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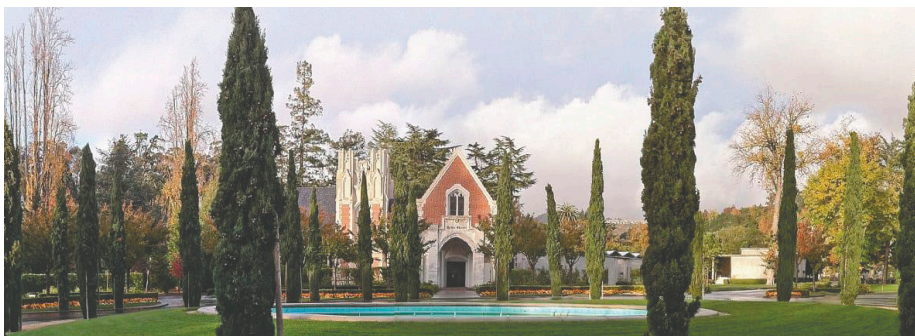
24
SEASON
25

Triumph

RAZAZ | PIAZZOLLA | SHOSTAKOVICH

JUNE 1, 2025 | 4:00PM

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Berkeley Symphony 24/25 Season



- 5** Message from the Music Director
- 6** Orchestra
- 8** Board of Directors & Ambassadors Council
- 11** Today's Program
- 13** Program Notes
- 21** Music Director Joseph Young
- 22** Guest Artist & Composer
- 25** About Berkeley Symphony
- 26** 2025/26 Season
- 29** Pre-Concert Talk
- 30** Music in the Schools
- 33** Annual Support
- 38** Staff & Contact

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Message from the Music Director

photo by Louis Bryant Photography



When I plan a season, I always envision the final concert as a tribute—a celebration of everyone who makes the season possible, most especially our musicians. I seek out repertoire that highlights the orchestra's many strengths and brings our season to a close with a joyful exclamation point (!).

Orchestral programs are typically planned at least a year in advance, so when I first conceived of tonight's program, it was simply meant as a heartfelt 'thank you.' And yet, as *Triumph* now becomes the coda to my six-year tenure as your Music Director, it feels exactly right—an homage to the artists and to the community that have made these years so meaningful.

The works you will hear tonight represent so much of what I love about leading Berkeley Symphony. With *Methuselah*, we see Berkeley once again taking the lead in co-commissioning a new work by an important contemporary voice, Gity Razaz.

Alongside Piazzolla's *Aconcagua* and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5, the program showcases the immense range and spirit of our remarkable ensemble.

And perhaps most importantly, it reflects *your* enthusiasm—as listeners, as supporters, and as true partners in our music-making—to embark on great adventures that span time, space, and style. Your trust in Berkeley Symphony and your embrace of our programming have defined my time with you. That, for me, is the true triumph we celebrate tonight—and the spirit I know will carry Berkeley forward into new adventures.

Music is my best language, my way of connecting. I hope that, through our performance today, you feel my deep gratitude for our time together and my abiding love for this community.

