

FABLES & FOLKLORE

JANUARY 25, 2026 | 4:00PM

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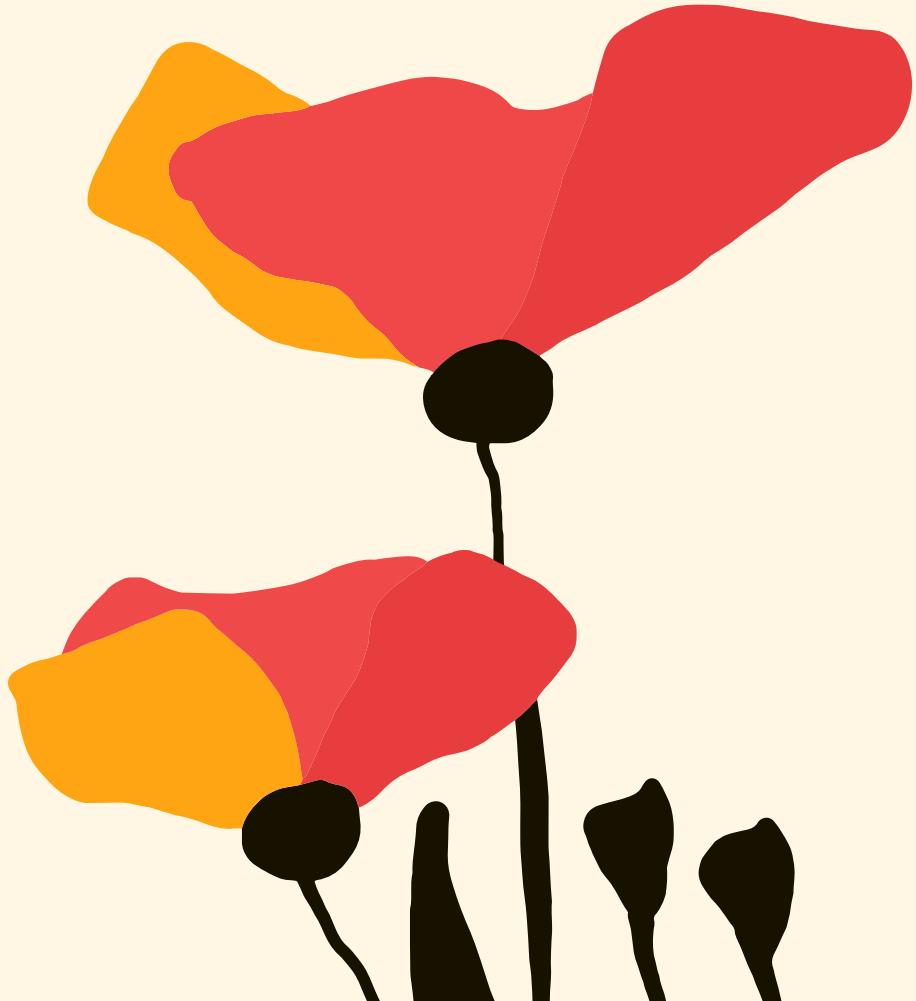
B
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SYMPHONY

25
26
SEASON

CAROLYN KUAN, guest conductor

MARC TEICHOLZ, guitar

HUANG RUO | CLARICE ASSAD | ANTONÍN DVORÁK





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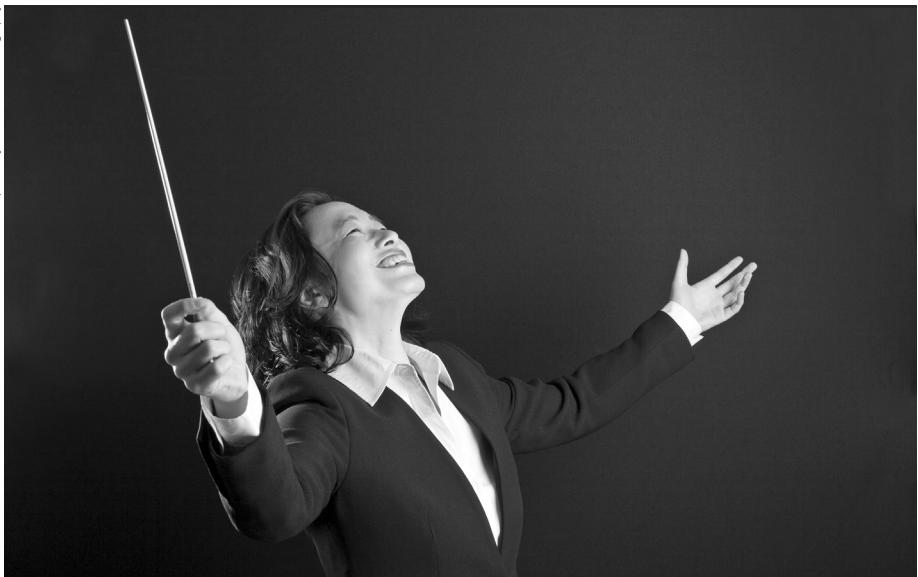
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Berkeley Symphony 25/26 Season

photo by Jane Shauck Photography



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Message from the Executive Director

photo by Roots & Shoots Photography



Welcome to *Fables & Folklore*!

