

For Immediate Release: April 18, 2023
[2023–24 Press Kit](#)

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY ANNOUNCES ITS 2023–24 SEASON

“INDIVIDUAL & COMMUNITY” ILLUMINATIONS THEME

Season-long theme connects performances with scholars and thinkers at UC Berkeley to explore the tensions that come into play while balancing the interests of the individual with the interest of the group

***Illuminations* Programming Includes Seven Distinct Performances:**

The West Coast premiere of **Taylor Mac & Matt Ray**’s *Bark of Millions: A Parade Trance Extravaganza for the Living Library of the Deviant Theme*; **Silkroad Ensemble** under the leadership of **Rhiannon Giddens** in *American Railroad*; **Nathalie Joachim** in the West Coast premiere of her new song cycle *Ki moun ou ye (Who are you?)*; **Urban Bush Women** in the Bay Area premiere of *Hair & Other Stories*; the Bay Area premiere of Pina Bausch’s *The Rite of Spring* and **Germaine Acogny** and **Malou Airaudo**’s *common ground[s]*, co-produced by the **Pina Bausch Foundation**, **École des Sables**, and **Sadler’s Wells** and featuring dancers from more than a dozen African countries; **Wild Up** with conductor **Christopher Rountree** performing Julius Eastman’s *Feminine*; and **Elevator Repair Service** in the Bay Area premiere of *Baldwin and Buckley at Cambridge*

PIANIST MITSUKO UCHIDA, ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Uchida will engage in campus activities and perform two concerts: the first with tenor **Mark Padmore** in Schubert’s *Winterreise*; the second leading the **Mahler Chamber Orchestra** from the keyboard in two Mozart piano concertos

TAYLOR MAC VISITS WITH DIVERSE CAST FOR BARK OF MILLIONS WEST COAST PREMIERE

The MacArthur Fellow and Pulitzer Prize finalist explores the many nuanced expressions of queerness in this rock opera of 54 original songs inspired by queer history

RENEWED MULTISEASON PARTNERSHIP WITH THE JOFFREY BALLET

The company will engage in four residencies on the campus over eight years, showcasing both repertory works and, for its first time in Berkeley, full-length narrative ballets

DANCE SERIES FEATURES NEW WORKS AND COMPANY DEBUTS

Mark Morris Dance Group presents the world premiere of a new work choreographed by Mark Morris, to be announced; and **The Joffrey Ballet** returns with its first full-length narrative ballet at Cal Performances, *Anna Karenina*, in its Bay Area premiere to launch a renewed Berkeley residency.

A special collaboration between the **Pina Bausch Foundation**, **École des Sables**, and **Sadler’s Wells** brings a double-bill program in its Bay Area premiere that includes a production of Bausch’s 1975 work *The Rite of Spring*, featuring dancers from more than a dozen African countries, and **Germaine Acogny** and **Malou Airaudo**’s *common ground[s]*

Two dance companies make their Cal Performances debuts: the acclaimed Tel Aviv–based **Batsheva Dance Company** brings the Bay Area premiere of **Ohad Naharin’s** *MOMO*, and the Brooklyn-based ensemble **Urban Bush Women** performs the Bay Area premiere of *Hair & Other Stories*, a dance-theater work based on interviews with Black women

SIX WORLD PREMIERES SEASON-WIDE

In dance, the **Mark Morris Dance Group** brings its 14th world premiere to Cal Performances (work to be announced), and in music, world premieres include: **Kronos Quartet** performing Cal Performances co-commissions by **Michael Gordon** and **Peni Candra Rini** as part of its *KRONOS Five Decades* 50th-anniversary project; **Takács Quartet** performing a Cal Performances co-commission by violist **Nokuthula Ngwenyama**; **Esa-Pekka Salonen** conducting the **San Francisco Symphony** in a new work by **Jens Ibsen**, winner of the Emerging Black Composers Project; and UC Berkeley’s ensemble in residence, **Eco Ensemble**, performing selections from Music Department faculty member **Cindy Cox’s** latest musical/theatrical work

