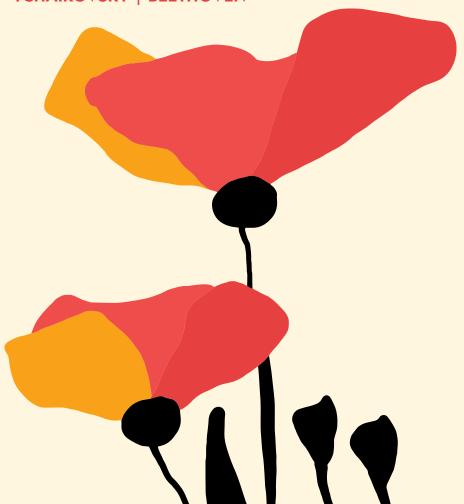
VISIONS OF ELYSIUM

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> 25 26 SEASON

DINA GILBERT, guest conductor **GABRIEL CABEZAS,** cello

SAMY MOUSSA | ALYSSA WEINBERG TCHAIKOVSKY | BEETHOVEN







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Berkeley Symphony 25/26 Season



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Message from the Executive Director



Friends,

Welcome to the first concert of Berkeley Symphony's 2025/26 season! We are delighted to open this exciting new chapter with you, our incredible audience, whose passion and presence are the heartbeat of everything we do.

This year's musical journey is filled with artistic adventure. We will welcome an inspiring lineup of guest conductors to our stage, each bringing fresh perspectives and bold musical ideas. Together, we will explore a rich tapestry of sound—featuring inspiring

new works alongside classic favorites—all brought to life by our extraordinary musicians and a roster of world-class soloists. Today's concert, *Visions of Elysium*, begins the season with an invitation to transcend the day-to-day and inhabit a world of ideals.

It has been our honor and our joy to work with an outstanding lineup of guest artists in preparing for this concert. I know you will enjoy seeing and hearing them on stage, and I hope you will also join us in the lobby and courtyard after the concert, to meet and welcome conductor Dina Gilbert, cellist Gabriel Cabezas, and composer Alyssa Weinberg.

Whether this is your first Berkeley Symphony concert or your hundredth: Thank you for joining us today. Your presence and your support make it possible for Berkeley Symphony to remain a place where creativity thrives and community grows through music. Your presence makes each concert special, and we appreciate having you here.

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Mayeller

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Tom Reicher, *Assistant Principal*

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PRESS RELEASE

Berkeley, California, (July 21, 2025)

Going Places Travel was awarded a 2025 Agency of Excellence by Travel Leaders Network at the annual EDGE conference in Las Vegas on June 12.

With over 5,000 agencies making up Travel Leaders Network, Going Places Travel is part of less than 1% of the top performers in North America's largest travel consortium.



"It's an honor to be an Agency of Excellence," said co-owner, Ting-Yi Shih. "This award demonstrates the hard work and dedication that all the travel advisors at Going Places put into seamlessly serving their clients and delighting them trip after trip."

"With Travel Leaders by our side, we have put their considerable tools and programs, as well as partner relationships, to use in achieving the level of success that gave us this honor," noted co-owner, Kevin Saxe.

"Being a top travel agency, especially in an organization as big as ours, is no easy feat." said Lindsay Pearlman, President of Travel Leaders Network. "This award represents a year of hard work, retaining clients, bringing in new travelers, and making the best use of their membership in Travel Leaders. We are very proud of their results: Going Places Travel is truly the personification of an Agency of Excellence."