Today's concert explores mythology and melody: musical reflections on images of "home," shaped by different landscapes and legends.

We are delighted to welcome Carolyn Kuan to the podium. She is familiar to Bay Area audiences through her work with the San Francisco Opera, where she conducted the world premiere of Huang Ruo's stunning new opera *The Monkey King* this fall. I'm especially pleased to extend a warm welcome to friends and fans from the Opera who are joining us on our side of the Bay tonight.

At the heart of this program is a concerto written for one of our own: Berkeley-based guitarist Marc Teicholz performs Clarice Assad's concerto *O Saci-Pererê*, composed especially for him. The piece transports us to the forests of Assad's native Brazil and introduces the mischievous Saci-Pererê, a shapeshifting trickster spirit drawn from Brazilian folklore.

Thank you for joining us for our final Symphonic Series concert of the season this evening. It has been a pleasure to introduce you to our remarkable guest conductors throughout 2025/26, and I hope you'll stay tuned as we look ahead—there are good things on the horizon.

And now, let us take you on a journey through musical worlds full of myths, stories, and imagination.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maureen".

Please join us for a reception to meet the guest artists following the concert!



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The Orchestra

Violin I

René Mandel, *Concertmaster**

Stuart Canin Chair

Matt Szemela,
*Associate Concertmaster**

Emanuela Nikiforova,
*Assistant Concertmaster**

Julia Churchill

Lisa Zadek

Erica Ward

Annie Li

Noam Elisha

Fred Chang

Violin II

Dan Flanagan, *Principal*

Sarah Elert, *Assistant Principal**

Monika Gruber

Katie Allen

Lylia Guion

Larisa Kopylovsky

Ann Eastman

Gayle Tsern Strang

Viola

Darcy Rindt, *Principal**

Alex Volonts,
*Assistant Principal**

Paula Karolak

Lisa Ponton

Omid Assadi

Rick Diamond

Peter Liepman

Cello

Carol Rice, *Principal*

Stephanie Wu, *Assistant Principal*

Chloé Mendola

Cello *continued*

Wanda Warkentin

Peter Bedrossian

Nick Carlin

Bass

Alden Cohen, *Principal**

David Horn,
*Assistant Principal**

Aaron Shaul

Flute

Stacey Pelinka, *Principal**

Janet Maestre Principal Flute Chair

Bethanne Walker

Piccolo

Bethanne Walker

Oboe

Ben Brogadir, *Principal*

Deborah Shidler Principal Oboe Chair

Bennie Cottone

English Horn

Ben Brogadir

Clarinet

Bruce Foster, *Principal*

Karen Sremac

Bassoon

Carla Wilson, *Principal*

Ravinder Sehgal

Contrabassoon

Carla Wilson

Horn

Logan Bryck, *Principal**

Rich Hall

Alicia Telford

Sophia Chen

Tuba

Forrest Byram, *Principal**

Trumpet

William B. Harvey, *Principal**

Kale Cumings

Timpani

Kevin Neuhoff, *Principal*

John W. Dewes Chair

Trombone

Chase Waterbury, *Principal**

Kathleen G. Henschel Chair

Katie Curran

Kurt Patzner

Percussion

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Today's Program

Carolyn Kuan Conductor

Huang Ruo

Folk Songs for Orchestra

I: Flower Drum Song from Feng Yang
鳳陽花鼓

II: Love Song from Kang Ding
康定情歌

III: Little Blue Flower
蘭花花

IV: The Girl from Da Ban City
达坂城的姑娘

Clarice Assad

O Saci-Pererê

Concerto for Guitar and Chamber Orchestra

Marc Teicholz guitar

Intermission

Antonín Dvořák

Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88

I: Allegro con brio

II: Adagio

III: Allegretto grazioso—Molto vivace

IV: Allegro ma non troppo

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Program Notes

Huang Ruo

Born on September 28, 1976, in Qionghai, Hainan Island, China; resides in New York City

Folk Songs for Orchestra

Composed: 2012/2019

First performance: *Folk Songs for Orchestra* was first performed in its original three-movement form in 2012 by the San Francisco Symphony under Carolyn Kuan; a fourth movement, commissioned by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, was added in 2019, expanding the work into its current form.

Estimated length: 16 minutes

Scored for: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, tuba, timpani, two percussionists (bongos, congas, bass drum, rain stick, metal wind chimes, chimes, crash cymbal, Chinese crash cymbal, Chinese opera gong, large Indonesian button gong, triangle, glockenspiel, large tam-tam, wood block, tambourine), and strings

Last fall, the Bay Area became a focal point in the globally peripatetic career of Huang Ruo, whose work has long drawn on folklore, myth, and storytelling across cultures. The world premiere at San Francisco Opera this past November of *The Monkey King*—an operatic reimaging of one of the most beloved figures in Chinese folklore and legend, to a libretto by David Henry Hwang—drew widespread acclaim and

was recognized by *The New York Times* as one of the best classical music performances of 2025. The production was led by Carolyn Kuan, whose long engagement with Huang's work has made her one of the composer's most compelling interpreters.

