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**Pasadena Symphony Association**  
**Pasadena Symphony & POPS**  
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For artist bios and images visit: <http://pasadenasympphony-pops.org/2019-20-classics-announcement/>

March 6, 2019

**PASADENA SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES 2019-20 CLASSICS SEASON**

*New Composers Showcase features works from acclaimed musicians who are shaping the future of classical music including Ellen Reid, Caroline Shaw, Michael Giacchino, Reena Esmail, Sydney Wang and Michael Abels*

**Pasadena, CA** – Music Director **David Lockington** and the **Pasadena Symphony** announce its 92<sup>nd</sup> season with an exhilarating schedule of seven concerts, running **October 19, 2019** through **April 18, 2020**. Alongside a stellar program of celebrated classical works, the symphony is introducing its **Composers Showcase** for the 2019-20 season, featuring work by both emerging and established contemporary composers at each concert, including two world premiere commissions – opening the season with a piece by aspiring composer **Sydney Wang** and closing with a new work by **Michael Abels**, composer of the critically acclaimed score for the film *Get Out*. All concerts take place at Pasadena’s **Ambassador Auditorium** with both matinee and evening performances at 2pm and 8pm. The season also includes the annually sold-out **Holiday Candlelight** Concert on Saturday, **December 14, 2019** with both 4pm and 7pm performances at **All Saints Church**.

**Lockington** kicks off the 2019-20 season on **October 19<sup>th</sup>** with **Brahms Symphony No. 1** and Naumburg Competition winner violinist **Tessa Lark** performing **Bruch’s Violin Concerto No. 1**. **November 17<sup>th</sup>** brings award-winning pianist **Alessio Bax** on **Beethoven’s** powerhouse “**Emperor**” **Piano Concerto**, along with cutting edge Los Angeles composer **Ellen Reid’s** **Petrichor**. The orchestra’s annual Baroque concert on **January 25, 2020** will showcase the triumphant return of local violinist **Simone Porter** in **Vivaldi’s Four Seasons** paired with **Reena Esmail’s Teen Murti**. Virtuoso violinist **Nick Kendall** of **Time for Three** will perform a one-of-a-kind concerto based on **Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess** on **February 15<sup>th</sup>** alongside **Debussy’s La Mer** and Oscar and Grammy Award Winner **Michael Giacchino’s Voyage**.

**Nicholas McGegan** concludes his celebrated tenure as **Principal Guest Conductor** on **March 21st** with **Mozart & McGegan**, a **Mozart Spectacular** with **Symphony No. 39** and the melodic perfection of his **Piano Concerto No. 20**. Also on the March program, the orchestra will perform **Caroline Shaw’s Red, Red, Rose**, which the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer wrote for McGegan’s Philharmonia Baroque orchestra. **Lockington** returns to the podium on **April 18<sup>th</sup>** to close the season with **Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 3** performed by Israeli pianist Inon

Barnatan, “one of the most admired pianists of his generation” (*New York Times*), plus **Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition** and the new Abels commission.

The Pasadena Symphony provides a quintessential experience specially designed for the music lover, the social butterfly or a date night out, and the inner epicurean in us all. Audiences can enjoy a drink or a bite in the lively Symphony Lounge, yet another addition to the care-free and elegant concert experience the Pasadena Symphony offers. A posh setting at Ambassador Auditorium's beautiful outdoor plaza, the lounge offers uniquely prepared menus from Claud & Co for both lunch and dinner, a full bar and fine wines by Michero Family Wines, plus music before the concert and during intermission.

All Symphony Classics concerts take place at Ambassador Auditorium, 131 S. St. John Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91105, with performances at 2pm and 8pm. Subscription packages start at \$99 with single tickets starting at \$35. Both may be purchased online at [pasadenasympphony-pops.org](http://pasadenasympphony-pops.org) or by calling (626) 793-7172.

### **2019-20 Symphony Classics Series Calendar**

#### **Brahms Symphony No. 1**

**October 19, 2019**

David Lockington, conductor

Tessa Lark, violin

Sydney Wang Commission (world premiere)

Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1

Brahms Symphony No. 1

#### **Beethoven “Emperor” Piano Concerto**

**November 16, 2019**

David Lockington, conductor

Alessio Bax, piano

Ellen Reid	Petrichor
Beethoven	Piano Concerto No. 5 “Emperor”
DeFalla	El amor brujo: Ritual Fire Dance
DeFalla	Three-Cornered Hat: Suite No. 1
Marquez	Danzón No. 2

#### **Holiday Candlelight**

**December 14, 2019**

David Lockington, conductor

Soloist to be announced

Los Angeles Children's Chorus

The Donald Brinegar Singers

L.A. Bronze Handbell Ensemble

**Vivaldi Four Season****January 25, 2020**

David Lockington, conductor

Marissa Benedict, trumpet

Simone Porter, violin

Albinoni Oboe Concerto (transcribed for trumpet)

Vivaldi Four Seasons

Bach Goldberg Variations for Strings

Reena Esmail Teen Murti

Piazzola “*Spring*” from Four Seasons of Buenos Aires**Gershwin Porgy & Bess****February 15, 2020**

David Lockington, conductor

Nick Kendall, violin

Copland Fanfare for the Common Man

Michael Giacchino Voyage

Gershwin Porgy and Bess: Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra

Vaughn Williams The Lark Ascending

Debussy La Mer

**Mozart & McGegan****March 21, 2020**

Nicholas McGegan, conductor

Yerin Yang, piano

Caroline Shaw Red, Red Rose

Mozart Piano Concerto No. 20

Mozart Symphony No. 39

**Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 3****April 18, 2020**

David Lockington, conductor

Inon Barnatan, piano

Michael Abels Commission (world premiere)

Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 3

Mussorgsky Pictures at an Exhibition

**ABOUT THE PASADENA SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION**

Recent Acclaim for the Pasadena Symphony and POPS:

*“The Pasadena Symphony signals a new direction...teeming with vitality...dripping with opulent, sexy emotion.” – Los Angeles Times.*

*“...full of pulsating energy from first note to last... the strings were lushly resonant, the wind principals were at the top of their games, and the brass rang out with gleaming vigor.”*  
– Pasadena Star News.

