



Music Director Joseph Young
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JOSEPH YOUNG TO STEP DOWN AS MUSIC DIRECTOR OF BERKELEY SYMPHONY FOLLOWING 2024-25 SEASON

BERKELEY, CA (November 19, 2024) – **Berkeley Symphony** today announced that **Music Director Joseph Young** will conclude his tenure at the end of the 2024-25 season, marking six transformative years of artistic leadership.

"The Berkeley Symphony is a respected, adventurous orchestra, and I am proud of all that we have accomplished together," said **Young**. "From our very first performances, the musicians and audiences enthusiastically embraced programs that centered our local community, elevated contemporary American voices, and celebrated the canon in new and dynamic ways. Together, we have grown artistically, as an institution, and as a community. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to lead the Berkeley Symphony and hopeful for all that lies ahead."

During his tenure, Young has ushered in a period of remarkable growth for Berkeley Symphony, driving both audience expansion and artistic innovation. With attendance increasing by over 40%, Young has significantly expanded the orchestra's musical repertoire through groundbreaking commissions and premieres. Young's commitment to new works has resulted in five commissioned pieces, including Jimmy López Bellido and Derrick Skye, alongside eight World or West Coast premieres from composers like Kris Bowers, Joel Puckett and Xi Wang. His dedication to contemporary American voices is reflected in his programming, with nearly half of all performed works during his tenure composed by American artists and 27 composers receiving their Berkeley Symphony debuts.

"Joseph's visionary leadership has been instrumental in advancing Berkeley Symphony's mission during a pivotal period," says **Board President Rigel Shimono-Robinson**. "His artistic excellence and innovative spirit have not only preserved our legacy but expanded our reach, engaging new

audiences and deepening our community connections. We are immensely grateful for his contributions and look forward to celebrating with him throughout the remainder of the 2024-25 season."

Young's innovative community engagement initiatives have created lasting memories, particularly the orchestra's 50th anniversary celebration that invited community members to conduct and play side by side with the orchestra in Berkeley's downtown plaza. Young's steady artistic vision proved especially valuable during the pandemic, when his leadership enabled the Symphony to maintain its commitment to musical excellence while adapting to unprecedented challenges. Through these achievements, he has strengthened Berkeley Symphony's position as a cultural cornerstone of the Bay Area, known for both artistic excellence and meaningful community connection.

"When we first met Joseph as a guest conductor, the chemistry between him and the orchestra was immediate and electric," said **Michel Taddei, Principal Bassist and Berkeley Symphony Board Member**. "His vision has made his tenure distinctive and memorable, particularly in programming works by women composers and composers of color alongside the traditional classical canon. The Berkeley Front Row Festival demonstrated his natural ability to connect with community members of all ages. We are optimistic about both our future and Joseph's as his career continues to grow."

"Joseph's artistic vision has elevated our programming to new heights, inspiring our audiences and musicians alike," said **Executive Director Marion Atherton**. "His final season with the Berkeley Symphony promises to be particularly spectacular, and we invite our community to join us in celebrating his remarkable legacy through our 2024-25 season performances."

The Berkeley Symphony Board of Directors has begun a search process to identify Young's successor.

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 cultural diversity and heady creative climate of its home city.

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