Huang Ruo is a multifaceted artist whose career encompasses composing, conducting, piano performance, and singing. His work effortlessly traverses cultural, stylistic, and disciplinary boundaries. Born in 1976 on Hainan Island, China's southernmost province, he came of age during the social and cultural thaw that followed the Cultural Revolution—a period that reshaped how music could be imagined, studied, and shared. His father, a composer of songs and works for traditional Chinese instruments, and his mother, a doctor who loved to sing, surrounded him early on with sound, setting the stage for a lifelong engagement with music as a lived, communal practice.

From an early age, Huang's musical education unfolded along multiple paths. He began studying piano and composition at six, later entering the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he absorbed both the Western classical canon and Chinese traditional music. After completing his studies there, Huang moved to the United States, earning degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory and the Juilliard School. He now lives in New York and teaches composition at the Mannes School of Music, but he is frequently on the road, in demand

across continents as he moves fluidly between rehearsals, premieres, and residencies.

Central to Huang's artistic outlook is a resistance to easy binaries. He has often rejected the shorthand of "East meets West," instead describing his music as emerging from what he calls a "third culture"—a space in which traditions intersect and give rise to something new rather than merely hybrid.

In *Folk Songs for Orchestra*, Huang reframes questions of cultural synthesis as processes of transformation, treating inherited melodies as material to be reimagined rather than preserved. Folk songs, he writes, "reflect the life, culture, and soul of a civilization," and Huang's connection to those selected for this work is deeply personal. He recalls having "always had a fond love for Chinese folk songs," shaped by the country's diversity: "more than 50 ethnic groups, each with its own culture, traditions, and folk songs."

Initiated as a commission from San Francisco Symphony in 2012, Huang describes *Folk Songs for Orchestra* as "an ongoing project . . . to compile and set folk tunes from various parts of China into Western orchestral form. The goal is not only to preserve and renew the original folk songs, but also to transform, elaborate, and develop them into new, original pieces of art that also contain an organic personal voice." The work, in its current form, encompasses four widely known Chinese folk songs, each associated with a distinct region and tradition, as Huang explains in the following commentary.

In the composer's words

"The first one is the 'Flower Drum Song from Feng Yang' (鳳陽花鼓). Almost 100 different songs are performed in Fengyang Flower Drum, which boasts a long history. Known for its flower-drum performances, Fengyang is the birthplace of Zhu Yuanzhang, the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty. At performances that include singing and dancing in Fengyang County of Anhui Province, 'Fengyang Flower Drum' has been passed down over the centuries. In terms of its forms, 'Fengyang Flower Drum' can be divided into three parts: Flower Drum Lantern, Flower Drum Play, and Flower Drum Gong. Together, these are entitled 'Fengyang Flower Drum,' or 'Three Flowers of Fengyang.'

The second piece is called 'Love Song from Kang Ding' (康定情歌). This tune is one of the most popular Chinese folk songs. Its simple melody and vivid rhythm are easy to remember and sing, and its lyrics tell of a timeless theme—love. This song's origin is from the Sichuan province.

The third piece, 'Little Blue Flower' (蘭花花), is based on a simple, beautiful, and timeless folk song from the northern part of the Shanxi province (陝北). The symphonic version is created as a dialogue and interplay between a solo violin (performed by the concertmaster or a soloist) and the orchestra.

The fourth piece is called 'The Girl from Da Ban City' (达坂城的姑娘). It is also known as 'Carriage Driver's Song.' It is from the Xinjiang province and is sung by carriage drivers in Turpan. The lively music shows the enthusiastic and colorful characteristics of Uyghur folk

song, reflecting its people's heartfelt admiration for Xinjiang, the 'hometown of songs and dances.'

Clarice Assad

Born: February 9, 1978, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; currently resides in Chicago

***O Saci-Pererê* Concerto for Guitar and Chamber Orchestra**

Composed: 2013

First performance: January 14, 2016, with guitarist Marc Teicholz and conductor Nicole Paiement at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Estimated length: 23 minutes

Scored for: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon (doubling contrabassoon), horn, trumpet, trombone, timpani, 2 percussionists (large suspended cymbal, sizzle cymbal, large caxixi, shaker, plastic hose, vibraphone, glockenspiel, agogô, brake drum, keychain, castanets, drum set, drum set—with bass drum muted for a dry sound—hi-hat, snare drum, large cabasa, marimba, large bass drum, tam-tam, and vibraphone), strings, and solo guitar

Brazilian folklore has provided a recurring point of departure for the music of Clarice Assad, alongside her interest in Brazilian cultural ritual more broadly. Her guitar quartet *Danças Nativas* (2008/09) reflects the former, while the participatory *É Gol!* (2019), inspired by the Brazilian soccer player

Marta Vieira da Silva, draws on the communal mythology of the sport. In the guitar concerto *O Saci-Pererê*, which we hear this afternoon, folklore even serves as a structural principle, shaping the narrative arc of the piece as well as its musical behavior.

