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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**OAKLAND SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES 2017-2018 SEASON**

**29<sup>th</sup> SEASON FEATURES W. KAMAU BELL INTRODUCING A NEW PLAYLIST SERIES, JONATHAN BLALOCK, NOAH GALVIN, SARA DAVIS BUECHNER, MUSICAL TRIBUTES TO PRINCE AND LEONARD COHEN AND MORE**

**SEVEN CONCERTS PRESENT A WIDE RANGE OF MUSIC BY BERNSTEIN, KEV CHOICE, JONAH GALLAGHER, ROSSINI, BARBER, BRITTEN, HIGDON, SAINT-SAËNS, ROSSER AND SOHNE, BRISTOW AND MONUMENTAL SYMPHONIES BY BEETHOVEN, SHOSTAKOVICH, MOZART, SCHUBERT AND TCHAIKOVSKY**

**MUSIC DIRECTOR MICHAEL MORGAN CELEBRATES 60<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY WITH BEETHOVEN AND SHOSTAKOVICH SEASON OPENER AND NOV. 4 GALA**

Oakland, CA, March 24, 2017 – The Oakland Symphony and Music Director **Michael Morgan** have announced their 2017-2018, 29<sup>th</sup> season, **continuing to reflect the diverse energy of the city it calls home and offering a programmatic mix ranging from new works and unexpected guest artists to new programs and monuments of the symphonic repertory.** The seven-concert season runs October 20, 2017, through May 18, 2018 at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland and features **W. Kamau Bell** co-curating a new **Playlist** series with Maestro Morgan designed to showcase how music has impacts on leading thinkers—and everyone else. The annual *Notes From...* and *Let Us Break Bread Together* holiday concerts will focus on music and artists of the LGBTQ community and musical tributes to the late **Prince** and **Leonard Cohen** respectively. In addition to music with appeal to new and diverse audiences including works by Oakland's **Kev Choice, Jonah Gallagher** and a **Leonard Bernstein** centennial celebration, there will be no shortage of symphonic masterworks by **Mozart, Schubert Tchaikovsky, Rossini, Saint-Saëns** and the season opening concert pairing **Beethoven's Fifth and the Shostakovich 15<sup>th</sup>** in celebration of Michael Morgan's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. **The annual Oakland Symphony gala will this year celebrate Maestro Morgan's birthday**

**and benefit the Symphony on Saturday, November 4, 2017**, at the Rotunda Building in downtown Oakland. For information and an invitation, contact [events@oaklandsymphony.org](mailto:events@oaklandsymphony.org) . Subscriptions for the 2017-2018 season are priced \$96-\$354 and go on sale March 31. Single tickets, priced \$25-\$90 go on sale August 19. For information, to purchase subscriptions and concert tickets, visit [www.oaklandsmphony.org](http://www.oaklandsmphony.org) .

## **OAKLAND SYMPHONY: THE ALTERNATIVE IS THE TRADITION**

As the long-standing flagship musical organization in a city **known for inclusion, innovation and dynamic change, the Oakland Symphony takes pride in embracing and reflecting Oakland's diversity, maverick creative spirit, individualism and style.** At the Oakland Symphony, the alternative is the traditional. Its concerts and other programs go beyond the standard symphony repertory that satisfies seasoned concert-goers, but **features new and non-traditional works, supremely gifted artists, innovative and fun outreach programs and a thoughtful, charismatic conductor** who is considered a civic treasure known nationally for creating concerts that **break the mold and welcome artists and audiences that actually feel like the community.**

"We want our season to be as bold and inclusive as our city," says Music Director and conductor Michael Morgan. "We want to gather and commune; then go away feeling better for having been in each other's company."

The 2017-2018 season is supported in part by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The Oakland City Council and the City of Oakland's Cultural Funding Program and the California Arts Council.

## **Oakland Symphony 2017–2018 Season**

All Performances at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland

### **Icons/Iconoclasts**

Friday, October 20, 2017, 8pm

### **Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 (1804-1808) Shostakovich: Symphony No. 15 in A Major, Op.141 (1971)**

Beethoven and Shostakovich both changed the course of music history. Beethoven radically incorporated a personal style to an extent virtually no composer had before. Shostakovich used his music to brilliantly and often subversively express his worldview while within the restrictive Soviet system for much of his life, creating works that broke the bonds of politics and stand as eloquent statements. Maestro Morgan celebrates his 60th birthday conducting these two monumental works.

