

CALIFORNIA SYMPHONY

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California Symphony's Epic Season Finale *UNFINISHED BRUCKNER*

Featuring the Unfinished Symphonies of Schubert & Bruckner

Led by Donato Cabrera, Artistic & Music Director



Photo by Kristen Loken; high resolution photos available [here](#).

**In Concert May 3 at 7:30pm & May 4 at 4:00pm
At Walnut Creek's Leshner Center for the Arts**

**California Symphony's 2024-2025 Season Showcases the Crowning
Achievements of
Composers at the Peak of Their Powers: [Watch Donato Cabrera's Introduction](#)**

Tickets & Information: www.californiasymphony.org

WALNUT CREEK, CA – **California Symphony** and Artistic and Music Director **Donato Cabrera** conclude the 2024-2025 season, which has showcased the crowning achievements of composers at the peak of their powers, with ***UNFINISHED BRUCKNER*** – two concerts featuring a striking pair of unfinished masterpieces by **Franz Schubert** and **Anton Bruckner** on **Saturday, May 3, 2025 at 7:30pm** and **Sunday, May 4, 2025 at 4:00pm** at Hofmann Theatre at the **Lesher Center for the Arts** (1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek).

Declining health, hesitation over how to continue the piece, work overload, or even that the pages were completed but ultimately lost – theories abound, but no one really knows why Schubert never finished his hauntingly beautiful Symphony No. 8. The three completed movements of Bruckner's Symphony No. 9 showcase his signature big symphonic sound, iconic themes, and brass fanfares. Featuring one of the largest ensembles to take the stage, Bruckner's unfinished Symphony No. 9 makes a fittingly epic grand finale to California Symphony's concert season.

"It has been a longtime wish of mine to program Schubert's unfinished Symphony No. 8 with Bruckner's unfinished Symphony No. 9," says Donato Cabrera. "While over 70 years separate them from one another, they share many of the same attributes and are, in this sense, musical contemporaries. In both symphonies, profound mystery and solemnity are frequently interrupted by emotional and dramatic outbursts. Simple, chorale-like melodies are used by both composers to create a complex web of communal experience, while also suggesting that there is a greater force behind it all. It's as if both are trying to depict, in music, what is beyond the great veil. Music such as this gives us a great opportunity to contemplate such matters on our own terms, without words or dogma to muddy the waters. It is my hope that people will leave the concert hall in a deep and thoughtful satisfaction, truly changed by these two powerful symphonies."

Schubert began work on his **Symphony No. 8** in 1822 but left only two movements completed, even though he lived for another six years. The symphony was never performed during his lifetime, and lay in storage until the 1860s — more than 30 years after Schubert's death — until it was discovered in the study of one of his contemporaries and performed in Vienna in 1865. Scholars have had many theories about why the work remained incomplete, but none have been proven. What is clear is that it is a masterpiece, stamped with the composer's indelible voice. The critic Eduard Hanslick wrote after the premiere, "When, after the few introductory measures, clarinets and oboes in unison begin to sound their sweet song above the peaceful murmur of the violins, then each and every child recognizes the composer, and a half-suppressed outcry 'Schubert' buzzes through the hall. He has hardly entered, but it is as if one knows him by his step, by his manner of lifting the latch."

Bruckner's Symphony No. 9 was left unfinished at the time of his death. A deeply religious man, he dedicated it to "the beloved God." He began writing the work in 1887 but was frequently interrupted

by other work and poor health. By the end of 1894, he had completed three movements. He is quoted as saying, "I have done my duty on earth. I have accomplished what I could, and my final wish is to be allowed to finish my Ninth Symphony. Three movements are almost complete, the Adagio nearly finished. There remains only the finale. I trust that death will not deprive me of my pen." He worked on the third movement for the next two years, until the morning of the day he died in October 1896, never completing the final movement.

Season tickets are now available for California Symphony's 2025-2026 season. Illustrating California Symphony's signature approach to creating vibrant concerts, rich in storytelling and spanning the breadth of orchestral repertoire, next season explores evocative programmatic music including **Maurice Ravel's** *Boléro*, **Modest Mussorgsky's** *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and **Valentin Silvestrov's** *Stille Musik*; the fruitful intersection of jazz and classical in music by **Jessie Montgomery**, **Friedrich Gulda**, and **George Gershwin**; the monumental symphonies of **Ludwig van Beethoven**, **Franz Schubert**, **Jean Sibelius**, and **Alexander Borodin**; the timelessness of **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** including excerpts from *Don Giovanni*; and world-class soloists in riveting concertos including pianist **Robert Thies** in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21, **Nathan Chan** in Friedrich Gulda's Cello Concerto, violinists **Jennifer Cho** and **Sam Weiser** in **Arvo Pärt's** *Tabula Rasa*, and pianist **Sofya Gulyak** in **Sergei Rachmaninoff's** Piano Concerto No. 3. **Read the season announcement [here](#).**

Founded in 1986, **California Symphony** has been led by Donato Cabrera since 2013. 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.

