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CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY 2016-17 SEASON BY GENRE

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Special Events in Cal Performances' 2016–17 season feature artist luminaries in remarkable performance contexts. Visionary cellist **Yo-Yo Ma** returns to the Greek Theatre for a concert under the stars with **The Silk Road Ensemble** (Aug. 18), formed in 2000 as part of his forward-looking and deeply inclusive musical think tank, the Silk Road Project. The ensemble blends Western string instruments with classical and folk percussion from other countries, performing arrangements of traditional music and contemporary works by composers from across the globe.

Mikhail Baryshnikov brings an icon of the dance world to life in the Cal Performances co-commission *Letter to a Man*, based on the haunting diaries of Vaslav Nijinsky. A collaboration with theater artist **Robert Wilson** (that continues following last season's production of *The Old Woman*), *Letter to a Man* was first performed at the Spoleto festival last summer and makes its West Coast premiere in Zellerbach Hall (Nov. 10–13).

WORLD PREMIERES

The 2016–17 season brings two substantial and multi-layered world premiere productions to Berkeley, by artists beloved by Cal Performances audiences for decades. **Mark Morris** presents his company's 13th world premiere on Cal Performances' stages, with **Layla and Majnun** (Sept. 30–Oct. 2). Morris' choreography combines with the transcendent voices of Azerbaijan's leading *mugham* vocalists, **Alim Qasimov and Fargana Qasimova**, and the

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stellar musicality of **The Silk Road Ensemble** in this timeless tale of star-crossed lovers—with scenic design by esteemed British painter **Howard Hodgkin**.

The **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra** and **Chorale** pay tribute to the vivid musical imagination of Jean-Philippe Rameau in a new staging of his opera-ballet *Le temple de la gloire* (*The Temple of Glory*), with leading proponents of period dance, the **New York Baroque Dance Company** (Apr. 28–30). The inspiration for this production has its origins at UC Berkeley—Rameau’s first version of the score was long thought lost, but the original 1745 manuscript was acquired by the UC Berkeley Hargrove Music Library, inspiring Philharmonia Baroque’s director, Nicholas McGegan, to mount this new production, the first staged version since the work’s premiere at Versailles in 1745. The libretto is by Voltaire, and costumes are furnished by the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles.

CHAMBER MUSIC/ORCHESTRA

This season, Cal Performances welcomes the **Philharmonia Orchestra** of London, led by venerable conductor **Esa-Pekka Salonen**, for a three-concert residency celebrating the brilliant musical mind of Igor Stravinsky (Oct. 7–9). Two programs explore the breadth of Stravinsky’s orchestral works, including *The Rite of Spring* (1913) of his Ballets Russes years; the 12-tone ballet *Agon* from his time in Los Angeles (1957); his homage to Debussy, *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920); and on October 9, the ritualistic opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex* (1927), featuring male chorus and mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung with a libretto by Jean Cocteau, paired with the *Symphony of Psalms* (1930). The October 9 concert recreates the repertoire of the opening concert of Zellerbach Hall in May 1968 when the composer himself was in attendance. Opening night of the residency features the orchestra in a program that balances Beethoven’s roiling *Eroica* Symphony with Sibelius’ ethereal Fifth Symphony.

The **Takács Quartet** returns for a momentous series of concerts, the complete string quartet cycle of Beethoven, performed over three weekends in Hertz Hall (Oct. 15–16; Mar. 4–5; Apr. 8–9). *New Yorker* music critic Alex Ross has called the group’s performances of these masterworks “the most richly expressive modern account of this titanic cycle.” This

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quartet's connection to this music is profound, as evidenced by violinist Edward Dusinberre's probing new book, *Beethoven For a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet*, published this May by the University of Chicago Press.

The distinguished **National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine** presents a powerful program that includes Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 with celebrated Ukrainian pianist Alexei Grynyuk, and Shostakovich's heroic Symphony No. 5. Celebrated for performances of brilliance, warmth, and expressive versatility, the orchestra has recorded and traveled widely since its founding in 1918, but rarely visits the West Coast (Mar. 26).

DANCE

Cal Performances' dance programming for 2016–17 presents a panorama of the world's most engaging and innovative choreographers and companies. **Cullberg Ballet**, the innovative Swedish dance company, presents *Figure a Sea* by pioneering choreographer **Deborah Hay** (Oct. 22–23, a meditative, reflective work for 21 dancers, with a shimmering electronic score by **Laurie Anderson**).

To celebrate the 70th birthday of internationally renowned Berkeley composer and favorite Cal Performances collaborator **John Adams**, Cal Performances has co-commissioned a revival of *Available Light* (1983), his seminal collaboration with choreographer **Lucinda Childs** and architect/designer **Frank O. Gehry** (Feb. 3–4). Childs' work last graced Bay Area stages in *Einstein on the Beach* in October 2012, and she returns with her company of 12 dancers for this newly restaged production, praised by the *Los Angeles Times* as “a revelation,” and danced to Adams' original taped score.