Formed in 1928, the Pasadena Symphony and POPS is an ensemble of Hollywood’s most talented and sought-after musicians. With extensive credits in the film, television, recording and orchestral industry, the artists of the Pasadena Symphony and POPS are the most heard in the world.

The Pasadena Symphony and POPS performs in two of the most extraordinary venues in the country - the historic Ambassador Auditorium, known as the *Carnegie Hall of the West*, and the beautiful Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden. Internationally recognized, Grammy-nominated conductor David Lockington serves as the Pasadena Symphony Association’s Music Director, with performance-practice specialist Nicholas McGegan serving as Principal Guest Conductor. The multi-platinum-selling, two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer dubbed “The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook,” Michael Feinstein, is the Principal Pops Conductor, who succeeded Marvin Hamlisch in the newly created *Marvin Hamlisch Chair*.

A hallmark of its robust education programs, the Pasadena Symphony Association has served the youth of the region for over five decades through the Pasadena Youth Symphony Orchestras (PYSO), comprised of five performing ensembles with over 300 gifted 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students from more than 50 schools all over the Southern California region. The PYSO has toured internationally at prestigious venues in New York, Vienna, and most recently San Jose, Costa Rica. They regularly perform throughout Southern California and have appeared on the popular television show *GLEE*.

The PSA provides people from all walks of life with powerful access points to the world of symphonic music.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

### **David Lockington Music Director**

David Lockington began his career as a cellist and was the Principal with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain for two years. After completing his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Cambridge where he was a choral scholar, Mr. Lockington came to the United States on a scholarship to Yale University where he received his Master's Degree in cello performance and studied conducting with Otto Werner Mueller. He was a member of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and served as assistant principal cellist with the Denver Symphony Orchestra for three years before turning to conducting.

Over the past thirty years, David Lockington has developed an impressive conducting career in the United States. A native of Great Britain, he served as the Music Director of the Grand Rapids Symphony from January 1999 to May 2015, and is currently the orchestra's Conductor Laureate. He has held the position of Music Director with the Modesto Symphony since May 2007 and in March 2013, Mr. Lockington was appointed Music Director of the Pasadena Symphony. He has a close relationship with the Orquesta Sinfonica del Principado de Asturias in Spain, where he was the orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor from 2012 through 2016, and in the 15/16 season was named one of three Artistic Partners with the Northwest Sinfonietta in Tacoma, Washington.

In addition to his current posts, since his arrival to the United States in 1978 Mr. Lockington has held positions with several other American orchestras, including serving as Assistant Conductor of the Denver Symphony Orchestra and Opera Colorado, and Assistant and Associate Conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. In May 1993 he accepted the position of Music Director of the Ohio Chamber Orchestra, assumed the title of Music Director of the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra in September 1995 and was Music Director of the Long Island Philharmonic for the 96/97 through 99/2000 seasons.

Mr. Lockington's guest conducting engagements include appearances with the Saint Louis, Houston, Detroit, Seattle, Toronto, Vancouver, Oregon and Phoenix symphonies; the Rochester and Louisiana Philharmonics; and the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Carnegie Hall. Internationally, he has conducted the Northern Sinfonia in Great Britain, the Israel Chamber Orchestra, the China Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra in Beijing and Taiwan, and led the English Chamber Orchestra on a tour in Asia.

Recent and upcoming guest conducting engagements include appearances with the New Jersey, Indianapolis, Utah, Pacific, Colorado, Nashville, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Stamford, Tucson and Kansas City symphonies, the Florida and Louisville Orchestras, the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa and the Buffalo, Calgary and Oklahoma Philharmonics. Mr. Lockington's summer festival activities include appearances at the Grand Teton, Colorado Music, Interlochen, Chautauqua and Eastern Music festivals.

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### **Nicholas McGegan** **Principal Guest Conductor**

As he embarks on his fourth decade on the podium, Nicholas McGegan — long hailed as “one of the finest baroque conductors of his generation” (The Independent) and “an expert in 18th-century style” (The New Yorker) — is recognized for his probing and revelatory explorations of music of all periods. In 2015 he begins his 30th year as music director of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and continues as Principal Guest Conductor of the Pasadena Symphony.

Best known as a baroque and classical specialist, McGegan's approach— intelligent, infused with joy and never dogmatic — has led to appearances with many of the world's major orchestras. At home in opera houses, McGegan shone new light on close to twenty Handel operas as the Artistic Director and conductor at the Göttingen Handel Festival for 20 years (1991-2001) and the Mozart canon as Principal Guest Conductor at Scottish Opera in the 1990s.

His 15/16 season features appearances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (with which he has appeared annually for 20 years), St. Louis, BBC Scottish, RTÉ National, and New Zealand Symphonies; the Cleveland Orchestra/Blossom Music Festival; the Orchestra of St. Luke's at Caramoor and Carnegie Hall, and the Juilliard School. Under McGegan this season, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra performs Scarlatti's *La gloria di primavera* at Carnegie Hall and throughout California's Orange County.

McGegan's extensive discography features eight releases on Philharmonia Baroque's label, Philharmonia Baroque Productions (PBP) including the 2011 GRAMMY® Award-nominated recording of Haydn Symphonies nos. 88, 101, and 104.

English-born Nicholas McGegan was educated at Cambridge and Oxford. He was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) "for services to music overseas." Most recently, McGegan was invited to join the board of Early Music America. Other awards include the Halle Handel Prize; the Order of Merit of the State of Lower Saxony (Germany); the Medal of Honour of the City of Göttingen, and a declaration of Nicholas McGegan Day, by the Mayor of San Francisco in recognition of his work with Philharmonia Baroque. In 2013, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music awarded him an honorary degree of Doctor of Music.

Visit Nicholas McGegan on the web at [www.nicholasmcgegan.com](http://www.nicholasmcgegan.com).

