



The 2025-26 season of the Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles is made possible thanks to the generous contributions from our gracious supporters.



Pacific Symphony Youth Concert Band | Songs of the Earth, November 23 @ 1:00 PM



Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings | Stories the World Told in Song, November 23 @ 7:00 PM



Pacific Symphony Youth Wind Ensemble | Salutations, Folk Songs & Celebrations!, November 24 @ 7:00 PM



Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra | Light in Darkness, November 25 @ 7:00 PM

Pacific Symphony is a proud Resident Company of



WELCOME TO THE 2025-26 PSYE SEASON!

Welcome to a season of celebration, as we welcome **Alexander Shelley, Pacific Symphony Artistic and Music Director Designate**, and **Pola Benke, Pacific Symphony Assistant Conductor and Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra Music Director**.

We also celebrate the continuing growth and success of our newest PSYE family member, **Pacific Symphony Youth Concert Band**, now embarking on their 4th season. Made possible by the generous support and advocacy of **Hans and Valerie Imhof**, this newest youth ensemble is led by celebrated music educator and conductor **Angela Woo**. Additionally, it is a joy to welcome back **Dr. Johanna Gamboa-Kroesen** for her 4th season as **Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings Music Director**, and **Dr. Gregory Xavier Whitmore** for his 12th season as **Pacific Symphony Youth Wind Ensemble Music Director**, fresh off the Youth Wind Ensemble's highly successful **2025 tour to Costa Rica**.

Looking ahead, we anticipate a rich and varied season of PSYE concert experiences, including celebrated guest artists, composers in residence, new composition debuts, and we invite you to join us in these exciting musical adventures! Grounded in the creative leadership of **Alexander Shelley**, PSYE continues to build upon the rich legacy established by **Music Director Laureate Carl St.Clair**. It is with this guidance and the support of **Pacific Symphony & PSYE Boards of Directors**, plus the extraordinary support of our many generous donors that this program is made possible.

Finally, the inspiring involvement of our SoCal community of friends, family members, and music lovers like you is deeply appreciated. Thank you so much, and please enjoy the music!



Shawne Natalia Zarubica
Managing Director, Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles, Pacific Symphony

PACIFIC SYMPHONY YOUTH ENSEMBLES (PSYE)

Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles (PSYE) is one of the largest and most prestigious pre-professional music training programs in the nation, nurturing and inspiring exceptional young musicians in grades 6 through 12. PSYE provides its members with advanced, innovative artistic experiences that cultivate musical excellence, personal growth, and lifelong engagement with the art of symphonic performance.

Now under the creative leadership of Alexander Shelley, Pacific Symphony's Artistic and Music Director Designate, PSYE continues to build upon the rich legacy established by Music Director Laureate Carl St.Clair, who originally envisioned the program as an integral part of Pacific Symphony's educational mission. Together, their vision reflects a shared commitment to inspiring the next generation of artists and audiences.

Comprising four performing ensembles—Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra, Pacific Symphony Youth Wind Ensemble, Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings, and Pacific Symphony Youth Concert Band—PSYE offers students the opportunity to develop their artistry through professional repertoire, world-class coaching, and unique performance experiences.

Members benefit from engaging conversations and mentorship with Maestros Shelley and St.Clair, receive regular coaching from Pacific Symphony musicians, and collaborate with renowned guest artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Cho-Liang Lin, Narong Prangcharoen, Derrick Skye, and Glenn Dicterow, among many others.

The Youth Ensembles perform regularly at the acclaimed Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Costa Mesa, CA, as well as at venues throughout the region. These free, community-focused performances are warmly received each season, touching the lives of thousands of Southern California residents.

Membership in PSYE is determined through annual auditions held each spring, drawing more than 700 applicants each year. The 335 students currently participating represent over 75 schools across Orange County and beyond. Graduates of the program go on to study at leading institutions including Juilliard, Johns Hopkins University/Peabody Institute, UCLA, University of Michigan, Stanford, USC, Brown, Vanderbilt, Yale, and many more.