2024 CAL PERFORMANCES GALA CELEBRATES ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Annual Cal Performances gala during the company’s weeklong April residency will support artistic programming and educational initiatives, including Berkeley/Oakland AileyCamp, this season celebrating its 22nd year on the UC Berkeley campus

EXPANSIVE RECITAL SERIES OPENS THE SEASON AND SPOTLIGHTS RISING STARS

The 2023–24 season features 17 recitals, including a performance by rising star pianist **Tom Borrow** to open the season on October 1

Other performances include return visits by renowned artists such as countertenor **Jakub Józef Orliński**; soprano **Renée Fleming**; pianist **Mitsuko Uchida** with tenor **Mark Padmore** as part of Uchida’s campus residency; and pianist **Brad Mehldau**, in a new solo piano work co-commissioned by Cal Performances; as well as by rising stars mezzo-soprano **Emilia Nikolovska**, pianist **Filippo Gorini**, the **Isidore String Quartet**, harpsichordist **Jean Rondeau**, and accordionist **Hanzhi Wang** in their Cal Performances debuts

PIANIST BRAD MEHLDAU PERFORMS TWO CONCERTS, SHOWCASING HIS ARTISTIC BREADTH

The **Brad Mehldau Trio** spotlights its namesake’s jazz artistry in a November concert; in February, Mehldau gives a solo recital featuring the Bay Area premiere of his Cal Performances co-commissioned solo piano work, *14 Reveries*

Berkeley, CA, April 18, 2023—Cal Performances’ board of trustees co-chairs Jeffrey MacKie-Mason and Lance Nagel and executive and artistic director Jeremy Geffen today announce programming for the organization’s 2023–24 season. The expansive array of performances and programs, curated to inspire the eclectic interests and adventurous sensibilities of Bay Area audiences, offers opportunities to experience works by familiar artists and to discover new ones. The season, which opens on October 1, 2023, features ten company debuts, a robust recital series

showcasing five debuts by rising-star performers, and many new works including the West Coast premiere of **Taylor Mac & Matt Ray**'s *Bark of Millions*; six world premieres spanning music and dance; and additional local and regional premieres performed by nearly every dance company visiting during the season. Cal Performances also continues to invest in long-term relationships with established artistic partners of international acclaim, this year announcing a renewed multiseason residency by **The Joffrey Ballet**, which brings its first full-length narrative ballet to Zellerbach Hall; and renowned pianist **Mitsuko Uchida** as Artist in Residence in March 2024, offering two concerts as well as opportunities for the UC Berkeley campus to engage with her singular artistry.

At the center of the Cal Performances 2023–24 season is its multidimensional *Illuminations* programming, which connects the work of world-class artists to the intellectual life and scholarship at UC Berkeley via performances and public programming to investigate a pressing theme, this year, “Individual & Community.” Reflecting on the theme’s significance, Geffen said, “Current events, public discourse, and the ever-widening gap between various social and political camps have given us an opportunity to think critically about where we as individuals stand in relation to the groups to which we feel we belong. As supporters of the performing arts, we not only have the unique perspective of *seeing* a multitude of communities take shape on stage, but we also participate in *creating* community and, in doing so, broadening our perspective through our relationships to others in the audience, onstage, and in the world around us. Across all of our performances this season, there are innumerable opportunities to be moved, to reinterpret our current understanding of ourselves and our realities. I’m pleased that our *Illuminations* programming will provide a dedicated platform through which to reflect and, through our connection to campus, expand on that feeling of self and community exploration arts lovers will all find particularly resonant.”

***Illuminations*: “Individual & Community”**

This season, *Illuminations* investigates the theme of “Individual & Community” through seven distinct performances and a series of complementary public programs created in collaboration with university partners, exploring how our allegiances and alliances influence our lives as individuals and as members of complex and often overlapping communities.

