

For Immediate Release: September 19, 2025

[Cal Performances Press Room](#)



Photos of the Philharmonia Orchestra, Santtu-Matias Rouvali (left), and Víkingur Ólafsson (right) are available for download from Cal Performances' [Press Room](#).

A video of Víkingur Ólafsson performing solo can be found on [YouTube](#).

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA
FROM LONDON
CONDUCTED BY
SANTTU-MATIAS ROUVALI
IN HIS BAY AREA DEBUT
IN TWO PROGRAMS FEATURING
CAL PERFORMANCES 2025–26 SEASON
ARTIST IN RESIDENCE
VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON, *PIANO*
SATURDAY–SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18–19, 2025
AT ZELLERBACH HALL

ÓLAFSSON RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES
FOR A SOLO RECITAL, *OPUS 109*,
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2026
AT ZELLERBACH HALL

Berkeley, CA, September 19, 2025—Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes the **Philharmonia Orchestra** and Principal Conductor **Santtu-Matias Rouvali** for two performances featuring Cal Performances 2025–26 season Artist in Residence, Icelandic pianist **Víkingur Ólafsson**, on Saturday, October 18 at 8pm and Sunday, October 19 at 3pm at Zellerbach Hall. The

orchestra comes to Berkeley this fall as part of its 80th birthday celebration and tour. Among the most in-demand conductors of his generation, Rouvali makes his San Francisco Bay Area debut with these concerts, leading programs that include Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, Sibelius' Fifth Symphony, and Sibelius' tone poem *Finlandia*. The Saturday concert features the Bay Area premiere of a new work by multiple Grammy Award-winning Mexican composer **Gabriela Ortiz**. Ólafsson is soloist in Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto and Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major.

Ólafsson returns to the UC Berkeley campus this season following his memorable Cal Performances debut recital of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* in May 2024. One of the most celebrated classical artists of our time, he is a unique and visionary musician who brings his profound originality to some of the greatest works in music history. Ólafsson's recordings have amassed more than one billion streams, and his recent recording of the *Goldberg Variations* received the 2025 Grammy for Best Classical Instrumental Solo.

Reflecting on the Saturday program and his approach to finding new vitality in often-heard works like Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto, Ólafsson said, "There's nothing conventional about any piece Beethoven ever wrote. He was always going against convention himself. So, we should look for that same spirit.... Sometimes, the greatest scope for originality and freedom to be yourself can be found in those pieces that are most often performed."

In addition to his two October performances with the Philharmonia Orchestra, with whom he is the ensemble's 2025–26 Featured Artist, Ólafsson performs a solo piano recital on Wednesday, April 29 at 7:30pm at Zellerbach Hall. The pianist is known for his insightful programming and in this recital explores "the road to Opus 109" by tracing the musical and historical lineages that converge in Beethoven's Op. 109 sonata, visiting works by Bach and Schubert along the way. Ólafsson's recording of works on this program—the first track of which, the third movement from Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 3 in E major, Op. 109, is [available now for streaming](#)—will be released on November 21.

"It is an honor that Víkingur Ólafsson returns to Cal Performances as our 2025–26 Artist in Residence," said Executive and Artistic Director Jeremy Geffen. "That the first visit of his residency follows on the heels of previous memorable Cal Performances residencies of the extraordinary Philharmonia Orchestra, and that these performances mark the Bay Area debut of their esteemed principal conductor, Santtu-Matias Rouvali, makes the occasion all the more significant."

The Saturday, October 18 performance features Ólafsson as soloist in Beethoven's iconic *Emperor* Concerto. The orchestra also performs Sibelius' Fifth Symphony and the Bay Area premiere of *Si el oxígeno fuera verde* (*If Oxygen Were Green*) a 12-minute meditation on environmental themes by Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz, who won three 2025 Grammy Awards for a recording of her most recent

orchestral works. The second concert, on Sunday, October 19, matches Shostakovich's turbulent Fifth Symphony with Sibelius' tone poem *Finlandia*. Ólafsson joins the orchestra for Ravel's jazz-inflected Piano Concerto in G major.

