My mother loved the Oakland Symphony and became a large contributor to it in her later years.

Just before her passing, she learned about “Pride & Prejudice: Notes from LGBTQ”. She enthusiastically supported the idea - making her underwriting of the show one of her last acts of giving.

In loving memory of my mother, please enjoy the show.

- Terrence Chan

Proud supporters of the
OAKLAND SYMPHONY
and the arts in the East Bay
Jennifer Higdon is a major figure in contemporary Classical music, receiving the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto, and a 2010 Grammy for her Percussion Concerto. Higdon enjoys several hundred performances a year of her works, and *blue cathedral* is one of America's most performed contemporary orchestral works, with more than 600 performances worldwide since its premiere in 2000. Her works have been recorded on over four dozen CDs. One of Higdon's most current projects is an opera based on the best-selling novel *Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier. It was co-commissioned by Santa Fe Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and Minnesota Opera, in collaboration with North Carolina Opera. Higdon recently won the International Opera Award for Best World Premiere. Higdon holds the Rock Chair in Composition at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press.

Oakland Symphony congratulates
Associate Conductor Bryan Nies &
frequent guest artist Zachary Gordin
on the MSR Classics release of
*Amour sans ailes - Songs of Reynaldo Hahn* a biographical journey through the songs of one of France’s great musical influencers. Available now on Amazon.com and in the lobby!
Michele Meow has been a radio personality in San Francisco and four other markets nationally for over seven years, where she continues to be a voice for the LGBTQ community. Meow is a true journalist with an edgy vibe (think hip and funny Lesbian version of Anderson Cooper, minus the gray hair). Throughout her radio career, Meow has interviewed notable personalities such as Margaret Cho, Sarah Palin, Gavin Newsom, Janice Dickinson, and Jennifer Beals. Her entertaining and knowledgeable approach to all things LGBTQ make her a memorable personality and a force to be reckoned with in every market in which she lands.

MATT AUMENT

New York-based musician Matt Aument feels very lucky. An orchestrator and arranger for live theatre, he has created charts for some truly incredible performers—Victoria Clark, Kristin Chenoweth, Nathan Lee Graham—and heard them performed in some legendary spaces—Carnegie Hall, Broadway's Neil Simon Theatre, and the Kennedy Center—and has been allowed to arrange for a wide variety of players and ensembles—symphony orchestra, chamber group, rock-band-with-a-harp.

Aument is particularly involved in the development of new works. Recent projects have included pieces by Sam Willmott, Dan Fishback, and Shaina Taub's Twelfth Night at the Delacorte in Central Park. He teamed up with drag personality Martha Graham Crackler to create intimate micro-shows in Room 202 of the Washington Square Hotel. In cabaret, Matt has joined Molly Pope for shows at the Duplex and concorcts arrangements for Seth Sikes' Judy and Liza tribute shows at 54 Below.

Aument adapted and arranged the score for the 2015 Broadway revival of Lerner & Loewe's Gigi, also playing in the orchestra and sometimes conducting. Going for the hat trick, he recast the score of Camelot with a new take on the orchestrations for Drury Lane Theater in Chicago, and music-directed My Fair Lady last winter. This season, he's music-directing the American transfer of Tooting Arts Club's site-specific Sweerey Todd at Barrow Street Theatre.

JONATHAN BLALOCK

American tenor Jonathan Blalock recently triumphed as Prince Claus in the world premiere of Mark Adamo's Becoming Santa Claus at the Dallas Opera. His critically acclaimed performance was broadcast live to Lincoln Center and will be released on DVD later this year.

2016-17 season engagements included Don Ramiro (La Cenerentola) with Syracuse Opera, Beppe (I Pagliacci) with Arizona MusicFest, Nanki-Poo (The Mikado) with Performance Santa Fe, a debut with Michigan Opera Theatre as Harry in La Fanciulla del West, and Podesta in Mozart's La Finta Giardiniera with both OnSite Opera and Atlanta Opera.

Highly acclaimed for his work in 20th and 21st century opera, Blalock has appeared in a number of world premieres, including Huang Ru's An American Soldier, with Washington National Opera; The Secret Agent with the Center for Contemporary Opera in NYC and the Armel Festival in Hungary; Jorge Martin's Before Night Falls with Fort Worth Opera; and Paul's Case with Urban Arias, which Alex Ross in The New Yorker declared as one of the top ten musical events of 2014, saying, “The tenor Jonathan Blalock was transfixing in the title role; Spears' score glistered beautifully and eerily around him.” In addition, Blalock sang The Electrician in Ades' Powder Her Face with West Edge Opera, made his Virginia Opera debut as Cégeste in Philip Glass' Orphée; and has sung in the same composer's Hydrogen Jukebox, with both West Edge Opera and Fort Worth Opera.