The “Individual & Community” series features two works in their West Coast premieres. **Taylor Mac & Matt Ray**'s *Bark of Millions: A Parade Trance Extravaganza for the Living Library of the Deviant Theme* is an epic four-hour rock opera meditation on queerness featuring 54 original songs (one for every year since the Stonewall riots of 1969), inspired by queer antecedents throughout world history (Feb. 23–25). The following month, composer, flutist, and vocalist **Nathalie Joachim** uses music, movement, and memory to explore personal history and the healing power of the voice in her new evening-length staged song cycle *Ki moun ou ye (Who are you?)*, inspired by her family lineage and Haitian heritage (Mar. 7).

Three Bay Area premieres are also part of the series. The Brooklyn-based company **Urban Bush Women** performs *Hair & Other Stories*, a participatory evening-length dance-theater work exploring race, identity, and concepts of beauty through the lens of Black women’s hair (Dec. 1–3); and **Elevator Repair Service**, a New York troupe that specializes in adaptations of literary and historic texts, presents *Baldwin and Buckley at Cambridge*, a dramatic re-enactment of a historic 1965 debate between queer Black writer James Baldwin and the “Father of American Conservatism,” William F. Buckley, Jr., during the height of the Civil Rights Movement (Mar. 1–3). Additionally, in a double-

bill production, Pina Bausch's iconic *The Rite of Spring* is performed by an ensemble of more than 30 dancers from 14 African countries, assembled through a collaboration between the **Pina Bausch Foundation, École des Sables, & Sadler's Wells**; and paired with the companion piece *common ground[s]*, a new duet co-created and danced by **Germaine Acogny**, known as the "mother of African contemporary dance," and **Malou Airaud**, a longtime dancer with the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch (Feb. 16–18).

The two remaining *Illuminations* performances this season celebrate musical voices and communities often underrecognized in traditional histories. **Silkroad Ensemble** returns under the leadership of award-winning multi-instrumentalist **Rhiannon Giddens** with *American Railroad*, exploring the creation of the Transcontinental Railroad by considering the contributions of African American, Chinese, Indigenous, Irish, and other communities, their cultures, and their music (Nov. 17). New-music ensemble **Wild Up**, conducted by **Christopher Rountree**, performs composer Julius Eastman's *Femenine* (Mar. 9). Black, gay, and avant-garde, Eastman was a provocative figure in the New York contemporary music scene of the 1970s and '80s, and he died in obscurity and poverty in 1990 at age 49; decades later, his music is currently enjoying a renaissance, and Wild Up has embarked on a multiyear project to perform and record his scores.

March 2024 Artist in Residence Mitsuko Uchida

Each season, Cal Performances develops avenues for expanding the impact and connection of a few select artists by engaging them in intimate conversations with members of the UC Berkeley campus and broader community. Revered pianist, mentor, and arts world luminary **Mitsuko Uchida** visits as Artist in Residence in March 2024, performing two concerts and participating in a range of campus activities aimed at providing Bay Area audiences rare and meaningful insights into her artistry.

Uchida is renowned internationally as a peerless interpreter of composers including Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann. Her 2024 residency will feature a return performance with the **Mahler Chamber Orchestra** for two Mozart piano concertos (No. 17 in G major, K. 453; and No. 22 in E-flat major, K. 482), as she directs the ensemble from the piano (Mar. 24); she will also perform Schubert's final song cycle, *Winterreise*, with acclaimed tenor **Mark Padmore** (Mar. 17). Campus residency events will include public discussions with UC Berkeley students and Cal Performances audience members, in addition to a master class with principal players of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

Jeremy Geffen notes, "We are honored to have the brilliant Mitsuko Uchida as Artist in Residence in March 2024. Uchida has been on a lifelong search for truth and beauty—one that has enriched audiences around the world. This cherished artist's extensive experience and abundant artistic vision will undoubtedly catalyze moments of profound learning, understanding, and enjoyment on our campus and throughout our community."

