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Classical California KUSC Celebrates The 250th Anniversary Of The Declaration Of Independence With “I Believe” Concert At The Judith And Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center In[...]

Tuesday, February 25, 2025 - Classical California KUSC , in collaboration with **YOLA (Youth Orchestra Los Angeles, part of the LA Phil)**, presents "**I BELIEVE: The Declaration Project**," a special concert commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, on **Thursday, March 6**, at **7:00 PM PT** in the **Edgerton Foundation Performance Hall at YOLA's campus in Inglewood at 101 South La Brea Avenue**.

"I Believe: The Declaration Project" is a national community transformation initiative led by pianist, activist, cultural catalyst, and KUSC evening host **Lara Downes**. Inspired by the long tradition of American music as a source of collective expression, the project is an invitation across the nation for young people to explore and express their vision of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness, imagining our American future together.

The March 6th concert will feature music and conversation from Downes, who will collaborate with YOLA musicians. Students will also present their own reflections on the concepts of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, exploring the potential of the American promise.

Get tickets and learn more:

<https://www.laphil.com/events/performances/3654/2025-03-06/i-believe-the-declaration-project>

In honor of Women's History Month, the concert will feature works by the mid-20th century composer Margaret Bonds, who was based in Los Angeles, and Valerie Coleman. Coleman's **Umoja** for wind ensemble was written in 2019.

Umoja, meaning unity or togetherness in Swahili, embodies the spirit of harmony and connection.

A violinist from YOLA at Torres in East LA will join Downes for a performance of the **Cantabile** from Mahler's Symphony No. 1. YOLA's Camino Nuevo musicians will sing Eduardo Cota's "Las Gaviotas," again, with Downes at the piano, and the YOLA Inglewood Jazz Ensemble will perform John Coltrane's "Blue Train."

Lara Downes' "I Believe" initiative has been an integral part of Classical California's community outreach. The inaugural event at Watts Learning Center Charter Middle School introduced more than 400 students to classical works by American composers such as Amy Beach, George Gershwin, and Florence Price. In 2024, the initiative expanded to the Community Music Center in San Francisco's Mission District, where nearly 100 students reflected on the Declaration of Independence and the potential of the American future. Through original compositions and personal statements, these young musicians shared their perspectives on life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, engaging with classical music in a deeply meaningful way.

Lara Downes is a longtime champion of American music, commissioning new works and celebrating historical narrative voices through her recordings, broadcasts, and NPR's Amplify series. Her "I Believe" initiative amplifies the voices of young people, exemplifying Classical California's commitment to sharing the inspiring power of classical music with children.

Classical California KUSC Celebrates The 250th Anniversary Of The Declaration Of Independence With "I Believe" Concert At The Judith And Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center In Inglewood On March 6 (Shore Fire Media Inc)

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