



**Press contact:** Jenny Lee, Marketing Manager  
P: 510.841.2800 x304 | [jlee@berkeleysymphony.org](mailto:jlee@berkeleysymphony.org)

For Immediate Release

## **BERKELEY SYMPHONY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL CELLIST WINS YOUTUBE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AUDITION**

BERKELEY, CA—Berkeley Symphony’s assistant principal cellist, [Stephanie Lai](#), is one of ten cellists selected to join the [YouTube Symphony Orchestra 2011](#) at the Sydney Opera House. She, along with other 100 winning musicians, will be flown to Sydney for a week of rehearsals and concerts from March 14-20, with a final performance on March 20 which will be live-streamed around the world.

A native of Virginia now based in the San Francisco Bay Area, Lai has been a member of Berkeley Symphony since March 2010. She holds a B.A. in Social Studies and Music from Harvard University and M.M. in Cello Performance from the Royal Northern College of Music as a scholarship recipient of the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music in England.

“Playing in the YouTube Symphony Orchestra is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” said Lai in her YouTube Symphony video blog, “Music is a unifying force for peace and intercultural understanding, and I am incredibly excited about making music with amazing artists and meeting new friends around the world.”

Lai has performed throughout the globe as an avid chamber and orchestral musician. She has served as principal cellist of the American Youth Philharmonic and the Pacific Music Festival Orchestra in Japan, performing with distinguished conductors such as Valery Gergiev and Ricardo Muti.

In addition to her post at Berkeley Symphony, Lai also works as a Grantmaking Operations Coordinator at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

### **About YouTube Symphony Orchestra 2011**

The 97 members of YouTube Symphony Orchestra 2011 come from more than 30 countries, and range in age from 14 to 49 years old. They include amateur and professional musicians, students and teachers, and some who have never set foot out of their home country. In addition, four soloists have been selected to perform an improvisation to a piece composed specifically for the Orchestra by American composer Mason Bates.

After an online audition period on YouTube last Fall, a panel of experts selected over 300 finalists from 46 countries based on skill and technique. Nine orchestras around the world participated in the judging, including London Symphony Orchestra, Berliner Philharmoniker, and Sydney Symphony. During a week of online voting in December, the YouTube user community gave their input on the finalists. Online votes were then taken into consideration in selecting the final orchestra.

In March, 2011, the musicians will be flown to the iconic setting of Sydney Opera House to participate in a week-long classical music summit with conductor Michael Tilson Thomas and leading performers in the field, culminating in a final performance on March 20, 2011, which will be live-streamed on YouTube. The YouTube Symphony Orchestra 2011 will focus on celebrating musical education, from offering online master classes with orchestras around the world, to classes for Australian musicians during the summit week.

YouTube Symphony Orchestra is one of several collaborative efforts by YouTube to push the boundaries of music, art, and film. Along with the film project, *Life in a Day*, and YouTube Play, a collaboration with the Guggenheim Museum, YouTube Symphony Orchestra is an example of the convergence of online video with more traditional art forms.

#Berkeley Symphony#