



LARGER THAN LIFE

2017-18 Season



CALIFORNIA
SYMPHONY

DONATO CABRERA MUSIC DIRECTOR

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

May 6, 2018

CALIFORNIA SYMPHONY
**SOMETHING OLD,
SOMETHING NEW**

Sunday, May 6 | 4:00 PM

Leshher Center for the Arts, Hofmann Theatre

Donato Cabrera, music director

Haochen Zhang, piano

Balch (b. 1991)..... *like a broken clock*
10 minutes World Premiere
Commissioned by California Symphony

Sibelius (1865–1957)..... Symphony No. 3 in C Major, Op. 52
31 minutes *Allegro moderato*
Andantino con moto, quasi allegretto
Moderato - Allegro ma non tanto

INTERMISSION

Brahms (1833–1897) Piano Concerto No. 2, in B-flat Major, Op. 83
47 minutes Haochen Zhang, soloist
Allegro non troppo
Allegro appassionato
Andante
Allegretto grazioso - Un poco più presto

*The total running time for this concert is approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes,
including a 20-minute intermission. Please silence your cell phones.*

Support for this concert is provided by



Season Partners



Sakana Foundation

The California Symphony Orchestra



Concertmaster

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Assistant

Concertmaster

Sarah Wood

First Violin

Josepha Fath

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Holly Heilig-Gaul

Laurien Jones

Sergi Goldman-Hull

Rita Lee

Irene Fitzgerald-Cherry

Jason Totzke

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Matthew Oshida, *Assistant Principal*

RaeAnn Goldberg

Ryo Fukuda

Marcella Schantz

Hande Erdem

Rachel Noyes

Carla Picchi

Katherine Button

Harry Chomsky

Viola

Emily Onderdonk,
Principal

Katherine Juneau

Janet Lynch

Catherine Matovich

Daria D'Andrea

Stephanie Ng

Ivo Bokulic

Fan Hu

Pauline Metzgar

Cello

Leighton Fong, *Principal*

Paul Hale, *Assistant Principal*

Elizabeth Struble



In addition to California Symphony, Carl plays with orchestras and theater groups throughout the Bay Area. He has served as Personnel Manager and Education Coordinator at Oakland Symphony. His wife Elizabeth teaches music at William Jessup University in Rocklin and his son Carl Franklin plays trumpet with the West Point Band in New York.



Julie Feldman
 Leslie Meeks
 Robert Hoexter
 Nicole Welch
 Dina Weinschelbaum

Bass

Michel Taddei, *Principal*
 Carl Stanley, *Assistant Principal*
 Kristin Zoernig
 Richard Worn
 Stephanie Payne
 Schuyler Karr

Flute

Linda Lukas, *Principal*
 Alexandra Miller

Oboe

James Moore, *Principal*
 Adrienne Malley

Clarinet

Jerome Simas, *Principal*
 Stephen Zielinski

Bassoon

Doug Brown, *Principal*
 Daniel Zimardi

Horn

Eric Achen, *Principal*
 Nicky Roosevelt
 Katherine Dennis
 Alicia Mastromonaco
 Monika Warchol

Trumpet

William Harvey, *Principal*
 John Freeman

Trombone

Donald Benham, *Principal*
 Craig McAmis
 David Ridge

Timpani

Alex Orfaly, *Principal*



From performing with major symphonies and film scores to coaching a wrestling team, David Ridge stays busy. Yes, that's right, he also coaches the wrestling team at Acalanes High School and plays Principal Trombone at San Francisco Opera too! But, with all that he still wouldn't miss the chance to play today's concert. He's been looking forward to it all year.

Donato Cabrera, music director

Donato Cabrera is the Music Director of the California Symphony and the Las Vegas Philharmonic, and served as the Resident Conductor of the San Francisco Symphony and the Wattis Foundation Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra from 2009–2016.

