

THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY AND LAGUNA BEACH LIVE! RETURN WITH THE 2024 LAGUNA BEACH MUSIC FESTIVAL LED BY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR ANNE AKIKO MEYERS!

Photo: Molina Visuals



IRVINE, CA (January 11, 2024)—The Philharmonic Society of Orange County and Laguna Beach Live! are pleased to announce the 2024 Laguna Beach Music Festival—taking place from February 12 to February 18—featuring Grammy-nominated violinist Anne Akiko Meyers as Festival Artistic Director. Described as “a musical wizard, with astonishing access to every kind of expressive color” by *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Meyers will guide audiences through inventive, thought-provoking musical collaborations as she and fellow guest musicians perform everything from Saint-Saëns and Bach to Chopin, and a world premiere by Philip Glass. Guest artists include violinist Aubree Oliverson, pianist Fabio Bidini, percussionist Matthew Howard, bassist Nathan Farrington, harpist Emmanuel Ceysson, and chamber orchestra Colburn Academy Virtuosi.

FESTIVAL CONCERTS

LBMF Opening Night: METAMORPHOSES (Friday, February 16, 2024, 8pm, Laguna Playhouse)—Anne Akiko Meyers creates a “beautiful sonic world full of color and movement and breath” in her Opening Night program: “Metamorphoses,” featuring new premieres of arrangements for violin-harp alongside harpist Emmanuel Ceysson as well as violin-electronics. Audiences will hear the world premiere of Philip Glass’ *New Chaconne*, Saint-Saëns’ *The Swan*, and works by Smetana, Arvo Pärt, and more.

LBMF: DOUBLES (Saturday, February 17, 2024, 8pm, Laguna Playhouse)—Joined by string orchestra Colburn Academy Virtuosi and violinist Aubree Oliverson, Anne Akiko Meyers shares a program which features the fiery interplay of two violins in works such as Bach’s Double Violin Concerto and Handel-Halvorsen-Heifetz’ Passacaglia. The yearning melodies of Philip Glass’ *Echorus* and Fanny Mendelssohn’s soulful String Quartet bring the program to a close.

LBMF: CARNAVAL! (Sunday, February 18, 2024, 3pm, Laguna Playhouse)—The 2024 Laguna Beach Music Festival closes with “Carnaval!”, a program pairing Astor Piazzolla’s nostalgic homage to the tango genre, *L’histoire du Tango*, with *Animals Carnaval*, a new arrangement of Camille Saint-Saëns’ whimsical *Carnival of the Animals*. This final concert features collaborations with pianist Fabio Bidini, percussionist Matthew Howard, and double bassist Nathan Farrington.

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

The Laguna Beach Music Festival is co-presented by the Philharmonic Society of Orange County and Laguna Beach Live! Since its inception, the exploration of music in its many forms and the diverse and fascinating ways music intersects with art, dance, and culture has been at the heart of the Laguna Beach Music Festival. For the past 21 years, the Festival has curated incredible, intimate experiences bringing audiences closer to artists through salons, open rehearsals, meet-the-artist events, and lively discussions, as well as engaging, educational activities with local schools and students. Past Festival Artistic Directors have included: pianist-composer Conrad Tao, violinist Ray Chen, pianist Joyce Yang, tenor Nicholas Phan, violinist Joshua Bell, cellist Johannes Moser, composer Paul Chihara, the Ahn Trio, Brooklyn Rider string quartet, pianist and radio personality Christopher O’Riley, pianist-conductor Jeffrey Kahane, violinist Jennifer Koh and pianist Shai Wosner, pianist-composer Pablo Ziegler, the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, Turtle Island String Quartet, cellist Lynn Harrell, bassist-composer Edgar Meyer, pianist Claude Frank, and pianist-composer Bruno Canino.

2024 FESTIVAL ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: ANNE AKIKO MEYERS

Anne Akiko Meyers is one of the world's most esteemed violinists. She regularly performs around the world as a soloist with leading orchestras, in recital, and is a prolific recording artist with over 40 recordings. She grew up in Southern California and received lessons with Alice and Eleonore Schoenfeld at the Colburn School of Performing Arts. She continued her studies with Josef Gingold at Indiana University and at the invitation of legendary teacher, Dorothy DeLay, moved to New York at the age of 14 to study with her, Felix Galimir, and Masao Kawasaki at The Juilliard School. She has received the Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Distinguished Alumna Award from the Colburn School of Music and is a member of the Board of Trustees of The Juilliard School.

