

CALIFORNIA SYMPHONY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Symphony Concertmaster Jennifer Cho is featured in *TAKE FLIGHT*. Photo: David Kim.
Houston the Barred Owl will be available for pre-concert “meet and greets” in the Leshner Center lobby. Photo: Paul Hara.

FEATHERED FRIENDS, BIRD CALLS WELCOME AT CALIFORNIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA’S NATURE-INSPIRED SHOWS, ITS FIRST OF 2022

TAKE FLIGHT is Presented in Two Concerts on
Saturday, January 29 and Sunday, January 30

WALNUT CREEK, CA (January 12, 2022) – **California Symphony**, led by Music Director **Donato Cabrera**, presents [**TAKE FLIGHT**](#) in its first concerts of 2022. Following fall 2021 performances of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, which featured a chirpy chorus of spring birds, works that evoke birds and the beauty of the great outdoors anchor *TAKE FLIGHT*.

TAKE FLIGHT concerts are Saturday, January 29 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, January 30 at 4:00 p.m. in the Hofmann Theatre at the Leshner Center for the Arts (1601 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek). Cabrera will hold an interactive 30-minute lecture in the theater auditorium one hour before each concert. In collaboration with [**Lindsay Wildlife Experience**](#), a family museum and wildlife

rehabilitation center, animal ambassador **Houston the Barred Owl** will be on hand in the Leshner Center lobby for “meet and greets” and photo opportunities with patrons 30 minutes before each concert.

Composers have long taken inspiration from animal sounds in their compositions. As could be expected, the program provides a workout for the wind section, where flutes, piccolos, clarinets, and oboes give voice to our feathered friends. *TAKE FLIGHT* opens with Vaughan Williams’ *The Lark Ascending*, composed in the early days of WWI when a pastoral scene of a singing bird seemed far away. California Symphony Concertmaster **Jennifer Cho** ascends as the lark in this quiet meditation for orchestra and solo violin.

“I have a renewed appreciation for music that transports us from our daily life. We have all experienced an extended period without much change in scenery, and absence makes the heart grow fonder,” says Cho. “When I play *The Lark Ascending*, I can almost smell the forest and fresh air from a higher elevation. Rather than simply evoking a lark, I think Vaughan Williams succeeds in capturing the feeling of what it’s like to be one.”

“Jennifer Cho has a finesse and elegance to her playing, a subtle quality that I love,” adds Cabrera.

As part of the *TAKE FLIGHT* concert program, Cabrera continues his commitment to regularly present works by Haydn, the “Father of the Symphony,” with the inclusion of his *Symphony No. 83 (The Hen)*. The piece is full of irony and conflict and derives its name from a fowl-like “clucking” heard from a rhythmic motif in the first movement. The English horn becomes the voice of the swan in Sibelius’ rarely performed *Swan of Tuonela*, a haunting and ethereal tone poem featuring one of the best-known solos for the instrument. The concert ends on a high note with Dvorák’s *Symphony No. 8*. Known as the most tuneful and cheery of Dvorák’s large-scale works, the folk music of Bohemia and the sounds of nature found in the Bohemian woods inspired his *Symphony No. 8*.

TAKE FLIGHT single tickets are \$44-\$74 and \$20 for students aged 25 and under with valid student IDs. In line with current guidance, patrons must show proof of vaccination upon entry to the Leshner Center building and remain masked while inside. To receive more information or purchase tickets, visit [CaliforniaSymphony.org](https://www.californiasymphony.org) or call the Leshner Center Ticket Office at (925) 943-7469, open Wed. through Sun., noon to 6:00 p.m.

TAKE FLIGHT is supported by the Leshner Foundation and Diablo Regional Arts Association (DRAA).

CALENDAR DATES AND PROGRAM DETAILS

California Symphony’s 2021—22 Season continues in the New Year with the nature-inspired *TAKE FLIGHT* in the Hofmann Theatre at the Leshner Center for the Arts (1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek). Tickets are \$44-\$74. Student discount available.

TAKE FLIGHT

7:30pm, Saturday, Jan. 29

4:00pm, Sunday, Jan. 30

Donato Cabrera, conductor

Jennifer Cho, violin

PROGRAM:

Vaughan Williams—*The Lark Ascending*

Jennifer Cho, violin
Haydn—Symphony No. 83 (*The Hen*)
Sibelius—*Swan of Tuonela*
Dvořák—*Symphony No. 8*

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ABOUT DONATO CABRERA

Donato Cabrera is currently Music Director for 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 in 2013, the organization has reached new artistic heights by implementing innovative programming that emphasizes welcoming newcomers and loyalists alike, building on its reputation for championing music by living composers, and committing to programming music by women and people of color. With a recently extended contract through the 2022-23 season, Cabrera continues to advise and oversee the Symphony's music education programs and community engagement activities. Cabrera has also greatly changed the Las Vegas Philharmonic's concert experience by expanding the scope and breadth of its orchestral concerts. Cabrera has also reenergized the Youth Concert Series by creating an engaging and interactive curriculum-based concert experience.

In recent seasons, Cabrera has made impressive debuts with the National Symphony's KC Jukebox at the Kennedy Center, Louisville Orchestra, Hartford Symphony, Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco, New West Symphony, Kalamazoo Symphony, and the Reno Philharmonic. In 2016, he led the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in performances with Grammy Award-winning singer Lila Downs. Cabrera made his Carnegie Hall debut leading the world premiere of Mark Grey's *Ātash Sorushan* with soprano, Jessica Rivera.

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.

ABOUT CALIFORNIA SYMPHONY

Under the leadership of Music Director [Donato Cabrera](#), California Symphony is distinguished by its vibrant concert programs that combine classics alongside American repertoire and works by living composers, and for bringing music to people in new and unconventional settings. The orchestra includes musicians who perform with the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Ballet, and others, and performs around the extended Bay Area region in Walnut Creek, Napa Valley, Concord, Oakland, and Berkeley.

Outside the concert hall, the Symphony actively supports music education as a driver for social change through its El Sistema-inspired [Sound Minds program](#) which brings intensive after-school music instruction and academic enrichment to elementary school children in a part of the Bay Area where 94% of students qualify for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program, at no cost to the students who participate.

The Orchestra also hosts the highly competitive [Young American Composer-in-Residence program](#) and its current, tenth composer is **Viet Cuong** (2020-2023). Past composers include [Mason Bates](#), [Christopher Theofanidis](#), and [Kevin Puts](#). California Symphony has also launched the careers of some of today's most well-known artists, including violinist [Anne Akiko Meyers](#), cellists [Alisa Weilerstein](#) and [Joshua Roman](#), and pianist [Kirill Gerstein](#).

In 2017, California Symphony was the first professional orchestra to publish a public **Commitment to Diversity**. For more information, please visit [californiasymphony.org](#).

MEDIA CONTACTS

For more information, or for interview requests, please contact Theresa Madeira at Theresa@californiasymphony.org or (415) 577-5823.

Press photos available [here](#).

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