West Coast Premiere of Taylor Mac & Matt Ray's *Bark of Millions*

February brings one of the standout performances of the season: the West Coast premiere of **Taylor Mac & Matt Ray's** *Bark of Millions: A Parade Trance Extravaganza for the Living Library of the Deviant Theme*. This epic four-hour rock opera meditation on queerness features 54 original songs

inspired by queer antecedents throughout world history and is performed by a cast of 13 ensemble members and an 11-member band (Feb. 23–25). A massive effort rivaling Mac’s legendary retelling of American history, *24-Decade History of Popular Music*, the work invites audiences to witness and reflect on an astounding range of queer experiences and perspectives, and is co-created by Mac (a MacArthur Fellow and Pulitzer Prize finalist) and his longtime collaborators **Matt Ray** (music) and **Machine Dazzle** (costumes), along with co-directors **Niegel Smith** and **Faye Driscoll**.

Bark of Millions traces many different personal expressions of queerness, offering a multitude of perspectives through which one can interpret Cal Performances’ *Illuminations* theme of “Individual & Community.” Creators and performers of *Bark of Millions* will take part in additional videos and events that examine what the theme means in terms of their work and their collaborative artistic practice.

Announcing a Multiseason Residency Partnership with The Joffrey Ballet

Cal Performances announces a renewed multiseason residency with Chicago’s esteemed **Joffrey Ballet**, promising four Berkeley visits by the company over the next eight years. Two of these programs will feature company repertory, and two will feature full-length performances of narrative ballets, the first of which is this season’s Bay Area premiere of **Yuri Possokhov’s** *Anna Karenina*, featuring an original score by award-winning composer **Ilya Demutsky** that will be performed live by the **Berkeley Symphony**, led by conductor **Scott Speck** (Mar. 15–17). The partnership builds on a longstanding relationship between Cal Performances and the Joffrey, which visited the campus each summer in the 1970s in a project that culminated in the Berkeley Ballets, a series of dances still in the company’s repertoire. During the 2021–22 season, the Joffrey concluded its most recent three-visit, six-year residency, which focused on the development of new works on the UC Berkeley campus.

Jeremy Geffen remarked on the renewed partnership, saying: “The Joffrey is a model 21st-century dance company, as comfortable in full-length narrative ballets as they are in repertory works that explore a dizzying array of contemporary styles. We are thrilled to engage them in a new residency commitment that, over the course of nearly a decade, will give our audiences the opportunity to delight in the many gifts of this illustrious company.”

New Works and Premieres in the 2023–24 Dance Series

With nearly every dance company visiting campus this season presenting works in their world, West Coast, or Bay Area premieres, the 2023–24 dance series demonstrates a profound commitment to the future of dance, supporting a wide range of both established and emerging international creators and interpreters.

Berkeley audiences will have an opportunity to deepen their connection with familiar artists who have long presented new dance works on campus. **Mark Morris Dance Group** first performed in Berkeley in 1987, and began making annual visits in 1994, officially dubbing Cal Performances its “West Coast home away from home” in 2002. This season, Morris offers Berkeley audiences the world premiere of a new creation, the 14th to grace Berkeley stages (Apr. 19–21). **The Joffrey Ballet** returns to launch a new multiyear partnership with the Bay Area premiere of **Yuri Possokhov’s** *Anna Karenina* (see above); and the beloved **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**

returns in its annual campus residency, which includes Ailey classics like *Revelations* as well as regional premieres by some of the leading choreographers of our time (Apr. 2–7). In a special collaboration, the **Pina Bausch Foundation**, **École des Sables**, & **Sadler’s Wells** join forces for the Bay Area premiere of a double-bill production featuring Pina Bausch’s *The Rite of Spring* performed by an ensemble of more than 30 dancers from 14 African countries, paired with the new work *common ground[s]*, a duet co-created and danced by two septuagenarian legends of dance, **Germaine Acogny** and **Malou Airaud** (Feb. 16–18).

