



For Immediate Release: August 31, 2026

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CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY SIGNIFICANTLY EXPANDS STUDENT ACCESS INITIATIVES FOR 2026–2027 ACADEMIC YEAR

UCB Students Can Experience More than 40 World-Class Performances from the Very Best Seats for Subsidized Rate of \$10/Ticket

Berkeley, CA, August 31, 2026—Cal Performances is making bold investments in UC Berkeley students' access to the live performing arts with the commencement of the organization's 2026–2027 season (which aligns with the university's 2026–2027 academic year). For the first time in the presenter's 120-year history, UC Berkeley students will be eligible to obtain seats in the very best locations of the performance hall across over 40 events (more than half of the season's total offerings), subsidized at just \$10 per ticket as a result of Cal Performances' expanded Golden Bear Circle ticket initiative. The sizable growth of Golden Bear Circle represents one of many ways Cal Performances is actively curating experiences that make live performances more accessible and inviting to the campus' approximately 45,000 enrolled students. As an integral part of one of the world's leading public universities, Cal Performances models the vital role the arts play in a well-rounded education.

About Golden Bear Circle

Golden Bear Circle was first introduced during Cal Performances' 2022–2023 season, adding to a robust selection of existing discount offers available exclusively to UC Berkeley students. (See more below.) The program was conceived to provide students opportunities to experience performances from prime seating locations in Zellerbach Hall, while significantly reducing financial barriers to attendance. For the first four years of the program, a limited number of Golden Bear Circle tickets were offered annually for at least 10 of the organization's most anticipated performances at a \$10 price point. Open to both graduate and undergraduate students, the offering quickly gained popularity, with tickets often selling out within minutes of being placed on sale.

Now in its fifth year, Golden Bear Circle has received generous funding that will allow the program to cover 43 performances—representing over half of all events during Cal Performances’ 2026–2027 season—across multiple venues and representing the widest availability of \$10 tickets to date. Tickets will be released for purchase on a fixed biweekly schedule and will be limited to two tickets per purchaser per event in order to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to take advantage of the discount.

Of the expansion, Cal Performances’ Executive and Artistic Director Jeremy Geffen said, “To be able to offer so many UC Berkeley students the opportunity to engage with the performing arts from the best vantage point in the house, introducing them to or reinforcing their relationship with the power and inspiration of live performance, is an honor as well as Cal Performances’ responsibility as the performing arts presenter of this campus. I am grateful for the extraordinary support from the Koret Foundation, which allows us to make this critical investment in student access. Our Golden Bear Circle program works alongside additional discount and engagement opportunities to bring UCB students opportunities that ensure that encounters with the performing arts are an integral part of their world-class public education.”

Cal Performances’ Comprehensive Student Discount Program

Golden Bear Circle represents one of five discount options Cal Performances currently extends to UC Berkeley students. Collectively, this menu of options is designed to cater to the full spectrum of student needs, interests, and priorities, offering varying degrees of flexibility across performances, seat selection, price level, and commitment timeline. Cal Performances’ longstanding baseline offer, available to all UC Berkeley students without restriction, is its 50% off discount, which can be applied at any time to any seat for any Cal Performances event. Additional student offers include the Flex Pass which offers 4-, 6-, or 8-performance bundles for \$15 per ticket; the student group discount, which provides \$15 tickets for groups of 10 or more; and student rush tickets, available one hour before select performances for \$15 per ticket.

Connection to Education, Community, and Wellbeing

In addition to reducing financial barriers, Cal Performances is taking steps to increase student attendance by enhancing the experience students have in its venues, and identifying more points of entry for students with varying academic backgrounds and interests. Currently, Cal Performances hosts a minimum of four catered student receptions in Zellerbach Hall each season, which are free to all student ticket-holders and their guests on the evening of the related performance. The receptions

provide students a dedicated space in which to relax and socialize while visiting the performance hall, as well as the opportunity to connect with other UC Berkeley students who share a common interest. The 2025–2026 season marked the first Chancellor’s Night student reception, for which Chancellor Rich Lyons, mandolinist/vocalist/composer Chris Thile, and Jeremy Geffen were in attendance to thank students for their involvement with the arts and to personally connect with student attendees. The 2026–2027 season will continue this tradition with a Chancellor’s Night reception following the 7:30pm performance of **The Complete Philip Glass Etudes** on Friday, November 20 at Zellerbach Hall, where several pianists involved in the concert will be in attendance.

Cal Performances’ efforts at connecting with students outside of traditional arts backgrounds and majors include the creation of accessible digital content, including blogs and social media posts that break down performing arts terminology; as well as its *Illuminations* thematic program, which each season offers curated performances, lectures, and conversations centered around a theme that explores timely issues and bridges diverse academic disciplines. In doing so, *Illuminations* programming extends a personal point of connection to the arts independent of past arts encounters..

Programs for the Broader Campus Community

In recognition of the intellectual leadership and output of UC Berkeley’s faculty and staff, Cal Performances has created multiple pathways to make connections between the performing arts and scholarship on campus. Chief among them is Cal Performances’ flagship *Illuminations* program, for which Cal Performances invites UC Berkeley scholars into dialogue with *Illuminations* artists to discuss pressing topics common to their respective work. This season’s “Innocence & Experience” theme was informed and continues to be shaped by a representative panel of UC Berkeley faculty and staff.

Each season, Cal Performances also works with individual faculty members to arrange group discounts for their students to attend performances related to course curriculum as a non-didactic tool to augment and deepen classroom learning.

For those who wish to attend as individuals, Cal Performances offers \$5 off regular ticket prices for all UC Berkeley faculty, staff, and Cal Alumni Association members.

Tickets

UC Berkeley students can find detailed information about their discounts, including which performances are included in Golden Bear Circle offerings and ticket on-sale dates, at calperformances.org/ucb-students. Information about other discounts, including UC Berkeley faculty and staff discounts, can be found at calperformances.org/discounts.

Tickets for all patrons are available at calperformances.org, by phone at (510) 642-9988, or in person at the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall. Ticket Office hours are Tuesday–Sunday, 12–5pm. Golden Bear Circle tickets are available for purchase online only, and are limited to two tickets per purchaser per event.

PRESS CONTACT

Louisa Spier

Cal Performances

(510) 643-6714

lspier@calperformances.org