## **Tessa Lark**

### **Violin**

Violinist Tessa Lark, Silver Medalist in the 9th Quadrennial International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, recipient of a 2018 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship and a 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant, and winner of the 2012 Naumburg International Violin Competition, is one of the most captivating artistic voices of our time. She has consistently been praised by critics and audiences for her astounding range of sounds, technical agility, and musical elegance. A budding superstar in the classical realm, she is also a highly acclaimed fiddler in the tradition of her native Kentucky, delighting audiences with programming that includes Appalachian and bluegrass music and inspiring composers to write for her.

Ms. Lark has been a featured soloist at numerous U.S. orchestras since making her concerto debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at age sixteen. She performed at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in 2017 on Carnegie's Distinctive Debuts series, and again the following year as part of APAP's Young Performers Career Advancement showcase. Ms. Lark has appeared at such venues as Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Artist Recital Series at Oberlin College, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, the Perlman Music Program, San Francisco Performances, Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts, Ravinia's Bennett-Gordon Classics series, Troy Chromatic Concerts, Chamber Music Tulsa, Caramoor's Wednesday Morning Concerts, the

Seattle Chamber Music Society, and the Marlboro, Yellow Barn, Olympic, and Music@Menlo festivals.

Her 2018-19 season includes debut appearances with the Seattle Symphony, where she will partner with cellist Jay Campbell in the Brahms Double Concerto, and with the Albany (NY) Symphony Orchestra in concerts featuring the world premiere of *Sky: Concerto for Violin*, a bluegrass-inspired work written for her by Michael Torke. Also planned for 2018-19 is Ms. Lark's debut CD, a fantasy-themed release exploring that musical form from the Baroque era to today; works include fantasias by Telemann, the *Fantasia in C Major* by Schubert, Ravel's *Tzigane*, the Viennese *Rhapsodic Fantasietta* by Fritz Kreisler, and Ms. Lark's own *Appalachian Fantasy*. The album's producer is four-time Grammy winner Judith Sherman. Other season highlights will include appearances with the Louisville Orchestra, the Evansville, Binghamton and South Carolina philharmonics, the Atlantic Classical Orchestra, CityMusic Cleveland, the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, the Knoxville, Eastern Connecticut, Ridgefield and Williamsburg symphony orchestras, Moab Music Festival, and the Louisville, Maryland and Telluride chamber music societies, as well as recitals at Kaufman Music Center and Baruch College in New York and the Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda, MD.

A passionate chamber musician, she has toured with musicians from Ravinia's Steans Music Institute and Musicians from Marlboro. Her piano trio, Trio Mod tre, took top prize in the 2012 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. Ms. Lark has collaborated with such renowned artists as Mitsuko Uchida, Itzhak Perlman, Miriam Fried, Donald Weilerstein, Pamela Frank, Kim Kashkashian, Peter Wiley, and Ralph Kirshbaum. She joined Caramoor Virtuosi as a result of her participation in Caramoor's Rising Stars Series.

Keeping in touch with her Kentucky roots, Ms. Lark performs and programs bluegrass and Appalachian music regularly and collaborated with Mark O'Connor on his CD "MOC4," released in June 2014. She also plays jazz violin, most recently performing with the Juilliard Jazz Ensemble at Dizzy's Club Coca Cola in New York City. She premiered her own *Appalachian Fantasy* as part of her Distinctive Debuts recital at Carnegie Hall, where she also gave the world premiere of Michael Torke's *Spoon Bread*, written specifically for her stylistic capabilities. In addition to her busy performance schedule, Ms. Lark has served on the faculty of the Great Wall International Music Academy in Beijing, and as an alumna of NPR's From the Top she is active in that radio show's arts leadership program as a performer and educator. Ms. Lark's primary mentors include Cathy McGlasson, Kurt Sassmannshaus, Miriam Fried, and Lucy Chapman. She is a graduate of New England Conservatory and completed her Artist Diploma at The Juilliard School, where she studied with Sylvia Rosenberg, Ida Kavafian, and Daniel Phillips.

Tessa Lark is represented worldwide by New York-based Sciolino Artist Management, [www.samnyc.us](http://www.samnyc.us).

### **Sydney Wang** **Composer**

Sydney Shanshan Wang is an aspiring composer studying with Professor Ian Krouse of the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. She was part of the 2017-2018 Los Angeles Philharmonic's Composer Fellowship Program. Her works have won top prizes in national and international competitions for young composers, including the Robert Avalon International

Competition and the BMI Student Composer Award. Her short orchestral piece, Moonlit River, was performed in May 2017 by the Pasadena Youth Symphony Orchestra at Ambassador Auditorium.

Sydney has been playing piano since the age of four and is currently studying with Dr. Sarkis Baltaian. She has won many awards in piano competitions in Southern California, including Southern California Junior Bach Festival, Southwestern Youth Music Festival, Los Angeles Young Pianist Competition, Kathryn Gawartin Chopin Piano Competition, Glendale Piano Competition, and CAMPT Contemporary Music Competition. In addition to her solo repertoire, Sydney plays piano in the Ed and Mari Edelman Chamber Institute of the Colburn School and her piano trio group was featured in Sundays Live at LACMA (LA County Museum of Art). Sydney also plays cello in the Pasadena Youth Symphony Orchestra and the La Cañada High School Orchestra. Aside from her passion for music and composition, Sydney loves playing tennis, reading, writing, art, and traveling.

### **Alessio Bax** **Piano**

Combining exceptional lyricism and insight with consummate technique, Alessio Bax is without a doubt “among the most remarkable young pianists now before the public” (*Gramophone*). He catapulted to prominence with First Prize wins at both the Leeds and Hamamatsu International Piano Competitions, and is now a familiar face on four continents, not only as a recitalist and chamber musician, but as a concerto soloist who has appeared with more than 100 orchestras, including the London and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, Dallas and Cincinnati Symphonies, NHK Symphony in Japan, St. Petersburg Philharmonic with Yuri Temirkanov, and the City of Birmingham Symphony with Sir Simon Rattle.

