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Berkeley Symphony 24/25 Season



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Message from the Music Director

photo by Louis Bryant Photography



Welcome back to Berkeley Symphony for the 2024/25 season. We have a wonderful group of musical stories to share with you tonight.

Silvestre Revueltas' *Redes Suite* will open our concert, drawing us into the story of Mexican fishermen fighting for social and economic justice. Listen for the juxtaposition of traditional folk melodies with lush orchestration. Next, it has been a delight to work with soprano soloist Lisa Delan for Samuel Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. This setting of James Agee's nostalgic poem paints a dream-like picture of a time long ago. "It has become that time of evening / When people sit on their porches," the song begins, and right away, we are transported to that languorous summer night.

Violinist Charles Yang takes us on a hero's journey of self discovery in the Bay Area premiere of Kris Bowers' violin concerto *For A Younger Self*.

Finally, Leonard Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story*, brings us to the streets of New York to relive the famous story of star-crossed lovers.

Thank you for joining us today. You are a vital part of the Berkeley Symphony, and I am proud of the legacy of artistry and innovation we are building together.

Here's to a wonderful concert and a remarkable season ahead!

—Joseph Young

The Orchestra

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René Mandel, *Concertmaster**

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Matthew Szemela,
*Associate Concertmaster**

Julia Churchill,
*Assistant Concertmaster**

Sarah Elert

Lisa Zadek

Erica Ward

Monika Gruber

Athena Giuliani

Annie Li

Amber Cheng

Fred Chang

Bert Thunstrom

Violin II

Dan Flanagan, *Principal*

Mijung Kim, *Assistant Principal*

David Cheng

Isabella Amador

Lylia Guion

Hande Erdem

Ann Eastman

Quelani Penland

Kevin Harper

Gayle Tsern-Strang

Charles Zhou

Viola

Jacob Joseph, *Principal**

Darcy Rindt, *Assistant Principal**

Alexandra Simpson

Alessandra Aquilanti

Charith Premawardhana

Rebecca Wilcox

Viola *continued*

Stephanie Ng

Lisa Ponton

Cello

Carol Rice, *Principal*

Stephanie Wu, *Assistant Principal*

Isaac Pastor-Chermak

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Kirsten Shallenberg

Dina Weinshelbaum

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Nicholas Carlin

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Michel Taddei, *Principal*

Alden Cohen, *Assistant Principal**

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Yuchen Liu

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Alice Lenaghan, *Principal**

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Flute/Piccolo

Sarah Holtzman

Amy Likar

Oboe/English Horn

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Deborah Shidler Principal Oboe Chair

Allison Gessner

English Horn

Ruth Stuart Burroughs

Clarinet

Roman Fukshansky, *Principal*

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

Bruce Foster

Jeannie Psomas

E-flat Clarinet

Karen Sremac

Alto Saxophone

Dave Henderson, *Principal**

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Kris King, *Principal**

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Contrabassoon

Cynthia Hansen

Horn

Eric Achen, *Principal**

Sarah Ference

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Alia Kuhnert

Trombone

Chase Waterbury, *Principal**

Kathleen G. Henschel Chair

Craig Bryant

Bass Trombone

Jason Borris

Tuba

Forrest Byram, *Principal**

Timpani

John Weeks *Principal**

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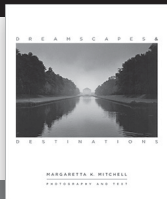
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Today's Program

Joseph Young *Conductor*

Silvestre Revueltas *Redes Suite*

- I. The Fisherman: The Child's Funeral
- II. Segunda parte

Samuel Barber *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Op 24

Lisa Delan *soprano*

Intermission

Kris Bowers *For A Younger Self*

Bay Area Premiere

- I. Moderato ma non troppo
- II. Larghetto (gently)
- III. Presto (with ease and confidence)

Charles Yang *violin*

Leonard Bernstein *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*

Prologue (Allegro moderato)

Somewhere (Adagio)

Scherzo (Vivace e leggiero)

Dance at the Gym (also called "Mambo")

Cha-cha (Andantino con grazia)

Meeting Scene (Meno mosso)

Cool Fugue (Allegretto)

Rumble (Molto allegro)

Finale (Adagio)

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Program Notes

Silvestre Revueltas

Born on December 31, 1899, in Santiago Papasquiaro, Mexico; died on October 5, 1940, in Mexico City

Redes Suite

Composed: 1934-35

First performance: 1936

Duration: c. 15 minutes

Scored for piccolo, flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, tam-tam, Indian drum, and strings

Although he was born on the last day of the 19th century, Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas was a committed revolutionary of the 20th—artistically and politically. His premature death in 1940 from alcoholism came just a few years after he had returned from Spain, where he had gone in 1937 to fight against the Fascists in the Civil War.