As a specialist in Rossini and Mozart, Blalock has performed Pedrillo in Mozart's Die Entführung aus dem Serail with Des Moines Metro Opera; Don Ottavio (Don Giovanni) with Cedar Rapids Opera and Nevada Opera; Ferrando (Cosi fan tutte) with Capitol Opera Raleigh; Count Almaviva (Il Barbiere di Siviglia) with Tri-Cities Opera, LOFT Opera, and Opera Company of Middlebury; Ramiro (La Cenerentola) with Opera Roanoke, Opera in Williamsburg, and as a guest with Bob Jones University; and covered two Rossini roles at Santa Fe Opera: Rodrigo (La Donna del Lago) and Condotterio (Maometto II).

Career highlights also include Pang (Turandot) with Nashville Opera and Pacific Symphony; the title role in Candide with Emerald City Opera; The Burrowing Mole (The Fantastic Mr. Fox) with both Opera San Antonio and Odyssey Opera; Remendado (Carmen) with Pacific Symphony and Fort Worth Opera; and Fenton (Falstaff) with Mercury Opera Rochester. In concert, Blalock has performed Carmina Burana with the Southern New Jersey Philharmonic and the Las Cruzas Symphony; Handel's Messiah with Winston-Salem Symphony and Lexington Philharmonic; and as soloist with the Portland Symphony, Opera America’s New Opera Showcase, the PROTOTYPE Festival, The Washington Chorus, the Rackham Choir (Detroit), and Opera Hong Kong.

MEREDITH BROWN

Meredith Brown is well-known throughout Northern California, holding Principal Horn positions with the Napa Valley, Fremont, and Vallejo Symphonies as well as with Oakland Symphony, and serving as Acting Principal Horn of the Santa Rosa Symphony. She has performed with the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Opera, and the San Francisco Ballet, as well as with Oakland Symphony, Marin Symphony, Fresno Philharmonic, and the California Symphony. In addition, she has extensive experience in musical theatre, including the San Francisco appearances of White Christmas, La Bohème, Ragtime, Fiddler on the Roof, Titanic, Sound of Music, Miss Saigon, Phantom of the Opera, and Les Miserables. Educated at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, with a master’s degree from the San Francisco Conservatory.

MEREDITH BROWN

MEREDITH BROWN
NOAH GALVIN

Noah Galvin is an American actor, best known for playing Kenny O’Neal in the ABC sitcom The Real O’Neals. Before starring on The Real O’Neals, he also appeared Off Broadway at theaters such as the Signature, Playwrights Horizons, MCC, the Vineyard, The Public, The Culture Project, The Flea, the wild project, New York Theater Workshop, the Barrow Street Theater, Rattlestick, Ensemble Studio Theater, and many others. He is a recipient of Audiofile Magazine Earphones Award for his narration of Hollis Seamon’s novel Somebody Up There Hates You. His other audiobook work includes Perks of Being a Wallflower, Matthew Quick’s Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock, and more. Additional credits include the celebrated short films Promised Land and Welcome to the Wayne. He currently lives in both New York City, New York, and Los Angeles, California.

SARA DAVIS BUECHNER

Sara Davis Buechner is one of the leading concert pianists of our time. She has been praised worldwide as a musician of “intelligence, integrity, and all-encompassing technical prowess” (New York Times). Japan’s InTune magazine says: “When it comes to clarity, flawless tempo selection, phrasing and precise control of timbre, Buechner has no superior.”

In her twenties, Buechner won the Gold Medal at the 1984 Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition, and was a Bronze Medalist of the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow. With an active repertoire of more than 100 piano concertos ranging from A (Albeniz) to Z (Zimbalist)—one of the largest of any concert pianist today—she has appeared as soloist with many of the world’s prominent orchestras. Audiences throughout North America have applauded Buechner’s recitals in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, and the Hollywood Bowl; and she enjoys wide success throughout Asia, where she tours annually.

Buechner’s numerous CD and DVD recordings have received prominent critical acclaim. She can be seen and heard on numerous live video and audio recordings on her website and YouTube Channel; and she has created many essays in written, spoken and film format on her blog Sara Says. She is a Professor of Piano at Temple University in Philadelphia, and an Honorary Visiting Professor of Music at the University of Shanghai. Sara Davis Buechner is a Yamaha Artist.

JONATHAN COZART

Jonathan Charles “Jon” Cozart, known by his online alias Paint, is an American YouTube personality, musician, and comedian.

Cozart’s video Harry Potter in 99 seconds helped him become a YouTube phenomenon with over four million followers.

In 2015, Cozart performed his own one-man show Laughter Ever After at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. His live performance of musical comedy was well-reviewed by attendees, stating “Jon Cozart delights with his witty, heartfelt music.” In 2016, Cozart joined fellow YouTube musicians Dodie Clark, Tess Violet, and Rusty Clanton for selected shows of the small and intimate Transatlantic Tour along the east coast. In 2017, he hosted the 2017 Streamy Awards.

Cozart was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, and raised in Houston, Texas. After graduating from Cypress Creek High School in 2010, he moved to Austin, Texas, and studied film at the University of Texas. Cozart took piano lessons as a child and has two brothers and a sister.