This season, for his first appearances with three major orchestras, Bax revisits the two concertos heard on *Alessio Bax Plays Mozart*. He makes his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut playing Mozart’s C-minor concerto (K.491) with Sir Andrew Davis. Then, on a spring tour of Australia and New Zealand, he not only reunites with the eminent conductor to reprise the same work for his Melbourne Symphony debut, but leads Mozart’s B-flat major concerto (K.595) from the keyboard in his first performances with the Sydney Symphony. Bax completes the tour with a series of solo recitals and accounts of the Grieg concerto with Tadaaki Otaka that mark his Auckland Philharmonia debut. His international lineup also includes concerts in Israel and a Japanese tour featuring dates with the Tokyo Symphony, solo recitals, and chamber music at Le Pont International Festival in Ako and Himeji. Back in the U.S., he undertakes multiple concerto collaborations, including Brahms’s Second with the Fort Worth Symphony under Miguel Harth-Bedoya and Barber with the Kansas Symphony and Edo de Waart, besides rejoining the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for a Hungarian-themed program and season-closing concert. He rounds out the season with a full summer of festivals, highlighted by his debut at France’s International Chamber Music Festival of Salon-de-Provence, and returns to the Great Lakes Music Festival, Saratoga Chamber Music Festival, and Tuscany’s Incontri in Terra di Siena festival, where he serves as Artistic Director.

Last season saw Signum Classics release the pianist’s recording of Beethoven’s “Emperor” concerto with the Southbank Sinfonia. Bax also undertook duo recital tours with Joshua Bell and Emmanuel Pahud; gave solo recitals at London’s Wigmore Hall and the Leeds Piano Festival;



returned to Hong Kong; and performed concertos by Gershwin, Rachmaninov, Grieg, and Schumann with orchestras including the Minnesota Orchestra, North Carolina Philharmonic, and Armenian Philharmonic. In 2016-17, he stepped in to play Brahms's Second with the Cincinnati Symphony under Sir Andrew Davis, in what proved "the most exciting debut in recent memory" (*Cincinnati Enquirer*), and made three appearances at the Wigmore Hall, including his solo recital debut, which aired live on BBC Radio 3.

Other highlights of recent seasons include Rachmaninov with London's Southbank Sinfonia and Vladimir Ashkenazy; his Minnesota Orchestra debut under Andrew Litton; a return to the Dallas Symphony for Barber under Jaap van Zweden, named one of the top ten concerts of 2013 by the *Dallas Morning News*; season-opening appearances with the Colorado Symphony; and concerts at L.A.'s Disney Hall, Washington's Kennedy Center, and New York's Carnegie Hall. In 2009, the pianist was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant, and four years later he received both the Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award and Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, which recognizes young artists of exceptional accomplishment.

Bax is a staple on the international summer festival circuit, and has performed at the Verbier Festival in Switzerland; England's International Piano Series and Aldeburgh and Bath festivals; the Risør Festival in Norway; and the Moritzburg Festival, Ruhr Klavier-Festival, and Beethovenfest Bonn in Germany. In the U.S., he makes regular appearances at New York's Bard Music Festival, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, the Bravo! Vail festival, Mimir Chamber Music Festival, Minnesota's Beethoven Festival, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, Music@Menlo, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. He has given recitals at New York's Lincoln Center and other major music halls around the world, including those of Rome, Milan, Bilbao, Madrid, Paris, London, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, and Washington, DC. As a chamber musician, Bax has collaborated with Emanuel Ax, Sol Gabetta, Steven Isserlis, Nicholas Phan, Paul Watkins, Jörg Widmann, and the Emerson String Quartet, among many others.

Bax's celebrated discography for Signum Classics includes Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" and "Moonlight" Sonatas (a *Gramophone* "Editor's Choice"); *Bax & Chung*, a duo disc with Lucille Chung that includes Stravinsky's original four-hand version of the ballet *Pétrouchka* as well as music by Brahms and Piazzolla; *Alessio Bax plays Mozart*, comprising Piano Concertos K. 491 and K. 595 with London's Southbank Sinfonia and Simon Over; *Alessio Bax: Scriabin & Mussorgsky* (named "Recording of the Month ... and quite possibly my recording of the year" by MusicWeb International); *Alessio Bax plays Brahms* (a *Gramophone* "Critics' Choice"); *Bach Transcribed*; and *Rachmaninov: Preludes & Melodies* (an *American Record Guide* "Critics' Choice 2011"). Recorded for Warner Classics, his *Baroque Reflections* album was also a *Gramophone* "Editor's Choice." He performed Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata for maestro Daniel Barenboim in the PBS-TV documentary *Barenboim on Beethoven: Masterclass*, available as a DVD boxed set on the EMI label.

Alessio Bax graduated with top honors at the record age of 14 from the conservatory of Bari, his hometown in Italy, where his teacher was Angela Montemurro. He studied in France with Francois-Joël Thiollier and attended the Chigiana Academy in Siena under Joaquín Achúcarro. In 1994 he moved to Dallas to continue his studies with Achúcarro at SMU's Meadows School of the Arts, where, with Lucille Chung, he is now the Johnson-Prothro Artist-in-Residence. He also serves with Chung as co-artistic director of the Joaquín Achúcarro Foundation, created to

support young pianists' careers. A Steinway artist, Bax lives in New York City with Chung and their four-year-old daughter, Mila. Beyond the concert hall he is known for his longtime obsession with fine food; as a 2013 *New York Times* profile noted, he is not only notorious for hosting "epic" multi-course dinner parties, but often spends his intermissions dreaming of meals to come.

## **Ellen Reid** **Composer**

Ellen Reid is one of the most innovative artists of her generation. A composer and sound artist whose breadth of work spans opera, sound design, film scoring, ensemble and choral writing, she recently became the first composer to have works premiered by Los Angeles' four leading musical institutions — the Los Angeles Philharmonic, LA Opera, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and Los Angeles Master Chorale — all within one year.

