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[Press Room](#)



Images of music director Ludovic Morlot, the Seattle Symphony, and composer John Luther Adams are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS THE
SEATTLE SYMPHONY
IN A RESIDENCY HIGHLIGHTING THE MUSIC OF
JOHN LUTHER ADAMS
INCLUDING THE CALIFORNIA PREMIERE OF *BECOME DESERT*
SATURDAY–SUNDAY, APRIL 7–8 IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

Residency events planned with the artists include an open rehearsal for UC Berkeley students, an artist talk with the composer, a pre-performance discussion, and a hands-on composition workshop.

Part of Cal Performances' 2017/18 *Vaulting Walls*
Berkeley RADICAL performance strand.

Berkeley, March 2, 2018 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents the Bay Area debut of the **Seattle Symphony**, conducted by music director **Ludovic Morlot**, in two concerts featuring works the orchestra commissioned from iconoclast composer **John Luther Adams**, on Saturday, April 7 at 8pm, and Sunday, April 8 at 3pm, in Zellerbach Hall. In these concerts the orchestra performs

Adams' Pulitzer Prize-winning *Become Ocean*, which also won the 2015 Grammy Award for Best Classical Contemporary Composition, as well as the California premiere of Adams' newest work, *Become Desert*. Both compositions address the magnificence and the fragility of our natural world through immersive musical soundscapes. The programs also include two works by Sibelius—the folk-tinged Second Symphony and the tone poem *The Oceanides*—and a selection of instrumental interludes from Britten's opera *Peter Grimes*.

Become Ocean (2013) is scored for a large orchestra divided into three spatially separated groups, each with its own distinctive instrumental and harmonic coloration, and each moving at its own tempo. The single-movement, 40-minute work serves as a powerful reminder of the effects of climate change on rising sea levels, as, in the composer's words, humans face “the prospect that once again we may quite literally become ocean.”

In *Become Desert*, which the orchestra premieres in Seattle on March 28, the week before its Cal Performances concerts, five different ensembles stationed around the audience move at five different tempos. The composer has described the listening experience as being “immersed in stillness, space, and light.” The 40-minute work, scored for orchestra and chorus, was inspired by Adams' relocation from his home of nearly 40 years in Alaska, to his new residence in the Chilean desert, and reflects his concerns about the accelerating process of desertification in many of the world's dry climates. For this performance, the symphony will be joined by Bay Area choir **Volti San Francisco**, the chorus singing a single word throughout—*luz*, the Spanish word for “light.”

“Cal Performances is thrilled, after many years of planning, to welcome the extraordinary Seattle Symphony with music director Ludovic Morlot in residence at Berkeley, and to support the inspiring music of composer John Luther Adams,” says Cal Performances artistic and executive director Matías Tarnopolsky. “The orchestra's residency, which is highlighted by performances of these two monumental works by John Luther Adams, serves to continue our exploration of humankind's relationship to the natural world through immersive, thought-provoking music and engaging public programs. This will be a memorable weekend-long residency and I encourage all in our community to take part in the many activities we will host, including an open rehearsal, two public talks with the composer, and a participatory workshop about tone poems.”

The orchestra's residency is part of Cal Performances' *Vaulting Walls* performance strand this season, which encourages audiences to ponder the greatest concerns of humanity, from who we are and who we strive to be as individuals, to our vast potential for creativity, empathy, and destruction as a species. Though John Luther Adams' music is inextricably tied to specific geographic locales, it also grapples with larger environmental issues that resonate far beyond the confines of the concert hall. In channeling the magnificence of the natural world, John Luther Adams' orchestral music challenges us to resolve our complex and conflicted relationships to our natural resources, both as individuals and as a society. More information about the *Vaulting Walls* series of performances can be found at <https://calperformances.org/learn/berkeley-radical/2017-18/vaulting-walls>.

In conjunction with the Seattle Symphony's residency, several public programs are planned. The orchestra opens its rehearsal to UC Berkeley students on Saturday, April 7 from 11am–1:30pm in Zellerbach Hall. John Luther Adams discusses his creative process at the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT) in a talk on Saturday, April 7 at 2pm; and he joins Cal Performances executive and artistic director Matías Tarnopolsky for a pre-performance talk at 7pm on Saturday, April 7. On Sunday, April 8 from 1-2:30pm, Adams joins master teaching artist Giorgia Ghizzoni for a hands-on workshop on composing tone poems inspired by the natural environment. No previous experience is required, and all levels of musical expertise are welcome.

Ticket Information

Tickets for the *Seattle Symphony* on Saturday, April 7 at 8pm and Sunday, April 8 at 3pm in Zellerbach Hall are \$38–\$98 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, visit calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

**Saturday, April 7, 8pm
Sunday, April 8, 3pm**

Zellerbach Hall

Orchestra Residency
Seattle Symphony
Ludovic Morlot, conductor

Concert programs:

Saturday, April 7, 8pm

John Luther Adams / *Become Desert* (California Premiere)

featuring Volti San Francisco; Robert Geary, *artistic director*

Sibelius / *Symphony No. 2 in D Major*, Op. 43

Sunday, April 8, 3pm

Sibelius / *The Oceanides*, Op. 73

Britten / *Four Sea Interludes and Passacaglia* from *Peter Grimes*, Op. 33a

John Luther Adams / *Become Ocean*

Berkeley RADICAL: This performance is part of Cal Performances' Berkeley RADICAL *Vaulting Walls* thematic programming strand this season. The artists in *Vaulting Walls* boldly challenge us to expand our understanding of the world around us, to vault past the limitations of conventional thought, and to break through barriers that confine us. More information can be found at calperformances.org/berkeley-radical-vaulting-walls.

Tickets: \$38–\$98 (prices subject to change)

Residency Activities

Saturday, April 7, 11am

Open Rehearsal with the Seattle Symphony

Zellerbach Hall

Open to UC Berkeley students.

Saturday, April 7, 2pm

Discussion with John Luther Adams

Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT), 1750 Arch Street, Berkeley

John Luther Adams discusses site-specific work and his creative process. Free and open to the public.

Saturday, April 7, 7pm

Pre-performance talk with John Luther Adams and Matías Tarnopolsky

Zellerbach Hall

Free for concert ticketholders.

Sunday, April 8, 1pm

Tone Poem Workshop

250 Morrison Hall

Master teaching artist Giorgia Ghizzoni leads a hands-on workshop, with composer John Luther Adams, about creating tone poems inspired by the natural environment. No previous experience

required; all levels welcome. Admission is free, and online registration is encouraged at calperformances.org.

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