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo returns to Cal Performances with its signature—and sophisticated—form of ballet parody (Mar. 3–4). The group has been performing classical ballets *en travesty* to international acclaim for more than 40 years. And the beloved **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** continues its long and fruitful association with Cal Performances, a relationship now into its fifth decade, with its annual residency (Mar. 14–

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19), featuring the company's signature mix of new and recent works by living choreographers, as well as timeless Ailey classics.

French-born choreographer Pascal Rioult presents *Bach Dances*, a program set to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach (May 6–7). His company, **RIOULT Dance NY**, performs four of his elegant, deeply emotive works set to Bach's sparkling harpsichord, violin, and chamber music. **Scottish Ballet** performs its riveting new take on Tennessee Williams' Southern Gothic melodrama, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, with choreography by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and directed by Nancy Meckler (May 10–12).

RECITAL

The 2016–17 recital series brings nearly a dozen instrumentalists and vocalists to Berkeley for intimate performances that showcase the intellect and virtuosity of these internationally acclaimed artists. The power trio of radiant soprano **Miah Persson**, tenor **Florian Boesch**, and insightful pianist **Malcom Martineau** presents a program of Schumann's tumultuous and sublime songs (Mar. 19).

With *Bach to Beatles*, the young Montenegrin guitarist **Miloš** returns to Cal Performances joined by a small ensemble for classical works by Granados, Rodrigo, Boccherini, and Albéniz; standards from Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico; and intimate renditions of songs by Lennon and McCartney (Mar. 25). Perennial Cal Performances visitors and audience favorites, cellist **David Finckel** and pianist **Wu Han** offer a program of classics from the repertoire for their instruments, including piano and cello sonatas by Beethoven and Rachmaninoff, plus a Bach sonata for viola da gamba and harpsichord (Nov. 20).

At the core of Cal Performances' recital series each season is a roster of international piano heavyweights, performing canonical works as well as new music commissioned from living masters. From the expansive musical mind of **Emanuel Ax** comes a program that illuminates important works of the past with fresh perspective—Ax performs Chopin's Sonata No. 3, plus Schubert's Four Impromptus, and has also commissioned rising star composer **Samuel Adams** to write a new work as a companion to the Schubert (Jan. 22).

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Similarly, in his engaging program, **Jeffrey Kahane** matches new and recent works by young composers, including his son **Gabriel Kahane**, and **Timo Andres**, with Schubert’s opulent G-Major *Fantasia* sonata (Mar. 12).

Admired for his gigantic sound and dazzling agility, Russian pianist **Denis Matsuev** is best known for his interpretations of the music of his countrymen, here playing a program that includes the second of Prokofiev’s tumultuous *War* sonatas, as well as Beethoven’s late-period Op. 110 sonata, and works by Schumann, Liszt, and Tchaikovsky (Oct. 23).

Palestinian-Israeli pianist **Saleem Abboud-Ashkar**, who at points in his career has been mentored by both Zubin Mehta and Daniel Barenboim, has cultivated a reputation for balancing “thoughtfulness and virtuosic abandon with playfulness and beauty of sound” (*Berliner Morgenpost*). Abboud-Ashkar makes his Cal Performances debut with an all-Beethoven program, including the *Appassionata* and *Les Adieux* sonatas (Apr. 21).

Also making his Berkeley debut, **Lucas Debargue** has energized the classical music world with his unusual career trajectory, unconventional technique, and riveting intellect, since dazzling audiences and critics at last summer’s Tchaikovsky competition. An imaginative programmer, here Debargue performs several of Domenico Scarlatti’s smart and colorful sonatas, and Ravel’s famously challenging *Gaspard de la Nuit* suite, plus works by Beethoven and Chopin (Feb. 12).

THEATER

The 2016/17 season’s theater artists bring a risk-taking sensibility to Cal Performances’ stages, from irreverently re-imagined works from the canon, to emotionally visceral dance-theater hybrids and collaborative troupes that gleefully mix up the conventions of genre.

Two of Canada’s most renowned and original companies, choreographer **Crystal Pite’s Electric Company Theatre** and playwright/performer **Jonathon Young’s Kidd Pivot**, collaborate for *Betroffenheit*, a gripping exploration of psychological trauma (Mar. 10–11) that stars Young with a cast of five dancers. Britain’s acclaimed **Filter Theatre** makes its West

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Coast debut with a raucous and cleverly re-imagined production of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, commissioned by the **Royal Shakespeare Company** (Mar. 22–26).

