

CALIFORNIA SYMPHONY

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California Symphony Celebrates with Symphony Supper Club



Photos by Jessica Monroy and Natalie Schrik for Drew Altizer Photography, available in high resolution [here](#).

Hosted by Artistic and Music Director Donato Cabrera Annual Gala Transported Guests to the Golden Era of Supper Clubs

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WALNUT CREEK, CA – On Saturday, April 13, **California Symphony** presented its annual gala, this year titled **Symphony Supper Club**, hosted by Artistic and Music Director **Donato Cabrera**. The supper club theme of the night encapsulated the glamor and elegance of the American golden age, reinforced by the iconic setting of the Claremont Hotel. The evening included live entertainment by international jazz sensation, multi-instrumentalist, and star of Postmodern Jukebox, **Gunhild Carling**. Guests also enjoyed the swinging stylings of the **Gunhild Carling Band** while taking in the twinkling lights of the San Francisco Bay.

The event raised over \$194,000, breaking last year's record and surpassing California Symphony event totals raised since 2010. Proceeds from Symphony Supper Club support the musicians of the California Symphony and music education initiatives including the acclaimed Young American Composer-in-Residence program, the nationally recognized Sound Minds program for underserved local students, and a major new initiative announced at the gala – California Symphony's first-ever Education Concerts.

Donato Cabrera began the evening by welcoming everyone and thanking the Symphony Supper Club Gala Committee, co-chaired by **Julie Basque** and **Abigail Dye** with honorary chair **Sharon Simpson**, who prepared a memorable night of celebration in support of the Symphony's nationally recognized education and community programs. Cabrera also introduced the Swedish jazz-sensation Gunhild Carling, who serenaded gala attendees while they enjoyed a fine dining experience and exceptional wine provided by the California-based Teneral Cellars. The world famous

multi-instrumentalist's swinging musical stylings transported attendees to the golden era of the supper club. Fundraising continued with a fund-a-need paddle raise and live auction, hosted by auctioneer Graham Crow.

Donato Cabrera says, "Our annual themed fundraising event has become known throughout the Bay Area as being both an evening of raising awareness and money for our world-class orchestra and our celebrated education programs, as well as being just a fun party! I am always humbled by the generosity of our donors and we simply couldn't do all of the things we've become so well-known for without their support."

California Symphony Executive Director **Lisa S. Dell** announced a major new initiative for the orchestra as it launches its first ever Education Concerts, serving 1500 local school children: "In November, we will launch our first education concert series for 4th-5th grade students from local Title I schools in up to three Contra Costa County school districts. The concerts will feature performances of Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* and California Symphony's former Resident Composer Mason Bates' Grammy-winning concerto for orchestra and animated film, *Philharmonia Fantastique: The Making of the Orchestra*. Before the performances, California Symphony Teaching Artists will visit classrooms to provide pre-concert music education, and the in-classroom learning will give students a deeper understanding and appreciation of music and lay the groundwork for a fun, productive, and memorable field trip."

Composer **Mason Bates**, also in attendance, explained his vision for *Philharmonia Fantastique* as a vehicle for discovery and understanding of the orchestra for young people. He also thanked the orchestra for supporting and performing his music and that of other American composers, and for the invaluable experience he gained as California Symphony Young American Composer-in-Residence from 2007 to 2010.

The Gunhild Carling Band rounded out the evening in the Claremont Hotel's Meritage Ballroom, with attendees dancing the night away against the backdrop of stunning nighttime views of San Francisco.

Among the guests enjoying the festivities were California Symphony Music and Artistic Director **Donato Cabrera** of San Francisco; honorary chair and Bay Area philanthropist **Sharon Simpson**; president of the Los Angeles-based Liberty Building Co. and a longtime ODC board member **Lynn Feintech**; CEO of Union Square Alliance **Marisa Rodriguez**; **Navid and Bill Armstrong** of Walnut Creek; composer and founder of Mercury Soul **Mason Bates**; Classical KDFC host **Dianne Nicolini**; and arts supporter **Michael Hormel**. Tables at the event were hosted by civic and social leaders including **Sharon Simpson, Jacqueline Mills, Timothy Carlson, California Symphony Alliance, Mike Elmore, and Michael and Denise Weiner**.

Founded in 1986, California Symphony has been led by Donato Cabrera since 2013. It is distinguished by its vibrant concert programs that span the breadth of orchestral repertoire, including works by American composers and by living composers. Its concert season at the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek, California serves a growing number of music lovers from across the Bay Area. California Symphony believes that the concert experience should be fun and inviting, and its mission is to create a welcoming, engaging, and inclusive environment for the entire community. Through this commitment to community, imaginative programming, and its support of emerging composers, California Symphony is a leader among orchestras in California and a model for regional orchestras everywhere.

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