Joseph Young

The Orchestra

Violin I

Rene Mandel, *Concertmaster**

Stuart Canin Chair

Nigel Armstrong,
*Associate Concertmaster**

Matthew Szemela,
*Assistant Concertmaster**

Emanuela Nikiforova

Katie Allen

Tingting Gu

Iryna Klimashevskaya

Darren Sagawa

Eashwar Mahadevan

Annie Li

Bert Thunstrom

Violin II

Stephanie Bibbo, *Principal**

Sarah Elert,
*Assistant Principal**

David Cheng

Erica Ward

Lylia Guion

Larisa Kopylovsky

Hande Erdem

Ann Eastman

Kevin Harper

Charles Zhou

Viola

Alexandra Simpson, *Principal**

Tatiana Trono,
*Assistant Principal**

Ivo Bokulic

Alessandra Aquilanti

Lisa Ponton

Viola *continued*

Rebecca Wilcox

Omid Assadi

Peter Liepman

Cello

Stephanie Wu, *Principal**

Isaac Pastor-Chermak,
*Assistant Principal**

Wanda Warkentin

Kirsten Shallenberg

Shain Carrasco

Amy Leung

Ken Johnson

Peter Bedrossian

Bass

Alden Cohen, *Principal**

Jon Keigwin, *Assistant Principal**

David Horn

Yuchen Liu

Carlos Valdez

Victor Ruiz

Flute

Stacey Pelinka, *Principal**

Janet Maestre Principal Flute Chair

William Yeh

Piccolo

Elizabeth Marshall

Oboe

Jessica Pearlman, *Principal**

Deborah Shidler Principal Oboe Chair

Adrienne Burg

Bennie Cottone

English Horn

Bennie Cottone

Clarinet

Roman Fukshansky, *Principal*

Bass Clarinet

Bruce Foster

E-flat Clarinet

Cory Tiffin

Bassoon

Kris King, *Principal**

Ravinder Sehgal

Contrabassoon

Jarratt Rossini

Horn

Alex Camphouse, *Principal*

Anthony Cecere

Patrick Jankowski

Richard Hall

Marianna Pallas, *Assistant Principal*

Trumpet

William B. Harvey, *Principal**

Kale Cumings

Robert Giambruno

Trombone

Katie Curran, *Principal**

Kathleen G. Henschel Chair

Craig Bryant

Jason Borris

Tuba

Forrest Byram, *Principal**

Timpani

John Weeks, *Principal**

John W. Dewes Chair

Percussion

Ward Spangler, *Principal*

Gail S. & Robert B. Hetler Chair

Mark Veregge

Stuart Langsam

Sohrab Bazargannia

Harp

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Piano

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Today's Program

Joseph Young *Conductor*

Gity Razaz

Methuselah (In Chains of Time)

Bay Area Premiere*

Astor Piazzolla

Concerto for Bandoneon,
String Orchestra and Percussion,
“*Aconcagua*”

Hanzhi Wang *accordion*

I. Allegro marcato

II. Moderato

III. Presto

Intermission

Dmitri Shostakovich

Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

I. Moderato

II. Allegretto

III. Largo

IV. Allegro non troppo

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Program Notes

Gity Razaz

Born March 22, 1986, in Tehran, Iran; currently resides in New York City

Methuselah (In Chains of Time)

Composed: 2023

First performance: May 20, 2023, with Rafael Payare conducting the San Diego Symphony

Estimated length: 10 minutes

Scored for 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 2 percussionists (tambourine, bass and tenor drum, tam-tam, glockenspiel, suspended cymbal, vibraphone, marimba, cymbals, tubular bells), piano/celesta, harp, and strings

Iranian-American composer Gity Razaz creates music shaped by questions of memory, identity, and transformation. Now based in New York City, she studied at the Juilliard School and later at the Curtis Institute of Music, with mentors including John Corigliano and Robert Beaser. She has written for leading institutions including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and Washington National Opera. Her work is rooted in Western classical traditions but marked by a strikingly personal approach to texture, color, and pacing.

For *Methuselah (In Chains of Time)*,

Razaz drew inspiration from an ancient tree in California's White Mountains named after the long-lived biblical patriarch—specifically, a 4,854-year-old Great Basin bristlecone pine in the Inyo National Forest, east of the Sierra Nevada. When the composer saw a photo of this tree in a Buddhist magazine, she was “immediately struck by the awe-inspiring shape of the trunk, braided around its core and twisting upwards from the bone-dry surface of the rock-covered ground.” She notes that “there is hardly any surrounding vegetation, and the extreme climate—*Methuselah* is located around 10,000 feet above sea level—makes the tree's longevity a true rarity.”

While composing her richly textured score, Razaz kept thinking about “the remarkable endurance of life, a single-minded, unapologetic force whose sole purpose is to perpetuate survival in spite of all the odds,” and became fascinated by “parallels in various aspects of our world: the persistence of hope, the striving for advancement, and the fight for justice and betterment. Such ideals essentially sprout from the same impulse, embedded in our DNA: to thrive.”