This season, Ellen presented her first opera, *p r i s m*, which opened to universal acclaim in sold-out runs on both the east and west coasts, as a part of New York's Prototype Festival and the LA Opera's Off Grand series. Upcoming highlights include a new work for the New York Philharmonic, and a collaboration with Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller on a sound installation for the LA Phil's Walt Disney Concert Hall. In the fall of 2019, Ellen begins a three-year appointment as Creative Advisor and Composer-in-Residence for Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

Ellen was listed as one of Musical America's 30 Professionals of the Year in 2016 for her work with Luna Composition Lab, a mentorship program for young self-identified female, non-binary, and gender non-conforming composers that she co-founded with composer Missy Mazzoli. She received her BFA from Columbia University and her MA from California Institute of the Arts. Ellen splits her time between her two favorite cities — Los Angeles and New York.

## **Marissa Benedict** **Trumpet**

Marissa Benedict has been a freelance trumpeter in the Los Angeles area for 38 years. As well as playing Principal in the Pasadena Symphony and POPS she is also Associate Principal trumpet in The Long Beach Symphony and Pops Orchestra. She actively performs with the Los Angeles Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Orchestra Santa Monica and The Long Beach Municipal Band, and is a founding member of the Modern Brass Quintet.

A very active and in-demand studio player, she can be heard on nearly 150 motion picture recordings including *The Incredibles II*, *Coco*, *Moana*, *Spider Man Homecoming*, *Jurassic World*, *Meet the Millers*, *Indiana Jones IV*, *Avatar*, *The Polar Express*, *Spider-Man 2*, *Monsters, Inc.*, *War of the Worlds* and many more. Her television studio recording credits include *Star Trek: Enterprise*, *Star Trek: Voyager*, *JAG*, *Commander in Chief*, *Galavant* and *Agent Carter*.

Marissa is also an active and dedicated music educator. She is on the faculty at The Colburn School of Performing Arts, California State University at San Bernardino, Glendale Community College and is also a trumpet coach at Burbank High School and Harvard Westlake Academy.

While staying busy with her music and teaching career she and her husband Mike just celebrated their 32nd wedding anniversary and have raised three children.

**Simone Porter**  
**Violin**

Violinist Simone Porter has been recognized as an emerging artist of impassioned energy, interpretive integrity, and vibrant communication. In the past few years she has debuted with the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and with a number of renowned conductors, including Gustavo Dudamel, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Stéphane Denève, Nicholas McGegan, Ludovic Morlot, and Donald Runnicles. Born in 1996, Simone made her professional solo debut at age 10 with the Seattle Symphony and her international debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London at age 13. In March 2015, Simone was named a recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

At the invitation of the composer, Simone has just concluded a busy season with an appearance at the New York Philharmonic's presentation of Esa-Pekka Salonen's "Foreign Bodies," a multi-sensory performance experience involving live dance and a video installation. During the season she visited orchestras in Rhode Island, Albany (NY), Oregon, Texas and Alabama with recitals in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and performances at U.S. summer festivals in Aspen and Bellingham as well as Dublin and Edinburgh's International Festival.

This season she will join Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in subscription concerts honoring John Williams, in addition to concerts with orchestras in Oklahoma City, Boise, Orlando, Erie, Lexington, Fort Worth, Spokane, Asheville, Edmonton, Long Beach and Costa Rica.

Simone's emergence on the international concert circuit has occurred simultaneously with her studies at the Colburn Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles. Her Walt Disney Concert Hall debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel came in 2015 followed soon after by performances with orchestras in Detroit, Cincinnati, Houston, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, Indianapolis, Nashville, Salt Lake City, Baltimore and Rochester. She also made her Ravinia Festival recital debut, her debut at the Grand Teton Music Festival, and multiple solo performances as a guest artist at the Aspen Music Festival. Having spent her formative years in Seattle, Simone made a rousing homecoming return engagement with the Seattle Symphony in 2016.

Internationally, Simone has performed with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra with Gustavo Dudamel; the Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira in Rio de Janeiro; the Costa Rica Youth Symphony; the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong; the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Milton Keynes City Orchestra, and the Royal Philharmonic in the United Kingdom; and the Opera de Marseilles.

Simone is a devoted chamber musician, and has most recently performed in the Seattle Chamber Music Society series with James Ehnes in January 2018. She has appeared in multiple Colburn Chamber Music Society Series concerts with artists such as violinists

Arnold Steinhardt and Scott St. John; on the South Bay Chamber Music Society series with violist Paul Coletti; and at the Miami International Piano Festival. Internationally, she has participated in the Prussia Cove Open Chamber Music Sessions and the Koblenz International Music Festival in Germany.

A 2015/16 Performance Today Young-Artist-in-Residence, Simone's performances and interviews have been broadcast nationally on the APM syndicated network on several different occasions. She has also been featured on the renowned syndicated NPR radio program *From the Top*, hosted by Christopher O'Riley and featuring America's best young classical musicians. Her performance in July 2012 marked her third appearance on the program; her first was in 2007 at the age of 11. Simone made her Carnegie Zankel Hall debut on the Emmy Award-winning TV show *From the Top: Live from Carnegie Hall*. In June 2016, her featured performance of music from Schindler's List with Maestro Gustavo Dudamel and members of the American Youth Symphony was broadcast nationally on the TNT Network as part of the American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award: A Tribute to John Williams.

Raised in Seattle, Washington, Simone studied with Margaret Pressley as a recipient of the Dorothy Richard Starling Scholarship, and was then admitted into the studio of the renowned pedagogue Robert Lipsett, with whom she presently studies at the Colburn Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles. Summer studies have included many years at the Aspen Music Festival, Indiana University's Summer String Academy, and the Schlern International Music Festival in Italy.

Simone Porter plays on a 1745 J.B. Guadagnini violin on generous loan from The Mandell Collection of Southern California.

## **Reena Esmail** **Composer**

Indian-American composer Reena Esmail works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music, and brings communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces.

In recent seasons, Esmail has worked with the Kronos Quartet, Albany Symphony, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, Salastina Music Society, SOLI, and American Composers Orchestra. Her work is performed regularly throughout the US and abroad, and has been programmed at Carnegie Hall, the Barbican Centre in London, Schloss Esterhazy in Hungary, and throughout India. She has served as Composer in Residence for Albany Symphony (2016-17), Street Symphony (2016-present) in downtown Los Angeles, Concerts on the Slope (2015-16) in Brooklyn, NY and the Pasadena Master Chorale (2014-16) in Pasadena, CA.