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Today's Program

Dina Gilbert Conductor

Samy Moussa Elysium

Alyssa Weinberg Caligo

for cello and chamber orchestra

Gabriel Cabezas cello

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Pezzo capriccioso, Op. 62

Gabriel Cabezas cello

Intermission

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 3

in E-flat major, Op. 55,

Eroica

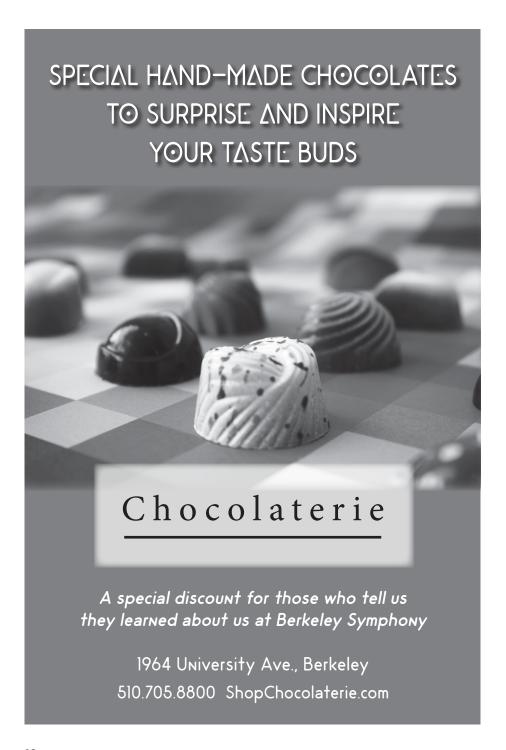
I. Allegro con brio

II. Marcia funebre: Adagio assai

III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace

IV. Finale: Allegro molto

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Program Notes

Samy Moussa

Born on June 1, 1984, in Montréal, Canada; currently resides in Berlin

Elysium

Composed: 2021

First performance: September 18, 2021, with Christian Thielemann conducting the Vienna Philharmonic at Sagrada Família, Barcelona, Spain

Estimated length: 11 minutes

Scored for: piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets (1st doubling piccolo trumpet), three trombones, tuba, timpani, three percussionists (bass drum, wind gong, vibraphone, tambourine, large and small cymbals, tubular bells, tamtam, crotales, suspended china cymbal, glockenspiel, small triangle, and snare drum), and strings

Growing up in Montréal in the 1990s, Samy Moussa began composing on his own before receiving formal training at the Université de Montréal. In his early twenties, he moved to Germany to study composition with Matthias Pintscher and Pascal Dusapin in Munich, later settling in Berlin. His career has since flourished with high-profile commissions across Europe and North America, earning distinctions such as the Roche Young Commissions at Lucerne Festival, the Ernst von Siemens Composer's Prize, the Hindemith Prize, the Ger-

man Rome Prize, and a current residency with the Helsinki Philharmonic. Moussa has also pursued conducting, taking master classes with Pierre Boulez and Peter Eötvös.

Moussa's catalogue of over 40 works spans songs, chamber music, concertos, symphonies, chamber operas, and multimedia, but orchestral writing remains central to his voice. Each score creates its own vivid sound world, and *Elysium* is no exception.

The title draws on Moussa's long-standing fascination with ancient Greek culture and myth. In Greek mythology, Elysium—the "Elysian Fields"—was a paradise distinct from the Underworld, reserved for heroes and those favored by the gods. The idea resonated through Homer and Hesiod, Virgil and Dante, and even Beethoven, whose *Ninth Symphony* sets Schiller's "Joy, daughter of Elysium."

Moussa, however, avoids Romantic idealization. He finds particular inspiration in the fragmentary writings of the pre-Socratic philosophers, notably Empedocles, the fifth-century BCE Sicilian thinker who pioneered natural philosophy. From Empedocles' *Purifications* comes a vision of Elysium as the ultimate escape from the cycle of reincarnation—a realm "free from human woes, safe from destiny, and incapable of hurt." Moussa interprets this as "the ultimate reward for an ethical life . . . a metaphor for a beautiful life, for a life well-lived on this planet."





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Yet *Elysium* is not program music; the title came after the music was written. "The way in which *Elysium* is constructed and functions is purely musical," Moussa asserts. Its essential narrative is "about the art form itself: the musical devices are aimed at constructing a new world that is inherently metaphysical."

What to listen for

The work opens with a radiantly shimmering B-flat major chord, sustained by divided strings over a bassoon—contrabassoon foundation, its surface sliding in and out of focus. The stately triple meter of a sarabande—the slow Baroque dance Bach often used for his deepest meditations—frames a spacious brass chorale whose harmonic sequence forms the spine of the piece.