Throughout her career Meyers has passionately championed living composers, showcasing their works through premieres and performances. For instance, she debuted Arturo Márquez's "Fandango" alongside Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, enchanting audiences at prestigious venues like Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Hall, and the Auditorio Nacional in Mexico City. Additionally, her rendition of Michael Daugherty's "Blue Electra" at The Kennedy Center with Gianandrea Noseda and the National Symphony Orchestra received widespread critical acclaim and was adored by audiences.

Meyers has also premiered new music with the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Nashville, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, San Diego, Seattle, Washington D.C., Helsinki, Hyogo, Leipzig, London, Lyon, and New Zealand, among others. She has worked closely with Arvo Pärt (*Estonian Lullaby*), Einojuhani Rautavaara (*Fantasia*, his final complete work), John Corigliano (cadenzas for the Beethoven Violin Concerto; *Lullaby for Natalie*), Mason Bates and Adam Schoenberg (violin concertos), Jakub Ciupięski, Jennifer Higdon, Samuel Jones, Morten Lauridsen, Wynton Marsalis, Akira Miyoshi, Gene Pritsker, Somei Satoh, and Joseph Schwantner.

FESTIVAL SPECIAL EVENTS

Festival Prelude Soirée (Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 6pm, Laguna Art Museum)—The 2024 Laguna Beach Music Festival kicks off with the Festival Prelude Soirée—a Valentine’s Day celebration of love and music at the Laguna Art Museum with an intimate performance from Artistic Director, Anne Akiko Meyers. This event includes heavy hors d’oeuvres, wine, and champagne.

A painting of Festival Artistic Director Anne Akiko Meyers will be unveiled and sold at auction during the Prelude. This one-of-a-kind art piece is a framed 16”x 12” oil on canvas painting featuring a portrait of Anne Akiko Meyers gracefully playing on her violin. The painting will be done by Michael Obermeyer, who recently won “Best in Show” in the 25th annual Laguna Beach Plein Air Painting Invitational (October 2023). His twenty-year career in illustration included works for Disney Studios, the Anaheim Angels, McDonnell Douglas, Coldwell Banker, and the United States Air Force. Michael serves as the President of the prestigious California Art Club and is a Signature Member of both the California Art Club and the Laguna Plein Air Painters Association. He maintains his studio in Laguna Beach, California.

Obermeyer mentioned the difficulty in portraying Anne's grace as a musician and her beauty while aiming to blend Laguna Beach's essence into the painting. After discarding various background concepts, the focus shifted to a simpler backdrop, centering entirely on Anne.

Ticket prices for the Festival Soirée are \$190 per person and \$350 per couple. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Nicole Gonzales at nicole@philharmonicsociety.org or (949) 553-2422, ext. 234.

FESTIVAL OUTREACH AND DISCOVERY

The Festival is dedicated to building community enrichment by creating multiple outreach opportunities to spread the joy of music.

- **Thursday, February 15**
 - Violinist Aubree Oliverson makes school visits to Thurston Middle School and Laguna Beach High School. This event is closed to the public.

- **Friday, February 16**
 - Susi Q Center performance with harpist Emmanuel Ceysson. This event is closed to the public.
- **Saturday, February 17**
Plein Air Art and Music at Heisler Park
 - Laguna Plein Air Painters Association painters, Laguna Beach Music Festival artists, and local musicians gather along the iconic Laguna Beach cliffs for a morning of art, music, and ocean views. This free event is from 9am-12pm and is open to the public.



2024 FESTIVAL GUEST ARTISTS

Praised for her evocative lyricism and joyful, genuine approach, young American violinist **Aubree Oliverson** is proving to be one of most compelling artists of her generation, distinguishing herself with clear, honest, and colorful performances, which have been described as “powerful... brimming with confidence and joy” (*Miami New Times*) and “masterful” (*San Diego Story*). After making her Carnegie Hall Weill Hall recital debut at age twelve, she has gone to perform to sold-out audiences at the Grand Teton Music Festival and Soka Performing Arts Center.