The fearless and eclectic performers of Montreal’s **The 7 Fingers** (*Les 7 Doigts de la Main*) brings the aesthetics of classical theater to the realm of the circus, and presents its latest creation, *Cuisine and Confessions*, a mix of circus arts, avant-garde dance, theater, and cooking-show satire (Feb 8–11).

CHORAL FESTIVAL

A feature of the 2016–17 season that brings together ancient and modern musical traditions, the Choral Festival celebrates the power of the human voice to connect and transform, with performances by five of the world’s most renowned choirs.

Cappella SF, a recent and welcome addition to the Bay Area’s arts landscape, was founded in 2014 by **Ragnar Bohlin**, director of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus for nearly a decade. Already praised for the “power and subtlety” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) of its performances, the choir performs a program of works by modern masters including Arvo Pärt, Frank Martin (his epic Mass for Double Choir), and a world premiere by Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo (Apr. 22). By contrast, Georgia’s male choir **Ensemble Basiani** excels in repertoire of an older vintage, singing religious hymns, monastic chant, epic ballads, folk and work songs from its Eastern European homeland (Oct. 21).

The holiday season brings the much-loved **Vienna Boys Choir** (Nov. 26) with a program of Austrian folk songs, classical masterpieces, Christmas hymns, and holiday carols to Zellerbach Hall. And the widely praised **Choir of Trinity Wall Street**, with its sister ensemble, **Trinity Baroque Orchestra**, performs Handel’s *Messiah* (Dec. 10), a highlight of its season each year in downtown Manhattan—ever since the group presented the oratorio’s 1770 North American premiere.

In the UK and beyond, the all-male **Choir of King’s College, Cambridge** is perhaps best known for its Christmas Eve service broadcast by the BBC, which attracts millions of

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viewers. The choir visits Berkeley (Mar. 24) in the spring, for a concert of works drawn from the rich English choral tradition.

NEW MUSIC

In three concerts this winter, the 2016–17 season presents some of today’s most admired composers and performers of contemporary music, with repertoire that crosses generations and borders, and pairs veteran artists who have defined the sound of 21st-century music, with fresh young voices.

Two concerts pair titans of modern music with emerging talents in compelling programs. Cal Performances celebrates **Steve Reich**’s 80th birthday with a co-commission and US premiere of his new work, *Runner*, performed by **Ensemble Signal**, which won a Diapason d’Or for its recording of the composer’s *Music for 18 Musicians* last year. The program also includes Reich’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *Double Sextet* (2008), and *You Are (Variations)* (2004) (Jan. 29). **Kronos Quartet** brings its ambitious *Fifty For the Future* commissioning initiative, of which Cal Performances is a Legacy Partner, to Berkeley (Dec. 3), with a program of recent works by Garth Knox, Yotam Haber, and Aleksandra Vrebalov, plus the Bay Area premiere of composer Mary Kouyoumdjian’s *Silent Cranes*, written to mark the 100-year anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

The revolutionary chamber ensemble **Bang on a Can All-Stars** joins with **Cappella SF** for a performance of founding member Julia Wolfe’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *Anthracite Fields* (2014). The oratorio for chorus and sextet weaves together oral histories, personal interviews, and local lore with amplified chamber music to tell the stories of Pennsylvania coal miners and their families at the turn of the 20th century (Feb. 26).

EARLY MUSIC

The Early Music programs in the Cal Performances 2016–17 season approach historically informed performance from a multitude of perspectives and through unique ensemble configurations.

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Superlative mezzo-soprano **Joyce DiDonato**, winner of the 2012 Grammy Award for Best Classical Vocal Solo, joins the dynamic young period instrument ensemble **Il Pomo D'Oro** for *In War and Peace—Harmony Through Music*, a program of Baroque arias exploring the tensions of discord and harmony in times of war (Dec. 4). And violin star **Nicola Benedetti** performs the full set of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* concerti with the renowned **Venice Baroque Orchestra** (Feb. 24), a group of gifted musicians with a special affinity for the work of Venice's brilliant native son.

Cal Performances favorite, Catalan *gamba* player **Jordi Savall** and his ensemble **Hespèrion XXI** perform *The Musical Europe, 1500–1700*, a program exploring the vibrant exchange of culture and ideas between Italy, England, Spain, France, and Germany in the 16th and 17th centuries (Jan. 27).

Two internationally celebrated European ensembles explore different corners of the Baroque era from instrumental and choral perspectives. For the program *Metamorphosis*, the unparalleled **Tallis Scholars** presents settings of core Christian texts by Palestrina, Tavener, Pärt, Praetorius, and Stravinsky, among others, spanning centuries and reflecting a wide range of affect and style (Apr. 7). The esteemed **Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin** returns to Cal Performances with *Foreign Affairs: Characters of the Baroque*, an exuberant program of works that showcase the ensemble's finesse at navigating a wide range of repertoire by Telemann, Couperin, Handel, Bach, Vivaldi, and others (Mar. 11).