Revueltas is best known for his thrilling score *Sensemaya*, which is often likened to a Mexican *Rite of Spring*. Like Aaron Copland, Revueltas also found film to be a stimulating medium through which he could convey his musical ideas. He even appeared in a cameo role as a piano player in a bar in the 1935 film *Vámonos con Pancho Villa* (*Let's Go with Pancho Villa*), which presented an iconoclastic portrayal of the national hero.

In 1934, Revueltas was commissioned to write his first film score. *Redes* (the word literally means “nets,” though the film was released in the US under the title *The Wave*) anticipated the Italian neorealist cinema movement in its focus on working-class people and their fight against injustice. The photographer/filmmaker Paul Strand, together with Fred Zinnemann and Emilio Gómez Muriel, put together a cast largely of amateurs to tell the story of impoverished fishermen on the Mexican Gulf Coast near Veracruz and how they eventually unite, after an internal struggle, to defend themselves against unfair treatment by those in power.

An unpleasant backstory involving another internal struggle led to Revueltas breaking with his influential fellow Mexican Carlos Chávez, who had initially been enlisted to write the score. Visiting the fishing village location for inspiration, Revueltas composed what has become recognized as a highlight of cinematic music. The roughly hour-long film was released in 1936, and the composer also made a condensed suite for the concert hall; another well-known arrangement—the one we hear in this performance—was made by the conductor Erich Kleiber in the 1940s.

What to listen for

The vibrant idioms of Mexican folk music blend with inspiration from Stravinsky, with an especially effective



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depiction of the toiling fishermen. In a story Copland published in *The New York Times* relating to the showing of *Redes* in New York, he wrote that the music of Revueltas “is derived from the more usual everyday side of Mexican life. It is often highly spiced, like Mexican food itself. It is full of whims and sudden quirks of fancy and leaves one with a sense of the abundance and vitality of life.”

Samuel Barber

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

Knoxville: Summer of 1915, Op. 24

Composed: 1947

First performance: April 9, 1948, with soprano Eleanor Steber and the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky

Duration: c. 16 minutes

Scored for solo soprano, flute (doubling piccolo), oboe (doubling English horn), clarinet, bassoon, 2 horns, trumpet, harp, and strings

Samuel Barber belongs to the subset of composers who served in the armed forces; he had been a corporal in the U.S. Air Force. Memories of the comparative innocence of childhood, of a younger America: these may have been prompted by the aftermath of the Second World War, still fresh in Barber’s mind when he composed *Knox-*

ville: Summer of 1915 in 1947. Barber used for his inspiration the evocative prose-poem of the same name published in 1938 by James Agee, a writer and film critic born in 1909 in Knoxville. The composer encountered this text as a short story; it was later published as the preface to Agee’s autobiographical novel *A Death in the Family* (which appeared in 1957).

Agee undertook to write this memory piece as an experiment in improvisatory creativity, claiming that he wrote it down in a mere 90 minutes. Barber described his own approach as composing a “lyric rhapsody.” He intended the overall design to suggest something relatively informal and spontaneous, such that the moods evoked by the music shift effortlessly for the listener.

Agee’s text is shaped like an almost stream-of-consciousness sequence of memories recalling a quiet summer evening in the South—as perceived from his adoption of an innocent young child’s point of view. Yet the child seems at times to encounter his mature self recollecting a now-vanished past. Barber and Agee were separated in age by a mere few months. The composer grew up in Pennsylvania, but Agee’s memories of the era likely struck a familiar chord.

Barber chose excerpts from Agee’s text to create a single-movement composition for soprano and orchestra. In the process, the music conjures its own sequence of contrastingly presented feelings and thus adds a substantial new dimension to Agee’s montage of memories and images. At the same

time, Barber subtly suggests connections among the impressions recalled by the child through recurrent thematic ideas.

