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**THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY PRESENTS
GRAMMY-AWARD WINNING ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
WITH ISATA KANNEH-MASON**



Orpheus Chamber Orchestra (Photo: Neda Navaee), Isata Kanneh-Mason (Photo: Karolina Wielocha)

(IRVINE, CA, SEPTEMBER 15 , 2026)—The Philharmonic Society of Orange County presents the Grammy Award-winning **Orpheus Chamber Orchestra** with **Isata Kanneh-Mason** on **Tuesday, November 10, 2026**, 8pm, at the **Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall**. This highly anticipated concert marks the return of both artists to Orange County. Kanneh-Mason last appeared in the region in 2024, performing with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Vasily Petrenko as part of its Orchestra Residency with the Philharmonic Society. Isata, alongside her brother, cellist Sheku

Kanneh-Mason, also served as the Philharmonic Society's Virtual Artists-in-Residence in 2020. Orpheus Chamber Orchestra returns following its 2022 performance with celebrated jazz musician, Branford Marsalis. The program includes works by Mozart and Haydn, selections from Handel's *Water Music* Suite, and the Southern California premiere of *Elixir of Life*, a newly commissioned work by multi-award-winning Welsh composer and producer, Katie Jenkins. A pre-concert lecture will take place at 7pm by Classical California's Brian Lauritzen. This performance is made possible with support from The Segerstrom Foundation.

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra is a radical experiment in musical democracy, proving for over fifty years what happens when exceptional artists gather with total trust in each other and faith in the creative process. Orpheus began in 1972 when cellist Julian Fifer assembled a group of New York freelancers in their early twenties to play orchestral repertoire as if it were chamber music. In that age of co-ops and communes, the idealistic Orpheans snubbed the "corporate" path of symphony orchestras and learned how to play, plan, and promote concerts as a true collective, with leadership roles rotating from the very first performance.

It's one thing for the four players of a string quartet to lean into the group sound and react spontaneously, but with 20 to 30 musicians together, the complexities and payoffs are magnified exponentially. Within its first decade, Orpheus made Carnegie Hall their home and became a global sensation through tours of Europe and Asia. Their catalog of recordings for Deutsche Grammophon, Nonesuch, and other labels grew to include more than 70 albums that still stand as benchmarks of the chamber orchestra repertoire, including Haydn symphonies, Mozart concertos, and twentieth-century gems by Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Ravel, and Bartók.

The sound of Orpheus is defined by relationships, and guest artists have always been crucial partners in the process. Orpheus brings out the best in their collaborators, with bonds that deepen over time, as heard in the long arc of music-making with soloists such

as Richard Goode, Vadim Gluzman, Anne Akiko Meyers, and Branford Marsalis, and in the commitment to welcoming next-generation artists including Nobuyuki Tsujii, Tine Thing Helseth, and Caleb Teicher. By partnering with jazz legends Brad Mehldau, Wayne Shorter, and Vijay Iyer, as well as actors Christine Baranski and Liev Schreiber, Orpheus expands the boundaries of what a chamber orchestra can achieve. Collaborating with composers like Jessie Montgomery, Billy Childs, and Fazil Say has been another crucial way Orpheus evolves, commissioning numerous world-premieres every year. Having proven the power of direct communication and open-mindedness within the ensemble, the only relationship Orpheus has never had any use for is one with a conductor.

At home in New York and in the many concert halls it visits in the U.S. and beyond, Orpheus celebrates over fifty years with a renewed commitment to enriching and reflecting the surrounding community. Orpheus Reflections™ brings the healing power of music to those living with dementia and their caregivers. Celebrating more than twenty years, Access Orpheus shares the orchestra's collaborative process with 1,500 New York City Public School students annually through coaching, school visits, and unparalleled access to Orpheus rehearsals and performances at Carnegie Hall. And through the Orpheus Leadership Institute, the musicians impart positive lessons of leadership and democracy to global organizations and businesses. Always evolving as artists and leaders, the Orpheus musicians carry their legacy forward, counting on their shared artistry and mutual respect to make music and effect change.

Isata Kanneh-Mason is first and foremost a pianist but is also a composer and arranger who is passionate about chamber music, romantic repertoire and loves to bring a range of styles and composers to her performances. She offers eclectic and stimulating recital programs with repertoire encompassing Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann, Chopin and Brahms, to Gershwin, Dobrinka Tabakova, and Coleridge Taylor. In concerto, she is equally at home in Felix Mendelssohn and Beethoven as she is in Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff.

Isata is in high demand from concert halls and orchestras worldwide. In July 2024, she was invited to perform at the First Night of the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall with the BBC Symphony and conductor Elim Chan, a performance which resulted in stellar reviews in the mainstream press. Isata went on to appear as concerto soloist with the European Union Youth Orchestra and Iván Fischer in summer 2024 performing Dohnányi's *Variations on a Nursery Tune* at New York's Carnegie Hall.

Highlights of the 2025/26 season included Rachmaninoff's third piano concerto with Bar Avni and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and with Petr Popelka with the Prague Radio Symphony at the Rudolfinum. Isata also went on tour with the Budapest Festival Orchestra in August 2026 led by conductor Iván Fischer and appeared in solo recital and in chamber music at Wigmore Hall. Further solo recital appearances include the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, the Brucknerhaus in Linz, Powell Hall in St Louis, De Bijloke in Ghent, the Howland Music Circle in New York, Norwegian National Opera in Oslo, and a return to the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, among others.

The 26/27 season sees Isata give a much-anticipated recital tour in Australia and New Zealand, which also includes performances with the NZ Symphony Orchestra. She makes debuts with the Athens (Greece) State Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, Malmö Symphony, and the Minnesota Orchestra and returns to the Toronto Symphony and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. She has solo recitals at the Heidelberger Frühling Festival and Tivoli Copenhagen and has chamber music engagements with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

Isata is a Decca Classics artist and has recorded four solo albums for the label—*Romance* (2019), *Summertime* (2021), *Childhood Tales* (2023), *Mendelssohn* (2024) and *Prokofiev* (2026). Isata has received many awards, including the coveted Leonard Bernstein Award from the Schleswig-Holstein Festival and an Opus Klassik award for best young artist. She

released two albums of her favorite works for intermediate and advanced piano students through ABRSM Publishing in 2023.

Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall is located at 615 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626. Ticket prices start at \$31 and are available at the Philharmonic Society box office at (949) 553-2422, or online at philharmonicsociety.org, and at the Center's box office at (714) 556-2787.

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

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ABOUT THE 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 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 80,000 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 nearly 450 volunteer members who provide more than 50,000 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, connecting with colleges and universities to conduct masterclasses and workshops and providing pre-concert lectures to introduce audiences to program selections.

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WHAT: Orpheus Chamber Orchestra with Isata Kanneh-Mason

WHEN: Tuesday, November 10, 2026, 8pm

Pre-concert lecture at 7pm by Brian Lauritzen

PROGRAM: **HANDEL:** *Water Music* Suite (selections)
MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat major, K. 595
Katie JENKINS: *Elixir of Life* (Southern California premiere)
HAYDN: Symphony No. 91 in E-flat major, Hob.I:91

WHERE: Renée & Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
Segerstrom Center for the Arts
615 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626

TICKETS: Ticket prices start at \$31.

Available at the Philharmonic Society box office (949) 553-2422,
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INFORMATION: Call (949) 553-2422 or visit philharmonicsociety.org