Since Cabrera's appointment as Music Director of the California Symphony, the organization has been

reinvigorated. With its expanded concerts, dramatically increased ticket sales, and innovative programming, the California Symphony and Cabrera are redefining what it means to be an orchestra in the 21st Century. Under Cabrera's leadership, The Las Vegas Philharmonic has also enjoyed a dramatic increase in ticket sales and an engagement with the community never before seen in Southern Nevada.

Over the last couple of seasons, Cabrera has made impressive debuts with the National Symphony's KC Jukebox at the Kennedy Center, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Louisville Orchestra, Hartford Symphony, New West Symphony, Sinfónica de Oaxaca, and the Orquesta Filarmónica de Boca del Rio. In 2016, he led the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in performances with Grammy Award-winning singer Lila Downs. Cabrera co-founded the New York-based American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME), and recently led performances of Icelandic composer Jóhann Jóhannsson's *Drone Mass* with ACME and Theatre of Voices at Duke Performances and the Big Ears Festival.

Awards and fellowships include a Herbert von Karajan Conducting Fellowship at the Salzburg Festival and conducting the Nashville Symphony in the League of American Orchestra's prestigious Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview. Donato Cabrera was recognized by the Consulate-General of Mexico in San Francisco as a Luminary of the Friends of Mexico Honorary Committee, for his contributions to promoting and developing the presence of the Mexican community in the Bay Area.



CREDIT: LINDSAY HALE



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Haochen Zhang, piano

Since his gold medal win at the Thirteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2009, 27-year-old Chinese pianist Haochen Zhang has captivated audiences in the United States, Europe, and Asia with a unique combination of deep musical sensitivity, fearless imagination and spectacular virtuosity. In 2017, Haochen received the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, which recognizes the potential for a major career in music.

Haochen has already appeared with many of the world's leading festivals and concert series. A popular guest soloist for many orchestras in his native China, Haochen has also performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, LA Philharmonic, NDR Hamburg, Israel Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony, London Symphony, and Hong Kong Philharmonic orchestras. International tours have taken him to cities including Beijing, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Tel Aviv, Berlin, Munich, Paris, Rome, Verbier, Montpellier, Helsingborg, Bogota, and Belgrade.

Haochen is also an avid chamber musician, collaborating with colleagues such as the Shanghai String Quartet and Benjamin Beilman and is frequently invited by chamber music festivals in the United States including the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and La Jolla Summerfest.

In February 2017, Haochen's latest recital CD was released by BIS, including works by Schumann, Brahms, Janáček, and Liszt. Haochen's performances at the Cliburn Competition were released to critical acclaim by Harmonia Mundi in 2009. He is also featured in Peter Rosen's award-winning documentary chronicling the 2009 Cliburn Competition, *A Surprise in Texas*.

Haochen is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia where he studied under Gary Graffman. He previously trained at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and the Shenzhen Arts School, where he was admitted in 2001 at the age of 11 to study with Professor Dan Zhaoyi.

Katherine Balch, Young American Composer-in- Residence (2017–2020)