Esmail received a 2011-12 Fulbright-Nehru to study Hindustani music in India, where she was also a 2011 INK Fellow (in association with TED). In 2010, Esmail co-founded of Yale's Hindi a cappella group, Sur et Veritaal. Esmail's doctoral thesis, entitled *Finding Common Ground: Uniting Practices in Hindustani and Western Art Musicians* explores the methods and challenges of the collaborative process between Hindustani musicians and Western composers. Her teachers include Srimati Lakshmi Shankar and Saili Oak.

Esmail holds degrees in composition from The Juilliard School (BM'05) and the Yale School of Music (MM'11, MMA'14, DMA'18). Her primary teachers have included Susan Botti, Aaron Jay Kernis, Christopher Theofanidis and Martin Bresnick, Christopher Rouse and Samuel Adler. She has won numerous awards, including the Walter Hinrichsen Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (and subsequent publication of a work by C.F. Peters) and two ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards.

Esmail was on the composition and theory faculty at Manhattan School of Music Precollege from 2006-2011. She taught the music theory core curriculum at Yale College from 2012-14. Recently, Esmail has worked with young composers through mentorship programs including Shastra's Arranging with Hindustani Music, Pasadena Master Chorale's Listening to the Future. This season, she will mentor young women composers through Kaufmann Center's new program, The Luna Lab.

Recent commissions include: *I Rise: Women in Song*, for Lehigh University's women's chorus and orchestra, a Clarinet Concerto for Hindustani/Western crossover clarinetist Shankar Tucker and Albany Symphony Orchestra (where she was the 2016-17 Composer Fellow), *The Light is the Same* for Imani Winds, and a new major sacred work, *This Love Between Us* for chorus, orchestra, sitar and tabla, written for Yale Schola Cantorum and Juilliard 415 which toured India in March 2017. This season's highlights include new works for Chicago Sinfonietta, Albany Symphony, and violinist Vijay Gupta.

In addition to her work as a composer, Esmail is the Co-Artistic Director of Shastra, a non-profit organization that promotes cross-cultural music that connects the great musical traditions of India and the West. She is also the Composer-in-Residence with Street Symphony, where she works with communities experiencing homelessness and incarceration in Los Angeles.

Esmail currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

## **Nick Kendall** **Violin**

Nicolas (Nick for short) Kendall connects people through music. He picked up his first violin at the age of three. With an insatiable appetite for a diversity of expression, he went to the streets of Washington D.C. to play trash cans for lunch money as a teenager. By college, he was forming pick-up rock bands at Curtis Institute between concert debuts at the most prestigious halls in the world.

Nick is one of our generation's most persuasive champions of bringing new audiences to concert halls across America. Irreverent, funny, and relentless, Nick has become a force for bringing people together through music, on stage and off. His work is based on the simple idea that the energy you exude greatly impacts the relationships that you build.

Nick's leadership comes from a long personal history with collective action. Years ago, Nick gathered his friends to form a band whose direction comes from the power of the collective, now the critically acclaimed East Coast Chamber Orchestra. His genre-bending trio, Time for Three, or TF3, creates new communities of audiences who otherwise might not participate in the performing arts.

Trained in the Suzuki method, which his grandfather, John Kendall, brought to America in the 1960s, Nick continues the teaching tradition. As a caretaker of his craft, he is passing on the vitality of classical music to a new generation.

## **Michael Giacchino** **Composer**

Composer Michael Giacchino (pronounced “Juh-key-no”) has credits that feature some of the most popular and acclaimed film projects in recent history, including *Inside Out*, *The Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, *The Incredibles*, *Ratatouille*, *Zootopia*, and *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, which marked the first score to be composed for a Star Wars film following John Williams. Giacchino’s 2009 score for the Pixar hit *Up* earned him an Oscar®, a Golden Globe®, the BAFTA, the Broadcast Film Critics’ Choice Award and two GRAMMY® Awards.

Giacchino studied filmmaking at the School of Visual Arts in NYC. After college, he landed a marketing job at Disney and began studies in music composition, first at Juilliard, and then at UCLA. He moved from marketing to producing in the newly formed Disney Interactive Division where he had the opportunity to write music for video games.

After moving to DreamWorks Interactive, he was asked to score the temp track for the video game adaptation of *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. Subsequently, Steven Spielberg hired him as the composer and it became the first PlayStation game to have a live orchestral score, recorded with members of the Seattle Symphony. Giacchino went on to score numerous video games including Spielberg’s Medal of Honor series.

Giacchino’s work in video games sparked the interest of J.J. Abrams, and thus began their long-standing relationship that would lead to scores for the hit television series *Alias* and *Lost*, and the feature films *Mission Impossible III*, *Star Trek*, *Super 8* and *Star Trek Into Darkness*.

Additional projects include collaborations with Disney Imagineering on music for *Space Mountain*, *Star Tours* (with John Williams) and the *Ratatouille* ride in Disneyland Paris. Giacchino also was the musical director of the 81st Annual Academy Awards®. His music can be heard in concert halls internationally with *Star Trek*, *Star Trek Into Darkness*, and *Star Trek Beyond*, and *Ratatouille* films being performed live-to-picture with a full orchestra.

Last year, Giacchino scored *War for the Planet of the Apes*, *Spider-Man: Homecoming*, and Pixar’s *Coco*. Upcoming projects include two highly anticipated sequels, *The Incredibles 2*, and *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom*, both being released this summer.

Giacchino serves as the Governor of the Music Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and sits on the advisory board of Education Through Music Los Angeles.

## **Yerin Yang** **Piano**

Yerin Yang’s most recent success was winning the National MTNA competition in Junior Division in March 2017. She also won awards in many competitions in Chicago area, where she

currently lives. Yerin was awarded first prizes in both the Sejong Music Competition and the Chinese Fine Arts Society Competition for three consecutive years in different divisions. She also placed first in the Los Angeles Young Musician international Competition in 2013.