An artist spotlight interview with Víkingur Ólafsson about his residency in Berkeley can be found on Cal Performances' [Beyond the Stage](#) blog.

Following the performance on Saturday, October 18, a reception is planned for UC Berkeley students to meet and mingle with other like-minded arts lovers. Additionally, through Cal Performances' Golden Bear Circle program, UC Berkeley students are eligible to purchase a limited number of \$10 tickets for the best seats in the house for both Philharmonia Orchestra performances. These tickets go on sale Friday, October 3. Information about this and more student events and discounts is available at calperformances.org/ucb-students.

CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, October 18, 2025, 8pm

Sunday, October 19, 2025, 3pm

**Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus**

Orchestra/Chamber Music / 2025–26 Artist in Residence

[Philharmonia Orchestra](#)

Santtu-Matias Rouvali, *principal conductor*

Víkingur Ólafsson, *piano*

Program:

Saturday, October 18, 8pm

Beethoven/Piano Concerto No. 5, *Emperor*

Gabriela Ortiz/*Si el oxígeno fuera verde (If Oxygen Were Green)*(Bay Area Premiere)

Sibelius/Symphony No. 5

Sunday, October 19, 3pm

Sibelius/*Finlandia*

Ravel/Piano Concerto in G major

Shostakovich/Symphony No. 5

Now celebrating its 80th birthday, Philharmonia Orchestra returns to Cal Performances with Finnish conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali making his Bay Area debut. In two programs featuring Cal Performances 2025–26 season Artist in Residence Víkingur Ólafsson, orchestra, conductor, and soloist take audiences on a journey through a collection of works ranging from Romantic masterpieces to a new commission.

The first concert features Ólafsson as soloist in Beethoven's iconic *Emperor* Concerto, as well as the orchestra performing Sibelius' Fifth Symphony. The program also includes the Bay Area premiere of a new piece by Mexican composer Gabriela Ortiz that reflects on environmental themes. The second concert matches Shostakovich's turbulent Fifth Symphony with Sibelius' tone poem *Finlandia*. Ólafsson joins the orchestra for Ravel's jazz-inflected Piano Concerto in G major.

Tickets: \$45–\$165 (prices subject to change)

Wednesday, April 29, 2026, 7:30pm

Zellerbach Hall

Recital / 2025–26 Artist in Residence

Víkingur Ólafsson, piano

Opus 109

Program:

Bach/Prelude in E major, from *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I*

Bach/Partita No. 6 in E minor

Beethoven/Piano Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90

Schubert/Piano Sonata in E minor

Beethoven/Piano Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109

Pianist Víkingur Ólafsson, Cal Performances 2025–26 season Artist in Residence, performs Beethoven's innovative and emotive Opus 109 piano sonata, taking audiences on a journey of musical inspiration and influence that includes side trips through the keyboard music of Bach and Schubert, interspersed between movements. Ólafsson describes the recital as “a road to Opus 109.... Some of [the music] is very Classical. Much of it is progressive and Romantic, but the roots all lie in the Baroque period with Bach.”

Tickets: \$50–\$125 (prices subject to change)

Tickets for all performances are available at calperformances.org, by phone at (510) 642-9988, or in person at the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, Tuesday–Friday, 12–5:30pm and Saturday–Sunday, 1–5pm. UC Berkeley students can access exclusive discounts, including half-price tickets in all sections of the theater, and through Cal Performances' Golden Bear Circle program, are eligible to purchase a limited number of \$10 tickets for the best seats in the house for the October 18 and 19 performances. These tickets go on sale at noon on Friday, October 3. Information about student tickets and discounts is available at calperformances.org/ucb-students. For information about other discounts, visit calperformances.org/discounts.

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