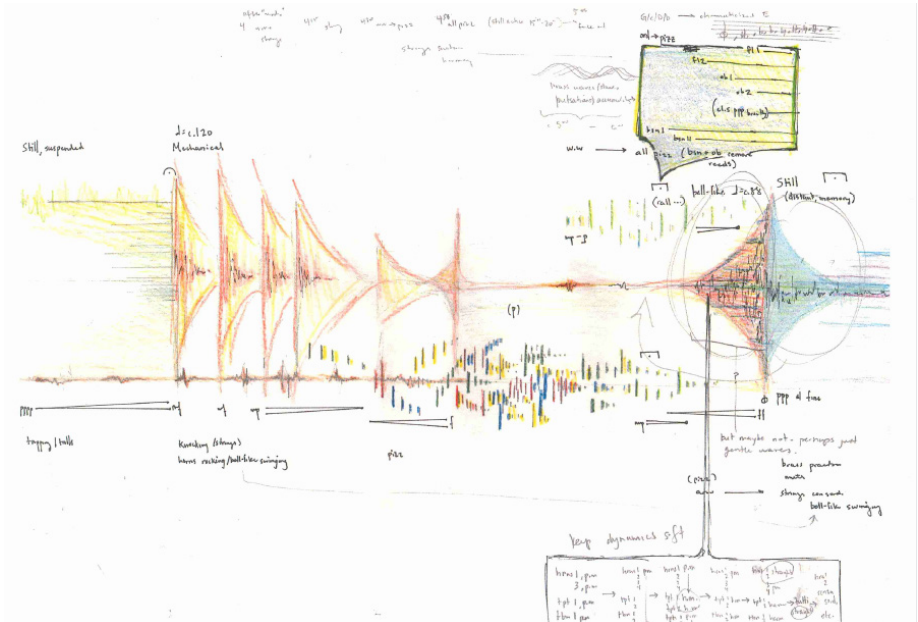


Katherine Balch (b.1991) writes music that seeks to capture the intimate details of existence through sound. Her music has been commissioned and performed throughout the U.S. and abroad by the Tokyo, Minnesota, Albany, and New York Youth Symphony Orchestras, Ensemble Intercontemporain, International Contemporary Ensemble, FLUX Quartet, Contemporaneous, and wildUp, among others. She is currently composer-in-residence for the California Symphony, and recently joined the roster of Young Concert Artists, Inc., where she holds the William B. Butz composition chair. The 2018-2019 season includes premieres by the Oregon and California Symphony Orchestras, Beethoven Trio, and the Argus Quartet.

Recent recognitions include fellowships from IRCAM Manifeste, Fontainebleau, Aspen, Santa Fe, Norfolk, and Tanglewood music festivals, awards from ASCAP, BMI, the International Society of Bassists, Fontainebleau, and a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Katherine completed her *M.M.* at Yale School of Music where she studied with Aaron Kernis, Chris Theofanidis and David Lang, and her *B.A./B.M.* in the Tufts University/ New England Conservatory double degree program, where she studied history and political science at Tufts and composition at NEC. She currently pursuing her *D.M.A.* at Columbia University, where she studies with Georg Haas. When not making or listening to music, she can be found baking, collecting leaves, and playing with her cat, Zarathustra.

PROGRAM



BALCH DESCRIBES HER SKETCHING AS "A SORT OF PRE-COMPOSITIONAL DRAWING OF THE FORMAL STRUCTURAL AND SONIC PALETTE OF THE PIECE."

like a broken clock (2018)

Katherine Balch (b. 1991)

The California Symphony's newest composer in residence, Katherine Balch, presents *like a broken clock* for its premiere performance.

Balch explains that the work's title "comes from a Joanna Newsom song, *In California*. She sings in one line 'like a little clock / that trembles on the edge of the hour / only ever calling out Cuckoo Cuckoo.'" What attracted her to that text was her interest in "off-kilter, delicate tapping/clicking rhythms" which led her to creating a set of digitized wave forms of the toll of a grandfather clock as part of the materials for *like a broken clock*.

Balch, who characterizes her music as "often influenced by extra-musical arts, philosophy, and literature," describes *like a broken clock* as "sputtering, ticking, clanging, summoning the minutes and seconds that jitter and dance."

M N O T E S

Symphony No. 3 in C Major, Op. 52 (1907)

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

Jean Sibelius's 92-year lifespan gave him a front-row seat to the full length of a singularly transformative period in Western music. When he was a teenager, both Brahms and Tchaikovsky were at the peak of their careers,

Wagner had yet to write *Parsifal*, and Robert Schumann was as recent a memory as is Aaron Copland nowadays. It was a time of rapid change; musicians such as Schoenberg, Bartók, and Stravinsky, destined for 20th century greatness, were all born before Sibelius was twenty years old—and he wound up outliving several of them.

Placing Sibelius on the Romantic–Modernist spectrum is tricky. His most popular works date from early in his career and partake of a decidedly Romantic and nationalist afflatus: *Finlandia*, the 2nd Symphony, the Violin Concerto. A fair amount of his piano music is charming salon stuff, very much 19th rather than 20th century. And yet there are those later symphonies—particularly the fifth through seventh—that bespeak a powerfully modernist sensibility, as do many of the tone poems.