As the winner of the 2013 DePaul Concert Festival, she performed with the Oistrach Symphony Orchestra and appeared on 98.7 WFMT: Introductions, a classical music podcast out of Chicago that features young classical musicians. Yerin participated in masterclasses with such notable musicians as Ilana Vered, John O’Conor, Gila Goldstein, Gabriel Kwok, Matti Raekallio, to name a few.

### **Caroline Shaw** **Composer**

Caroline Shaw is a New York-based musician—vocalist, violinist, composer, and producer—who performs in solo and collaborative projects. She was the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2013 for *Partita for 8 Voices*, written for the Grammy-winning Roomful of Teeth, of which she is a member. Recent commissions include new works for Renée Fleming with Inon Barnatan, Dawn Upshaw with Sō Percussion and Gil Kalish, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s with John Lithgow, the Dover Quartet, TENET, The Crossing, the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, the Calidore Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, the Baltimore Symphony, and Roomful of Teeth with A Far Cry.

The 2018-19 season will see premieres by pianist Jonathan Biss with the Seattle Symphony, Anne Sofie von Otter with Philharmonia Baroque, the LA Philharmonic, and Juilliard 415. Caroline’s film scores include Erica Fae’s *To Keep the Light* and Josephine Decker’s *Madeline’s Madeline* as well as the upcoming short *8th Year of the Emergency* by Maureen Towey. She has produced for Kanye West (*The Life of Pablo; Ye*) and Nas (*NASIR*), and has contributed to records by The National, and by Arcade Fire’s Richard Reed Parry. Once she got to sing in three part harmony with Sara Bareilles and Ben Folds at the Kennedy Center, and that was pretty much the bees’ knees and elbows.

Caroline has studied at Rice, Yale, and Princeton, currently teaches at NYU, and is a Creative Associate at the Juilliard School. She has held residencies at Dumbarton Oaks, the Banff Centre, Music on Main, and the Vail Dance Festival. Caroline loves the color yellow, otters, Beethoven opus 74, Mozart opera, Kinhaven, the smell of rosemary, and the sound of a janky mandolin.

### **Inon Barnatan** **Piano**

“One of the most admired pianists of his generation” (*New York Times*), Inon Barnatan is celebrated for his poetic sensibility, musical intelligence, and consummate artistry. He is the recipient of both a prestigious 2009 Avery Fisher Career Grant and Lincoln Center’s 2015 Martin E. Segal Award, which recognizes “young artists of exceptional accomplishment.” He was recently named the new Music Director of the La Jolla Music Society Summerfest, beginning in 2019.

Summer 2017 saw Barnatan make his BBC Proms debut, playing Ravel’s Piano Concerto in G with Kazushi Ono and the BBC Symphony at London’s Royal Albert Hall. At Aspen, he gave

the world premiere of a new concerto by Alan Fletcher, which was also the vehicle for his season-opening Hollywood Bowl appearance with the commissioning Los Angeles Philharmonic. Besides a reprise of Fletcher's concerto with the Atlanta Symphony and Robert Spano, Barnatan's 2017-18 highlights include a New Year's Eve performance of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto with the Minnesota Orchestra and Osmo Vänskä, followed by a Midwest tour culminating in Chicago; debuts with the London and Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestras; a return to the Cincinnati Orchestra for Barber's notoriously difficult Piano Concerto; and solo recitals at London's Wigmore Hall and South Bank Centre, New York's 92nd Street Y, and with the Vancouver Recital Society. He gives recitals at Carnegie Hall and Philadelphia's Kimmel Center with soprano Renée Fleming, curates and plays in a multi-concert Schubert festival for the La Jolla Music Society, and tours the U.S. and Europe, with concerts at Carnegie Hall and Wigmore Hall, with his frequent recital partner, cellist Alisa Weilerstein.

A regular performer with many of the world's foremost orchestras and conductors, the pianist recently completed his third and final season as the inaugural Artist-in-Association of the New York Philharmonic. Other 2016-17 highlights included debuts with the Chicago, Baltimore, Fort Worth, Indianapolis, Nashville, San Diego, and Seattle Symphony Orchestras; and returns to many other U.S. ensembles. He made debuts with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic, returned to the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony, and performed a complete Beethoven concerto cycle in Marseilles. He toured the U.S. twice, once with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, with which he played and conducted Mozart and Shostakovich from the keyboard and premiered a newly commissioned concerto by Alasdair Nicolson, and then with Alisa Weilerstein and New York Philharmonic principal clarinetist Anthony McGill, performing a trio program that featured the world premiere of a new commission from young American composer Joseph Hallman.

Highlights of recent seasons include Barnatan's Walt Disney Concert Hall debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel; performances of Copland's jazz-inflected Piano Concerto with the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas in San Francisco and at Carnegie Hall; a debut with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic; appearances with the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon; and solo recital debuts in the Celebrity Series of Boston and at Chicago's Harris Theater. He also collaborated with choreographer Mark Morris, pianist Garrick Ohlsson, and the Mark Morris Dance Group at the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York.

A sought-after chamber musician, Barnatan was a member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's CMS Two program from 2006 to 2009, and continues to make regular CMS appearances in New York and on tour. His passion for contemporary music sees him commission and perform many works by living composers, including premieres of pieces by Thomas Adès, Sebastian Currier, Avner Dorman, Joseph Hallman, Alasdair Nicolson, Andrew Norman, Matthias Pintscher, and others.

Barnatan's most recent album release is a live recording of Messiaen's 90-minute masterpiece *Des canyons aux étoiles* ("From the Canyons to the Stars"), in which he played the exceptionally challenging solo piano part at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. In 2015 he released *Rachmaninov & Chopin: Cello Sonatas* on Decca Classics with Alisa Weilerstein, earning rave reviews on both sides of the Atlantic. His most recent solo recording, of



Schubert's late piano sonatas, was released by Avie in September 2013, winning praise from such publications as Gramophone and BBC Music, while his account of the great A-major Sonata (D. 959) was chosen by BBC Radio 3 as one of the all-time best recordings of the piece. His 2012 album, *Darkness Visible*, debuted in the Top 25 on the Billboard Traditional Classical chart and received universal critical acclaim, being named BBC Music's "Instrumentalist CD of the Month" and winning a coveted place on the New York Times' "Best of 2012" list. He made his solo recording debut with a Schubert album, released by Bridge Records in 2006, that prompted Gramophone to hail him as "a born Schubertian" and London's Evening Standard to call him "a true poet of the keyboard: refined, searching, unfailingly communicative." Next Barnatan looks forward to the release of Beethoven's five piano concertos, which he recorded with Alan Gilbert and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, marking the orchestra's first complete recording of the cycle.