Assad's musical roots run deep. She is the daughter of guitarist-composer Sérgio Assad, and the niece of both guitarist Odair Assad and vocalist-composer Badi Assad, members of a generation-spanning Brazilian music family that has gained prominence on concert stages around the world.

Alongside this lineage, Assad has built an international profile of her own through residencies and commissions with major orchestras. In 2025, she was named one of eight recipients of the Chicago-based Meier Achievement Awards, which recognize composers whose work combines artistic distinction with broader cultural engagement.

Across her recent work, questions of cultural identity, narrative, and participation recur, alongside a sustained interest in how contemporary music is framed and encountered. This concern has led Assad to explore formats—across concert works, educational projects, and multimedia collaborations—that seek to make listening more immediate and less exclusionary.

Trained in classical composition, Assad is also active as a pianist and vocalist. Her scores frequently incorporate elements drawn from Brazilian popular traditions, jazz, and improvisation. Rather than confine herself to a single stylistic lane, Assad folds these diverse idioms into an innovative musical

language animated by rhythm and color and marked by unpredictable elements of gesture, play, and theatrical energy.

Composed in 2013 and premiered a decade ago at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the guitar concerto *O Saci-Pererê* was written for and dedicated to guitarist Marc Teicholz, a longtime member of the Bay Area's contemporary-music community and a member of the Conservatory's faculty.

The title alludes to one of Brazil's most iconic folkloric figures, a mischievous, one-legged trickster whose uncanny agility and shape-shifting identities have fascinated the composer since childhood. Assad recalls reading so often about Saci-Pererê that she used to believe he actually existed. She was especially intrigued by his characterization as "a magical being" and by his unusual appearance: "He is short, has only one leg but can move swiftly through the woods," she writes, and has "dark, chocolate mocha skin and wears a red magic cap that enables him to be invisible, disappear, and reappear whenever he wishes."

Emerging from a fusion of Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian traditions, the lore around Saci-Pererê carries traces of enslavement-era storytelling, resistance, and satire. The myth casts him as a prankster who delights in disorder and loud, boisterous laughter, yet also as a figure who can turn menacing—"mostly towards people who are not nice," as Assad wryly notes, a moral ambiguity that makes him, in her words, "a good guy in a way." The character's volatility is further complicated by transformation: in another guise,

in which he is known as "Matita-Perê," Saci becomes a bird "who sings a beautiful, mournful song."

Cast in a familiar three-movement format—medium, slow, fast—the concerto devotes each movement to illuminating a different facet of Saci's personality. The opening movement, "The Magic Cap," captures his playful, childlike spirit and "love for harmless pranks," as Assad puts it, through scherzo-like shifts and rhythmic sparkle. In "Matita-Perê," the slow movement, Saci manifests in his bird transformation. Assad allows the guitar to sing a more lyrical, introspective line as the bird prepares for "a long flight over a rocky mountain." The finale, "Dust Devil," boils over with volatile energy to bring Saci's "evil character" into relief.

Throughout the concerto, the guitar functions as the central protagonist and bard, driving the musical narrative and shaping its successive transformations. Assad treats the chamber orchestra as an active participant in the drama, producing an array of nontraditional sounds—percussive effects, rustling textures, and sudden bursts of noise—that blur the line between orchestral texture and theatrical sound-making. *O Saci-Pererê*'s sense of play and mischief thus extends beyond the solo part.

What to listen for

The concerto opens with a jolt of "sarcastic humor" on a forceful unison chord, as the ensemble erupts violently. The string players are instructed to speak loudly, then diminish to echoing whispers, testing the boundary between music, speech, and gesture.

Throughout the concerto, Assad introduces unusual sonorities, often comic but at times mysterious, that mirror Saci's pranks and abrupt appearances: metallic clangs from brake drum and agogô, rustling effects from caxixi and cabasa, dry rhythmic snaps from a muted drum set, and bursts of noise from objects like keychains and plastic hose. The guitar is subtly amplified, allowing its quietest percussive taps and fragile lyrical lines to register clearly amid the orchestra's bursts of noise and color.

An extended cadenza provides a structural hinge into the second movement, where the guitar's line floats over hushed textures and breath-like wind responses. The finale tightens the screws, unleashing sharper attacks, restless percussion, and rapid-fire figures that drive the music toward an unsettled, volatile close.

Estimated length: 35 minutes

Scored for: two flutes (second doubling piccolo), two oboes (first doubling English horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings

Antonín Dvořák's Eighth Symphony stands among his most open-hearted responses to the natural world and the vernacular traditions that shaped the Czech composer's musical imagination. Written amid the countryside surrounding his summer home at Vysoká (about 50 kilometers southwest of Prague), the work draws on birdsong, dance rhythms, and folk-inflected gestures as generative musical forces.

Dvořák approached the prospect of composing the Eighth, which he began in August 1889, with a fresh spirit of confidence. The success of his turmoil-filled Seventh Symphony in 1885 had given him much-needed validation, in the face of German-Austrian ethnocentrism, and proved that he unquestionably belonged to the great symphonic tradition.