I PSYE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Elizabeth Stahr* *Lifetime Director & Distinguished Counselor Emeritus to the Board ~ In Loving Memory*

Directors

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Kristy Cha

David Dunford

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Emma Lee

Eric Lee

László Mező

Dot Nelson

Linda Owen

Herb Roth

Elaine Sarkaria

Walter Stahr*

Peter Tan

Larry Woody

David Yeung

I PSYE EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF

Alexander Shelley

Artistic and Music Director Designate,

Pacific Symphony

Carl St.Clair*

Music Director Laureate,

Pacific Symphony

John Forsythe*

President, Pacific Symphony

Eileen Jeanette

Senior Vice President of Artistic Planning &

Production, Pacific Symphony

Shawne Natalia Zarubica

Managing Director, Pacific Symphony Youth

Ensembles, Pacific Symphony

Daniel Escobar

Director of Individual Giving and Governing

Members, Pacific Symphony

Pola Benke

Music Director, Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra

& Pacific Symphony Assistant Conductor

Johanna Gamboa-Kroesen

Music Director, Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings

Gregory X. Whitmore

Music Director, Pacific Symphony Youth Wind

Ensemble

Angela Woo

Music Director, Pacific Symphony Youth

Concert Band

Bethany Goldberg

Youth Ensembles Coordinator, Pacific Symphony

Jackson Nguyen

Youth Wind Ensemble &

Youth Concert Band Manager,

Pacific Symphony

Vivian Junyuan Wu

Youth Orchestra Manager &

Santiago Strings Manager,

Pacific Symphony

Danielle Liu

Youth Quartet & Octet Coordinator,

Pacific Symphony

Frances Cisneros

Youth Concert Band Saxophone Coach,

Pacific Symphony

Baxter Fee

Youth Concert Band Percussion Coach,

Pacific Symphony

Michael Hammerton

Youth Concert Band Brass Coach,

Pacific Symphony

Meri Sheegog

Santiago Strings String Coach,

Pacific Symphony

Haiyang Wang

Youth Concert Band Wind Coach,

Pacific Symphony

Alan Lu

Youth Ensembles Intern,

Pacific Symphony

* Also member of Board of Directors
for Pacific Symphony

† Pacific Symphony Life Director



SONGS OF THE EARTH

Sunday, Nov. 23, 2025 @ 1 p.m.

Angela Woo, conductor
Baxter Fee, guest conductor and
PSYCB percussion coach
PSYCB Percussion Ensemble
Pacific Symphony Youth Concert Band

Scan the code below for full concert
information and program notes



This afternoon's performance is generously
sponsored by **Hans and Valerie Imhof**.

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

RICHARD SAUCEDO *Fanfare for the Third Planet*

ERIC WHITACRE *The Seal Lullaby*
Angela Luo, PSYWE member
& guest pianist

ALEX STOPA *Three Scenes from the Desert*
I. Desert Sunrise
II. Waltz for a Rainy Day
III. Red Rock Canyon
Baxter Fee, guest conductor
PSYCB Percussion Ensemble

YUKIKO NISHIMURA *Ancient Flower*

WILLIAM OWENS *Three Scottish Vistas*
I. This Proud People
II. The South of Skye
III. Glasgow, the West End

FRANK TICHELI *Earth Song*

JAY CHATTAWAY *Mazama*
(Legend of the Pacific Northwest)

(No Intermission)

MEET THE PSYCB

Angela Woo / Music Director
Jackson Nguyen / PSYCB Manager
Frances Cisneros / Saxophone Coach
Baxter Fee / Percussion Coach

Michael Hammerton / Brass Coach
Haiyang Wang / Woodwinds Coach

FLUTE

Kate Jung, *principal*
Ziling Cheng, *PSYWE Mentor*
Jacob Han
Claire Kim
Ellie Kim
Katie Kim
Annabel Lin
Chloe Park
Shruti Pradhan

OBOE

Seoah Shin, *principal*
Gia Kwak
Olivia Park

CLARINET

Kara Chan, *principal*
Daniel Ahn
Annabelle Baek
Daniel Cui
Adrian Kang
Leia Kim
Stella Kim
Jihu Lee
Sihu Lee
Jayden Lim
Aaron Lin
Jeyi Park
Julian Park
Ethan Wang
Christine Yang
Kevin Zhang