Born in Tel Aviv in 1979, Inon Barnatan started playing the piano at the age of three, when his parents discovered his perfect pitch, and made his orchestral debut at eleven. His musical education connects him to some of the 20th century's most illustrious pianists and teachers: he studied first with Professor Victor Derevianko, a student of the Russian master Heinrich Neuhaus, before moving to London in 1997 to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Christopher Elton and Maria Curcio, a student of the legendary Artur Schnabel. Leon Fleisher has also been an influential teacher and mentor. Barnatan currently resides in New York City.

## **Michael Abels** **Composer**

Michael Abels has been described as a composer with a gift for "[juxtaposing] elements unleashed in an irresistible display of orchestral color" (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*), who possesses a "keen ear and a deft ability to adapt structural elements from popular music into the symphonic idiom," (*Houston Chronicle*).

Primarily a composer of large forms, Abels has applied his skillful compositional approach to over 20 orchestral works. His much-admired piece *Global Warming*—written around the time of the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War—was commissioned for and premiered by the Phoenix Youth Symphony in 1991. Given the current social context of the title, *Global Warming* was originally conceived as a piece that reflects the many similarities between folk music of divergent, immigrant cultures, and celebrates these common threads as well as the sudden improvement in international relations that occurred at the time. *Global Warming* has received over 100 performances by such prominent symphony orchestras as Chicago, Cleveland, Atlanta, Houston, Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, and Nashville. *Global Warming* was also one of the first works of an African-American composer to be performed by the National Symphony of South Africa following the election of President Nelson Mandela.

In the time leading up to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Abels was working on a National Symphony commission and had written an encore to follow Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. But as he watched the rescue efforts of the first responders unfold on television over several days, he abandoned the encore. Abels composed a new work—*Tribute*—which didn't attempt to depict the horror of the event, but, instead, to offer a picture of the unified spirit of the immediate aftermath. Premiered on November 8, 2001 and led by Marin Alsop, *Tribute* is a

simple chorale that begins in muted despair but ends in powerful resolve; and it was the first piece the National Symphony performed after 9/11.

Always a thoughtful communicator, Abels cleverly reinvents classical styles while adapting popular idioms. His *American Variations on Swing Low Sweet Chariot* (1993) was premiered by Doc Severinsen and the Phoenix Symphony. He describes his work *More Seasons* (1999) (performed by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra among others) as his “own spin” on early Baroque music, subjecting the themes of Vivaldi’s ‘Spring’ and ‘Summer’ “to maniacal, Minimalist abuses,” and calling it “Vivaldi in a Mixmaster.” Other orchestral works include: *Dance for Martin’s Dream* (1998) (after civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.) commissioned and premiered by the Nashville Symphony and quickly followed by other performances including the Cleveland Orchestra; *Frederick’s Fables* (1994)—a four-movement piece for narrator and orchestra based on selected stories of Leo Lionni which was commissioned by Philip Brunelle and the Plymouth Music Series and premiered over two concert series with narrators James Earl Jones and Garrison Keillor (Abels himself narrated the National Symphony’s Kennedy Center concerts); *Urban Legends* (2008-09) commissioned by the Sphinx Organization and written for the Harlem Quartet and the Sphinx Orchestra, and *Aquadia* (2009) which was co-commissioned by the Chicago Sinfonietta and the Shedd Aquarium, and subsequently recorded by the ensemble to serve as the featured installation music for the oceanarium’s “Fantasea” exhibit which ran through spring 2011. In spring 2012, Abels’ *Delights and Dances* was featured on the Chicago Sinfonietta’s season finale-concerts, joined by the Harlem Quartet. Commissioned by the Sphinx Organization, the three-movement work (performed as a single movement) is scored for string quartet and string orchestra. Afterward, both ensembles recorded the piece for future release on Cedille Records.

Abels was also commissioned by the Los Angeles Opera and his 40-minute opera *Homies & Popz* premiered in May 2000 at high schools throughout Los Angeles County. Based on the true story of the Compton Homies & the Popz, the opera tells the story of LA activist Ted Hayes and his successful efforts to create and organize a cricket team in order to provide inner-city youth and homeless adults with an alternative to gang culture. Abels has also created popular, artful gospel arrangements for choir and orchestra which were written for the Reverend James Cleveland. These arrangements are regularly performed throughout the US, and several of them are heard annually on the Atlanta Symphony’s Gospel Christmas program.

A recipient of a Music Alive Residency program from Meet the Composer (now New Music USA) and the League of American Orchestras (formerly the American Symphony Orchestra League), Abels served a 2001-2002 residency with the Richmond Symphony. He also participated in a three-year Meet The Composer New Residencies program held in the Los Angeles Watts community. During this time, he wrote *Bitterroot* for the USC Percussion Ensemble, songs and incidental music for the Cornerstone Theater Company’s production of “Broken Hearts: a BH Mystery,” which won Backstage West’s 1999 Garland Award for musical score, and also wrote and performed the score for Cornerstone’s 2000 production of “For Here Or To Go” which ran at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles.

Born in Phoenix, AZ, Abels grew up in rural South Dakota where he began piano lessons at a young age. He attended the University of Southern California, studying with James Hopkins and Robert Linn. In 1985-86, he studied West African music with Alfred Ladzekpo at the California Institute for the Arts. He currently serves as Director of Music for New Roads School in Santa

Monica, overseeing a program that provides hands-on instruction in the latest technologies integrally important to contemporary popular music. Aside from his activities as a composer, arranger, and educator, Abels is also an amateur triathlete.

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