Sibelius's symphonies, while widely popular in both America and England, tended to rankle contemporary critics such as Virgil Thomson, who dismissed the Second Symphony as "vulgar, self-indulgent, and provincial beyond all description." Then there was composer-conductor René Leibowitz, who went big by condemning Sibelius as "the worst composer in the world." Even as staunch a supporter as conductor Eugene Ormandy declared that he found both the Third and Sixth symphonies enigmatic.

Which is intriguing, given that those two symphonies just happen to be Sibelius's most striking essays in neo-Classicism—a 20th-century movement that sought inspiration in the music of past composers such as Bach and Haydn; its practitioners include Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Ernest Bloch, and a host of others. Sibelius's Third Symphony stands as a landmark in his output, given that it is the first of his seven symphonies that seeks compression, economy, and brevity over his previous

Sibelius' Symphony No. 3 is economical: even the number of movements is reduced from the more usual four to three.

neo-Tchaikovskian expansiveness. Even if his oft-quoted comment to Gustav Mahler about the essence of the symphony being “severity of style and profound logic that creates an inner connection among all the motifs” is typically associated with the icily beautiful Fourth Symphony, it could just as well apply to the Third. When we consider that the Sibelius Third is more or less contemporaneous with technicolor extravaganzas such as Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly* and the Mahler Sixth Symphony, its anti-Romantic and über-rational affect becomes all the more striking.

Sibelius even cut down on the number of movements—three instead of the usual four. Energy, high spirits, and a strict economy of materials characterize the ingratiating first movement; the second-place *Andantino con moto* is more a stately dance than a slow movement; the concluding *Moderato-Allegro* presents the listener with a dazzling mosaic of tiny musical gestures, meticulously and tightly arranged, the whole ending in a no-nonsense C major chord spelled out emphatically in the brass.

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 83 (1881)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Brahms blew hot and cold about writing concertos. Mostly cold. There would appear to be two primary causes for that. The first was the savage drubbing administered to his youthful Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor in 1858. “I am only experimenting and feeling my way,” Brahms wrote to his friend and mentor Joseph Joachim, “all the same, the hissing was rather too much.” Even after his sadly maligned concerto found success Brahms remained decidedly skittish about revisiting the genre.

A second reason was Brahms’s overall aversion to showy bling, integral to most concertos designed to highlight the soloist. Even with the example of noble outliers from Beethoven, Mendelssohn (in his Violin Concerto), and Schumann, the mature Brahms was not one for anything that partook of the musical equivalent of empty calories.

It seems that his happy experience working with Joachim on the magisterial D Major Violin Concerto of 1878 brought about a change of heart. The Violin Concerto is almost a symphony for violin and orchestra—motivically integrated, economical, very much a bling-free zone despite being monstrously difficult for the soloist. The new piano concerto that would emerge in 1881 is likewise a symphony with piano. But what a piano part it is—mammoth, formidable, sometimes so distressingly awkward that no less than Alfred Brendel referred to its “unsurpassable pianistic perversions.” Brahms wrote it for himself to play, and one rather wonders just how well he did with it; he was long out of practice, now a portly bearded eminence in place of the willowy piano virtuoso of the 1850s.



WILL VON BECKERATH, BRAHMS ON THE WING

This “tiny, tiny piano concerto” (as he wrote to friend Elisabet von Herzogenberg) doesn’t so much begin as it wafts into existence, but having arrived it embarks on a magnificent and extended journey through four expansive movements, including a “tiny, tiny wisp of a scherzo” in second place that just might be the most impressively granitic in the literature, a third-place *Andante* of surpassing gentleness (it’s a cellist’s piece as much as the pianist’s), and a graciously charming finale with just the barest whisper of Gypsy rhythms scattered hither and yon..

Program Annotator Scott Foglesong is the Chair of Musicianship and Music Theory at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and a Contributing Writer and Lecturer for the San Francisco Symphony.

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