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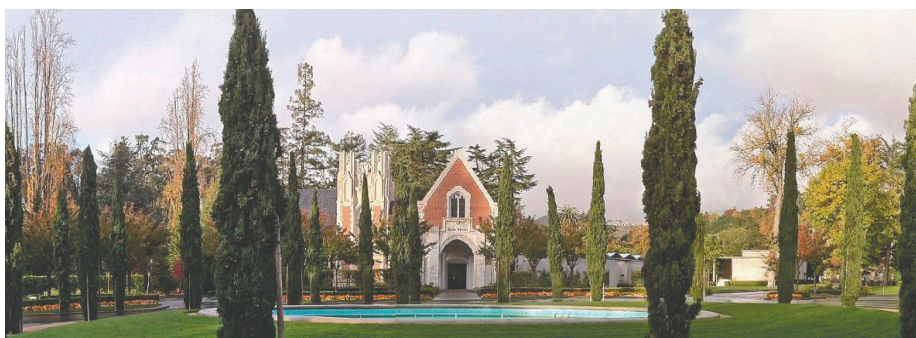


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Message from the Music Director

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It is a delight to be back with the Berkeley Symphony family to launch into another season of incredible music. With this first concert, I found inspiration in the idea of a kaleidoscope, a colorful, prismatic, ever-changing look at the world. So with American Kaleidoscope, we embark on a musical journey that blends our uniquely American musical heritage with cultural storytelling that captures the essence of our complex and beautiful country.

Barber's Second Essay for Orchestra will open our concert, inviting you to explore the rare harmonies of this timeless piece, setting the stage for the musical adventure ahead. Next, we present Johnson's *Yamekraw: A Negro Rhapsody*, featuring the remarkable talents of the Marcus Roberts Trio. This performance promises to infuse jazz brilliance into our evening,

celebrating the vibrant, ever-evolving American musical traditions. Peter S. Shin's introspective *Relapse* will follow, offering a contemplative and thought-provoking interlude that will allow you to reflect on the deeper dimensions of American music. The final piece on the program, Gershwin's iconic *Rhapsody in Blue*, is a dazzling fusion of classical, jazz, and popular music that represents the epitome of American musical innovation.

Thank you for joining us today. You are a vital part of this musical journey, and your presence enhances the experience for everyone, creating a symphony of unity within our audience.

—Joseph Young

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Today's Program

Joseph Young *Conductor*

Samuel Barber *Second Essay for Orchestra, Op. 17*

James P. Johnson *Yamekraw: A Negro Rhapsody*

Marcus Roberts Trio:

Marcus Roberts *piano*

Roland Guerin *bass*

Jason Marsalis *drums*

Intermission

Peter S. Shin *Relapse*

George Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue*

Marcus Roberts Trio:

Marcus Roberts *piano*

Roland Guerin *bass*

Jason Marsalis *drums*

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Program Notes

Samuel Barber

Born on March 9, 1910, in West Chester, Pennsylvania; died on January 23, 1981, in New York City

Second Essay for Orchestra, Op. 17

Composed: 1942

First Performance: April 16, 1942, with Bruno Walter conducting the New York Philharmonic

Duration: c. 10 minutes

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

Popularity is a double-edged sword. Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings, a fixture on classical "top ten" lists, has long served as a go-to piece in times of mourning; countless listeners who have never been inclined to attend a formal concert recognize Barber's voice thanks to the Adagio's effectiveness in adding a sense of gravitas to numerous soundtracks. But this one piece also tends to eclipse the rest of Barber's output.

Barber's days as a prodigy student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia—which celebrates its centenary in 2024—foreshadowed a brilliant career. While still only in his twenties, Barber produced a series of compositions that put his name on the map—including the

Adagio, which originated in 1938 as the slow movement of his first string quartet in response to a request from Arturo Toscanini for a new piece to perform with his fledgling NBC Symphony Radio Orchestra. Premiered on a legendary broadcast in November 1938, the Adagio for Strings attracted enormous attention for Barber's brand of American Romanticism.