BASS CLARINET

Gavin Wolfe, *principal*
George Chuan, *PSYWE Mentor*
Jon Lee, *PSYWE Mentor*

BASSOON

Hannah Pearce, *principal*

ALTO SAXOPHONE

Justin Chuang, *principal*
Timothy Hsu
Jude Lee
Max Mar
Max Wang
Eric Yang

TENOR SAXOPHONE

Jay Homma, *principal*
Tristan Shaw

BARITONE SAXOPHONE

Adrian Dee, *principal*
Jacob Herrera Monteon, *PSYWE Mentor*

FRENCH HORN

Chloe Shin, *principal*
Aaron Chung
Abigail Julian
Vivian Murray

TRUMPET

Tony Lee, *principal*
Joshua Cho
Ryan Choi, *PSYWE Mentor*
Roy Han
Brent Kim
Damian Lee
Jayden Lee
Luke Yang
Brandon Yoon

TROMBONE

Elias Yun, *principal*
Joshua Choi
Enzo Nohai
Jayden Park
Dylan Tang
Vinh Tran
Daniel Yoo

EUPHONIUM

Annie Kwak, *principal*
Violet Dif, *PSYWE Mentor*
William Guo

TUBA

Joel Anne, *principal*
Eli Magdaleno, *PSYWE Mentor*

PERCUSSION

Megan Chan
Ian Park
Kylee Tang
Johnny Xia
Colton Yu

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

Arnold O. Beckman High School
Beechwood School
Brea Olinda High School
Cadence Park School
Carl Hankey Middle School
Cerritos High School
Chaparral Middle School
Crean Lutheran High School
D. Russell Parks Junior High School
Heritage Oak Private Education
Jeffrey Trail Middle School
Lakeside Middle School
Newcomb Academy
Northwood High School
Orange County School of the Arts
Orchard Hills Middle School
Oxford Academy
Pioneer Middle School
Portola High School
Rancho San Joaquin Middle School
Riverside STEM Academy
Sage Hill School
Serrano Intermediate School
Sierra Vista Middle School
Solid Park School
South Pointe Middle School
Sunny Hills High School
Tesoro High School
Tetzlaff Middle School
University High School
Valley Christian High School
Vista Verde School
Woodcrest Christian High School

ABOUT THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



Angela Woo is Director of Instrumental Music at John Adams Middle School (Santa Monica, CA) where nearly 300 students comprise three concert bands and three string orchestras. The John Adams ensembles

have consistently earned the highest possible ratings at performance festivals. In 2011, the John Adams Middle School Wind Ensemble was selected to perform at the inaugural California All-State Music Education Conference as the only middle school concert band in the state to be so honored.

Ms. Woo is also Music Director of Pacific Symphony Youth Concert Band (Orange County, CA), which is part of the Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles, one of the largest pre-professional music training programs in the nation for young musicians in grades 6 through 12.

For over 25 years, Ms. Woo has enjoyed an active schedule as a guest conductor, clinician, and adjudicator with numerous honor groups, conducting symposia, and music festivals throughout the United States. Ms. Woo has been invited by several universities to lead professional development workshops for music educators at the elementary and secondary levels. Her guest conducting invitations have included All-State honor bands and orchestras at the middle school and high school levels in Kentucky, Oregon, Michigan, Colorado, California, Georgia, and Louisiana. Ms. Woo has been invited by the WorldStrides Honors Performance Series to conduct in Carnegie Hall (New York) with the 2019 and 2022 Middle School Honors Orchestra, and the 2020 High School Symphony Orchestra.

On the international level, Ms. Woo was the first woman to conduct at the 1992 XIV New Music Forum in Mexico City, premiering wind music of Karel Husa, Vincent Persichetti, George Crumb and William Schuman. In 2019, Ms. Woo was the first international guest conductor for the middle school State Honours Ensemble Program at the Queensland Conservatorium at Griffith University (Brisbane, Australia), and returned to guest conduct the national high school Wind Orchestra with the 2023 Australian Honours Ensemble Program.

An alumna of the University of California, Los Angeles, Ms. Woo holds the degrees Bachelor of Arts in Music Education and Piano Performance, Master of Education, and Master of Fine Arts in Conducting. She also holds the Master of Arts in Educational Administration from California State University, Northridge. Prior to her appointment to John Adams Middle School in 1995, Ms. Woo was Director of Music at Corona del Mar High School in Orange County, California where she led the band, orchestra, choral, and jazz ensembles. She also served as conductor of the Santa Monica College Wind Ensemble during the 1995-96 season.