JAZZ

This season's jazz programming highlights the work of visionary bandleaders who look back to the genre's rich past and forge new paths forward with vibrant compositional languages and performance contexts.

Pianist **Myra Melford**—a Guggenheim fellow, Doris Duke artist, and Alpert Award recipient—combines a passion for groove and lyricism with an experimentalist's spirit of invention in her acclaimed works. A UC Berkeley professor in the Department of Music,

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Melford brings her acclaimed ensemble **Snowy Egret**, featuring star drummer **Tyshawn Sorey**, cornetist **Ron Miles**, guitarist **Liberty Ellman**, bass guitarist **Stomu Takeishi**, for *Language of Dreams*, an immersive work of music, video, narration, and movement inspired by the writings of Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano (Nov. 19). In this work, Melford performs on piano, melodica, and sampler, and the group is expanded by **Sofia Rei** (spoken text), dancer choreographer **Oguri**, and video artist **David Szlasa**.

Maria Schneider, another trailblazing bandleader and composer, has been compared to jazz titans Duke Ellington and Gil Evans for the lush and evocative compositions she writes for her 17-member orchestra—works that have earned her five Grammy Awards to date (Feb. 19).

The **Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra**, led by charismatic trumpeter and nine-time Grammy Award winner **Wynton Marsalis**, lends its fleet brand of hard swinging jazz to classic repertoire by Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Thelonious Monk, and other jazz heroes, in a special performance in Oakland’s historic Paramount Theatre (Sept 29). And the deep musicality of pianist **Bill Charlap** joins with **Ann Hampton Callaway**’s sensuous and versatile voice for **Jazz & Sondheim Side by Side**, a program exploring the improvisational promise of Stephen Sondheim’s greatest works for Broadway (Apr. 13). Charlap, joined here by fellow pianist **Renee Rosnes**, developed the hugely popular program in his role as artistic director of the 92nd Street Y’s summer concert series.

WORLD STAGE

From classical and folk music virtuosos, to international pop music stars with socially conscious messages, to awe-inspiring acrobatics and traditional dance, the Cal Performances 2016/17 season brings some of the most outstanding international performers to Berkeley audiences. Peerless *tabla* virtuoso **Zakir Hussain** performs with frequent collaborator, the innovative *sitar* master **Niladri Kumar**, promising an evening of dazzling interplay between the two well-matched musical partners (Oct. 26).

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Distinct African musical traditions are represented by the latest edition of the **Afropop Spectacular** (Nov. 4), a double bill of Mali’s **Trio da Kali**—an all-star ensemble of *griots* who appeared as part of Kronos Quartet’s 40th birthday celebration two seasons ago—and legendary septuagenarian Ethiopian vocalist **Mahmoud Ahmed**, who tours in North America very rarely. With *Cuban Nights*, the **Havana Cuba All-Stars** evoke the golden era of acoustic Cuban dancehall bands, specializing in the lush vintage sound of traditional Cuban *son*, with layered percussion, guitars, trumpets, and a chorus of male voices (Nov. 18).

From China, Japan, and Brazil comes breathtaking movement drawn from centuries-old traditions. The daring **Shanghai Acrobats of the People’s Republic of China** celebrate their colorful, kinetic hometown in the spectacular *Shanghai Nights* (Sept. 10), and **Kodo**, Japan’s foremost *taiko* drumming ensemble, performs *Dadan*, a bold exploration of percussion and athleticism featuring the troupe’s male drummers (Jan. 28–29). Brazil’s famed folkloric dance and music ensemble **Balé Folclórico da Bahia** honors the African roots of Brazilian culture with *Herança Sagrada (Sacred Heritage)* by the company’s 32 dancers, instrumentalists, and singers (Mar. 5).

Two collectives, from Australia and East Africa, create dynamic performances steeped in musical collaboration, storytelling, and social activism. **Black Arm Band**, comprising Australia’s premiere Aboriginal musicians from diverse backgrounds, presents *Dirtsong*, “a soulful, vivid telling of the cultural and linguistic diversity of Australia,” (*Singapore Today*), performed in 13 different Aboriginal languages, with new songs inspired by the writings of indigenous author Alexis Wright (Feb. 12). **The Nile Project** returns (Feb. 18) after a memorable Berkeley debut and campus residency last season, connecting vocalists, percussionists, and instrumentalists from the 11 nations sharing the water of the Nile River through musical collaboration and civic engagement—with joyful concerts of “seductive and beautiful music” (*Afropop*).

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