



yMusic

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Jeremy Geffen

This weekend's programming at Cal Performances offers instructive—and delightful—examples of the eternal changeability and flexibility of music. Over the course of three extraordinary concerts, we'll sample a selection of music that ranges from the masterpieces of Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert, to cutting-edge compositions by a group of today's most gifted composers.

We begin on Friday evening with the music of today, as the brilliant yMusic serves up a feast of contemporary works, the oldest of which was written only six years ago. I'm particularly proud that the group's program features the West Coast premiere of *Difference* (2019), a Cal Performances co-commission by American composer Andrew Norman, "one of the most gifted and respected composers of his generation" (*New York Times*). As ensemble member and award-winning radio host Nadia Sirota promises in her program note, it's "immediate, unexpected, physical, and a blast to play." Those of you who saw yMusic's brilliantly creative concert on last year's *Cal Performances at Home* streaming series will have some idea of the musical treasures that lie in store; for everyone else, get ready for a real treat!

Then, two ensembles working in the grand European tradition, present programs featuring some of the most sublime classical music ever written. The esteemed **Vienna Piano Trio**, making its Cal Performances debut in a rare—and final—West Coast appearance, arrives with a deep dive into Schubert's chamber music comprised of the composer's two magisterial piano trios played back-to-back. And on Sunday afternoon, renowned conductor **John Eliot Gardiner** and his esteemed **English Baroque Soloists**—the period-instrument ensemble Gardiner founded more than 40 years ago—make an exceedingly rare stateside appearance in a bracing program of Mozart and Haydn.

March and April finds Cal Performances operating at full speed as we approach the April 20 announcement date for our brilliant 2022–23 season. (We just released our beautiful new 42-page season brochure to the printer; I can't wait to share it with you!) From now through the beginning of May, the remainder of our current season is filled with adventurous programming. You won't want to miss...

- **Angélique Kidjo**, our 2021–22 artist-in-residence, in her new music-theater piece *Yemandja* (a much-anticipated Cal Performances co-commission and *Illuminations* event, Apr 23).
- highly anticipated concerts with superb classical artists including Germany's **Tetzlaff Quartet** (Apr 23), another favorite from last season's *Cal Performances at Home*; pianist **Daniil Trifonov** (Apr 28), making his Cal Performances solo debut; and the **Danish String Quartet** (Apr 29)—a particular favorite of our chamber music audience—delivering the next installment in its ongoing *Doppelgänger* Project, a series of concerts that pairs late Schubert string quartets with newly commissioned works (on this occasion, a new quartet by the fascinating Finnish composer Lotta Wennäkoski).

Fasten your seatbelts; we have all of this—and more—in store before the season ends!

I know you join us in looking forward to what lies ahead, and to coming together—as we do today and have done so often in the past—to encounter the life-changing experiences that only the live performing arts deliver. We can't wait to share it all with you!

Jeremy Geffen
Executive and Artistic Director, Cal Performances



music dance theater
Cal Performances

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

21/22
SEASON

Angélique Kidjo's *Yemandja*

Bay Area Premiere
A Cal Performances Co-commission

Starring Angélique Kidjo
Conceived by Angélique Kidjo, Jean Hebrail,
and Naima Hebrail Kidjo
Book and Lyrics by Naima Hebrail Kidjo
Music by Angélique Kidjo and Jean Hebrail
Developed with and Directed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce

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In her first foray into musical theater, Cal Performances' 2021–22 artist-in-residence—and three-time 2022 Grammy nominee—Angélique Kidjo explores themes of love, betrayal, honor, and revenge against a backdrop of slavery in 19th-century West Africa. Named after a Yoruban deity, *Yemandja* is a panoramic work of magic realism, a stunning parable about gods and humans.

Sat, Apr 23, 8pm
ZELLERBACH HALL

Yemandja is co-commissioned by ArtsEmerson, The Broad Stage at Santa Monica College, Cal Performances, Ruth and Stephen Hendel, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Mass MoCA, and the Yale Schwarzman Center. Produced by THE OFFICE performing arts + film.

calperformances.org | 510.642.9988

Friday, April 8, 2022, 8pm
Hertz Hall

yMusic

CJ Camerieri, *trumpet*

Alex Sopp, *flute*

Nuno Antunes, *clarinet*

Rob Moose, *violin*

Nadia Sirota, *viola*

Gabriel Cabezas, *cello*

PROGRAM

Gabriella SMITH (b. 1991) *Tessellations* (2018)