In demand as a concerto soloist, recent and forthcoming highlights include performances with the San Diego Symphony (under Edo de Waart), Utah Symphony (Conner Gray Covington), Puerto Rico Symphony (Maximiano Valdés), Pacific Symphony, Columbus and Des Moines Symphonies (Carl St.Clair), New Haven Symphony, Roma Tre Orchestra, Brno Philharmonic (František Macek), and the Pasadena Symphony (Nic McGegan), in works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Bruch, Haydn, Saint-Saëns, Dvořák and Barber. In 2021, she joined the Louisiana

Philharmonic for a two-week residency during which she performed Beethoven's Violin Concerto (under Carlos Miguel Prieto) as well as chamber music.

Chosen amongst 70 of his best peers in a totally blind and anonymous audition process, **Emmanuel Ceysson** has been the new Los Angeles Philharmonic Harpist under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel since September 2020. This exciting symphonic position comes after almost 15 years playing opera in the pit, as Principal Harp: first with the Opéra National de Paris, a job he won at 22, and then for five full seasons with the legendary New York MET Opera Orchestra. As a recording artist, his wide discography covers solo, chamber music and concerto harp repertoire with labels such as Naxos, BR Klassik, Naïve, and Aparte.

Italian pianist **Fabio Bidini** is one of his generation's top-flight pianists. His appearances have included performances with London Symphony Orchestra at The Barbican, Philharmonia Orchestra of London at Royal Festival Hall, San Francisco Symphony, New World Symphony, Dallas Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, and Budapest Festival Orchestra.

Fabio Bidini is also in great demand as a chamber music partner. He is the pianist of the highly acclaimed ensemble, Los Angeles Piano Trio, and has enjoyed artistic collaboration with many ensembles and artists including Trio Solisti, Modigliani Quartet, American String Quartet, and Janáček Quartet.

He has been awarded first prize in eleven of Italy's most prestigious national piano competitions and has been the recipient of the top prizes awarded in eight international competitions—Terni, Köln, Busoni 1988 and 1992, Pretoria, Marsala, London and the Van Cliburn Fort Worth.

Fabio Bidini's discography comprises thirteen CDs recorded under the labels BMG, Classichord, Musikstrasse, EPR and True Sounds. He is a Steinway artist.

Matthew Howard is the youngest Principal Percussionist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the same orchestra he grew up watching as a Los Angeles native. Before joining the LA Phil, he was a resident of Miami, where he was a Percussion Fellow with the New World Symphony under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas. He has performed with such groups as the San Francisco Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Santa Barbara Symphony, and Boston Ballet. He also has been a member in the National Repertory Orchestra, Verbier Festival Orchestra, and Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra.

The **Colburn School's Academy Virtuosi** is an elite conductorless chamber orchestra comprised of talented young musicians from the Music Academy.

Nathan Farrington has played the bass sections of many of the world's finest orchestras: Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cincinnati, and Baltimore. He has written and performed music for TV and film, most recently scoring a documentary that was executive produced by Martin Scorsese. He has also developed creative productions for the Louisville Orchestra, and the University of Southern California that combine music, actors, dancers, and film.

Laguna Playhouse is located at 606 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach, CA 92651. Ticket prices start at \$38 for each concert. Tickets are available at the Philharmonic Society box office at (949) 553-2422, the Laguna Playhouse at (949) 497-2787, online at www.philharmonicsociety.org, and online at www.lagunaplayhouse.com.

ABOUT PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY:

Founded in 1954 as Orange County's first music organization, the Philharmonic Society of Orange County presents national and international performances of the highest quality and provides dynamic and innovative music education programs for individuals of all ages to enhance the lives of Orange County audiences through music.

Since its inception, the Philharmonic Society has evolved and grown with the county's changing landscape, presenting artists and orchestras who set the standard for artistic achievement from Itzhak Perlman, Gustavo Dudamel, Yo-Yo Ma, and Renée Fleming to the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and many others. In addition, the Philharmonic Society celebrates multi-disciplinary performances under its Eclectic Orange brand and embraces music from a wide range of countries with its World Music performances. Its celebrated family concerts introduce children to classical music with creative and inspiring performances, instilling music appreciation for future generations.