What to listen for

The piece opens with a solemn and prayer-like passage for the woodwinds that returns later when the child/narrator prays for his family. This leads into a comforting melody corresponding to Agee's image of "people [who] sit on their porches, rocking gently." Barber uses the "rocking" image as a backdrop for a fresh melody for the soprano. The tempo accelerates in an agitated passage, as the soloist calls forth the memory of "a streetcar raising its iron moan"—a symbol of Modernism intruding on an idyllic past. But the soloist restores an air of serenity.

The "prayer" music from the opening of the piece returns. The child's vision of his small body against the stars invites cosmic thoughts of being alone in the universe. Barber introduces a tone of pathos at the words "my father who is good to me." (During the process of composing *Knoxville*, his own father was dying.) The older, wiser self here confronts the child just beginning to contemplate the possibility of death.

The "rocking" melody returns in the final section but takes on a weightier aspect. The carefree spirit of the opening has grown heavier. In this way, Barber seems to suggest the child's dawning sense that these blissful recollections of a time of security and togetherness are destined to endure only as memory.

Knoxville: Summer of 1915

**Text by James Agee
(adapted by Samuel Barber)**

It has become that time of evening
when people sit on their porches
rocking gently and talking gently
and watching the street
and the standing up into their sphere
of possession of the trees,
of birds' hung havens, hangars.
People go by; things go by.
A horse, drawing a buggy,
breaking his hollow iron music on the
asphalt:
a loud auto: a quiet auto:
People in pairs, not in a hurry,
scuffling, switching their weight of aesti-
tival body,
talking casually,
the taste hovering over them of vanilla,
strawberry, pasteboard, and starched
milk,
the image upon them of lovers and
horsemen,
Squared with clowns in hueless amber.

A streetcar raising its iron moan;
stopping;
belling and starting; stertorous;
rousing and raising again
its iron increasing moan
and swimming its gold windows and
straw seats

on past and past and past
the bleak spark crackling and cursing
above it
like a small malignant spirit
set to dog its tracks;
the iron whine rises on rising speed;
still risen, faints; halts;
the faint stinging bell;
rises again, still fainter;
fainting, lifting lifts,
faints foregone;
forgotten.
Now is the night one blue dew;
my father has drained,
he has coiled the hose.
Low on the length of lawns,
a frailing of fire who breathes.
Parents on porches:
rock and rock.
From damp strings morning glories
hang their ancient faces.
The dry and exalted noise of the locusts
from all the air
at once enchants my eardrums.
On the rough wet grass
of the backyard
my father and mother have spread quilts
We all lie there, my mother, my father,
my uncle, my aunt,
and I too am lying there.
They are not talking much, and the talk
is quiet,
of nothing in particular,
of nothing at all.
The stars are wide and alive,
they all seem like a smile

of great sweetness,
and they seem very near.
All my people are larger bodies than
mine,
with voices gentle and meaningless
like the voices of sleeping birds.
One is an artist, he is living at home.
One is a musician, she is living at home.
One is my mother who is good to me.
One is my father who is good to me.
By some chance, here they are,
all on this earth;
and who shall ever tell the sorrow
of being on this earth, lying, on quilts,
on the grass,
in a summer evening,
among the sounds of the night.
May God bless my people,
my uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good
father,
oh, remember them kindly in their time
of trouble;
and in the hour of their taking away.
After a little
I am taken in
and put to bed.
Sleep, soft smiling,
draws me unto her;
and those receive me,
who quietly treat me,
as one familiar and well-beloved in that
home:
but will not, oh, will not,
not now, not ever;
but will not ever tell me who I am.

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Kris Bowers

Born on April 5, 1989, in Los Angeles, where he currently resides

For A Younger Self

Composed: 2019-20

First performance: February 8, 2020, at Walt Disney Concert Hall, with Charles Yang as the soloist and Carlos Izcaray conducting the American Youth Symphony

Duration: 26 minutes

Scored for solo violin, 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2nd doubling English horn), 2 clarinets (2nd doubling bass clarinet), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, triangle, glockenspiel), harp, and strings

Kristopher Bowers is best known as an award-winning film and television composer (*The Color Purple*, *King Richard*, *Bridgerton*, among many others) and also won the 2024 Academy Award for Documentary Short Film for co-directing *The Last Repair Shop*. He began studying piano and theory at the Colburn School of Performing Arts in 1998, as soon as it started operating in downtown Los Angeles. Five years later, the iconic Disney Concert Hall opened across the street on South Grand Avenue. Bowers performed there with his high school jazz band.