Single tickets start at \$50 and at \$25 for students 25 and under. A free 30-minute pre-concert talk by lecturer Scott Fogelsong will begin one hour before each performance. More information is available at [CaliforniaSymphony.org](https://californiasymphony.org).

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: California Symphony presents *UNFINISHED BRUCKNER*

California Symphony concludes its 2024-2025 season with a striking pair of unfinished masterpieces, each marking the pinnacle of achievement for the composers. Conducted by Artistic and Music Director Donato Cabrera, the orchestra performs the two surviving movements of Franz Schubert's hauntingly beautiful Symphony No. 8. Declining health, hesitation over how to continue the piece, work overload, or even that the pages were completed but ultimately lost . . . theories abound, but no one really knows why Schubert never finished it. The three completed movements of Anton Bruckner's Symphony No. 9 conclude the program, showcasing his signature big symphonic sound, iconic themes, and brass fanfares. Featuring one of the largest ensembles to take the stage,

Bruckner's unfinished Symphony No. 9 makes a fittingly epic grand finale to California Symphony's concert season.

California Symphony takes the stuffiness out of the concert experience: Take selfies at the photo booth, order a signature cocktail, and sip at your seat. Tickets include a free 30-minute pre-concert talk by award-winning instructor Scott Foglesong, starting one hour before the show.

WHEN: Saturday, May 3, 2025 at 7:30pm
Sunday, May 4, 2025 at 4:00pm

WHERE: Hofmann Theatre at the Leshner Center for the Arts
1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek

CONCERT:

Unfinished Bruckner
7:30pm, Saturday, May 3
4:00pm, Sunday, May 4
Donato Cabrera, conductor
California Symphony

PROGRAM:

Franz Schubert: Symphony No. 8 (Unfinished)
Anton Bruckner: Symphony No. 9 (Unfinished)

TICKETS: Single tickets start at \$50 and at \$25 for students 25 and under.

INFO: For more information or to purchase tickets, the public may visit [CaliforniaSymphony.org](https://californiasymphony.org) or call the Leshner Center Ticket Office at (925) 943-7469 (open Wed – Sun, noon to 6pm).

PHOTOS: Available [here](#).

About the California Symphony:

Founded in 1986, California Symphony has been led by Artistic and Music Director 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.

Since 1991, California Symphony's three-year Young American Composer-in-Residence program has provided a composer with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to collaborate with the orchestra over three consecutive years to create, rehearse, premiere, and record three major orchestra compositions, one each season. Every Composer-in-Residence has gone on to win top honors and accolades in the field, including the Rome Prize, Pulitzer Prize, Grammy Awards, and more.

The orchestra's nationally recognized educational initiative Sound Minds impacts students' trajectories by providing instruction for violin or cello and musicianship skills. Sound Minds has proven to contribute directly to improved reading and math proficiencies and character development, as students set and achieve goals, learn communication and problem-solving skills, and gain self-confidence. Inspired by the El Sistema program of Venezuela, the program is offered completely free of charge to the students and families of Downer Elementary School in San Pablo, California.

Through its innovative adult education program Fresh Look: The Symphony Exposed, California Symphony provides lifelong learners a fun-filled introduction to the orchestra and classical music. Led by celebrated educator and California Symphony program annotator Scott Foglesong, these live classes are held over four weeks in the summer annually and are available to stream online year-round.

In 2017, California Symphony became the first orchestra with a public statement of a commitment to diversity. Its website is available in both Spanish and English.

Reaching far beyond the performance hall, since 2020 the orchestra's concerts have been broadcast nationally on multiple radio series through Classical California (KUSC/KDFC) and the WFMT Radio Network, reaching over 1.5 million listeners across the country.

For more information, visit [CaliforniaSymphony.org](https://californiasymphony.org).

California Symphony's 2024-25 season is sponsored by the Leshner Foundation.