Moussa seeks clarity through recognizable harmonic transformations, allowing the listener to hear how one sonority grows from another. Orchestral textures are handled with painterly precision, from translucent string shadings to glowing brass blocks, while details such as a rising scalar figure, punctuated by flickering percussion, inject flashes of color.

The influence of the symphonies of Anton Bruckner—a composer especially revered by Moussa—comes through in the sense of cosmic breadth and in the carefully prepared climaxes. A monumental Adagio-like span builds to an ecstatic eruption, shattered by a searing dissonance. In the coda, the music subsides to a new serenity, returning to B-flat major—transformed from the sonority with which the journey began.

Alyssa Weinberg

Born in 1988; currently resides in Brooklyn

Caligo for cello and chamber orchestra

Composed: 2019

First performance: April 18, 2019, at the Ogle Center (Indiana University Southeast), New Albany, Indiana, with Nicholas Finch as the cello soloist and the NouLou Chamber Players

Estimated length: 11 minutes

Scored for: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, percussion, strings, and solo cello

A lyssa Weinberg crafts music with a painter's ear for instrumental color and a sculptor's feel for texture, creating atmospheres that can feel dreamlike or brimming with emotional intensity. Her output ranges from intimate solo and chamber pieces to large-scale orchestral works and operatic collaborations, frequently blurring the lines between disciplines.

While a student at the Curtis Institute, for example, Weinberg met cellist Gabriel Cabezas—then a recent graduate—and the pair co-founded Duende, a new music and contemporary dance collective devoted to exploring how sound intersects with movement in unexpected spaces. That interdisciplinary curiosity has carried into more recent projects, including *time to stretch*, her contribution to Benjamin Millepied's Paris Dance Project, which premiered in 2023 at the Philharmonie de Paris.

Among Weinberg's recent ventures in music theater are the poetic monodrama ISOLA, a meditation on isolation and human connection that premiered last year at Long Beach Opera, and two operas currently in progress. DRIFT, exploring themes of migration and climate change, will premiere next summer at Opera Saratoga. Claude & Marcel, with a libretto by Stephanie Fleischmann and direction by Elkhanah Pulitzer, portrays Surrealist artists Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore, whose art and activism fueled their resistance during the Nazi occupation of France; it is slated for a 2027 premiere at West Edge Opera in Berkelev.

Weinberg composed *Caligo* in 2019 for the Louisville Orchestra's principal cellist Nicholas Finch and the NouLou Chamber Players. The title comes from the Latin word for "mist," "darkness," "haze," or "obscurity"—the composer additionally offers "a dizzying fog"—and that imagery guided her creative process. She has said she aimed "to create a piece that felt like it hovered in this endless mist, infinitely suspended, floating ethereally through the vast and cavernous haze."

In an interview for WUOL Radio, Weinberg noted that much of her music originates from a response to a visual impression—whether drawn from nature or art—which she transforms into sonic gestures before deciding on actual pitches, seeking to create in listeners the same feeling she experienced. *Caligo*, she explained, is "really about this one particular sound that I became fascinated with early on when I started developing the sketches for this work."

For *Caligo*, Weinberg began with pages of hand-drawn squiggles and shaded



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details—"the shape of that feeling"—to capture the contours of what she was imagining before deciding which specific pitches would bring it to life. "I wanted to build color vertically and fill the space, adding as much depth to a single note as I could. It started to evoke imagery of this misty, hazy room—you see the dust particles—and then within all that cold darkness and haze, you can see this one beam of light shining right through. It's almost as if the haze and the murkiness are the thing that actually allows you to see the beam of light itself."

What to listen for

Caligo is a compact chamber concerto for cello, cast in a single movement; Weinberg describes the work as a "meditation through this imagined space, fixating on an almost hallucinatory texture that ebbs and flows throughout the piece." The line performed by the solo cellist "leads us through the texture like a beam of light coming in and out of focus, hinting at a path through the fog."



