events, and project

management. In her free time, Shikiri enjoys indulging in the latest fashion trends, blogging, long-distance running, practicing yoga, and traveling the world with her husband and their children.

Rigel Robinson (he/him) currently serves on the Berkeley City Council. Elected at 22 in 2018, Councilmember Robinson is the youngest person to ever serve on the Berkeley City Council. Additionally, he represents the City of Berkeley on the Alameda County Transportation Commission. A UC Berkeley alumnus, he is now completing his master's degree at UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy. Rigel Robinson grew up in the suburbs of St. Louis, Missouri, where he played violin in his school orchestras. Rigel Robinson describes himself as "the worst violinist you have ever met," though he deeply loved being in the orchestra and credits those experiences with shaping his relationship with music.

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.

###