This took some of the pressure off Dvořák, and he returned to the genre in 1889 eager to express his unique perspective. Dvořák's appointment to the Bohemian Academy of Science, Literature, and Arts provided the immediate impetus for the work, and he conducted members of the National Theater Orchestra (of which he had once been a member) at the premiere in February 1890.

The Eighth would be a symphony, the composer remarked, "different from the other symphonies, with individual

Antonín Dvořák

Born on September 8, 1841, in Nelahozeves, Bohemia, just north of Prague (then part of the Austrian Empire); died on May 1, 1904, in Prague

Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88

Composed: 1888

First performance: February 2, 1890, in Prague, with the composer conducting the Prague National Theater Orchestra

thoughts worked out in a new way.” Reporting to Dvořák on the Vienna premiere, the conductor Hans Richter wrote: “You would have enjoyed this performance very much. We all felt that it is a great work and so we were all enthusiastic.”

The Eighth contains typically Dvořákian touches of Czech musicality and local color. But this sense of a personal voice is even more pervasive here, combined artfully with his reverence for the idyllic natural surroundings of Vysoká. At moments, the Eighth Symphony suggests a beguiling pastoral ode; elsewhere, ambivalence and unpredictability come to the fore.

What to listen for

The symphony opens in a singing style with a veiled melancholy in an implied G minor—material that recurs at several important junctures in the first movement—before accelerating and settling at home in a gently radiant G major, like sunlight suddenly bursting through a

tree canopy. A flute introduces birdsong, an important thematic idea rather than mere picturesque coloring.

Such pastoral moments coexist with energetic, brass-driven climaxes. The effect is not so much a retreat into nature as the discovery, within nature’s realm, of a vast and unpredictable emotional spectrum. Dvořák recombines and diversifies his basic musical elements, giving the impression of ideas germinating organically into abundant variety.

The technique of variation is fundamental to nature, and Dvořák exploits it as a musical strategy. The Adagio unfolds as a multi-hued set of reflections on a theme introduced by the strings at the outset. One variation subtly recalls the serene birdcall music from the first movement, while another grows stormier and more dramatic. Changes of instrumentation are integral to the movement’s expressive logic.

In lieu of a boisterous scherzo, Dvořák offers a melancholy waltz in G minor as the third movement. Its somber tone is counterbalanced by a sweetly innocent central section that recycles material from a one-act comic opera written earlier in his career.

Opening with trumpet fanfares, the finale explores a wide range of variations on a two-part theme first presented by the cellos—yet another echo of the first movement’s flute theme. The inventive model recalls Beethoven’s *Eroica* as well as Brahms, but the music is unmistakably Dvořák’s own. The final minutes are at once magical and spiced with Czech humor, growing almost giddy in the symphony’s closing bars.

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Conductor Carolyn Kuan

photo by Allegro Anderson



Carolyn Kuan is internationally recognized for her extraordinary versatility, innovative programming, and dedication to contemporary music. Throughout her distinguished career, she has developed strong relationships with leading orchestras, opera and ballet companies, and music festivals worldwide. Since 2011, Kuan has been Music Director of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, significantly expanding its artistic reach and reputation.

In May 2024, Carolyn Kuan conducted the critically acclaimed New York premiere of Huang Ruo's *An American Soldier*, a co-production of the Boston Lyric Opera and the American Composers Orchestra. In July 2024, she made her highly anticipated debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming highlights include *M. Butterfly* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at London's

Barbican Centre, as well as debut performances with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, and Rheinische Philharmonie in Germany.

In North America, Kuan has led renowned ensembles such as the Baltimore Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Omaha Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Seattle Symphony, and Toronto Symphony. Her work also includes engagements with the New York City Ballet, the Florida Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, and appearances at the Colorado Music Festival and Glimmerglass Opera Festival.

Internationally, she has worked with prestigious orchestras including the Bournemouth Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, Singapore Symphony, Residentie Orkest, and the Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo. She has also collaborated with the Royal Danish Ballet, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and Borusan Philharmonic Orchestra in Istanbul.

As an opera conductor, Carolyn Kuan has distinguished herself with a diverse repertoire. She conducted Stewart Wallace's *Harvey Milk* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis and Huang Ruo's *M. Butterfly* at Santa Fe Opera. In the same season, she made her critically acclaimed debut at English National Opera with Philip Glass' *Satyagraha*. She also made a significant impact with New York City Opera's 2019 production of Iain Bell's *Stonewall*, marking the 50th anniversary of the

Stonewall Uprising. Earlier, she debuted with Portland Opera in 2018, conducting *La Cenerentola*.

A recognized expert in Asian contemporary music, Carolyn Kuan directed the San Francisco Symphony's annual Chinese New Year concert from 2007 to 2012 and launched the Celebrate Asia! program with the Seattle Symphony. She has led world premieres with Music from Japan and multimedia productions like the *Butterfly Lovers Concerto* and *A Monkey's Tale* as part of the Detroit Symphony's World Music Series.