Two esteemed companies also make their Cal Performances debuts this season in works receiving their Bay Area premieres. The Tel Aviv–based **Batsheva Dance Company** comes to Berkeley for the first time with the Bay Area premiere of its house choreographer **Ohad Naharin**’s *MOMO*, a work exploring dualities and tensions within human nature and danced to recordings by Laurie Anderson and Kronos Quartet, Philip Glass, and the Venezuelan musician Arca (Mar. 8–9). Additionally, **Urban Bush Women** presents the Bay Area premiere of *Hair & Other Stories*, a participatory work inspired by founder and 2021 MacArthur Fellow **Jawole Willa Jo Zollar** and choreographed by co-artistic directors **Chanon Judson** and **Mame Diarra Speis**. Intending to provoke activism, awakening, and engagement, this dance-theater performance incorporates personal narratives culled from participants in “Hair Party” sessions the company held with Black women across the country (Dec. 1–3).

Cal Performances favorites since 1974, **Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo** round out the season with a playful dance program performed by the all-male cast *en travesti* (Jan. 27–28).

Six World Premieres

Throughout the 2023–24 season, a collection of music ensembles well known to Berkeley audiences performs world premieres and Cal Performances co-commissions by a diverse cohort of veteran and next-generation composers. As part of its *KRONOS Five Decades* program celebrating the ensemble’s 50th anniversary, Kronos Quartet performs the world premiere of Cal Performances co-commissioned works by **Michael Gordon** and **Peni Candra Rini** (Mar. 2). In the first of its two concerts this season, **Takács Quartet** performs the world premiere of a Cal Performances co-commissioned work by California violist **Nokuthula Ngwenyama** (Nov. 12). That same week, solidifying the orchestra and its conductor’s close Berkeley ties, the **San Francisco Symphony** returns to Cal Performances with music director **Esa-Pekka Salonen** at the podium, with the world premiere of a new work by **Jens Ibsen**, the most recent winner of the Emerging Black Composers Project, a collaboration between the San Francisco Symphony and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music to foster the creation and performance of new music from early-career Black American composers (Nov. 10). And the university’s new-music ensemble in residence **Eco Ensemble** presents a program of works by Music Department faculty composer **Cindy Cox** spanning several decades of her artistic output, including the world premiere of selections from Cox’s large theatrical work for singers, chorus, and ensemble, *The Road to Xibalba* (Feb. 3).

The season’s catalog of world premieres is rounded out in dance with a new work choreographed by **Mark Morris** and performed by the **Mark Morris Dance Group** (see above; Apr. 19–21).

Cal Performances 2023–24 Gala Honoring Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Cal Performances welcomes patrons and donors to its annual gala benefit on Thursday, April 4, 2024, honoring longtime artistic partner **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**. Taking place around the company's Thursday evening performance at Zellerbach Hall, the gala is an intimate gathering featuring a pre-show cocktail reception and post-performance reception and dinner. This second annual event follows on the heels of the 2023 Cal Performances Gala, a record-breaking fundraiser that served as the culminating celebration during the campus' recent William Kentridge residency. All proceeds support Cal Performances' artistic initiatives and education programs, including AileyCamp, which serves up to 60 East Bay children each year. Further details will be announced; contact Cal Performances' Development Office at 510.642.8653 or donate@calperformances.org for more information.

Expansive Recital Series Invites International Stars and Fresh New Voices

Exploring the range from canonic repertoire to new works and rarely performed gems, an expansive recital series infuses the season with more than a dozen concerts featuring both rising-star performers and well-known artists.