The same broadcast included a work titled *Essay for Orchestra, Op. 12*, which explored an innovative format for a single-movement concert piece. As Barber's stock rose, so did the request for new works, and in 1942 he presented a freshly composed orchestral *Essay* to the conductor Bruno Walter to consider performing as part of the New York Philharmonic's centennial season. The *Second Essay for Orchestra, Op. 17*, was premiered at Carnegie Hall in April 1942. A *Third Essay, Op. 47*, which followed in 1978, was the composer's final major score. For the *Second Essay*, Barber drew on ideas he had put aside while writing his *Violin Concerto* in 1939.

Baroque music famously translated rhetorical devices from speech into sonic terms. In Barber's case, the implication of a new genre called "*Essay for Orchestra*" brings to mind an analogue from literature or even politics: the prose essay that marshals evidence for a particular argument or point of view, ranging from a clear-cut manifesto to philosophical reflections on varying topics, as in the essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson, which exerted such a powerful influence

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on American Romanticism. Barber's Second Essay does not depict an extra-musical program—aside from possible references to wartime—but “argues” its case through effective elaboration of abstract materials. “I have been composing very hard, and my music has been going so well that it seems incongruous for times such as these,” Barber wrote in the months after Pearl Harbor.

A few months after completing the Second Essay, Barber was drafted into military service and later joined the U.S. Army Air Corps, in which capacity he *did* compose several works directly reflecting the wartime experience (in particular, the Second Symphony, which Barber withdrew in the 1960s, observing that “times of cataclysm are rarely conducive to the creation of good music, especially when the composer tries to say too much”).

Barber's unapologetic lyricism set him at odds with mid-20th-century fashions regarding musical style. At the same time, the Second Essay exemplifies a concision and economy in its use of thematic material that a Modernist might grudgingly admire. Brief though it is, the Second Essay unfolds in interconnected sections that suggest a highly condensed, multi-movement symphony.

What to listen for

The first section begins with a contemplative, meandering opening theme entrusted first to the solo flute, set against deep shadows cast by the almost subliminally present low brass and bass drum. The perspective enlarges with new colors added by the rest of the orchestra. An insistent rhythmic motto introduced by the timpani adds a hint of martial unrest.

A faster-paced fugue suddenly sends the music into a scherzo-like direction. Barber thickens the textures while weaving in earlier themes. The final section reworks the pensive hesitations of the opening into a triumphal assertion in the form of a noble orchestral chorale.

James P. Johnson

Born on February 1, 1894, in New Brunswick, New Jersey; died on November 17, 1955, in Jamaica, New York

Yamekraw: A Negro Rhapsody (orchestration by *William Grant Still*)

Composed: 1927 (arranged for orchestra in 1928 by William Grant Still)

First performance: April 27, 1928, with Fats Waller at the keyboard

Duration: 21 minutes

In addition to solo piano, scored for flute, oboe, 2 clarinets (2nd doubling alto saxophone), alto saxophone (doubling baritone saxophone), tenor saxophone, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, timpani, percussion, tenor banjo, and strings.

For anyone interested in music, the place to be in New York City on February 12, 1924, was Aeolian Hall, a prominent, 1,100-seat concert venue of the era located near Times Square. A crowd braved the snow that afternoon and vied for tickets to attend a concert billed as “An Experiment in Modern Music.”

The brainchild of the celebrity big band leader Paul Whiteman, the concert was built around the theme of jazz as America's contribution to musical progress and included the premiere of *Rhapsody in Blue*. Absurdly, the program included not a single work by a Black composer—an absence that all too clearly reflects with the entrenched racism of the era.