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Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Born on May 7, 1840, in Votkinsk, Russian Empire; died on November 6, 1893, in St. Petersburg

Pezzo capriccioso, Op. 62

Composed: 1887

First performance: November 25, 1889, with Anatoliy Brandukov as the soloist, with the composer conducting a special concert of the Russian Musical Society

Estimated length: 7 minutes

Scored for: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, timpani, strings, and solo cello

Tchaikovsky is remembered above all as a composer, but in the final decade of his life he gained new prominence as a conductor of his own music. In 1887, he embarked on his first sustained series of appearances abroad, traveling to Leipzig, Hamburg, and Paris. Later that summer, while in Aachen visiting a gravely ill friend, he began work on *Pezzo capriccioso*, a lyrical yet virtuosic showpiece for cello and orchestra.

Composing with great speed, Tchaikovsky sought the advice of the Russian cellist Anatoliy Brandukov, a rising virtuoso who had studied at the Moscow Conservatory and moved in the same artistic circles as Tchaikovsky.

"I have written a small cello piece, and would like you to look through it, and put the final touches to the cello part," he wrote to Brandukov, arranging to meet upon his return to Russia later in the month. He also asked his colleague Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, who taught cello at the Moscow Conservatory when Brandukov was a student, to review the solo part and suggest markings—since the piano, not the cello, was Tchaikovsky's own instrument. Fitzenhagen is remembered today above all as the cellist who premiered *Rococo Variations* in a version he had, rather scandalously, taken upon himself to rearrange.

What to listen for

Unlike the longer *Variations on a Rococo Theme*, which pays homage to the Classical era—in particular, to Tchaikovsky's idol, Mozart—*Pezzo capriccioso* speaks in a darker, more introspective voice. Closer to a Romantic character piece, it unfolds in a single, continuous span in ABA-like form, with an elegiac opening section, a middle showcasing high-wire virtuosity, and a return to the reflective mood.

The piece's melancholy lyricism may reflect the somber circumstances under which it was written: the visit to a dear lawyer friend who was dying. The solo cello states the wistful, rubato-inflected, minor-key theme in long, singing lines. In contrast, the central section erupts into quicksilver virtuosity, with writing that pushes the instrument into its highest register. This dazzling style returns to close *Pezzo* in a high-spirited coda.

The interplay between cello and orchestra is often intimate, with textures that allow the solo instrument's

voice to emerge unforced. The "capriccioso" in the title comes through both in the rapid-fire brilliance of the virtuosic passages—recalling an earlier brand of Romantic showmanship associated with Paganini and his ilk—and in the work's quicksilver changes of mood, from introspection to playfulness.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Baptized on December 17, 1770, in Bonn, Electorate of Cologne (now Germany); died on March 26, 1827, in Vienna

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55, *Eroica*

Composed: 1802-04

First performance: Following a private performance in the summer of 1804, the first official public performance took place in Vienna on April 7, 1805

Estimated length: 50 minutes

Scored for: pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons; 3 horns; 2 trumpets; timpani, and strings

The *Eroica* is rightly characterized as a giant advance in the history of Western music. Beyond its historical importance—claiming an unparalleled scope for what the symphony could express—it marks a personal breakthrough for Beethoven. The work emerged from a profound crisis in his

early thirties. What he hoped was a temporary problem with his hearing proved to be the onset of permanent deafness—an especially cruel blow for a composer who was also a celebrated pianist.

In the summer of 1802, on his doctor's advice, Beethoven retreated to Heiligenstadt, then a quiet village outside Vienna. The hoped-for cure never came, and his despair deepened to the point of contemplating suicide. In the moving document known as the *Heiligenstadt Testament*, written that autumn, Beethoven explains his isolation, the need to hide his deafness, and the misunderstanding that he was "misanthropic" by nature.

What kept him alive, he wrote, was "an overpowering conviction of artistic mission": it seemed impossible to leave the world before creating all that he felt called to produce. This renewed sense of purpose came with his resolve to forge what he termed "a new path" in music.

The *Eroica* is the first full-scale realization of that ambition. The opening gesture—two bracing E-flat major chords in place of a slow introduction—launches an epic on a scale unprecedented for the symphony. Over the years, listeners have likened it to a battlefield, the early dynamism of industrialism, even a metaphor for the human drive to confront the unknown. The famous "surprise" C-sharp in the cello line—a note outside the home key—becomes a symbol of Beethoven's eagerness to confront experience headon, embracing pain as well as joy.

