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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **BERKELEY SYMPHONY HOSTS SYMPHONY SOIRÉE SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2023**

**The annual gala raises vital funds for Berkeley  
Symphony’s innovative performances and  
award-winning Music In The Schools program**

BERKELEY, CA (May 1, 2023) – **Berkeley Symphony Board of Directors** and **Music Director Joseph Young** will host its annual fundraising gala, ***Symphony Soirée***, where guests are invited to find their frequency during an evening of celebration at Berkeley’s historic **Claremont Club & Spa** (41 Tunnel Road), on **Saturday, May 20 at 6 p.m.** Guests will first enjoy a reception featuring **Berkeley High Jazz**, hors d’oeuvres, drinks and silent auction, before sitting down for a dinner by **Joseph Paire III**, Claremont Club & Spa Executive Chef. There will be a special featured performance by **Jazz Mafia** and **Cosa Nostra Strings**, followed by an exciting live action hosted by emcee **Michael Tate**. Proceeds from ***Symphony Soirée*** provide vital funding for Berkeley Symphony’s innovative performances and its award-winning Music in the Schools program. Tickets and sponsorships are available online at [berkeleysymphony.org](http://berkeleysymphony.org) or by calling 510.841.2800.

“This year’s gala celebrates Berkeley Symphony’s commitment to our long-standing legacy of innovation and inclusion in music, and to help provide a comprehensive music curriculum to Berkeley public elementary students,” says **Kate Kammeyer, Executive Director**. “The Soirée

brings together the best Berkeley has to offer, and will enable us to create unique and diverse live performances, while extending our reach to thousands of students each year with Music in the Schools.

"We are thrilled to welcome the community to an unforgettable evening that celebrates Berkeley Symphony's integral role in the arts and culture landscape of the Bay Area and beyond," said **councilmember Rigel Robinson, Berkeley Symphony Board Member and Event Chair**. "With the backdrop of the historic Claremont Club & Spa, the Soirée combines the best our City has to offer. Chef Paire will serve a menu that encompasses his unique flair, and the performances represent the exciting range of voices that are found at Berkeley Symphony's concerts."

Open to all who wish to support Berkeley Symphony, the silent auction will be available online for two weeks, beginning Saturday, May 6 through the end of the Soirée on Saturday, May 20. Supporters have the chance to win concert tickets to Bay Area performing arts organizations, including **SFJAZZ**, the internationally acclaimed chamber music festival **Music@Menlo**, and GRAMMY® Award-winning vocal ensemble **Chanticleer**. Other prizes include private culinary experiences, sound healing, and more! Soirée attendees can participate in the live auction, which will feature experiences such as a North Bay "foodie outing" with Berkeley Symphony's Education Director **Ming Luke**, a trip to NYC to see Music Director **Joseph Young** in a performance at **Carnegie Hall**, and an all-inclusive stay at a charming German country estate.

**Adam Theis, Jazz Mafia Co-Founder** adds, "Curating the presentation with two of our core ensembles excites us, because it offers the chance to explore numerous far-reaching musical worlds."

[Jazz Mafia](#) is a distinctly Bay Area hybrid of musical mayhem, marching band madness, soulful singing, and soaring strings, with a foundation of futuristic beats. Co-founded by trombonist, bassist, composer, arranger, and producer Adam Theis in 2000, the Jazz Mafia collective includes an eclectic group of forward-thinking and accomplished players in Electro, Hip-Hop, World, Classical, and Jazz. Twenty years in the making, Jazz Mafia is a prolific staple of the quintessential San Francisco sound, uniting creative and accomplished Bay Area instrumentalists, vocalists, MCs, composers, and arrangers.

The collective quickly garnered a reputation for its collaborative and risk-taking spirit, and over the years has worked with Roy Ayers, Lyrics Born, Zion-I, Rebelution, Latyrx, Galactic, Ledesi, Blackalicious, and Jackie Greene, to name a few. Recently, the collective performed sold out residencies at the SFJAZZ Center and served as the house band in The Soiled Dove – its large-scale cirque-inspired collaboration with The Vau de Vire Society. Jazz Mafia has also recently performed with the Oakland Symphony at Paramount Theatre of the Arts, as well as

with GRAMMY-winning composer Mason Bates and his Mercury Soul project at the Kennedy Center in DC. Jazz Mafia also curates musical experiences for Stanford University, Oakland Art & Soul Festival, and many other presenters.

An offshoot of the Jazz Mafia collective, [Cosa Nostra Strings](#) is a five-piece powerhouse crew that features conservatory-trained classical and jazz musicians who find a common language in their passion for the music that is found in-between the lines. A unique instrumentation of cello, viola, violin, trombone, bass, vocals and percussion provides the perfect vehicle to explore the edges of the perceived musical universe.

Symphony Soirée sponsors include **S.Shariq Yosufzai & Brian James; Kathleen Henschel & John Dewes; Laura & Paul V. Bennett; Kathleen Crandall & Lori Gitter; Susan & Ronald Choy; and Bela & Shikiri Hightower-Gaskin.**

#### **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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