But on October 29, 1923, just a few months before that epochal premiere, the musical comedy/revue called *Runnin' Wild* opened on New York City's Upper West Side at the New Colonial Theatre—a venue that presented shows featuring Black artists. James Price Johnson composed the score, the most popular number of which was “The Charleston.” Believed to have originated with the transmission of Gullah traditions from South Carolina, the Charleston dance became an embodiment of the liberating spirit that defined the Jazz Age and the “Roarin’ 20s.” Though Johnson’s tune “The Charleston” included lyrics by his collaborator,

Cecil Mack, it circulated mostly as an instrumental dance number.

As a teenager, Johnson moved with his family from New Jersey to Manhattan and became known for his virtuosity at the keyboard, commanding an astonishing versatility of styles and showing a gift for accompanying different types of singers. Johnson combined the ragtime tradition with modern developments in jazz, perfecting the stride piano style in pieces like the landmark “Carolina Shout” (c. 1918, recorded in 1921). Stride ratchets up the tension between left and right hand: while the left wildly jumps (“strides”) between bass notes and chords to a steady pulse, creating an entire rhythm section, the right hand ornaments the melody with syncopated improvisations.

Johnson and Gershwin admired one another, and both composers experimented with ways to combine the vocabulary of jazz with classical models. In his Concerto in F, Gershwin paid tribute to Johnson by making the syncopated

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Charleston rhythm an important theme. Well after Gershwin's death, Johnson remembered meeting his younger colleague around 1917, during a period when both artists were employed cutting piano rolls for the Aeolian musical instrument company. Despite their vastly different backgrounds, they discovered a mutual interest in building on vernacular music. Gershwin "was interested in rhythm and blues," Johnson recalled. "Like myself, he wanted to write them on a higher level. We had lots of talks about our ambitions to do great music on American themes."

Yamekraw: A Negro Rhapsody marks the beginning of this line of symphonic jazz in Johnson's work and stands apart as a Black response to the success of *Rhapsody in Blue*. Initially written for solo piano, *Yamekraw* was introduced at Carnegie Hall in 1928, four years after *Rhapsody in Blue*, in a concert produced by W.C. Handy, the self-described "father of the blues." William Grant Still arranged the music for solo piano and jazz orchestra, with

Johnson's protégé Thomas "Fats" Waller as the soloist. (In his published score, Still retitled the work *Yamekraw: An Ebony Rhapsody*.)

"Yamekraw" (also spelled "Yamecraw") is a place-name referring to a Black neighborhood on the outskirts of Savannah, Georgia, where the rich Gullah and Geechee cultures brought to the South by enslaved Africans continued to thrive. Johnson had been exposed to this legacy as a dance hall pianist in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood, where longshoremen originally from the Southern coastal region would congregate.

The response to Johnson's music proved so successful that it was recycled for a short Warner Brothers "Vita-phone" film in 1930, directed by Murray Roth. The film tells a cautionary tale about the dangers of the big city, where a poor Black man is tempted by a dancer before he eventually returns to his wife. Orson Welles also made use of the overture for his *Voodoo Macbeth* production of 1936 (set on a fictional Caribbean island).

Whiteman's "experiment" concert still resonated as the point of reference for symphonic jazz, but, according to the musicologist John Howland, *Yamekraw* "represents a new African American perspective on symphonic jazz." He points out that the foreword to the first edition of the piano score described the work as "a genuine Negro treatise on spiritual, syncopated, and 'blue' melodies by James P. Johnson, expressing the religious fervor and happy moods of the natives of Yamekraw, a Negro settlement situated on the outskirts

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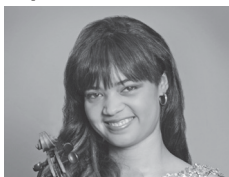
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of Savannah, Georgia.” It was further advertised as “not a Rhapsody in Blue, but a Rhapsody in Black and White (Black Notes on White Paper).”

