

**CALIFORNIA SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES
NEW YOUNG AMERICAN COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE**

SAAD HADDAD

***SELECTED THROUGH A RIGOROUS BLIND SCREENING PROCESS,
WHICH ATTRACTED SUBMISSIONS FROM A RECORD NUMBER OF APPLICANTS***

WALNUT CREEK, CA (16 February 2023) – **California Symphony** announces its 11th Young American Composer-in-Residence (YACR) **Saad Haddad** (2023–2026). Over the next three seasons, Haddad will work closely with the orchestra and Music Director **Donato Cabrera** to create, rehearse, premiere, and record three major orchestra compositions. The composer is provided with a workshop rehearsal each season, and the opportunity to receive recordings of his work with the orchestra during the composition process. "The journey through this application process and hearing so many talented applicants has been incredibly rewarding and exciting," says Cabrera. "So much astonishing music is being written today! What a gift it is to know that the future of music is in such capable and innovative hands." Cabrera adds, "Saad has such a clear sense of expression and what he wants the music to convey. I can't wait to have him start experimenting with our orchestra."

Established in 1991, California Symphony's Young American Composer-in-Residence program has fostered the careers of remarkable musicians, with Haddad's ten illustrious predecessors going on to win major national and international recognition, including the Rome Prize (awarded to eight alumni composers, including, most recently, Katherine Balch, 2017-20); GRAMMY Awards (Kevin Puts, 1996-99; Mason Bates, 2007-10); International Prize for Composition (Christopher Theofanidis, 1994-96; Pierre Jalbert, 1999-2002); and the Pulitzer Prize for music (Kevin Puts, 1996-99).

"California Symphony's long history of supporting working composers is crucial," says Haddad.

"Most composers are not 'geniuses in ivory towers.' We yearn to share our love of music with as

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many as possible, particularly people who love listening to something they've never heard before. I'm looking forward to engaging in that feeling of discovery with California Symphony audiences."

A first generation American, Haddad was born in Augusta, Georgia in 1992, and raised in southern California. His Lebanese mother and Jordanian father met in the U.S. and have not visited their respective homelands since immigrating, but Arabic language and music became part of Haddad's childhood through family gatherings. By his teens, he was part of the first group of musicians selected for The Los Angeles Philharmonic's Nancy and Barry Sanders Composer Fellowship Program, working with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky. Youthful experimentations included an arrangement of Michael Jackson's 1979 hit *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough*, featuring soprano sax, electric guitar, piano, and drum. Immersion in his parents' Middle East music led at age 21 to composing a chamber work for string quartet and live electronics (*Mai*). Since then, Haddad has continued at a remarkable speed, completing a masters at Juilliard and a doctorate at Columbia, while composing dozens of commissioned works, as well as scoring work for films. At 25 he became the youngest recipient of the composer award in the history of the Utah Arts Festival. Haddad has been called out by *The New York Times* for achieving a "remarkable fusion of idioms," most notably in his work fusing Western art music with Middle Eastern musical tradition.

"Saad's music is beautifully crafted and the soundscapes he creates are out of this world," says Viet Cuong, the symphony's current Young American Composer-in-Residence. "I'm so eager to hear what he will write through these collaborations with the California Symphony." Katherine Balch (2017-20) adds, "Saad's musical voice immediately stands out for its imagination, craft, and personal expression. Saad has found a way to integrate a diverse landscape of musical vocabulary into a truly idiosyncratic listening experience. I am very excited to see what his collaboration with the California Symphony will bring."

Haddad's tenure with California Symphony will begin in August 2023, with his first of three commissioned works making its world premiere in the orchestra's 2023-24 Season. California

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Symphony will announce its full 2023-24 season programming in the coming weeks. For more information, the public may visit CaliforniaSymphony.org.

MORE ABOUT SAAD HADDAD

Saad Haddad's music delves into the relationship between the West and the East by transferring the performance techniques of traditional Arab instruments to Western symphonic instruments. His orchestral works have been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, Illinois Philharmonic, Chicago Composers Orchestra, Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, Symphony in C, Hangzhou Philharmonic Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Albany, Columbus, Milwaukee, New Jersey, Princeton, and Sioux City. Recent distinctions include the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Barlow Endowment General Commission, S&R Foundation Washington Award Grand Prize, Jerome Fund for New Music grant from the American Composers Forum, Palmer Dixon Award from The Juilliard School, Aaron Copland Residency Award, and multiple awards from ASCAP, BMI, and the Vancouver Chamber Choir. He has been in residence at the Millay Colony for the Arts, Ucross Foundation, Bogliasco Foundation, The Studios of Key West, Soundstreams' Composer Workshop, Luzerne Music Center, and most recently as Young Concert Artists' 2019–2021 Composer-in-Residence. Haddad currently serves as a Dean's Fellow at Columbia University.

ABOUT THE YOUNG AMERICAN COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Hailed as a "model for residency programs across the country" (*The Mercury News*), the **Young American Composer-in-Residence (YACR) Program** selects a new composer every three years. Program alumni include Kamran Ince, Christopher Theofanidis, Kevin Puts, Pierre Jalbert, Kevin Beavers, Mason Bates, D. J. Sparr, Dan Visconti, Katherine Balch, and Viet Cuong. Each graduate has gone on to win top honors and accolades in the field – from the Pulitzer Prize for Music to the Rome Prize in Composition, Grammy Award for Best Opera, and more. Said Mason Bates (2007 – 10), "The California Symphony has one of the most outstanding composer-in-residence programs in the country. They have this orchestra-as-laboratory idea, and they let the composer work in ways that almost never happen anywhere else."

ABOUT CALIFORNIA SYMPHONY

Founded in 1986, **California Symphony** is now in its eleventh season under the leadership of Music Director Donato Cabrera. It is distinguished by its vibrant concert programs that combine classics alongside American repertoire and works by living composers, and for making the symphony welcoming and accessible. The orchestra includes musicians who perform with the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Ballet, and others. Committed to the support of new talent, California Symphony has launched the careers of some of today's most well-known artists, including violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, cellists Alisa Weilerstein and Joshua Roman, pianist Kirill Gerstein and composers such as Mason Bates, Christopher Theofanidis, and Kevin Puts. California

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Symphony is based in Walnut Creek at the Leshner Center for the Arts, serving audiences in Contra Costa County and the wider Bay Area.

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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available here:
<http://www.cbpr.co/press/saadhaddad>