“This space and this part of downtown L.A. has been an integral part of my young life,” he recalls. “Being in these halls and on these stages made me incredibly excited about the possibilities for my future and my own potential

as a musician. It helped me envision myself with a career doing this.”

At the time, though, Bowers rarely joined the audiences for classical concerts in these spaces. “On some level, I felt like I didn’t belong, and although I studied classical piano alongside jazz until graduating high school, it seemed like classical music just wasn’t ‘for me,’” he says. “As a young Black boy, I didn’t see myself in the audience members, the classical composers that were presented, or even in the other students I was in school with. Not seeing myself in these spaces helped me create an internal narrative that I didn’t belong.”

It was through his passion for film that Bowers eventually found the confidence to enter that world and embark on his career as a composer. Also a pianist and documentary director, Bowers writes of his “deep love and appreciation for the film scores of composers like John Williams, Danny Elfman, Quincy Jones, John Powell, Howard Shore, and Jerry Goldsmith,” which inspired him to listen more closely to classical and orchestral music “and really see/hear where they were coming from.”

The music of canonical classical composers suddenly “came alive for me.” Despite the lack of diversity in the field, Bowers found it profoundly inspiring “to see how these composers combined their personal musical styles with their classical training. Not to mention that at times, great storytelling can transcend race and gender, and I still found inspiration in the heroes of the films I watched as a kid.”

Bowers befriended violinist Charles Yang when they were teenage students at the Juilliard School in New York. When he was commissioned by the Los Angeles-based American Youth Symphony to write a concerto for Yang to premiere at Disney Concert Hall, the two “reminisced about the feeling we had [of] adjusting to a new and incredibly overwhelming environment, and how tough it can be as a young person to overcome fear, stress, self-doubt, etc.”

For A Younger Self is Bowers’ first concert work for orchestra and is influenced by what he has learned about “storytelling as a film composer.” He explains: “I wanted to see if I could convey a narrative through the shape and pacing of this piece. Using Charles [Yang] and his violin as the protagonist, I wondered if there was a way for me to follow the format of *The Hero’s Journey* while at the same time adhering to the rules and traditions of the violin concerto.”

Bowers adds: “On some level, writing this piece became a way to send a message to the younger version of myself, in terms of finding a way to maintain balance and inner peace in this chaotic and troubling world, and also as a way to encourage and celebrate my curiosity and love for so many types of music.”

What to listen for

Cast in the familiar three-movement concerto format, *For a Younger Self* introduces this hero-protagonist as “somewhat melancholic and timid.” He almost seems to be “pushed around by the orchestra,” which “can be both the bully and the mentor.” The music moves

back and forth between “moments of chaos and anxiety” to “gentler sections that represent the pining for tranquility, nostalgia, love, etc.,” Bowers writes.

A “moment of peace and reflection” arrives in the central *Larghetto*, where “our hero finally takes control of the narrative. He is now driving the orchestra, flowing through with much more ease and acting from a place of love rather than fear.” In the *Presto* final movement, “the hero and what he’s learned is put to the test, and the ease in which he exhibits his self-confidence and assuredness amidst the chaos is on full display.”

Leonard Bernstein

Born on August 25, 1918, in Lawrence, Massachusetts; died on October 14, 1990, in New York City

Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*

Composed: 1960 (using the score for the 1957 musical)

First performance: February 13, 1961, at Carnegie Hall, with Lukas Foss conducting the New York Philharmonic

Duration: c. 24 minutes

Scored for flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, piccolo trumpet, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, alto saxophone, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, and strings

Leonard Bernstein effortlessly moved back and forth between so-called classical and popular styles, in the process creating innovative hybrids. A case in point is the landmark *West Side Story*, which altered the course of American musical theater from the moment it opened in 1957. It has entered the collective memory like no other from the second half of the 20th century.

