

BERKELEY SYMPHONY



JOANA CARNEIRO
Music Director

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<http://www.berkeleysymphony.org/about/press/>

Berkeley Symphony and Guest Conductor Gemma New perform the West Coast premieres of Music Alive Composer-in-Residence Anna Clyne's *Abstractions* and Rene Orth's *Chasing Light*, and Conrad Tao returns as soloist in Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* and Liszt's *Totentanz* December 7 at Zellerbach Hall



(l to r: Gemma New, by Roy Cox; Anna Clyne, by Javier Oddo; Rene Orth, by Andrew Bogard; Conrad Tao, by Brantley Gutierrez)

BERKELEY, CA (November 7, 2017) – Gemma New, making her East Bay debut, will lead Berkeley Symphony in a terrific set of twos – two premieres and two piano masterpieces at **Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley on Thursday, December 7 at 8p**. A former Dudamel Conducting Fellow, New Zealand-born conductor, Gemma New leads two West Coast premieres in this performance, opening the concert with *Chasing Light* by Rene Orth. Back by popular demand, pianist Conrad Tao returns to the Zellerbach stage to perform two show stoppers, beginning with Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* to conclude the first half of the performance. Berkeley Symphony's own Music Alive Composer-in-Residence Anna Clyne presents the West Coast premiere of *Abstractions*, a five-movement suite inspired by five highly

contrasting contemporary artworks. Conrad Tao performs Liszt's *Totentanz*, a composition also inspired by visual art and featuring a fiendishly difficult solo piano part to conclude the concert.

Sought after for her insightful interpretation and dynamic presence, New Zealand-born conductor [Gemma New](#) is Music Director for the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra in Ontario, Canada and Resident Conductor for the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. In the 2017-18 Season, in addition to working with Berkeley Symphony, New enjoys guest engagements with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Helsingborgs Symfoniorkester, Filharmonia Szczecin and Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne in Europe, the Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio, and the Omaha and Albany Symphonies in the USA, as well as the Auckland Philharmonia and Christchurch Symphony in New Zealand.

London-born [Anna Clyne](#) is a Grammy-nominated composer of acoustic and electro-acoustic music. Described as a "composer of uncommon gifts and unusual methods" in a *New York Times* profile and as "dazzlingly inventive" by *Time Out New York*, Clyne's work often includes collaborations with cutting-edge choreographers, visual artists, filmmakers, and musicians worldwide. Anna Clyne is currently Berkeley Symphony's Music Alive Composer-in-Residence as part of a three year residency program through Music Alive.

Originally from Dallas, composer [Rene Orth](#) recently completed her studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where she held the Edward B. Garrigues Fellowship and studied with David Ludwig, Jennifer Higdon, and Richard Danielpour. Her music has been described as "whimsical, spikey, sometimes show-bizy, always dramatic, reflective, rarely predictable, and often electronic" (*Musical America*). She currently serves as Opera Philadelphia's 6th Composer in Residence.

[Conrad Tao](#) has appeared worldwide as a pianist and composer, and has been dubbed a musician of "probing intellect and open-hearted vision" by the *New York Times*, a "thoughtful and mature composer" by NPR and "ferociously talented" by *Time Out New York*. In June of 2011, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars and the Department of Education named Tao a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, and the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts awarded him a YoungArts gold medal in music. Later that year, Tao was named a Gilmore Young Artist, an honor awarded every two years highlighting the most promising American pianists of the new generation. In May of 2012, he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant.

ABOUT BERKELEY SYMPHONY

Well-established as a presenter of major contemporary orchestral works, [Berkeley Symphony](#) continues its steadfast commitment to presenting original and unique programs with new music commissioned by living composers, many of whom have developed an ongoing creative and collaborative relationship with the Symphony. Since its 1979-80 season, Berkeley Symphony has performed 65 world premieres, 28 U.S. premieres, and 21 West Coast premieres. In recognition of its leadership in commissioning and creating new music, the Orchestra has received the prestigious ASCAP Adventurous Programming Award in 10 of the past 13 seasons. In December, Berkeley Symphony and composer Anna Clyne were awarded a three-year *Music Alive* grant for a composer residency, beginning in 2017, one of only five U.S. orchestra-composer pairings selected by New Music USA and the League of American Orchestras for the honor. The residency is designed to involve Clyne in a far-reaching, immersive collaboration with Berkeley Symphony, involving the creation of new work,

collaboration with other Berkeley arts institutions, music education, community outreach and multidisciplinary activities.

ABOUT JOANA CARNEIRO

Music Director [Joana Carneiro](#) has captivated the public with her commanding stage presence and adventurous programming, which has highlighted the works of several prominent contemporary composers, including John Adams, Kaija Saariaho, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Brett Dean, and Gabriela Lena Frank. Carneiro is regarded as one of the most exciting and outstanding young conductors working today. Carneiro's commitment to expanding the community base of Berkeley Symphony and upholding the Orchestra's artistic excellence was recognized by the League of American Orchestras, which honored her with the Helen M. Thompson Award in 2010. She was appointed Music Director of Berkeley Symphony in 2009, succeeding Kent Nagano as only the third Music Director in the 40- year history of the Orchestra. Named Principal Conductor of the Portuguese National Symphony at the Teatro de Sao Carlos in January 2014, Carneiro remains the Official Guest Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra in her native Lisbon. She is also increasingly in demand throughout the world for guest conducting engagements, both for orchestras and opera companies. Prior to her Berkeley Symphony appointment, she served as Assistant Conductor with the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 2005 to 2008, where she worked closely with Esa-Pekka Salonen and led performances at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl.

ABOUT MUSIC ALIVE

The Residency of Anna Clyne is made possible through Music Alive, a residency program of the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA. This national program is designed to provide orchestras with resources and tools to support their work with composers and new music, capitalizing on the power of composers and their creativity to build new paths for orchestras to heighten their relevancy and deepen their relationships with their communities. Major funding for Music Alive comes from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Amphion Foundation, The ASCAP Foundation Bart Howard Fund, the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Thursday, December 7, 2017, 8p – [Clyne & Rachmaninoff](#)

Zellerbach Hall, 2425 Bancroft Avenue, Berkeley

Berkeley Symphony

Gemma New, *guest conductor*

Conrad Tao, *piano*

Rene Orth: *Chasing Light (West Coast Premiere)*

Rachmaninoff: *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*

Anna Clyne: *Abstractions (West Coast Premiere)*

Liszt: *Totentanz*

TICKETS: Tickets for the Berkeley Symphony concert December 7 are priced at \$15 to \$96 and are available at tickets.berkeleysymphony.org or by phone at (510) 841-2800. Student tickets are available. Doors open at 6:30p. A pre-concert talk, free to ticketholders, begins at 7p.