



Sunday, February 26, 2023, 3pm  
Hertz Hall

## Alexi Kenney, violin *Shifting Ground*

### PROGRAM

*This program will be played in five sets without intermission.  
Please hold all applause until the end of each set.*

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| J.S. BACH (1685–1750)               | Adagio, from Sonata No. 1 in G minor, BWV 1001 (1720)   |
| George ENESCU (1881–1955)           | “Le Ménétrier,” from <i>Impressions d’Enfance</i> , Op. 28 (1940)                                 |
| BACH                                | Allemande from Partita in D minor, BWV 1004 (1720)  |
| Paul WIANCKO (b. 1983)              | Allemande from <i>X Suite for Solo Violin</i> (2019)  |
| DU YUN (b. 1977)                    | <i>Under a Tree, an Udatta</i> , for violin and tape (2016)                                       |
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| Angélica NEGRÓN (b. 1981)           | <i>The Violinist</i> for violin and electronics, story by Ana Fabrega (2023, California Premiere) |
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| BACH                                | Allemande and Double, from Partita No. 1 in B minor, BWV 1002 (1720)                              |
| Steve REICH (b. 1936)               | <i>Violin Phase</i> , for live-looped violin (1967)   |
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| BACH                                | Grave, from Sonata No. 2 in A minor, BWV 1003 (1720)  |
| Nicola MATTEIS (1650–1714)          | <i>Alla Fantasia</i> (c. 1700)  |
| Salina FISHER (b. 1993)             | <i>Hikari</i> , for solo violin (2023, California Premiere)                                       |
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| BACH                                | Largo, from Sonata No. 3 in C major, BWV 1005 (1720)  |
| Matthew BURTNER (b. 1971)           | Elegy, from <i>Muir Glacier</i> (1889–2009), for violin and glacier sonification (2017/2020)      |
| Anonymous                           | <i>Nitida Stella</i> (c. 1600)  |
| (arr. Alexi KENNEY for solo violin) |   |
| BACH                                | Chaconne from Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004 (1720)   |

*This performance is made possible, in part, by Art Berliner & Marian Lever.*

COVID-19: Masking is required inside the auditorium, and is strongly recommended, though not required, for indoor lobby/waiting areas as well as outdoor spaces. Up-to-date vaccination is strongly recommended, though not required for entry. The latest information on Cal Performances' COVID-19 safety policies is available at [calperformances.org/safety](https://calperformances.org/safety).  
Photographing and/or recording this performance is strictly prohibited.

I must have been about 10 years old when I first heard the Bach Chaconne, introduced to me by my then-teacher Jenny Rudin. I remember being first overwhelmed by its magnitude, its complexity, its difficulty; then enchanted by its mysterious power to hold me enraptured and transported for a full 13 minutes. Over the years, the Chaconne has come to occupy maybe the biggest and most important place of any piece of music in my life: it continues to be the piece I turn to to get myself back into playing shape after taking breaks away from the violin; it provides a meditative landscape for me to think through creative thoughts; and, several years ago now, it was the only way that seemed to make sense to process the death of the same teacher who had taught it to me all those years ago.

Through my lifetime of loving the Chaconne came the idea that inspired the program you'll hear today: Bach is connected to everything. Beyond his music's most important capacity to speak straight to the soul, Bach's influence ripples through time and transcends genre. The structures, harmonies, and counterpoint he mastered are present in just about every genre of music we listen to today, and certainly have lived

in the consciousness of almost all classical composers and performers who came after him.

*Shifting Ground* is a program whose titular word "ground" bears homage to Bach's era, the Baroque, in which a bass line (or a "ground") is repeated with embellishments and variations on top of it. This program is also an excavation of music's roots, and how they have manifested and developed through time. You will hear a kind of ground bass in Steve Reich's hypnotic *Violin Phase*, in which the same two bars of music are progressively overlapped to create an ever-changing landscape of pattern; in Du Yun's *Udatta*, which places an improvisational violin line above a repeating recorded mantra; and in the at once soothing and heartbreaking recorded sounds of a melting glacier that make up Matthew Burtner's *Elegy*.

Above all, however, I've created this program out of a deep love and passion for all the music in it, and a belief that each piece not only connects to Bach in a way that makes sense, but in a way that feels right. I'm grateful you've chosen to join me today on what I hope will be a sort of spiritual journey for all of us.

—Alexi Kenney

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

The recipient of a 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2020 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award, **Alexi Kenney** (*violin*) is building a career that defies categorization, following his interests, intuition, and heart. He is equally at home creating experimental programs and commissioning new works, soloing with major orchestras in the US and abroad, and collaborating with some of the most celebrated musicians of our time.

Last season, Kenney debuted as soloist with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Orchestra de la Suisse Romande, Virginia Symphony,

Reno Philharmonic, Eugene Symphony, and New Haven Symphony; returned to the Indianapolis Symphony, California Symphony, and Santa Fe Symphony; and appeared at Wigmore Hall, Princeton University Concerts, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He also performed duo concerts with harpist Bridget Kibbey, and as a member of Owls, a new quartet collective with violist Ayane Kozasa, cellist Gabe Cabezas, and cellist-composer Paul Wiancko.





In 2021, Alexi released his first recording, Paul Wiancko's *X Suite for Solo Violin*, accompanied by a visual album that pairs each of the seven movements of *X Suite* with seven contemporary sculptures, filmed on location at the Donum Estate in Sonoma, California.

In recent seasons, Kenney has performed as soloist with the Detroit Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Sarasota Orchestra, and Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, and in a play-conduct role as guest leader of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. He has played recitals at Wigmore Hall, on Carnegie Hall's Distinctive Debuts series, and at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Phillips Collection, 92nd Street Y, Mecklenberg-Vorpommern Festival, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Winner of the 2013 Concert Artists Guild Competition and laureate of the 2012 Menuhin Competition, Kenney has been profiled by *Musical America*, *Strings Magazine*, and *The New York Times*, and has written for *The Strad*.

Chamber music continues to be a major part of Kenney's life, performing at festivals including Bridgehampton, Caramoor, ChamberFest Cleveland, Chamber Music Northwest, Festival Napa Valley, La Jolla, Ojai, Kronberg, Music@Menlo, Ravinia, and Spoleto, as well as on tour with Musicians from Marlboro and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

Born in Palo Alto in 1994, Alexi is a graduate of the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he received his Artist Diploma as a student of Miriam Fried and Donald Weilerstein. Previous teachers include Wei He, Jenny Rudin, and Natasha Fong. He plays a violin made in London by Stefan-Peter Greiner in 2009 and a bow by François-Nicolas Voirin.

Outside of music, Kenney enjoys hojicha, Bauhaus interiors, baking for friends, and walking for miles on end in whichever city he finds himself, listening to podcasts and Bach on repeat.

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