As part of a high-profile fundraising concert for the New York Philharmonic in 1961, of which he was then music director, Bernstein gathered nine excerpts from the show—though not in their original sequence—to create the stand-alone *Symphonic Dances*, borrowing a title Sergei Rachmaninoff had used for his last major composition from 1940.

The composer oversaw their orchestration into a suite by his associates Sid Ramin and Irwin Kostal; they had just finished scoring the first film version of *West Side Story*. The concert version of this much-loved music was premiered just a few weeks after Kennedy's Inauguration, in February 1961, as part of a "Valentine" by the New York Philharmonic for Bernstein. (The film itself was released later that October.)

What to listen for

Bernstein toyed with the notion of a formal overture but wisely decided to open the musical in the middle of things instead. The music for the danced confrontation between Jets and Sharks simmers with tension. The composer once compared the fanfare-like motif of the opening motif to the

call of the shofar (the ram's horn traditionally used in Jewish services). This motif pivots on a tritone, the uneasy-sounding interval that is seeded throughout the score and serves as its fundamental motivic idea. The tritone's inherent ambiguity is apparent from the motif's appearance in the gang music as well as in the opening notes of "Maria," where it suggests the dawning of young love.

Menace yields to the fragile hope expressed in "Somewhere," a dream vision of love which occurs near the beginning of the second act. But cloudier harmonies darken the picture to underline its utopian unreality. A brief Scherzo hints at the Americana landscapes of Bernstein's friend Aaron Copland. This acts as a transition to the Latin-tinged music for the "Dance at the Gym," where Tony and Maria meet and instantly fall in love. The stylized energy of the dances sublimates the gangs' violent impulses, while the gentle rhythms of "Cha-cha" focus the camera on the young lovers.

The brief "Meeting Scene," however, is set against the ugly, ever-present threat of violence, this time channeled into a thrilling jazz-fugue sequence. Bernstein unleashes the pent-up ferocity of ethnic hatred between the Sharks and Jets in the climactic "Rumble." But the possibility of a way out of this dead end returns in the lyrical intensity of Maria's "I Have a Love" in the "Finale," introduced by a meandering flute solo. The harmonies darken once more, and a brief reprise of the "Somewhere" chorus concludes the suite.

Program notes © 2024 Thomas May

Music Director Joseph Young

photo by Louis Bryant Photography



Powerful, precise, and deeply expressive, American conductor Joseph Young stands out with dynamic performances that boldly reframe the classical canon, pairing established composers with new and emergent voices to create contemporary narratives that consistently draw new and diverse audiences.

In the 2024/25 season, Young has debuts and return engagements with the National Philharmonic, Orquesta Sinfónica RTVE, the Liverpool Philharmonic, and the Louisville Orchestra, among many others. He makes his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut conducting Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's

opera *Blue*, which he led to great acclaim with the Washington National Opera. In summer 2024, he led the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in the Cincinnati Opera's world-premiere staging of Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio*.

Recent engagements include debuts with the San Francisco Symphony, Seattle Symphony, the LA Phil at the Hollywood Bowl, National Symphony Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, Detroit Symphony, the Sphinx Symphony, Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música (Portugal), and the Mzansi National Philharmonic Orchestra (South Africa).

Young is the Music Director of Berkeley Symphony, a role he has held since 2019. Also a noted music educator, he is the Artistic Director of Ensembles and Chair of the Conducting program at the Peabody Conservatory. His long-time affiliation with Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra (NYO2) culminated in 2023 with his Carnegie Hall debut, followed by the group's first international tour to the Dominican Republic.

Young began his career as a League of American Orchestras Conducting Fellow with the Baltimore Symphony and Buffalo Philharmonic, and went on to roles with the Atlanta and the Phoenix symphonies. He holds an Artist's Diploma from the Peabody Conservatory. Mentors include Jorma Panula, Robert Spano, and Marin Alsop, with whom he maintains an artistic partnership. He sits on the board of New Music USA.