Unlike the later Fifth Symphony, which achieves drama by compression, the *Eroica* builds expansively: venturing to distant keys, amassing thematic material, and swelling the sonata form to unprecedented breadth. The massive coda becomes an enormous counterweight to all that precedes it, rather than a quick summing-up.

Almost everything about the *Eroica* signals higher stakes: from these dramatically expanded dimensions to its striking harmonic shifts and intensified use of dynamic contrast. The slow movement replaces the lyrical interlude a contemporary listener might expect with a monumental funeral march in C minor.

The oboe, a recurring solo voice in all four movements, opens a fleeting bright interlude that signals hope before the march returns, its tragic pathos intensified yet further with a fugue of overwhelming grandeur. The final pages are almost cinematic, as a solitary mourner seems to falter while the procession moves on.

Only the *Eroica*'s instrumentation remains within the Classical norms of Haydn and Mozart—apart from Beethoven's striking choice of three horns instead of two, which justifies itself in the witty central section of the animated Scherzo.

Still another radical move comes in the finale, where Beethoven takes the familiar principle of theme and variations to new heights. Here, the technique becomes more than a display of invention, evolving into a culminating statement that enacts a final act of transformation. Beethoven had used this theme, originally a contradance tune, in several previous works, including his successful ballet of 1801, *The Creatures of Prometheus*. That mythological reference adds another layer of meaning: some hear the defiant figure of Prometheus, who suffered to bring enlightenment to humanity, as the true hero of the work.

Beethoven originally planned to dedicate the symphony to Napoleon Bonaparte, whom he admired as a champion of revolutionary ideals. But when Napoleon crowned himself Emperor in December 1804, Beethoven—who despised tyranny—furiously scratched out the dedication on the title page.

This often-told story of spontaneous outrage isn't quite so simple: in reality, Beethoven had not entirely ruled out the practical advantages of such a dedication; at the time, he was even considering a move to Paris. In the end, he published the score as *Sinfonia eroica* ("Heroic Symphony"), "composed to celebrate the memory of a great man."

What to listen for

The opening movement brims with epic, forward-driving energy. Expansion fuels the drama: abundant themes, far-flung keys, and a coda as weighty as the development section. The ensuing slow movement is a funeral march of public grandeur and private grief, its solemn tread briefly brightened by a hopeful interlude before returning to tragic C minor in a majestic fugue.

In place of a minuet, the Scherzo rekindles the life force of the first movement in playful, even elemental terms, with pairs of chords bouncing against triple meter to create a delirious rhythmic ambiguity. The aforementioned three horns take center stage in the central section.

The finale unfolds as variations on what seems a self-contained theme. Beethoven creates teasing suspense by introducing its bass line first as a disguise for the real theme. Unassuming as it seems at first, the theme is revealed to contain enormous potential: from playful flute filigree to a nobly triumphant orchestral climax, with a chilling recollection of the Funeral March in its depths. In the end, these transformations reveal the creative spirit itself—not Napoleon, not Prometheus, not modernity—as the *Eroica*'s true hero.

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Conductor Dina Gilbert



rench-Canadian conductor Dina Gilbert is passionate about communicating with audiences of all ages to broaden their appreciation of orchestral music through innovative collaborations. This commitment, as well as Dina Gilbert's extensive knowledge of repertoire, has shaped her career and the orchestras she has worked with. Regularly invited to conduct in Canada and overseas, she attracts critical acclaim for her energy, presence on the podium, and expressive music-making.

Dina Gilbert is currently Principal Conductor of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Associate Conductor of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and Music Director of the Walla Walla Symphony, where she is known for her contagious dynamism and her audacious programming. Over the years, she has conducted leading Canadian orchestras such as the Toronto Symphony, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, the Orchestre métropolitain, the Orchestre symphonique de Québec as well as orchestras in the United States, Colombia, Spain, France, and the Sinfonia Varsovia for a series of concerts in Japan.

Her innate curiosity towards nonclassical musical genres and willingness to democratize classical music has sparked collaborations with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and the Orchestre National de Lyon in several Hip-Hop Symphonic programs featuring renowned artists I AM, MC Solaar, Youssoupha and Bigflo & Oli, as well as a recent symphonic fusion with renowned metal group Voïvod.