YOUTH SPEAKS - PRE CONCERT LOBBY PERFORMERS

Since 1996, Youth Speaks has created safe spaces that challenge young people to find, develop, publicly present, and apply their voices as creators of societal change. As one of the world’s leading presenters of Spoken Word performance, education, and youth development programs, Youth Speaks produces local and national youth poetry slams, festivals, and reading series, alongside a comprehensive slate of arts-in-education programs during the school day, in the after-school hours and on weekends all across the Bay Area.
PROGRAM NOTES

HIGDON

First Essay for Orchestra, Op. 12
SAMUEL BARBER
(1910–1981)

Composers Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti first visited conductor Arturo Toscanini in 1933. There were other visits, during one of which Toscanini mentioned his desire to perform a work by Barber.

Four years later, Toscanini was planning the first season of the newly formed NBC Symphony Orchestra. He asked Artur Rodzinski to recommend an American work to program. Rodzinski suggested something by Barber.

By spring, 1938, Barber sent Toscanini the First Essay for Orchestra, and also the Adagio for Strings, an arrangement of the first half of the second movement of his string quartet. Toscanini sent the scores back without comment. Barber assumed the great conductor didn’t like the works, and cast about for someone else to play them.

That summer Menotti visited Toscanini, who inquired why Barber was absent. Menotti replied that his friend was sick. “I don’t believe that,” said Toscanini. “He’s mad at me. Tell him not to be mad. I’m going to play one of his pieces, I’m going to play both.”

The maestro had memorized the music. Toscanini and the NBC Orchestra introduced both works on November 5, 1938. There were other visits, during one of which Toscanini mentioned his desire to perform a work by Barber.

SERENADE FOR TENOR, HORN AND STRINGS, Op. 31
BENJAMIN BRITTEN
(1913–1976)

Britten wrote the Serenade in 1943 for his partner, tenor Peter Pears, and the twenty-two-year-old Dennis Brain. Brain was then principal horn player in the RAF Orchestra, which was playing Britten’s music on various radio programs.

The first performance of the Serenade took place at Wigmore Hall in London on October 15, 1943, with Pears and Brain as soloists and Walter Goehr conducting. William Glock recalled his predecessor as music critic for the Observer “being able to hear Brahms’ maturest works as they came out…. In Benjamin Britten we have at last a composer who offers us visions as great as these. His new Serenade….surpasses everything else of his in strength and feeling.”

- Notes by Charley Samson, copyright 2018.

blue cathedral
JENNIFER HIGDON
(b. 1962)

Born in Brooklyn, Higdon grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and Seymour, Tennessee, and now lives in Philadelphia, where she teaches at the Curtis Institute of Music. She won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2010.

This work was commissioned and premiered in 2000 by the Curtis Institute of Music. This was a story that commemorates living and passing through places of knowledge and of sharing and of that song called life.

This work was commissioned and premiered in 2000 by the Curtis Institute of Music.

- Notes by Jennifer Higdon
Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22
CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS
(1835-1921)

Saint-Saëns had known Anton Rubinstein for ten years when, in 1868, Rubinstein began shifting his focus to conducting. “I haven’t conducted an orchestra in Paris yet,” he complained to Saint-Saëns. “Let’s put on a concerto that will give me an opportunity of taking the baton.” Saint-Saëns made inquiries and discovered that the Salle Pleyel would be free in three weeks. “Very well,” he said, “in those three weeks I’ll write a concerto for the occasion.”

The work was introduced on May 13, 1868, with Rubinstein conducting and Saint-Saëns as soloist. “Not having had the time to practice it sufficiently for performance,” said Saint-Saëns, “I played very badly, and except for the scherzo, which was an immediate success, it did not go well. The general opinion was that the first part lacked coherence and the finale was a complete failure.” Pianist Sigismond Stojowski once described the Concerto: “It begins with Bach and ends with Offenbach.”

- Notes by Charley Samson, copyright 2018.

With The Right Music: A Song Cycle
TIM ROSSER AND CHARLIE SOHNE
World Premiere, Commissioned by Oakland Symphony

With The Right Music is about the experiences that shape who we are during our tumultuous and thrilling adolescent years. It’s about a boy’s struggle, first to understand himself and then to gain the confidence to express the whole of who he is. While self-discovery can be an ultimately positive journey, self-awareness brings with it self-consciousness, and knowing yourself is only truly valuable if it comes with self-acceptance. Adam’s journey through the piece is aided by the experiences he has with Sarah, Jason, and Dylan—three kids who, either intentionally or not, allow Adam to discover these different sides of himself, while also affecting the person he will become. While With The Right Music is intended as a universal coming of age story, it also is very specifically a gay story. We’re thrilled, particularly in a political climate where difference is often attacked rather than celebrated, that there are places like the Oakland Symphony, who will take an evening out of their season to celebrate the very specific challenges and triumphs of a particular community. Through the acknowledgment of our diversity, we also come to better understand our common humanity.

- Notes by Tim Rosser and Charlie Sohne