Carolyn Kuan's passion for multimedia collaborations shines in *Life: A Journey Through Time*, a project with Philip Glass and National Geographic photographer Frans Lanting. Developed with the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, this production merged music and photography to spotlight environmental issues. Notable performances include the Ninth World Wilderness Congress and the CERN Large Hadron Collider inauguration, where she led the Orchestre de la

Suisse Romande in front of global leaders and Nobel laureates.

Carolyn Kuan's past roles include Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony, Artist-in-Residence at the New York City Ballet, and Assistant Conductor of the Baltimore Opera. Her recording with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, featuring works by Chinese composers, debuted in 2012 on the Naxos label.

A recipient of numerous awards, Carolyn Kuan was the first woman to receive the Herbert von Karajan Conducting Fellowship in 2003, leading to her residency at the 2004 Salzburg Festival. She was also the inaugural winner of the Taki Concordia Fellowship and has received honors from the Women's Philharmonic, Conductors Guild, and Susan W. Rose Fund for Music.

Born in Taiwan, Carolyn Kuan moved to the U.S. at age 14 to pursue her music studies. She graduated cum laude from Smith College, earned a Master of Music from the University of Illinois, and a Performance Diploma from the Peabody Conservatory.



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Get to Know Carolyn Kuan

photo by Steven Lischkever



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

I grew up with music and studied piano, violin, flute, harp, and voice, but I actually never imagined I would become a conductor. I attended Smith College and studied business and computer science. My advisors were encouraging and I found the subjects logical and intuitive to me. Music was my love and hobby, and it was more elusive. The more I learned, the more questions I had. There were also many discouragements. Ultimately, I think it was my curiosity that led me on the path to conducting.

What do you love about your home ensemble, the Hartford Symphony Orchestra? What are some things you're proud of in the years you've worked with them?

This is my 15th season, and it's been an extraordinary journey. I was the first female, first Asian and youngest music director appointed to the HSO. What I value most, though, is the trust and relationships I've built over the years—with the audience, the musicians, and the organization as a whole. From day one, my vision has been for the HSO to be an institution that serves the community. Together, we've embraced curiosity and taken creative risks, exploring programming that reaches well beyond the traditional concert hall. From collaborations with visual artists and actors, to concerts involving chefs, dogs, puppets, breakers, to interactive concert experiences, it has been a very special journey indeed.

You're recognized as an expert in contemporary music. Obviously



this is a huge category of music, but could you tell us some recommended listening as an entry point?

People often think of contemporary music as the “vegetables” of classical music. In reality, it is exciting, expressive, and already part of our lives. For me, contemporary music includes the film scores of our favorite movies and TV shows, the music that shapes video games, and of course, new works written for opera, ballet and the concert stage. I am also drawn to contemporary works that feature less commonly heard instruments—such as the pipa, koto, sitar, bandoneon etc—which bring fresh colors and perspectives into the orchestral world. As an entry point, I encourage listeners to start with what they already love and follow their curiosity from there. With tools like YouTube and ChatGPT, it’s easier than ever to discover contemporary music and explore the sounds of our time.

Huang Ruo’s *Folk Songs for Orchestra* is on tonight’s program, and this past fall, you conducted his opera *The Monkey King* in San Francisco. What was that like?

Huang Ruo and I have known each other since 2011, and I actually conducted the world premiere of the original Folk Songs for Orchestra with San Francisco Symphony in 2012. For a conductor, it is very special to have the trust that grows out of a long friendship with a composer. *The Monkey King* marked our fourth grand opera collaboration since 2014, and it was an experience I don’t quite have words for. The production itself was ambitious and electrifying, and the response was overwhelming on every level, including its recognition by *The New York Times* as one of the “Best Classical Performances of 2025.” Perhaps most meaningful of all was the connection we felt with audiences during the sold-out performances. Sharing such a powerful and inspiring work with listeners is why we do what we do.

What are some of your hobbies and interests outside of orchestral music?

I enjoy meditation, philosophy, yoga, hiking, good food, and spending time with friends. I also find myself happily chain-watching C-dramas, which tend to run 30+ episodes, though I like to tell myself it’s all in the service of keeping my Chinese sharp!

We’re so thrilled to have you close our season of guest conductors. What made you excited about this opportunity?

It is always exciting to work with a new orchestra, especially one I have admired since my students days, when Maestro Kent Nagano was music director of Berkeley Symphony! I also have friends who went to UC Berkeley, so I can’t wait to finally get to know the city.

Guest Artist & Composers

photo courtesy Marc Teicholz



Marc Teicholz, guitar

Described by Soundboard magazine as “among the best we have ever heard,” classical guitarist Marc Teicholz, first prize-winner of the 1989 International Guitar Foundation of America competition, has toured extensively throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe, receiving critical acclaim for his recitals and master classes. Some of the major concert halls he has performed in include Los Angeles’ Ambassador Auditorium, Atlanta’s Spivey Hall, and Columbia’s Koger Center.