What to listen for

Cast in dimensions similar to those of *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Yamekraw* presents a profusion of melodic ideas and episodes framed by a call-to-attention introduction and an exciting coda. Johnson touches on a range of stylistic registers, from popular song and dance idioms—including variations on the Charleston—to dreamily introspective, swooning Romantic melodies.

Yamekraw marked the first collaboration that Marcus Roberts embarked on with an orchestra when he played the solo part with the ensemble Concordia in 1992. He has further put his personal stamp this music in his interpretation with his Trio, transforming *Yamekraw* into a capsule history of early jazz piano in his thrilling improvisations for the cadenzas.

Peter S. Shin

Born in 1991 in Kansas City, Missouri; currently resides in Berkeley, California

Relapse

Composed: 2016

First performance: November 10, 2017, with Osmo Vänskä conducting the Minnesota Orchestra

Duration: c. 10 minutes

Scored for 3 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo,

3rd doubling alto flute), 2 oboes and English horn, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano/celesta, and strings.

In its citation for the 2023 Charles Ives Fellowship, the American Academy of Arts and Letters observed that Peter Shin “has already established an individual voice” and singled out *Hyo*, a work for chamber orchestra from 2021, as showing “a sophisticated wide range of beautiful orchestral sounds that unfold within a strong narrative . . . honest, clear, heartfelt, original music.”

A second-generation Korean-U.S. American, Shin explores through his music issues of mixed identity and belonging that reflect a contemporary understanding of what Gershwin a century ago characterized as the “kaleidoscope” and “metropolitan madness” expressed by his *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Raised in Kansas City, Missouri, Shin has earned degrees from the University of Michigan, the University of Southern California, and the Yale School of Music and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Berkeley. His distinctions include the Charles Ives Prize (along with the Fellowship cited above) from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Fulbright fellowship, and commissions from the Harvard University Fromm Music Foundation, American Composers Forum, and Chamber Music America. Among his orchestral commissions are *Scène in E minor* (2018), co-commissioned by Berkeley Symphony with the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archives. *Rough Magic*, the album just released

by Roomful of Teeth—with whom Shin is currently working on an evening-length collaboration—includes *Bits torn from words*, a piece for eight solo voices exploring varied manifestations of generalized anxiety disorder.

Relapse, though without words, similarly charts issues of psychological disturbance and malaise. The earliest orchestral score Shin includes in his list of works, *Relapse* was composed as part of a residency with the Minnesota Orchestra's Composer Institute in 2016 and confronts experiences in the composer's life from his early 20s, when he was struggling with a sense of alienation from “the two halves of my Korean-American identity.” Shin notes that he has since continued to educate himself about “the collective origins of Asian America” in order to “strive for a deeper understanding of my Korean ancestry.”

Relapse, according to Shin, traces a “journey of self-discovery.” At the same time, the piece is “a reminder that personal growth is not a straight path” and that we face moments where it seems we are forced back “to the starting point, as if all our efforts were in vain.” *Relapse* dramatizes this struggle through its complications and transformations of a musical idea closely associated with the Korean sense of national selfhood and survival: the beloved folk song known as “Arirang.”

The connotations of this folk song are central to Korean cultural identity—so central that UNESCO added “Arirang” to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity not just once but twice. The song's origins

are unknown: its title may refer to one's beloved or to homesickness evoked by a natural setting in the mountains. Shin quotes one of its anonymous verses in English translation: “My dear—who discarded me here—cannot walk ten li [i.e., a Chinese measurement equalling about 2.5 miles] before their feet burn.”

“Arirang” has invited countless improvisations and regional variants and has come to represent the untranslatable Korean concept of *han*, a multifaceted emotional state of sorrow, longing, and hope reflecting the nation's historical legacy. For Shin, this in turn extends to his situation as the child of immigrants from South Korea who have for decades made their home in the American heartland. He recalls singing “Arirang” at the Korean school in Kansas City that he would attend as a child on Saturdays. *Relapse* derives its initial melody from the minor counterpart of the major pentatonic scale from which “Arirang” is built.