Intimate recitals offer access to many rising-star recitalists this season, including acclaimed pianist **Tom Borrow**, whose Berkeley debut recital opens the 2023–24 season. At 23 years old, Borrow has won every national piano competition in his native Israel; here, he performs a program featuring R. Schumann's epic, impassioned *Fantasy in C major* (Oct. 1). A BBC New Generation Artist and performer at the International Opera Studio at the Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden, mezzo-soprano **Emma Nikolovska** is joined by pianist **Howard Watkins** in a recital of music by Schubert, R. Schumann, and Debussy (Mar. 10). In their Cal Performances recital debuts, Italian pianist **Filippo Gorini**, recent recipient of the Bortolotti-Buitoni Trust's prestigious Franco Buitoni Award, explores J.S. Bach's *The Art of Fugue* (Jan. 28); and harpsichordist **Jean Rondeau** (in the Early Music series) presents works by Fux, Mozart, and Beethoven (Nov. 5). Additionally, the young accordion virtuoso **Hanzhi Wang** makes her debut in a duo recital alongside mandolinist **Avi Avital** with a program of repertoire arranged for their unique instrumentation (Oct. 15).

International stars visit this season with a variety of recital offerings for their many Berkeley fans: soprano **Renée Fleming** returns for a recital at Zellerbach Hall (Feb. 9), and Artist in Residence **Mitsuko Uchida** joins tenor **Mark Padmore** for Schubert's *Winterreise* song cycle (Mar. 17). Celebrated genre-crossing pianist **Brad Mehldau** presents the Bay Area premiere of *14 Reveries*, a Cal Performances co-commissioned work for solo piano that, in the composer's words, "reflects on the interior experience we create from our own consciousness, independently of those around us" (Feb. 10). In the Early Music series, riveting countertenor **Jakub Józef Orliński** returns to Berkeley with the period-music ensemble **Il Pomo d'Oro**, for a program of rarely performed works from the 16th and 17th centuries (Apr. 9).

Jeremy Geffen reflected, "Cal Performances celebrates performers at all stages of their careers, from living legends to artists who are just beginning to receive the recognition their exceptional artistry warrants. It is a distinct pleasure to introduce audiences to artists they don't yet know they can't live without, and we are privileged to be able to follow and support these performers as their careers evolve."

The recital series also includes performances by several star vocalists: soprano **Christine Goerke** with pianist **Craig Terry** (Oct. 8); soprano **Erin Morley** with pianist **Malcolm Martineau** (Feb. 18); and the wife-husband duo of soprano **Amina Edris** and tenor **Pene Pati**, joined by pianist **Robert Mollicone** (Apr. 23). Pianists **Michelle Cann** (Oct. 29) and **Víkingur Ólafsson** (May 4) make their Berkeley debuts, and pianist **Conrad Tao** (Mar. 3) returns after a memorable outing as composer and performer for Caleb Teicher's tap dance creation *More Forever* during the 2021–22 season. Cellist **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** returns this season (in a program of works for unaccompanied cello; Nov. 1), as do Cal Performances favorites, cellist **David Finckel** and pianist **Wu Han** (Feb. 11).

Exploring Two Sides of Brad Mehldau

Among the most respected voices on his instrument today, Grammy-winning pianist **Brad Mehldau** has forged a distinctive path rooted in jazz but infused with explorations of classical repertoire and pop music sensibilities. This season, Mehldau presents two concerts that together explore the wide range of his pianism and artistry. With 12 trio recordings to his name over more than 25 years, Mehldau has entered the canon of great jazz piano trio leaders. In late 2023, the **Brad Mehldau Trio**—also featuring longtime bandmates, bassist (and San Francisco native) **Larry Grenadier** and drummer **Jeff Ballard**—performs a concert of original compositions and reimagined jazz and pop standards (Nov. 11). In early 2024, Mehldau returns for an introspective solo recital that showcases both his classical and jazz influences in the Bay Area premiere of *14 Reveries*, a new Cal Performances co-commissioned work for solo piano (Feb. 10).

Venue and Ticket Information

Subscription packages for Cal Performances' 2023–24 season go on sale to the general public beginning Friday, April 21 at noon, and single tickets go on sale Tuesday, August 8. More details about Cal Performances' 2023–24 season, including a full listing of on-sale dates, can be found at calperformances.org.

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