Ms. Woo is a staunch advocate for music education at all levels. She has been recognized and honored for her advocacy and service to music education by local, regional, and national organizations, including the Santa Monica Rotary Club (2005 Santa Monica-Malibu District Teacher of the Year), the John Philip Sousa National Foundation (2012 Legion of Honor Laureate), the Education Through Music - Los Angeles Foundation (2019 Shining Star Award), and the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association (2020 Gold Award and 2025 Outstanding Middle School Educator Award). Ms. Woo was named the recipient of the 2024 California Music Educators Association Middle School Music Educator Award.

ABOUT THE GUEST CONDUCTOR



Baxter Fee is a percussionist and educator from Bowling Green, KY. He is currently pursuing his Master's degree in Percussion Performance at the Bob Cole Conservatory in

Long Beach, California, studying with Ted Atkatz. On campus, he teaches the Percussion Methods course to undergraduate music education majors, and has been a member of the Symphony Orchestra, Wind Symphony, and University Percussion Group. Beyond his classical studies, Baxter is passionate and experienced on jazz vibraphone and plays with the school's Latin Jazz Orchestra.

I ABOUT PSYCB

Now in their 4th season, Pacific Symphony Youth Concert Band (PSYCB) is the newest addition to the PSYE family of ensembles. Founded in 2022 through the generous sponsorship and advocacy of Hans and Valerie Imhof, PSYCB is led by renowned music educator Angela Woo.

Under the creative leadership of Alexander Shelley, Pacific Symphony's Artistic and Music Director Designate, PSYCB continues to build upon the rich legacy established by Music Director Laureate Carl St.Clair. Together, their vision reflects a shared commitment to inspiring the next generation of artists and audiences.

Representing over 32 schools throughout the Southern California region, PSYCB provides an experience that nurtures the confidence, poise, and musical sensitivity of young musicians through the study and performance of outstanding

I PROGRAM NOTES

Richard Saucedo (b. 1957) composed *Fanfare for the Third Planet* in 2004. The piece is dedicated to the planet Earth. Filled with optimistic, lively rhythms and joyous harmonies, it is a popular concert opener.



A native of Reno, Nevada, **Eric Whitacre** (b. 1970) has made an international name for himself in music. *Seal Lullaby* (2004) was inspired by the children's story "The White Seal" by British author Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). Written in 1893 in Brattleboro, Vermont, "The White Seal" tells the story of a white baby seal in the Bering Sea off the coast of Alaska.



Australian-born **Alex Stopa** composed *Three Scenes from the Desert* in 2018. Inspired by the deserts of Southern Nevada and California, the composer transports us to some of the most beautiful and striking landscapes in the world with these lyrical and evocative works.



A native of Japan, pianist and composer **Yukiko Nishimura** (b. 1967) has written music often



concert band literature. PSYCB serves gifted instrumentalists in grades 6 through 9 and is one of four youth ensembles offered by Pacific Symphony's Youth Ensembles program.

PSYCB members benefit from the mentorship of Maestros Shelley and St.Clair, receive regular coaching from Pacific Symphony musicians, perform twice each season at the magnificent Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Costa Mesa, CA, and look forward to future touring opportunities.

Membership in the Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles program is determined through annual auditions held each spring, drawing more than 700 applicants each year. Graduates of the program go on to study at leading institutions including Juilliard, Johns Hopkins University/Peabody Institute, UCLA, University of Michigan, Stanford, USC, Brown, Vanderbilt, Yale, and many more.

inspired by nature, space, and colors. **Ancient Flower** (2013) combines Western and Asian musical influences.

William Owens (b. 1963) composed *Three Scottish Vistas* as a musical depiction of Scotland. Each of the piece's three movements depicts a different aspect of the Scottish landscape and culture—traditional bagpipes, the isle of Skye, and the city of Glasgow.



Frank Ticheli (b. 1958) has composed music in a wide variety of forms and genres. *Earth Song* (2012) is a hymn to the human longing for peace. Written during a dark time in the midst of the Iraq war, it uses music to express an ardent need for comfort and healing.



Jay Chattaway (b. 1946) composed *Mazama (Legend of the Pacific Northwest)* in 1985. The piece was inspired by the mythology of Native American tribes local to the area around Crater Lake.



Joshua Grayson, Ph.D., is an historical musicologist and graduate of the USC Thornton School of Music, and the program note annotator for Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles.