As the founder and artistic director of the Ensemble Arkea, a Montréal-based chamber orchestra, Dina premiered over thirty works from emerging Canadian composers. Committed to music education, she has reached thousands of children with her interactive and participative Conducting 101 workshops. From 2013 to 2016, Dina Gilbert was the assistant conductor of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and Maestro Kent Nagano, also assisting notable guest conductors including Zubin Mehta and Sir Roger Norrington.

Highlights of recent engagements included debuts with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, the Cape

Symphony, the Orchestre national des Pays de la Loire, and a tour with the Orchestre national de Metz. As the Principal Conductor of the Orchestre des Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, she participated in tours in the United States, in Colombia and in Spain, and has premiered ballets by Peter Quanz (La Dame aux Camélias with music by Weber, Lili Boulanger, Louise Farrenc and Kaija Saariaho), Étienne Béchard (Carmen Shchedrin's Carmen Suite), Garrett Smith (Beethoven's Symphony No. 5), Jayne Smeulders (Prokofiev's Cinderella) and Edward Clug (Orff's Carmina Burana).

The 2025/26 season marks her return to conducting several subscriptions

concerts with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, debuts with Berkeley Symphony and a tour with the Orchestre national-d'Ile-de-France in the greater Paris region, culminating with a performance at the Philharmonie de Paris.

Dina Gilbert earned her doctorate from the Université de Montréal and polished her skills in masterclasses with Kenneth Kiesler, Pinchas Zukerman, Neeme Järvi and the musicians from the Kritische Orchester in Berlin. Awarded the Opus Prize of "Découverte de l'année" in 2017, she has received support from the Canada Arts Council, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and from the Père-Lindsay Foundation.

Get to Know Dina Gilbert

How did you decide that you wanted to become a conductor?

Growing up in a small town with no orchestra, the idea of becoming a conductor felt as distant as becoming an astronaut—how could someone from my background ever get there? I played both piano and clarinet with equal passion and as a teen, I conducted a children's choir and a wind symphony in the air cadets, sparking a passion.

While studying in Montréal, I received my first formal conducting lessons. It was through the enthusiastic encouragement of my professor that I realized I had both the skills and the personality to pursue a Master's and Doctorate in Conducting. The chance to inspire others through music convinced me this was my path. It's a powerful, collaborative art form that constantly challenges and fulfills me.

Berkeley Symphony was lucky to have Maestro Kent Nagano as our conductor for many years. What was it like working with him as your mentor?

Working with Maestro Nagano was profoundly inspiring. His intellectual depth and musical insight had a lasting impact on my artistic vision. Over the course of three years, I had the incredible privilege of following him through all rehearsals, concerts, and tours with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal—and it was during one of those tours that I had the chance to attend a concert right here in Berkeley, ten years ago! Observing his leadership, both on and off the podium, taught me how to serve both music and community with purpose.



You also conduct the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal. How is conducting for ballet different than symphony orchestra?

Conducting ballet requires a heightened sensitivity to dancers' movements and breathing. It's a dialogue between music and physical expression where the conductor becomes both leader and collaborator. I particularly enjoy the creative process of working with choreographers and dancers when we are creating a ballet with the company. One of the most recent and thrilling experiences was premiering La dame aux Camélias by Peter Quanz, with music by Grazyna Bacewicz, Lili Boulanger, Fanny Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann and Kaija Saariaho. Supporting the dancers while preserving musical integrity and creating a synergy between the pit and the stage makes it a uniquely rewarding and enriching experience.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of orchestral music?

It all starts with spending time with my favorite people: my daughter Clara and my partner David. We love to travel, discover new restaurants, and attend as many cultural events as we can! While I've never played hockey, I'm a huge fan of the Canadiens de Montréal. There's something deeply satisfying about watching the coordination of a team on the ice and witnessing those perfect goals. To me, it's a reflection of how each member of an orchestra brings a unique set of qualities that contribute to the success of the entire "game"; or concert.

What made you excited to open the season in Berkeley?