What to listen for

Methuselah begins with a descending gesture in the orchestra's lowest register. “I imagine that deep under the rocky surface of the ground there must be many far-reaching roots, perhaps just as gnarled and twisted as the trunk

and branches above,” writes the composer. From this subterranean sonic image, the music begins its “upward journey,” developing a motive that ascends and eventually arrives at a lyrical violin solo. The melody unfolds at the top of the instrument’s register and represents “the precious persistence of life beneath the rock-hard, twisted bark of the tree.” *Methuselah* concludes as this melodic strand dissolves “in tutti chords across the orchestra,” as if subsiding into the landscape once more.

Astor Piazzolla

Born on March 11, 1921, in Mar del Plata, Argentina; died on July 4, 1992, in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Concerto for Bandoneón, String Orchestra, and Percussion, “Aconcagua”

Composed: 1979

First performance: December 1979 in Buenos Aires, with the composer as soloist

Estimated length: 25 minutes

Scored for bandoneón, timpani, triangle, güiro, bass drum, piano, harp, and strings

“If classic is what remains as a model and universal is what belongs to everyone for all time, Piazzolla’s tango is universal and classi-

cal music.” So declared the poet and tango scholar Horacio Ferrer, one of Piazzolla’s most enduring collaborators. Indeed, Astor Piazzolla’s name has become synonymous with the tango itself—one of Argentina’s most iconic cultural exports—and his role in transforming it rivals Johann Strauss Jr.’s elevation of the waltz. With unbounded imagination and virtuosic flair, Piazzolla reimagined tango as high art.

But tango defies easy definition. More than a sensuous dance, it pulses with paradox: the tension between strict rhythmic control and melodic freedom, between discipline and improvisation, menace and melancholy. Rooted in the slums and brothels of 19th-century Buenos Aires, tango absorbed influences from Europe and Africa, eventually transcending class and geography. Piazzolla’s music draws on this tension, making it central to his expressive voice.

Born to Italian immigrants, Piazzolla spent his early childhood in New York City’s Little Italy. At eight, his tango-loving father bought him a pawnshop bandoneón—the concertina-like accordion that would become his voice. By his teens, Piazzolla was immersed in both Bach and Duke Ellington. After the family returned to Argentina in 1936, he quickly rose through the ranks of Buenos Aires’ tango elite, performing in Aníbal Troilo’s celebrated orchestra. Yet his restless drive for innovation soon put him at odds with tango traditionalists.

He introduced daring harmonies, rhythmic complexity, and contrapuntal writing, drawing from jazz



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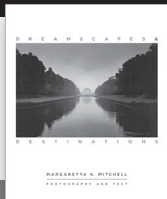
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and modern classical music—from the Baroque to Bartók. Piazzolla dubbed this new hybrid *nuevo tango*, marked by expanded forms and richer textures. Rejecting the sacred acoustic makeup of the tango orchestra, he brought in electric guitar and favored a chamber ensemble of bandoneón, violin, piano, double bass, and electric guitar.

A pivotal moment came in 1954, when Piazzolla studied composition with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. She famously urged him not to hide his tango roots beneath classical pretension. Her encouragement gave him license to build an unapologetically personal idiom, with the bandoneón as his analogue to Mozart's piano: an extension of the self. Even had he never written a note, his charismatic, often standing performances—one foot raised on a chair—would have earned him a place in tango history.

The bandoneón itself embodies tango's contradictions. Invented in Germany in the 19th century as a portable substitute for the church organ, it migrated to the docks and dance halls of Buenos Aires. Piazzolla once likened it to his psychoanalyst: "I start playing and I blurt everything out."

He composed the Concerto for Bandoneón during one of his most creatively fertile periods, in 1979—a time when Argentina was under a brutal military dictatorship marked by censorship, repression, and the disappearance of thousands of citizens. While Piazzolla did not address politics overtly in his music, his insistence on creative autonomy and his stylistic hybridity challenged expectations—musical and

cultural—in an era of rigid nationalism and authoritarian conformity. The nickname *Aconcagua*—a reference to the highest peak in the Andes—was later coined by Piazzolla's publisher, Aldo Pagani. Like Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata, the title was not the composer's own, but it fits: this is Piazzolla's bandoneón elevated to summit level.