Pacific Symphony

STORIES THE WORLD TOLD IN SONG

Sunday, Nov. 23, 2025 @ 7 p.m.

Dr. Johanna Gamboa-Kroesen, conductor
Filipino American Symphony Junior
Orchestra, guest ensemble
Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings

Scan the code below for full concert
information and program notes



This evening's performance is generously
sponsored by an **anonymous donor**.

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

RUSSELL PECK

Signs of Life II
I. Allegro

GERALD FINZI

Prelude for String Orchestra
in F minor, Op. 25

GYÖRGY ORBÁN

Balzene Suite for Strings
I. Overture
II. Valse Volante
III. Vasska
V. Tango
VI. Frisch (anime)

FLORANTE

Arr. by AJ Consolacion II
Trans. by Jeffrey Solares

Handog (Offering)
Filipino American
Symphony Junior Orchestra,
guest ensemble

CÉSAR GUERRA-PEIXE *Mourão*

(No Intermission)

MEET THE PSSS

Dr. Johanna Gamboa-Kroesen / Music Director
Vivian Junyuan Wu / Santiago Strings Manager
Meri Sheegog / PSSS String Coach

VIOLIN I

Harmonie Fu
Alicia Huang
Annessa Hui
Madeleine Joo
Jimin Kang
Joanna Kang
Emmalyn Kim
Junseo Lee
Eunice Lee
Kevin Liu
Owen Lo
Ryan Noda
Anna Shung
Victoria Shung
Lana Sirkin
Xindi Wang

VIOLIN II

Annie Chih
Hudson Fu
Derek Guan
Henry Jang
Caylin Jeon
Jennifer Kim
Ellen Kim
Fiona Kim
Emily Lee
Jane Lee
Zack Lee
Jarden Pan
Lucas Poon
Mason Przytulski
Winston Ryee
Melody Ye

VIOLA

Vincent Cho
Danielle Hahn
Jesse Huang
Jerry Huang
Uthara Iyer
Olivia Kim
Luke Lee
Ariane Liang
Emily Pan
Jamie Reyes
Grace Wang
Emily Xiao
Amber Yun
Tim Zhang
Chelsey Yu

CELLO

Annabelle Chantana
Audrey Chen
Zach Gerhart
Lucas Kim
Ryan Kim
Theodore Kim
Kaitlyn Lee
Duhan Li
Audrey Ma
Jeremiah Ming
Jeeho Park
Lioma Quoit Minematsu
Louis Shen
Abby Yoo
Ereny Yosef
Xien Zheng

DOUBLE BASS

Derek Cha
Chris Ding
Yehia Mansour
Dean Saunders
Keegan Seigel

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

Arnold O. Beckman High School
Beacon Park School
Beechwood School
Bernardo Yorba Middle School
Calvary Christian School
Charles Evans Hughes Junior High School
Corona Del Mar Middle School
Crean Lutheran High School
Deerfield Elementary School
El Rancho Charter School
Heritage Oak Private Education
Irvine High School
Jeffrey Trail Middle School
Lakeside Middle School
Las Flores Middle School
McPherson Magnet School
Northwood High School
Orange County School of the Arts
Orchard Hills School
Oxford Academy
Portola High School
Portola Springs Elementary School
Rancho San Joaquin Middle School
Red Hill Lutheran School
Sage Hill School
Sierra Vista Middle School
Solis Park School
St. Margaret's Episcopal School
Westpark Elementary School
Woodbridge High School

Sections listed alphabetically.

ABOUT THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



Dr. Johanna Gamboa-Kroesen is a GRAMMY®-nominated music educator, conductor, and Assistant Professor of Music Education at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, where

she teaches courses in music education, string pedagogy, and conducting, and supervises student teaching. A Fulbright Scholar, she holds a Doctorate in Education from the University of California, Los Angeles, a Master of Music Education from The Hartt School of Music, and dual Bachelor of Music degrees in Music Education and Violin Performance from Chapman University.

As Music Director of Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings, one of Southern California's premier youth orchestras, Dr. Gamboa-Kroesen is recognized for her artistry, inclusivity, and commitment to educational excellence. Her work as a conductor and educator reflects a deep belief in the power of ensemble learning to cultivate connection, belonging, and musical growth. She frequently conducts school, youth, and regional honor orchestras and is sought after for workshops and clinics by community music organizations and school districts across the country.