Mr. Teicholz has toured Russia, Poland, and Switzerland as well as Southeast Asia, Fiji, and New Zealand under the auspices of the U.S.I.A. Artistic Ambassador program. He has appeared as a soloist with the Pacific Symphony, Far

Eastern Orchestra in Russia, the Cordoba Orchestra in Spain, the Houston Chamber Orchestra, the California Symphony, the Oakland Symphony, the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, and the Maui Symphony. Mr. Teicholz also toured with the popular quartet, “A Festival of Four.” He has recorded several solo CD’s for Naxos, Sugo, and Menus and Music, as well as the pilot soundtrack for George Lucas’ *Young Indiana Jones*. He enjoys working with composers, including Andrew Imbrie, Dusan Bogdanovic and Lee Actor, to produce new guitar literature and has premiered several new works written for him. Releases include a solo CD of waltzes (*Valseana*) recorded on vintage instruments with GSI which was named by *Acoustic Magazine* as one of the 10 best CDs of 2011 and a debut CD with the Pacific Guitar Ensemble. A recording of the music of Ernesto Nazareth, arranged and produced by Sergio Assad, was released in 2016 and named by *Acoustic Magazine* as one of the 10 best CDs of that year. He also premiered *O Saci-Pererê*, a concerto dedicated to him by Clarice Assad, in 2016.

He is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and at California State University East Bay. Recently he has participated at the GuitarWest Festival in Calgary, the Moab Music Festival, the California Summer Arts Festival and the Weathersfield Music Festival in Vermont. Marc Teicholz graduated *magna cum laude* from Yale University, 1985, received a master’s degree from the Yale School of Music, 1986, and a J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley at the Boalt School of Law, 1990.



Huang Ruo, composer

Composer Huang Ruo has been lauded by *The New York Times* for having “a distinctive style.” His vibrant and inventive musical voice draws equal inspiration from Chinese ancient and folk music, Western avant-garde, experimental, noise, natural and processed sound, rock, and jazz to create a seamless, organic integration using a compositional technique he calls “Dimensionalism.”

Huang Ruo’s diverse compositional works span from orchestra, chamber music, opera, theater, and dance, to cross-genre, sound installation, architectural installation, multimedia, experimental improvisation, folk rock, and film. His music has been premiered and performed by the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra,

San Francisco Symphony, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, National Polish Radio Orchestra, Santa Fe Opera, Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, LA Opera, Seattle Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Royal Danish Opera, Asko/Schoenberg, Ensemble Modern, London Sinfonietta, and conductors such as Wolfgang Sawallisch, Marin Alsop, Andrew Davis, Michael Tilson Thomas, and James Conlon. His opera *An American Soldier* (with libretto by David Henry Hwang) has recently received its world premiere at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis in June 2018, and was named one of the best classical music events in 2018 by *The New York Times*. His installation opera *Paradise Interrupted* was premiered at the Spoleto Festival USA in 2015 and was performed at the Lincoln Center Festival in 2016. Another opera, *Dr. Sun Yat-Sen*, premiered at the Santa Fe Opera in 2014.

His opera *M. Butterfly* (with libretto by David Henry Hwang) received its world premiere with the Santa Fe Opera in 2022. His recent new opera *The Monkey King* premiered with the San Francisco Opera in the fall of 2025. He served as the first composer-in-residence for Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam, and was the visiting composer for the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra in Brazil. Huang Ruo was born in Hainan Island, China in 1976—the year the Chinese Cultural Revolution ended. His father, who is also a composer, began teaching him composition and piano when he was six years old. Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, when China was opening its gate to the Western world, he received both traditional and Western education at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. As a result of the dramatic cultural and economic

changes in China in the 80s and 90s, his education expanded from Bach, Mozart, Stravinsky, and Lutoslawski, to include the Beatles, rock and roll, heavy metal, and jazz. Huang Ruo was able to absorb all of these newly allowed Western influences equally.

After winning the Henry Mancini Award at the 1995 International Film and Music Festival in Switzerland, he moved to the United States to further his education. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of

Music, and Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in composition from the Juilliard School.

Huang Ruo is a composition faculty at the Mannes School of Music in NY, and is the artistic director and conductor of Ensemble FIRE. He was selected as a Young Leader Fellow by the National Committee on United States–China Relations in 2006. Huang Ruo's music is administered exclusively by European American Music Distributors Company (ASCAP).

pianist, inventive vocalist and educator is acclaimed for her evocative colors, rich textures, and diverse stylistic range.

What motivates Assad? What drives her passion and creativity? Writing and playing music that inspires and encourages audiences' imaginations to break free of often self-imposed constraints is just the beginning. She endeavors to harness the incredible and intangible power of music to connect people and transform lives through original works, commissions, and education programs that give voice to everything from the impact of climate change to issues of social justice, gender equity, and the empowerment of young voices.

With her talent sought-after by artists and organizations worldwide, the polyglot musician continues to attract new audiences both onstage and off. In the recording arena, Assad has released seven solo albums and appeared on or had her works performed on another 34. Her music is represented on Cedille Records, SONY Masterworks, Nonesuch, Adventure Music, Edge, Telarc, NSS



Clarice Assad, composer

“She energetically bends music to her will and reshapes it with fascinating results.”—*Jazz Improv Magazine*.