The Philharmonic Society's nationally recognized Youth Music Education Programs, offered free of charge, engage more than 100,000 students annually through curriculum-based music education programs that aim to inspire, expand imaginations, and encourage learning at all levels. These programs are made possible by the Committees of the Philharmonic Society comprised of 500 volunteer members who provide more than 90,000 hours of in-kind service each year. As a key youth program, the exceptional Orange County Youth Symphony and String Ensemble provide top-tier training to the area's most talented young musicians through multi-level ensemble instruction, leadership training, touring opportunities, challenging professional repertoire, and performances in world-class venues. The Philharmonic Society also promotes life-long learning by connecting with colleges and universities to conduct masterclasses and workshops and providing pre-concert lectures to introduce audiences to program selections.

ABOUT LAGUNA BEACH LIVE!:

Laguna Beach Live!, founded in 2001, is a non-profit organization that strives to increase the awareness of and participation in diverse musical experiences through the presentation of high quality live musical performances that are accessible...affordable, intimate and in our community. From *Jazz Wednesdays*, a cabaret series in summer and winter, *Live! at the Museum*, monthly chamber music concerts, and *Live! Music Insights*, education programs for adults, to our annual *Bluegrass Festival* and distinctive classical multi day *Music Festival* co-presented with the Philharmonic Society, and special concerts of Gospel, Blues, Big Band, and Pop, we present over 34 performances year round plus free outreach programs to our youth and seniors.

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SPECIAL EVENTS**FESTIVAL PRELUDE SOIRÉE**

Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 6pm
Laguna Art Museum

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FESTIVAL OUTREACH AND DISCOVERY

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Thurston Middle School & Laguna Beach High School

School visits from violinist Aubree Oliverson. This event is closed to the public.

Friday, February 16, 2024

Susi Q Center

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Saturday, February 17, 2024

Plein Air Art and Music at Heisler Park

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CONCERTS

OPENING NIGHT: METAMORPHOSES

Anne Akiko Meyers, violin & 2024 LBMF Artistic Director

Emmanuel Ceysson, harp

Friday, February 16, 2024, 8pm

Laguna Playhouse

Michio MIYAGI: *Haru no Umi (The Sea in Spring)*

Jakub CIUPIŃSKI: Wreck of the Umbria

SMETANA: *Má vlast. The Moldau, Op. 43*

Philip GLASS (arr. Michael Riesman): *Metamorphosis II*

PÄRT: Spiegel im Spiegel

SAINT-SAËNS: The Swan

VILLA-LOBOS: Song of the Black Swan

Philip GLASS: New Chaconne (world premiere)

DOUBLES

Anne Akiko Meyers, violin & 2024 LBMF Artistic Director

Colburn Academy Virtuosi

Aubree Oliverson, violin

Saturday, February 17, 2024, 8pm

Laguna Playhouse

HANDEL-HALVORSEN (arr. Heifetz): Passacaglia

BACH: Double Concerto in D minor

Philip GLASS: *Echorus*

Fanny MENDELSSOHN: String Quartet (arr. for strings)

CARNAVAL!

Anne Akiko Meyers, violin & 2024 LBMF Artistic Director

Fabio Bidini, piano

Matthew Howard, drums, marimba

Nathan Farrington, double bass

Sunday, February 18, 2024, 3pm

Laguna Playhouse

PIAZZOLLA: *L'histoire du Tango*

Frédéric CHOPIN: Prelude in E-minor, Op. 28, No. 4

Frédéric CHOPIN: *Andante Spianato & Polonaise*

SAINT-SAËNS: The Swan

VILLA-LOBOS: The Song of the Black Swan
SAINT-SAËNS (arr. Gene Pritsker): *Animals Carnaval*

Concert tickets start at \$38. Three-day passes are available for \$114.
Philharmonic Society of Orange County | (949) 553-2422 | philharmonicsociety.org
Laguna Beach Live! | (949) 715-9713 | lagunabeachlive.org/musicfestival

All dates, artists, programs, and prices are subject to change.