What to listen for

Scored without winds or brass, the concerto achieves a chamber-like transparency that favors dialogue with the soloist. The first movement opens with bold, declamatory gestures from the bandoneón, echoed and answered by the ensemble. The music soon shifts into more intimate exchanges, with space for elaborate cadenzas woven into the fabric before the initial material returns with fresh authority.

The central movement reveals Piazzolla—as composer and performer—at his most lyrically introspective. A meditative soliloquy from the soloist unfolds over gently pulsing accompaniment. Harp, solo violin, and piano contribute atmospheric color, conjuring a nocturnal ambiance.

The finale begins as a bracing rondo but detours into unexpectedly confessional territory. Under the rasp of the güiro, the bandoneón breaks into a rhapsodic lament—what Piazzolla described as a moment of melancholic vulnerability. But resolve follows. The soloist draws the ensemble back in with a stoic motif, and together they close the concerto with resilient flair.

Dmitri Shostakovich

Born on September 25, 1906, in St. Petersburg, Russian Empire; died on August 9, 1975, in Moscow, USSR

Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

Composed: 1937

First performance: November 21, 1937, in Leningrad, with Yevgeny Mravinsky conducting the Leningrad Philharmonic

Estimated length: 45 minutes

Scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam, triangle, glockenspiel, xylophone, piano, celesta, harp, and strings

If Piazzolla's Concerto for Bandoneón asserts artistic freedom through an audacious reimagining of tango, Dmitri Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony offers a darker meditation on what it means to compose under constraint. Written more than four decades earlier in Stalinist Russia, Shostakovich's symphony navigates a far more perilous landscape—where music could be a matter of life or death. Yet both works affirm a commitment to individual expression. Beneath their surface differences—one steeped in urban Argentine rhythms, the other in brooding symphonic drama—lies a shared commitment to emotional truth within environments that demanded conformity.

On January 28, 1936, the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* ran a now-infamous editorial under the headline “Muddle Instead of Music.” A direct attack on Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, the piece—widely assumed to carry Stalin's approval—marked an abrupt end to the composer's brief reign as the poster child of Soviet modernism. His works were pulled from the stage, commissions evaporated, and with them any sense of artistic security. The Fourth Symphony was shelved before its premiere; the political climate had become too perilous to risk provocation.

The stakes could not have been higher when Shostakovich began his Fifth Symphony in the spring of 1937. This was his chance to re-enter public life and reclaim legitimacy. He completed the score in an astonishing three months. When it premiered that November, the audience responded with overwhelming emotion—some reportedly wept during the Largo. The state interpreted this as triumphant redemption, seizing on the now-famous subtitle: “A Soviet artist's creative response to just criticism.” Shostakovich never publicly contradicted that phrase, though it almost certainly wasn't his.

On its surface, the Fifth Symphony appears to realign with the tenets of Socialist Realism: clear structure, accessible idiom, uplifting finale. But underneath, it tells a far more complicated story. This is music that folds anguish into grandeur, irony into rhetoric. Whether by necessity or design, Shostakovich discovered a new artistic mode—one that could pass censorship

while speaking in code to those who knew how to listen.

If the Fifth Symphony marks a “creative response to criticism,” its brilliance lies in the fact that the response is double-edged. Shostakovich gave the authorities what they demanded, but on his own terms. His symphony fulfills official expectations in form while quietly pushing back in content. In doing so, he created a work that became emblematic of the moral and artistic paradoxes faced by composers under authoritarian regimes. The Fifth remains one of the most haunting and resonant works of the 20th century not because it flatters power, but because it dares to endure in its presence.

What to listen for

The Fifth Symphony opens with a movement in modified sonata form, built from just two core ideas: a severe unison gesture in the strings, and a melancholy violin melody. Jagged, quasi-Baroque rhythms intensify the starkness of this soundscape. (Morrissey sampled this passage in his 1995 song “The Teachers Are Afraid of the Pupils.”) These materials undergo a long dramatic arc, cycling through martial climaxes and retreating into lyrical isolation.

March rhythms swell into bluster, but ambiguity pervades: is this heroism or anxiety? The coda, spare and tender, features a striking duet between flute and horn. Conductor Vladimir Spivakov once heard a quotation from *Carmen*’s “L’amour” in this moment—an oblique comment on the hollowness of

state-mandated emotional ideals.