A powerful communicator renowned for her musical scope and versatility, Brazilian-American Clarice Assad is a significant artistic voice in the classical, world music, pop, and jazz genres. The Grammy Award–nominated composer, celebrated

Music, GHA, and CHANDOS. Her innovative and award-winning *VOXploration* education series on music creation, songwriting, and improvisation has been presented throughout the world.

The prolific composer has more than 70 works to her credit, including numerous commissions for Carnegie Hall, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Boston Youth Orchestra, Chicago Sinfonietta, San Jose Chamber Orchestra, the Bravo! Vail Music Festival, and the La Jolla Music Festival, to name a few. Her compositions have been recorded by some of the most prominent names in classical music, including percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and oboist Liang Wang. Assad's music has been performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Tokyo Symphony, Queensland Symphony, and the Orquestra Sinfônica de São Paulo. She has served as a composer-in-residence for the Albany Symphony, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, New Century Chamber Orchestra, and the Boston Landmarks Orchestra. Her works are published in France (Editions Lemoine), Germany (Trekel), Brazil (Criadores do Brasil), and in the U.S. by Virtual Artists Collective Publishing (VACP), a publishing company she co-founded with poet and philosopher Steve Schroeder. Assad recently wrote the soundtrack to *Devoti Tutti*, a documentary by Bernadette Wegenstein, and is composing the music for a ballet by award-winning choreographer Shannon Alvis.

As a performer, Assad has shared the stage with Bobby McFerrin, Anat Cohen, Nadia Sirota, Paquito D'Rivera, Tom Harrell, Marilyn Mazur and Mike Marshall,

among others. She has performed at internationally renowned venues and festivals including The Netherlands' Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, Belgium's Le Palais des Beaux-Arts, Le Casino de Paris, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and the Caramoor International Jazz Festival.

Assad also strives to expand the sonic palette of the voice, including immersing audiences in the music as active participants and by electronically altering sounds, "like one of those cooks who can turn any four random foodstuffs into a feast" (*Classical Voice North America*).

She takes the immersive experience outside of the concert hall with the innovative and accessible *VOXploration*, which she created in 2015. The program offers a creative and fun approach to music education through meaningful, interactive experiences. It has been carefully curated to work equally well with participants of any age or musical background. It has received numerous grants and awards from Brazilian foundations such as CAIXA CULTURAL and SESC, as well as American organizations New Music USA and the McKnight Foundation. Assad has given master classes, residencies, and workshops throughout the United States, Europe, and the Middle East.

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Clarice Assad is one of the most widely performed Brazilian concert music composers of her generation. The recipient of numerous honors and awards, amongst them an Aaron Copland Award and several ASCAP awards in composition, she holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Roosevelt University in Chicago, and a Master of Music degree from The University of Michigan School of Music.

Pre-Concert Talk

photo © Marco Guglielmi for The Civiltà Ranieri Foundation, 2024



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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About Berkeley Symphony

Photo by Louis Bryant Photography



Founded 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



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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Berkeley Symphony is grateful to be a beneficiary of an extraordinary legacy gift from the estate of Joan and Richard Herring.

Richard Herring was born in Minneapolis, MN, the youngest of eight children. Dick served as an ensign in the U.S. Navy and earned a master's degree from U.C. Berkeley. Dick was married to Joan Eikenberry, also of Minneapolis, and the two enjoyed more than sixty happy years of marriage. They had no children but enjoyed close relationships with family and friends. In the 1980's Dick and Steve Croley entered a partnership and bought Oakland Paper. Their diligent efforts resulted in a successful business which Joan helped with her expertise in bookkeeping. Dick and Joan made their home in Walnut Creek and enjoyed traveling, symphony, opera, and fine arts. Dick was a dedicated member of the West Berkeley Lion's Club. Joan died in 2011, and Dick in 2012. We are deeply grateful to the Herrings for their abundant generosity and for their commitment to Berkeley Symphony and the Bay Area community.

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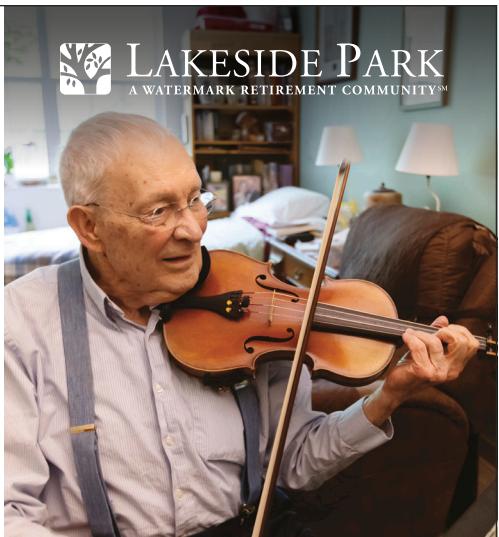


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