Guest Artists

photo by Gian Andrea di Stefano



Lisa Delan, *soprano*

On the first of her eleven recordings for the Pentatone label, Lisa Delan premiered the titular role of Gordon Getty's *Joan and the Bells*, which she performed in Russia, England, France, Germany, Spain, Mexico, and throughout the US. She went on to record Pentatone's first American art song album, about which *Audiophile Audition* wrote, "I am not sure I have heard a finer American song album since *Songs of America* made its debut [20] years ago." Songs in the soprano's discography include no less than 79 world premiere recordings, many of which were composed for her. *Opera News* observed, "Lisa Delan has established herself as a passionate advocate of contemporary art song, commissioning and singing the premieres of new works, as well as extending the life span of repertoire that might otherwise

slip into oblivion. It's gratifying to find a singer involved so intimately and actively with the music of her time."

Ms. Delan has performed on some of the world's leading concert stages, including Lincoln Center, Davies Symphony Hall, Madrid's Auditorio Nacional, Moscow Conservatory, Tchaikovsky Hall, and in special appearance at Windsor Castle. Her festival appearances include the Bad Kissingen Festival in Germany, the Colmar Festival in France, the Rachmaninoff Festival in Novgorod, Russia, Festival Napa Valley, the Tuscan Sun Festival in Taormina, Italy, and the Domaine Forget Festival in Quebec.

A passionate advocate for arts access for children, Delan co-created and performed on the album *Angel Heart*, a musical storybook, with composer Luna Pearl Woolf. Imagined for children and their families, *Angel Heart* intertwines a new fable written especially for the project by bestselling author Cornelia Funke with songs arranged for voices and cellos. The recording, narrated by Jeremy Irons, was lauded by the *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. *Angel Heart* was presented in family performances by Cal Performances, Carnegie Hall, and Festival Napa Valley.

During the pandemic the soprano turned to her love of poetry, and since 2022 has had over 40 poems published, garnering a nomination for the Pushcart Prize. Her words have been set by composers Jake Heggie, Jack Perla, and Luna Pearl Woolf, and she recently penned the libretto for Mark Winges'

The Guardians of Yggdrasil, premiering in 2025 with the award winning vocal ensemble Volti in her adopted home city of San Francisco.

photo © Jingyu Lin



Charles Yang, *violin*

Grammy Award-winning violinist Charles Yang is the recipient of the 2018 Leonard Bernstein Award and has been described by the *Boston Globe* as a musician who “plays classical violin with the charisma of a rock star.” He has appeared at the festivals of Schleswig-Holstein, Aspen, Ravinia, Caramoor, and Interlochen and performed at Carnegie Hall, Musikverein, Lincoln Center, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Royal Danish Theatre, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Konzerthaus Berlin, Beijing’s Forbidden City, YouTube Music Awards, Google Zeitgeist, and Joe’s Pub in New York.

A compelling vocalist, crossover artist, and improviser, Yang is a member of Time for Three, an eclectic, free-wheeling string trio that locates itself at the busy

intersection of Americana, modern pop, and classical music. In 2023, the group received a Grammy Award in the best Classical Instrumental Solo category for its recording of *Letters for the Future*, featuring the music of Kevin Puts and Jennifer Higdon with the Philadelphia Orchestra and conductor Xian Zhang.

Yang—an adventurous composer, arranger, songwriter, and collaborator—co-wrote the original score to *Land*, a 2021 film directed by Robin Wright. He has also collaborated onstage with artists such as Steve Miller, Savion Glover, Jon Batiste, Gaby Moreno, Joshua Bell, Michael Thurber, Peter Dugan, and Misty Copeland. In 2019, he premiered Kris Bowers’ concerto *For a Younger Self* at Walt Disney Hall.

A Juilliard graduate, Yang began his violin studies with his mother, Sha Zhu, in Austin, Texas, before working with Kurt Sassmanshaus, Paul Kantor, Brian Lewis, and Glenn Dicterow.

Charles performs on the 1852 “ex-Soil” J.B. Vuillaume.

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Kris Bowers, *composer*

Kris Bowers is an Academy Award®-winning filmmaker, Emmy and Grammy nominated composer and pianist. He won his first Academy Award® for Best Documentary Short Film for his most recent film, *The Last Repair Shop*. The Searchlight Pictures and L.A. Times Studio-backed film, which he directed alongside Ben Proudfoot, premiered at Telluride in 2023 and spotlights some of the individuals working at a repair shop in Los Angeles, the last American city to provide freely repaired instruments to its public school students. Upcoming, he is scoring the DreamWorks animated film, *The Wild Robot*, which stars Lupita Nyong'o, Pedro Pascal, Bill Nighy and Catherine O'Hara and premieres on September 20.