## **Love & Loss**

Friday, November 17, 2017, 8pm

**Jonah Gallagher: *Vocare* (2016)**

**Mozart: Symphony No. 40 in G minor, KV. 550 (1788)**

**Rossini: *Stabat Mater* (1841) with the Oakland Symphony Chorus, Lynne Morrow, Director**

This program features works that embrace the spectrum of love from passion to grief, including Mozart's 40th Symphony and Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, a musical account of the biblical story of Mary's devastation over the death of her son. Jonah Gallagher's *Vocare* likewise memorializes a loved-one's early loss.

## **Let Us Break Bread Together: Hallelujah!**

Sunday, December 10, 2017, 4pm

### **Featuring Musical Tributes to Prince and Leonard Cohen**

The popular non-traditional holiday tradition brings together the full complement of the Oakland Symphony and Oakland Symphony Chorus with more than 200 combines voices of top Bay Area guest choirs and guest artists. *Let Us Break Bread Together* features a tribute to musician/activists and this year will focus on the music of Prince and Leonard Cohen, two supremely influential artists who passed in 2016.

## **W. Kamau Bell's Playlist**

Friday, January 19, 2018

Program to be announced

Oakland Symphony launches its groundbreaking new *Playlist* series, an annual concert co-curated by some of the great thinkers—and doers—of our time focusing on the impacts music has on all of us. For the inaugural *Playlist* concert, socio-political comedian, activist, and Emmy-nominated CNN host, the Bay Area's own W. Kamau Bell will select a range of music he is passionate about to be performed by the Oakland Symphony and Michael Morgan with commentary by Bell and Morgan about the profound and sometimes unexpected roles music plays in the world beyond the concert stage.

"I am a huge fan of the unique vision of W. Kamau Bell," says Michael Morgan. "The range of his Playlist from spirituals to Coltrane should make the evening a fascinating journey."

### **Pride & Prejudice: Notes from LGBTQ**

Friday, February 9, 2018, 8pm

Guest artists: Vocalists Jonathan Blalock and Noah Galvin, Sara Davis Buechner, piano, and Meredith Brown, horn, MC Michelle Meow

**Barber: Essay for Orchestra No. 1, Op. 12 (1938)**

**Britten: Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Op. 31 (1943)**

**Jennifer Higdon: *Blue Cathedral* (2000)**

**Rosser and Sohne: Songs**

**Saint-Saëns: Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22 (1868)**

A hallmark of Oakland Symphony seasons, the popular *Notes From ...* series annually focuses on music both familiar and fresh from specific communities and cultures. Past *Notes From...* concerts have featured music and artists of Native America, Vietnam, Persia, Armenia, China, the Philippines, Mexico and others. This year the spotlight will be on the LGBTQ community we will reflect on self-identity and self-expression through the artistry of LGBTQ composers and musicians--celebrating difference, finding common ground and embracing the beauty of authenticity. Featuring Noah Galvin from ABC's *The Real O'Neals*, tenor and actor Jonathan Blalock, pianist Sara Davis Buechner and MC'd by Bay Area community activist and TV personality Michelle Meow.

### **Rooted in Oakland**

Friday, March 23, 2018, 8pm

With members of the Oakland Symphony MUSE orchestra

**Kev Choice: World Premiere**

**George Frederick Bristow: Overture to *Rip van Winkle* (1855)**

**Schubert: Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, D. 485 (1816)**

Oakland native Kev Choice is a classically-trained pianist who uses wit and creative lyrics to infuse his unique blend of jazz, R&B and soul with a positive message. Oakland Symphony has commissioned a new work by Choice, to be played alongside Schubert's 5th symphony and a lost Romantic gem, George Frederick Bristow's overture to his opera, *Rip van Winkle*.

## **The Artist's Struggle**

Friday, May 18, 2018, 8pm

**Bernstein: Serenade for Violin and Orchestra (1954) (Soloist to be announced)**

**Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74 "Pathétique" (1893)**

Oakland Symphony celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Leonard Bernstein, whose musical accomplishments mirrored his lifelong and sometimes controversial commitment to promoting political change. His *Serenade* for violin drew its inspiration from Plato's *Symposium* and is a technically challenging, game-changing take on the violin concerto.

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