Dr. Gamboa-Kroesen's research and publications, featured in *Research Studies in Music Education and Teaching Music*, explore inclusive teaching practices, string pedagogy, school belonging, and culturally responsive music education. She regularly presents at national and international conferences, including the International Society for Music Education (ISME), Society for Music Teacher Education (SMTE), College Music Society (CMS), National Association for Music Education (NAfME), American String Teachers Association (ASTA), and California All-State Music Education Conference (CASMEC). Within ASTA, she serves as Chair of the College Committee, where she champions initiatives that strengthen collegiate engagement, professional sustainability, and inclusive access across the string teaching community.

Dr. Gamboa-Kroesen has received multiple research, service, and teaching awards and collaborates extensively with school districts as a curriculum and instructional consultant. Prior to her appointment at UCLA, she taught orchestra in public schools for 16 years, where her innovative and student-centered

approaches to teaching continue to influence her university and community work today.

Guided by a vision of inclusive excellence, Dr. Gamboa-Kroesen continues to lead initiatives that reimagine how music education can connect people, cultures, and communities through shared creative practice.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



The Filipino American Symphony Junior Orchestra (FASJO) is the advanced youth ensemble of the Filipino American Symphony Orchestra's Education Program, providing middle and high school students with high-level orchestral training through weekly rehearsals, sectional work, and personalized coaching from professional FASO musicians.

What distinguishes FASJO is its diverse and culturally rich repertoire, which blends classical works with Filipino, Asian, and world music traditions, as well as contemporary selections. This focus fosters both technical excellence and cultural identity, giving students a deeper understanding of music as a universal art form.

FASJO has performed at prestigious venues including Walt Disney Concert Hall, The Colburn School, the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels and major community celebrations, offering young musicians valuable performance experience while connecting them to their cultural roots and the broader musical community.

ABOUT PSSS

Now in their 35th season, Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings (PSSS) has become a nationally celebrated youth string orchestra. Sponsored by The Orange County Chapter of the Suzuki Music Association of California, PSSS was founded in 1991 by Lonie Bosserman and Margie Chan, coming under the wing of Pacific Symphony in 2007.

Led from its inception through the 21-22 season by renowned music educator Irene Kroesen, PSSS welcomed its new music director, Dr. Johanna Gamboa-Kroesen in the fall of 2022. Dr. Kroesen is a member of the music faculty at UCLA, and her tenure represents an exciting new chapter for the ensemble.

Under the creative leadership of Alexander Shelley, Pacific Symphony's Artistic and Music Director Designate, PSSS continues to build upon the rich legacy established by Music Director Laureate Carl St.Clair. Together, their vision reflects a shared commitment to inspiring the next generation of artists and audiences.

Representing over 30 schools in the Southern California region, PSSS provides an experience that nurtures the confidence, poise, and musical sensitivity of young musicians through the study and performance of outstanding string

orchestra literature. PSSS serves gifted young instrumentalists in grades 6 through 9 and is one of four youth ensembles offered by Pacific Symphony's Youth Ensembles program.

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I PROGRAM NOTES

The music of **Russell Peck** (1945-2009) is heavily influenced by both his musical education and his upbringing in Detroit, the location of the popular record studio Motown during the composer's youth in the 1960s. Like much of Peck's music, **Signs of Life** (1983) combines the influence of classical and popular music.



Gerald Finzi (1901-1956) remains one of the most overlooked British composers of the twentieth century. **Prelude in F Minor** was composed sometime in the 1920s. It was originally intended as the first movement of a chamber symphony which was to be called "The Bud, the Blossom and the Berry."



Esteemed Hungarian composer **György Orbán** (b. 1947) was born in Transylvania. His music has been noted by scholars of contemporary Hungarian music



for its originality. Orbán composed **Balzene Suite** in 2000. The work's full Hungarian title, translated into English, means "ball music for Count Razumovsky;" the piece takes the form of a dance suite.

Florante de Leon (b. 1952), popularly known simply as **Florante**, is a Filipino singer-songwriter and was a pioneer and leading exponent of Pinoy folk rock during the DZRJ-AM radio boom in Manila during the 1970's. One of his most popular singles includes the haunting ballad **Handog (Offering)**.



Composer, violinist, and conductor **César Guerra-Peixe** (1914-1993) was one of Brazil's most important composers. He composed **Mourão**, his most famous work, in the early 1970s. In keeping with his musical interests, it is based on a well-known northeast Brazilian folk melody.