I'm thrilled to make my debut with the Bay Area's most innovative orchestra! Opening the season is a tremendous honor, and I look forward to sharing the stage with your incredible musicians and guest soloist Gabriel Cabezas as we present Visions of Elysium—a program that speaks to both our present moment and the timeless emotions that connect us all.

Berkeley's rich tradition of musical innovation makes it an inspiring place to create. I'm excited to engage with an audience that is curious, open-minded, and passionate about music, and I can't wait to explore your city, connect with your community, and meet the people who contribute to Berkeley Symphony's internationally renowned reputation.

Guest Artist & Composers



Gabriel Cabezas, cello

Cellist Gabriel Cabezas is a prolific and sought-after soloist and collaborator. Praised for his artistry and charisma, he is as comfortable interpreting new works as he is with the pillar scores of the cello repertoire and was named one of the "Composers and Performers to Watch" by the Washington Post. Cabezas has appeared with America's finest symphony orchestras and has inspired and premiered dozens of new works by vanguard composers of the 21st century.

Cabezas is known for his extensive creative partnership with composer Gabriella Smith. Together, they released *Lost Coast*, a dynamic album of original music composed by Smith in response to climate change. It was named one of NPR Music's "Favorite Albums Of 2021" and was featured by the *New York Times* as a "Classical Album to Hear Right Now." The duo Gabriella Smith & Gabriel

Cabezas continues to write and record. Their live performances in the 2025/26 season include appearances at Seattle Symphony's Octave 9, LA Phil's Green Umbrella series, and San Francisco Symphony's SoundBox series.

Cabezas premiered Smith's concerto Lost Coast, a reimagining of the album as a daring work for solo cello and orchestra, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel in May 2023. In the 2025/26 season, Cabezas will perform Smith's Lost Coast concerto in a pair of transatlantic performances with conductor Gemma New, first with the BBC Philharmonic for the piece's UK premiere and then with the Seattle Symphony, where Cabezas will serve as the orchestra's Artist in Focus. He will also perform this signature work with the Chicago Symphony under Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Cabezas is a member of the genre-leading chamber sextet yMusic. Their virtuosic execution and unique configuration have attracted high profile collaborators—from Paul Simon to Bill T. Jones to Ben Folds. Cabezas also co-founded the string group Owls, described as "a dream group" by the *New York Times*. The quartet weaves together new compositions with fresh arrangements of music ranging from the 1600s to the present. Their debut album, *Rare Birds*, was released in 2025.

Cabezas has recorded extensively as a studio musician, appearing on releases by Phoebe Bridgers, John Legend, Rufus Wainright and Taylor Swift, among many others. Cabezas studied at the Curtis Institute of Music under Carter Brey.



Samy Moussa, composer

norn in Montréal in 1984 and now based in Berlin, composer-conductor Samy Moussa is one of the world's leading composers. Moussa's work has been performed by many of the world's most prestigious orchestras including Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has also featured as Artist in Residence at Toronto Symphony Orchestra and works closely with Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal. The 2022/23 season saw the world premiere of his Trombone Concerto "Yericho" with Orchestre national de Lvon and trombonist Jörgen van Rijen, as well as the European premiere of his Second Symphony with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Proms 2023, whilst Moussa

himself made appearances as conductor with Musikkollegium Winterthur and Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming highlights in the 2023/24 season include the world premieres of *Antigone*, an oratorio for female chorus and orchestra conducted by Erik Nielsen with Dutch National Opera & Ballet, and *Adgilis Deda*, a hymn for orchestra by Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra to be conducted by Manfred Honeck.

In the 2023/24 season, Moussa conducts Orchestra della Svizzera italiana, as well as Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Bilbao Orkestra Sinfonikoa. Recent seasons have seen him take up the baton to lead a range of repertoire from Classical to contemporary music with Bayerisches Staatsorchester, RSO Wien, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, Staatskapelle Halle and Zürcher Kammerorchester.