The second movement functions as a bitter scherzo. A lumbering waltz gives way to grotesque humor, its charm undercut by instability and exaggerated accents. The music echoes Beethoven’s Fifth, but here the wit is sharp-edged, even grotesque. What sounds festive may just as easily be read as corrosive.

The Largo is the symphony’s emotional epicenter. Scored without brass, it creates a hushed, solemn atmosphere with slow-moving string chorales and harp punctuations. Solo woodwinds offer plaintive phrases, isolated and exposed. A slow crescendo leads to a massive, emotionally raw climax, before the movement dissolves into a quiet epilogue. For many listeners, this movement spoke most directly to the unacknowledged suffering of life under Stalin.

The finale opens in blazing D major, with bombastic brass and timpani hammering home a message of triumph. On the surface, this is the “resolution” that state censors expected: struggle overcome, victory achieved. But the repetition becomes overbearing, and the tempo—marked *Allegro non troppo*—feels dogged rather than ecstatic. Some interpreters have slowed the last pages dramatically to reveal the mechanical insistence beneath the heroism. In his controversial *Testimony*, Solomon Volkov described the ending as “someone beating you with a stick, saying ‘Your job is to rejoice!’”

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Music Director Joseph Young

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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 Artist & Composer



Hanzhi Wang, *accordion*

Accclaimed for her “staggering virtuosity,” Hanzhi Wang is the only accordionist to ever win a place on the roster of Young Concert Artists in its 60-year history. An ambassador for her instrument, Wang has been praised for her captivating stage presence and performances that display passion and finesse.

A groundbreaking artist, Wang’s other firsts include being named Musical America’s “New Artist of the Month,” an interview and performance on the

2,145th episode of New York WQXR’s *Young Artists Showcase* as the first solo accordionist on the program, and the Naxos label’s first-ever solo accordion CD, *On the Path to H.C. Andersen*, which was nominated for the prestigious DR (Danish Radio) P2 Prize in 2019.

A first-prize winner of the 2017 Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions, Wang debuted in New York in The Peter Marino Concert at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall. Her Washington, DC debut opened the 40th Anniversary Young Concert Artists Series at the Kennedy Center, co-presented with Washington Performing Arts. She holds the Ruth Laredo Prize and Mortimer Levitt Career Development Award for Women Artists of YCA.

Wang has performed recitals at UC Santa Barbara’s Lively Arts, Stanford Live, Bravo! Vail, Krannert Center, and Candlelight Concert Society. Upcoming recitals include the Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota and a concert with YCA saxophonist, Steven Banks, at The Morgan Library & Museum in New York City. Wang has appeared as a soloist with the Oregon Music Festival, Victoria Symphony, Cantori, Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, Sinfonia Gulf Coast, and Iris Orchestra, and next season performs with the Hawaii Symphony, Erie Philharmonic, and Reno Chamber Orchestra.

Wang won the First Prize at the 40th Castelfidardo International Accordion Competition in Italy. She inspires

the next generation of accordionists with lectures, performances, and master classes at the Manhattan School of Music, Royal Danish Academy of Music, Tianjin Music Conservatory, Ghent Music Conservatory (Belgium), Norway, and Portugal. Composers Martin Lohse, James Black, and Sophia Gubaidulina have written and dedicated works to her.

Wang earned her Bachelor's degree at the China Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. She completed her Master's degree and Soloist Diploma at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen with the renowned accordion professor Geir Draugsvoll, where she also served as an assistant teacher at the Academy.



Gity Razaz, *composer*

Her music hailed as “ravishing and engulfing” (*New York Times*) and of an “uncompromising beauty” (*BBC Music Magazine*), Gity Razaz composes music that ranges from concert solo pieces to large symphonic works. Ms. Razaz’s music has been commissioned and/or performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, cellist Alisa Weilerstein,

Seattle Symphony, San Diego Symphony Orchestra, Washington National Opera, National Sawdust, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, former cellist of the Kronos Quartet Jeffrey Zeigler, cellist Inbal Segev, violinist Jennifer Koh, League of the American Orchestras, violinist Francesca dePasquale, Metropolis Ensemble, Albany Symphony Orchestra, Juilliard Symphony Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, and Amsterdam Cello Biennale among many others.