Joshua Grayson, Ph.D., is an historical musicologist and graduate of the USC Thornton School of Music, and the program note annotator for Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles.



Pacific Symphony

SALUTATIONS, FOLK SONGS & CELEBRATIONS!

Monday, Nov. 24, 2025 @ 7 p.m.

Dr. Gregory X. Whitmore, conductor
Kristen Lawrence, organ
Pacific Symphony Youth Wind Ensemble

Scan the code below for full concert
information and program notes



This evening's performance is generously
sponsored by **Pacific Life Foundation**.

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

- RON NELSON** *Lauds (Praise High Day)*
PERCY GRAINGER *Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie
Doon*
JULIE GIROUX *One Life Beautiful*
JEFF TYZIK *Three Latin Dances
Danzón, Cha Cha, Malambo*

—INTERMISSION—

- J.S. BACH** *Fantasia and Fugue in
G minor, BWV 542*
Kristen Lawrence, organ
J.S. BACH *Chorale Prelude, BWV 727*
Arr. Cailliet *Herzlich tut mich verlangen
(Fervent is my longing)*
J.S. BACH *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor,*
Arr. Hunsberger *BWV 565*
Kristen Lawrence, organ
**JOHN PHILIP
SOUSA** *Nobles of the Mystic Shrine*

MEET THE PSYWE

Dr. Gregory X. Whitmore / Music Director
Jackson Nguyen / PSYWE Manager

FLUTE

Kaya Baird, *principal*
Ziling Cheng
Aimee Fan
Sarah Feigenbaum
Grady Gillen
Euna Kim
Jacob Li
Angela Wang
Hunsika Yerratha
Lucia Yu
Emily Zhao

OBOE

Sydney Kramer, *principal*
Fenton Benne

CLARINET

Wonny Jang, *principal*
Alex Butterly
Eric Choi
Ethan Choo
Ben Chow
Daniel Chung
Kai Doushgounian
Jenna Hong
Benjamin Lee
Kaden Lee
Tyler Salamanca
Ashley Shibuya
Gabi White

BASS CLARINET

Dylan Rosen, *principal*
George Chuan
Jon Lee

BASSOON

Sohrab Zarin, *principal*
Normandie Olsen

ALTO SAXOPHONE

Jayden Lee, *principal*
Megan Chou
Cameron Davenport
Shido Kamai
Jai Lue
Nolan Nelson
Jason Ngo
Vincent Nguyen
James Park
Abel Yu

TENOR SAXOPHONE

Armaan Diwan, *principal*
Sonam Raj
Justin Vo

BARITONE SAXOPHONE

Jacob Herrera Monteon, *principal*
Samyam Bhandari
Neil Dedhia

FRENCH HORN

Aurora Li, *principal*
Brandon Dee
Noah Kim
Joshua Liu
Sylas Wei
Rico Xu

TRUMPET

George Ty, *principal*
Austin Ahn
Bomi Bishop
Ian Cho
Sooho Cho
Ryan Choi
Alvin Chung
Alex Lee
Zachary Lovell
Tomo Nagasaki
Eddie Valdemar

TROMBONE

Parker Wilson-Medvitz, *principal*
Natalie Dechary
Cruz Magaña
Ada Mjolsness
Adrian Perez
Gwyn Renger
Nathan Sung
Taylor Wong
Sophie Yu

BASS TROMBONE

Ryland Del Mundo, *principal*
Brandon Coluna

EUPHONIUM

Diego Tarry, *principal*
Alan Co
Violet Dif
Tehmina Zarin

TUBA

Ferrel Widjaya, *principal*
Max Ledezma
Eli Magdaleno
Matthew Tucker

DOUBLE BASS

Kenny Ostaszewski, *principal*

PERCUSSION

(Listed Alphabetically)

Addie Case
Alex Chen
Ella Choi
Gracie Fox
Momoka Hayashibe
Alex Lu

PIANO

Angela Luo, *principal*

HARP

Amber Chui, *principal*

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

Arnold O. Beckman High School
California High School
Canyon High School
Crean Lutheran High School
Diamond Bar High School
El Dorado High School
El Toro High School
Eleanor Roosevelt High School
Glen A. Wilson High School
Gretchen Whitney High School
Irvine High School
Laguna Hills High School
Los Altos High School
Marina High School
Northwood High School
Orange County School of the Arts
Oxford Academy
Portola High School
Sage Hill School
San Marcos High School
Santa Monica High School
Troy High School
University High School
Vista Murrieta High School
Woodbridge High School

Sections listed alphabetically
under principal.