Regularly programmed by the world's most prestigious orchestras, Moussa's works have been commissioned and performed by the likes of Wiener Philharmoniker, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, DSO Berlin, Dutch National Opera and Ballet, Dallas Symphony Orchestra and Brussels Philharmonic. This season sees even more premiere orchestras take up his work with performances by NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. His works remain popular internationally-renowned ductors such as Hannu Lintu, Manfred Honeck, Kent Nagano, Kevin John Edusei, Chistian Thielemann, Christoph Eschenbach, Gustavo Gimeno and Fabien Gabel.



Alyssa Weinberg, composer

A lyssa Weinberg uses color, texture and gesture to channel big emotions, creating music that is "quite literally stunning" (*Chicago Tribune*). She is fascinated with perception and loves to play with form, subverting expectations to create surreal scenarios, often in dreamy, multidisciplinary productions.

Highlights of the 2024/25 season include the premiere of Bioluminescence, commissioned by the Juilliard School in collaboration with ARCO Collaborative. artistic director Jennifer Koh, for the Sounds of US Festival presented by the Kennedy Center, and the premiere of The water-clock bleeds, commissioned by an international consortium of over 50 saxophonists, in collaboration with consortium leaders Aporii (Doug O'Connor and Jeff Siegfried). This season also celebrates the announcement of two new operas: Claude & Marcel, written with librettist Stephanie Fleischmann and director Elkhanah Pulitzer, commissioned by West Edge Opera and premiering in August 2027; and DRIFT, written with librettist J. Mae Barizo and director Mary Birnbaum, commissioned by Opera Saratoga, and made possible by a commissioning grant from Opera America's 2024 Opera Grants for Women Composers, supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

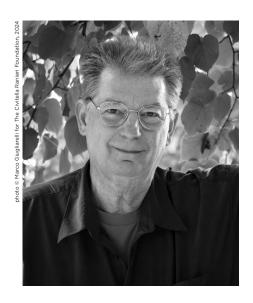
Weinberg's music has been performed by celebrated artists and ensembles around the world, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and Louisville Orchestra. She has received commissions and awards from organizations including Chamber Music America, Copland House, New Music USA, and FringeArts. Weinberg's percussion music has been celebrated for its inventive use of color and innovative performance techniques, most notably for her prepared vibraphone duo *Table Talk* which has received hundreds of performances across the globe.

Weinberg's poetic monodrama *ISOLA*, a prismatic meditation on time, mental health, and isolation written in collaboration with librettist J. Mae Barizo, was premiered by Long Beach Opera in February 2024 to critical acclaim, and she was awarded a 2022 Opera America Discovery Grant to facilitate the development of *DRIFT*, an opera with collaborator Barizo centering themes of migration, motherhood and climate change.

A dedicated educator, Weinberg currently serves on the composition faculty at Mannes School of Music. She is the Founding Director of the *Composers Institute* at the Lake George Music Festival, a summer program that centers mentorship and community alongside the craft of composition.

Weinberg holds a PhD in composition from Princeton, as well as degrees from Vanderbilt, Manhattan School of Music, and the Curtis Institute of Music.

Pre-Concert Talk



Paul Dresher, pre-concert talk host

P aul 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 electroacoustic 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.

FREE PRE-CONCERT TALKS — 1 HOUR BEFORE

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.



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About Berkeley Symphony



ounded by **Thomas Rarick** in 1971, Berkeley Symphony has become an integral part of the Bay Area classical music scene. The orchestra, known for its blend of classical and contemporary music, has grown into a respected institution that both honors their roots and embraces innovation. Starting in 1978, under the visionary leadership of Music Director **Kent Nagano** (1978-2009), Berkeley Symphony gained an international reputation for their adventurous programming, becoming known for premiering the music of international composers and showcasing young local talents.

Berkeley Symphony continued to make history in the intervening years, welcoming **Joana Carneiro** as their third Music Director in 2009, followed by the dynamic **Joseph Young** in 2018. His tenure, which concluded in 2025, strengthened the symphony's commitment to innovative programming, award-winning educational initiatives led by Education Director **Ming Luke**, and vibrant community engagement programs like Students at the Symphony. Now, looking ahead, Berkeley Symphony is entering an exciting new chapter—one rooted in curiosity, creativity, and a deep connection to community.

Music in the Schools



rafted 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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