What to listen for

Shin provides this commentary on *Relapse*: “Although pleasant to the ears, this tune is an anthem of abandonment and tremendous lament, highlighted by drawing out the original dance-like 3/4 meter over a more stately and solemn quasi-4/4 meter. Although the central idea of *Relapse*, the melody makes only one incomplete and wildly interrupted iteration following a series of rhythmic shifts within a rigid tempo, illustrating the grief behind the text, and the wave of doubts that for years would constantly disrupt my sense of belonging.”

Notes continue on page 29



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George Gershwin

Born on September 26, 1898, in Brooklyn New York; died on July 11, 1937, in Hollywood, California

Rhapsody in Blue

Composed: 1924 (arranged for orchestra by Ferde Grofé, with additional arrangements by Marcus Roberts)

First Performance: February 12, 1924, in New York, with Gershwin as the soloist and Paul Whiteman leading his band; Marcus Roberts and his Trio first performed their arrangement in 1995

Duration: c. 29 minutes

Along with solo piano, the orchestration by Ferde Grofé calls for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 2 alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, 3 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, banjo (optional), piano, and strings; in addition, Marcus Roberts has created an arrangement that allows for extensive improvisations by his Trio.

As the music world pays special homage this season to *Rhapsody in Blue*, George Gershwin's achievement in bridging musical worlds remains as inspiring as it did to those who first experienced it a century ago. His impoverished upbringing in New York's Lower East Side in the early years of the 20th century sharpened Gershwin's sensitivity to the many stories of immigrants like that of his own family. Of Ukrainian- and Lithuanian-Jewish heritage, his parents fled the increasingly anti-Semitic conditions of the Russian Empire.

This background paved the way for the polyglot musical language Gershwin later developed as he moved effortlessly among different idioms. Already as a teenager, he became firmly grounded in the “real” world of commercial entertainment and launched his career crafting popular songs for music publishers who congregated along W. 28th St between Fifth and Sixth Avenues (the so-called “Tin Pan Alley”).

A central achievement of Gershwin's legacy was to combine a personal style that had been shaped by popular styles with the ambitious, long-form structures associated with the European classical tradition. “Finding himself in a musical world split into separate spheres, popular and classical, he maintained a staunch commitment to both,” writes Richard Crawford in his recent biography *Summertime*.

It was with the stunning success of *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1924 that Gershwin exploded on the scene as a “classical” composer. He pursued his “concert music” on one track while, in parallel, he wrote a string of revues and musicals for the Broadway stage, collaborating with his lyricist brother Ira. This dual focus was a pattern Leonard Bernstein would repeat a few decades later.

Paul Whiteman first became a champion of Gershwin when he invited the young composer—after some back-and-forth on his part—to write his boldly innovative one-act, jazz-inspired opera *Blue Monday* as part of a popular Broadway revue he conducted in 1922. The artist who partnered with Gershwin to orchestrate that score was Will Vodery, one of the few Black composers and

arrangers active in the Broadway scene of that era—and a figure whose legacy remains sadly little known.

Whiteman subsequently commissioned Gershwin to contribute to his “An Experiment in Modern Music” extravaganza scheduled for February 1924 (one of two new compositions commissioned of the occasion). Gershwin was fond of recounting that he had set his commitment aside, only to be reminded about a month before the date by a newspaper ad. He composed *Rhapsody in Blue* at a frantic pace, preparing a sketch for two pianos between January 7 and February 3 and referring to the work-in-progress as *American Rhapsody*. Gershwin later claimed that the structure for the whole piece came to him while traveling on a train, as he listened to “its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang, that is often so stimulating to a composer.”