Missy MAZZOLI (b. 1980) *Ecstatic Science* (2016)

yMusic (f. 2008) *Zebras* (2020)

Sober Miles (2019)

Flood (2019)

Judd GREENSTEIN (b. 1979) *Together* (2020)

INTERMISSION

Andrew NORMAN (b. 1979) *Difference* (2019, West Coast Premiere,
Cal Performances co-commission)

Exclusive Management

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opus3artists.com

*You can keep these stellar performances accessible to all by making a gift today at calperformances.org/donate
or by contacting the Development Office at donate@calperformances.org.*

When COVID-19 restrictions hit, yMusic found ourselves suddenly far apart from one another, flung across the country in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Long Island, Connecticut, and California. Faced with this new physical hurdle, we worked hard to maintain close creative contact, meeting weekly on Zoom and puzzling through ideas and modes of collaboration. We never would have chosen this time apart, but we are proud of finding our creative groove together, writing group compositions, working with composers, and recording our parts remotely. This program endeavors to show a bit of our creative journey over this disquieting period.

Our program kicks off with *Tessellations* by Gabriella Smith and *Ecstatic Science* by Missy Mazzoli—the first two tracks off of our latest recording, released less than a month before pandemic lockdown restrictions were put in place. This is the music we were touring, loving, and inhabiting right before we were forced apart. These works are followed by three pieces we wrote ourselves—music we composed, refined, and recorded remotely. The final piece on the first half is *Together*, by Judd Greenstein; *Together* was written modularly, with the first section designed to work aurally despite the lags and tics of a Zoom meeting, and the second section a joyful celebration of chamber music and finally being in a room together.

Finally, the second half is the long-awaited premiere of a new, major work by Andrew Norman, *Difference*. What a joy thing to be able to dive into a piece as toothsome as *Difference* after all this time apart! The music is immediate, unexpected, physical, and a blast to play. We are so grateful to be performing it for you.

—Nadia Sirota

yMusic, “six contemporary classical polymaths who playfully overstep the boundaries of musical genres” (*The New Yorker*), performs in concert halls, arenas, and clubs around the world. Founded in New York City in 2008, yMusic believes in presenting excellent, emotionally communicative music, regardless of style or idiom. “One of the groups that has really helped to

shape the future of classical music” (Fred Child, NPR’s *Performance Today*), the group’s virtuosic execution and unique configuration (string trio, flute, clarinet, and trumpet) has attracted the attention of high-profile collaborators—from Paul Simon to Bill T. Jones to Ben Folds—and inspired original works by some of today’s foremost composers, including Nico Muhly, Missy Mazzoli and Andrew Norman.

In 2020, yMusic debuted a major new work, *Difference*, by Grawemayer and Grammy Award-winning composer Andrew Norman, set out on a US tour with singer-songwriter Bruce Hornsby, and released *Ecstatic Science*, its fourth full-length album. The recording, one of *Pitchfork*’s “6 New Albums You Should Listen to Now,” features music by Missy Mazzoli, Gabriella Smith, Paul Wiancko, and Caroline Shaw. *Pitchfork* praised the group for its “excellent taste in collaborating with composers” and for creating an album of “fluidly engaging” work. Due to global restrictions on nonessential travel and gatherings, the members of yMusic took the 2020–21 season to work on their own collaborative compositions, recorded remotely.

Recent highlights include a sold-out concert at Carnegie’s Zankel Hall, a collaborative album release with the Staves on Nonesuch Records, a recording of “God Only Knows” with John Legend for the Grammy Awards, and summer appearances at the Sarasota Music Festival and Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts. yMusic is also featured on “You’ve Got Time” by Regina Spektor, the main title theme for the final season of Netflix’s *Orange is the New Black*.

yMusic’s other recordings include 2017’s *First*, 2014’s *Balance Problems*, and 2011’s *Beautiful Mechanical* (*Time Out New York*’s “#1 Classical Record of the Year”). In addition to performing its own repertoire, yMusic serves as a ready-made collaborative unit for bands and songwriters, and has lent its distinctive sound to dozens of albums, including *In the Blue Light* by Paul Simon, with whom the group appeared on *Saturday Night Live* and toured arenas, amphitheaters, and outdoor festivals across the globe as featured guests on Paul Simon’s *Homebound: The Farewell Tour*.

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