In addition to being an accomplished filmmaker, Bowers is known for his thought-provoking playing style, creating genre-defying film compositions that pay homage to his classical and jazz roots. He has composed music for film, television, documentaries and video games. He has collaborated with musicians and artists across genres, including Kobe Bryant,

Mahershala Ali, Justin Simien, Ava DuVernay and Shonda Rhimes. His work can also be heard in recent films like the box office hit Paramount biopic, *Bob Marley: One Love*, DuVernay's *Origin*, Warner Bros.' *The Color Purple* and acclaimed television series such as *Bridgerton*, *Secret Invasion*, *Mrs. America* and *When They See Us*. He also won a Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Music Direction and Composition for his work in *The Snowy Day*.

Bowers also stars in, produced, and scored the documentary *Anthem* with director Pete Nicks, which follows Bowers and Grammy-winning music producer DJ Dahi as they take a musical journey traveling across America in a bold experiment to reimagine America's National Anthem. The documentary premiered in June 2023 at the Tribeca Film Festival and debuted on Hulu on June 28, 2023. In 2020, Bowers also co-directed his first documentary short film, *A Concerto Is A Conversation* with Proudfoot. The film, a New York Times Op-Doc—executive produced by DuVernay, premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival and earned an Academy Award® nomination for Best Documentary Short Subject at the 93rd Academy Awards®.

He has also created original music for the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater (alongside choreographer Kyle Abraham), worked with the American Youth Symphony to create a Violin Concerto, which premiered at Los Angeles' Disney Hall (2020), was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic to create a new horn concerto (2021) and he has collaborated with brands like Bang & Olufsen, Chevy and Krug Champagne.

Bowers has multiple projects in development through Et Al Studios Productions, a production company he founded with his wife, Briana Henry.

About Berkeley Symphony

photo by Burgundy Visuals



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 cultural diversity and heady creative climate of its home city.

Berkeley Symphony entered a new era in the 2019/20 season under the leadership of Joseph Young, whose February 2019 debut was acclaimed by critics and audiences alike. In addition to building on the Orchestra's artistic innovation, creativity, and adventurous programming, Maestro Young, Berkeley Symphony's fourth Music Director in its 50-year history, is committed to amplifying the voices of underrepresented artists as well as telling diverse stories that reflect the local community.



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Music in the Schools



Crafted in partnership with Berkeley Unified School District, Berkeley Symphony's Music in the Schools (MITS) program provides a comprehensive and inclusive music curriculum to over 4,700 Berkeley public school students each year and is recognized by the League of American Orchestras as one of the country's top music education programs. Ming Luke has served as the Education Director since 2007 and continues to bring joy, laughter, and music to the students in the MITS Program.

Launched in Fall 2022, the Elevate initiative is a series of additional support opportunities to respond to two major transition points where BIPOC student participation and engagement drops more significantly than in other populations: the beginning of fourth grade, when students select instruments in band and orchestra, and high school seniors interested in music as a college path and career.



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A VIENNESE SOJOURN

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CONNECTIONS

PIEDMONT CENTER FOR THE ARTS **SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025, 4PM**
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SPECIAL EVENTS

MUSIC IN THE SCHOOLS LUNCHEON

TUESDAY, FEB 4, 2025, 12:30PM

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SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2025, 5:30PM

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A photograph of a wooden building exterior with three grey solar equipment units mounted on the wall. The top unit is labeled 'ENPHASE'. A stylized orange and yellow 'A1 SUN' logo is overlaid on the left. To the right, a blue award plaque reads 'BEST OF THE EAST BAY 2022 EBX'.

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A poster for 'THIRTY-SIX' by Shotgun Players. It features a stylized illustration of a man and a woman in profile, facing each other with a microphone between them. The background is black with red and teal accents.

SHOTGUN PLAYERS PRESENTS
THIRTY-SIX
 WRITTEN BY
LEAH NANAKO WINKLER
 DIRECTED BY
MICHELLE TALGAROW
 Based on the article "The 36 Questions that Lead to Love" from
The New York Times
ON STAGE THIS NOVEMBER



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