Recent works include a piece for Alisa Weilerstein and her ground-breaking project *Fragments*, a commission from BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo for the prestigious Last Night of the BBC Proms at London’s Royal Albert Hall, and a world premiere with San Diego Symphony under Rafael Payare as part of an ambitious multiple-orchestra spanning initiative from the League of American Orchestras. Upcoming commissions include a collaboration with Israeli Chamber Project and the Grammy-winning tenor, Karim Sulayman, as well as a concerto for flautist Sharon Bezaly and London’s Wigmore Soloists.

Ms. Razaz was named a 2022 “Rising Star” by *BBC Music Magazine*. Her compositions have earned numerous national and international awards, such as the Andrew Imbrie Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters that is “is given to a composer of demonstrated artistic merit in mid-career”, the Jerome Foundation award, the Libby Larsen Prize in 28th International Search for New Music Competition, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra Composer Institute, Juilliard Composers’ Orchestra Competition, multiple ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer awards, ASCAP Plus Awards, Juilliard’s Palmer Dixon Award for the outstanding composition of the year in 2010 and 2012, as well as special recognition from the Brian Israel Composition Prize, Margaret Blackburn Memorial Competition, the League of Composers (ISCM), to name a few.

Ms. Razaz’s debut album, “The Strange Highway,” which was recently released on Sweden’s preeminent BIS

Records, has garnered international praise. As described by *BBC Music Magazine*, “There’s an uncompromising beauty to these works by the Iranian-born American composer, the opening title work, for cello octet, is a wild rhythmic ride, while the closing *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* offers some fantastic musical storytelling. Impressive.”

Aside from her ongoing engagements in composition, Ms. Razaz is also active as a teacher and an educator. She has appeared as a guest artist presenting master classes across the nation while teaching composition privately in New York. Ms. Razaz joined the faculty of Ramapo College of New Jersey, where she taught music theory and ear training in 2012-2013, and served on the advisory committee for the American Federation of Teachers Graduate Scholarship. From 2017-2021, Ms. Razaz offered composition teaching and mentorship for the Luna Composition Lab, a program founded in partnership with the Kaufman Music Center, while holding a teaching artist position at the New York Philharmonic’s Very Young Composers Program. She is a composition faculty at Mannes School of Music prep division and has served as composer and jurist for the Irving M. Klein International String Competition.

Iranian-American composer Gity Razaz started her musical studies in piano at a young age and began composing music at age nine. She received her Bachelor and Master of Music in Composition from The Juilliard School. She has studied with Samuel Adler, Robert Beaser, and John Corigliano.



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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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Pre-Concert Talk

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Paul Dresher, *pre-concert talk* host

Paul Dresher is an internationally active composer noted for his ability to integrate diverse musical influences into his own coherent style. He pursues many forms of musical expression including experimental opera/music theater, chamber and orchestral composition, live instrumental electro-acoustic music, musical instrument

invention, and scores for theater and dance. A recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Composition in 2006, he has received commissions from the Library of Congress, St Paul Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, Kronos Quartet, SF Symphony, SF Ballet, Present Music, Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, Brenda Way/ODC Dance and Chamber Music America. He has had his works performed at the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Festival d'Automne in Paris, the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, and the Minnesota Opera.

Recent works include *Global Moves* (2022) for the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company, *Breathing at the Boundaries* (2020) created with Rinde Eckert, Alexander V. Nichols, Michael Palmer and the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company; *Crazy Eights & Fractured Symmetries*, commissioned and premiered by Berkeley Symphony in 2016; *Family Matters* (2014), a duo for TwoSense (cellist Ashley Bathgate and pianist Lisa Moore); and *Two Entwined* (2011), commissioned by pianist Sarah Cahill and premiered at the Spoleto Festival USA.

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These informative and engaging pre-concert talks offer fascinating insights into the music you are about to experience. Learn about the program's cultural and historical context, along with guided listening. Additionally, there will be live interviews with guest artists, composers, and orchestra musicians! Music talks take place one hour before all Symphonic Series concerts. Admission is free to all ticket holders.

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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