Ferde Grofé, himself a composer and also the arranger for Paul Whiteman’s band, was entrusted with orchestrating Gershwin’s two-piano score for solo piano and jazz band. (Gershwin had added his own pointers to the sketches about how to orchestrate his music.) Grofé prepared a version for standard theater orchestra in 1926 and, in 1942, introduced a version deploying a full symphony orchestra.

The title *Rhapsody in Blue* was proposed by Ira Gershwin as a playful allusion to the artist James Abbott McNeill Whistler’s specification of colors in the names for some of his paintings. Whistler’s titles, for their part, often make explicit cross-connections between his paintings and musical

genres. *Rhapsody* proved definitively that Gershwin could work persuasively with forms larger than the standard three-minute template of the Tin Pan Alley hit.

What to listen for

Gershwin distills the fast-slow-fast pattern familiar from the classical concerto into a single-movement mini-concerto. *Rhapsody in Blue* presents an abundance of themes that manipulate the formulas of the pop-song refrain. Gershwin’s tunes are characterized by flattened “blue” notes and syncopated rhythms, as well as hints of Latin dance, ragtime, and stride piano. “Classical”-sounding virtuosity coexists comfortably with vernacular American idioms, while Gershwin’s rapid modulations of key and transitions are bold and keep the listener riveted to his musical narrative. Gershwin summed up *Rhapsody in Blue* as representing “a musical kaleidoscope of America—of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our blues, our metropolitan madness.”

In the version he created for his Trio and first introduced in 1995, Marcus Roberts and his colleagues considerably expand the original dimensions of *Rhapsody in Blue* (from about 16 minutes to nearly half an hour). At various moments in the original score, they embark on extensive improvisations. These involve radically altered perspectives on Gershwin’s material that add striking new harmonic and rhythmic dimensions and entrancing melodic lines to complement this familiar music.

Program notes ©2023 Thomas May

Music Director Joseph Young



American conductor Joseph Young balances a vibrant guest conducting career with leadership roles as 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.

His commitment to amplifying voices, both historic and contemporary, has resulted in electrifying programs featuring works by Juan Pablo Contreras, Brian Raphael Nabors, Florence Price, and Carlos Simon, alongside established greats including Adams, Brahms, Dvořák, and Prokofiev.

Joseph's 2022/23 season featured major debuts, including the L.A. Phil at the Hollywood Bowl; at Washington National Opera and the National

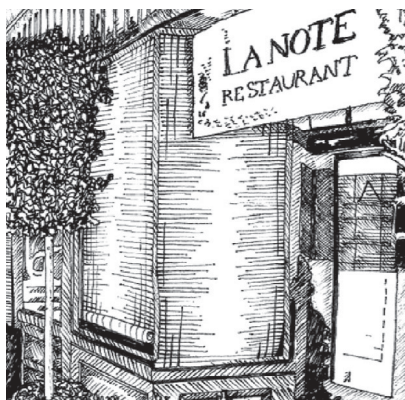
Symphony Orchestra, both at the Kennedy Center; and at Carnegie Hall leading the National Youth Orchestra.

Recent engagements include his San Francisco Symphony debut; inaugurating the Mzansi National Philharmonic Orchestra (Johannesburg); and the world premiere of William Menefield and Sheila Williams' *Fierce* with the Cincinnati Opera. He has appeared with the Seattle Symphony, Detroit Symphony, New World Symphony Orchestra, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música (Portugal), and the Orquestra Sinfónica y Coro de RTVE (Spain), among others in the U.S. and Europe.

Earlier in his career, Joseph served as the Assistant Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony, Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, and Resident Conductor of the Phoenix Symphony. He also served as the League of American Orchestras Conducting Fellow with the Buffalo Philharmonic and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

Joseph holds an Artist's Diploma from the Peabody Conservatory, studying with Gustav Meier and Markand Thakar. Mentors include Jorma Panula, Robert Spano, and Marin Alsop, with whom he maintains an artistic partnership. Now a mentor himself, Joseph shapes the future of classical music through his dynamic engagements with major symphony orchestras, his steadfast commitment to teaching in classrooms and concert halls, and his service on the board of New Music USA.

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Composer & Guest Artist Bios



Peter S. Shin, composer

Introspective, referential, and observant, the music of Peter S. Shin strives in reach of others. His work investigates issues of social and national belonging, the co-opting and intermingling of disparate musical vernaculars, and the liminality between the two halves of his second-generation Korean-U.S. American identity. *The New York Times* described him as “a composer to watch” and his music “entirely fresh and personal” following his premiere at Carnegie Hall.

Highlights include a performance of his electroacoustic dance work *Screaming Shapes* at the Walt Disney Concert Hall; an orchestral commission by John Adams and Deborah O’Grady for the Cabrillo Festival; the chamber orchestral work *Hyo* commissioned by the

Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra which explores his family’s immigration story; and the on-going “Hallyu Interventions” series which contends with the globalization of South Korean contemporary culture known as the *hallyu wave* via the sounds of K-Pop.

Recent and upcoming projects include the release of *Bits torn from words* about the reclamation of his mother tongue on the vocal band Roomful of Teeth’s latest studio album, *Rough Magic*; new works for Friction Quartet, Ensemble inter-contemporain, Tanglewood, and an evening-length collaboration with Wild Up and Roomful of Teeth.

Peter has received both the Charles Ives Scholarship and Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Fulbright fellowship, and commissions from the Harvard University Fromm Music Foundation, American Composers Forum, and Chamber Music America. He has participated in programs by the orchestras of Minnesota, St. Louis, and Berkeley, and in the music festivals of Tanglewood (MA, US), Aspen (CO, US), and IRCAM (Paris, FR).

A native of Kansas City, Missouri, Peter is a second-generation Korean-U.S. American and the son of South Korean immigrants who have called the U.S. home for over 30 years. With degrees from the University of Michigan (B.M.), the University of Southern California (M.M.), and the Yale School of Music (M.M.A.), Peter is currently a Ph.D. candidate (ABD) at the University of California, Berkeley.

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The Marcus Roberts Trio

A long-term musical partnership between pianist, Marcus Roberts, the phenomenal drummer Jason Marsalis, and gifted bassist Roland Guerin

The Marcus Roberts Trio is known for its virtuosic style and entirely new approach to jazz trio performance. While most jazz trios have the piano front and center, all members of the Marcus Roberts Trio share equally in shaping the direction of the music

by changing its tempo, mood, texture, or form at any time. They do this with lightning quick musical reflexes and creative imagination. The trio is known for having almost telepathic communication on the stage. More than a few concert goers have been heard to say that it sounds like a lot more than three people up there on the stage!

The Marcus Roberts Trio believes in ‘letting the music take over’ and the result is a powerfully rhythmic and melodic sound that is filled with rhythmic, harmonic, and dynamic contrast.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of watching this trio perform is that it is evident that these three musicians are really having fun playing together and listening to each other.

“One way Roberts individualizes his sound is by utilizing orchestral devices initially borrowed from the Ahmad Jamal Trio. In the course of a single piece, he constantly modulates grooves, tempos and keys, plays separate time signatures with the right hand and the left, and, as he puts it, “flips around the roles of the piano, bass and drums by giving everyone an equal opportunity to develop the concepts and themes, to change the form,

to get us where we’re getting ready to go.” Ted Panken, *Jazziz Magazine*.

Added to the logic and balanced trio style of Ahmad Jamal, is the swing and virtuosity of the Oscar Peterson Trio, combined with the buoyant joyous sound of Erroll Garner. These influences provide a rich foundation for the ever evolving and expanding sound of the Marcus Roberts Trio. The musical cues combine with musical inspiration from all over the world, which guarantees that audiences never know where this trio is heading—influences from Africa, Europe, and South America are combined with American traditions to give this group an infinite palate of styles, timbres and colors to draw from.



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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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