ABOUT THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



Gregory Xavier Whitmore is Conductor of the University Symphonic Winds at California State University Fullerton (CSUF). In addition to this artistic responsibility, Dr. Whitmore is an

Associate Professor of Instrumental Music Education and serves as Area Coordinator of the CSUF Music Education Department. Dr. Whitmore is also in his 12th season as Music Director of the Pacific Symphony Youth Wind Ensemble, one of only a handful of youth wind ensembles connected to a group one professional symphony orchestra (Pacific Symphony) in the United States.

Dr. Whitmore's previous appointments in higher education include tenure as Director of Bands at Irvine Valley College (Irvine, CA), Mt. San Antonio College (Walnut, CA), and College of the Desert (Palm Desert, CA). Prior to his work in higher education, Dr. Whitmore spent 13 years as Director of Bands at Cathedral City High School (Cathedral City, CA).

A proud Midwesterner and native of Ann Arbor, Michigan; Dr. Whitmore earned his bachelor's degree in instrumental music education from The University of Michigan School of Music, Theater and Dance. While a student at Michigan, Dr. Whitmore performed in the University of Michigan Symphony and Concert Bands; and led the University of Michigan Marching Band as "Michigan's Man Up Front"—Drum Major, from 1999 to 2001—becoming the second Black Drum Major in the history of the University of Michigan. Dr. Whitmore received his master's degree in music with an emphasis in wind conducting from California State University Fullerton. Dr. Whitmore holds a master's degree, and a doctorate in music and music education from Columbia University (Teachers College) in the city of New York.

A Second Place Winner of the 2017 American Prize in Conducting, Dr. Whitmore has conducted ensembles around the world in such notable concert venues as the Teatro Nacional de Costa Rica, The Sydney Opera House (Sydney, Australia), The Golden Hall of The Musikverein (Vienna), The Wiener Konzerthaus (Vienna), The MuTh (Vienna), Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall (Costa Mesa, CA), Symphony Hall (Chicago), The Kennedy

Center (Washington, D.C.), Carnegie Hall (New York City), Walt Disney Concert Hall (Los Angeles), Meng Concert Hall (Fullerton, CA), Weill Hall (Sonoma, CA), The Ambassador Auditorium (Pasadena, CA), Holy Trinity Church (Stratford, England), St. John's Smith Square (London), Chateau Vaux le Vicomte (Paris), and Heidelberg Castle (Germany). Under Dr. Whitmore's direction, the Cathedral City High School Symphony Band was selected to perform as the showcase ensemble during the 2008 California Band Directors Association Annual Convention. Dr. Whitmore is a conductor for the World Strides Honors Performance Series.

With a research interest in music educator values as operationalized into pedagogy, in addition to investigating the concert band as an artistic medium; Dr. Whitmore has presented research at music education symposia throughout the United States and abroad, including The Midwest Clinic, and the International Society of Music Education World Congress. Dr. Whitmore's research has been published in *Visions of Research in Music Education*. Dr. Whitmore has been recognized in four editions of *Who's Who Among America's Teachers* and he has been included in the 2005/2006 Edition of the National Honor Roll's *Outstanding American Teachers*. Dr. Whitmore was selected to represent the State of California by School Band and Orchestra Magazine in the 2008 edition of "50 Band Directors Who Make a Difference."

Dr. Whitmore belongs to professional organizations that include College Band Directors National Association, Kappa Psi Honorary Band Fraternity, Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity, Pi Kappa Lambda Honor Society, The National Association for Music Education, Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association, and the California Music Educators Association, College Band Directors National Association, and The National Band Association.

Learn more about Dr. Whitmore at gwhitmore.com

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kristen Lawrence, organ



Classically trained pipe organist Kristen Lawrence has been called the Queen of Halloween for writing and producing elegant, fun, and melodic music for the Halloween

season—but enjoyed all year by fans.

Rue Morgue Magazine's music editor described Lawrence's music this way: "With sweeping string arrangements, handsome lyrics and layers of her own graceful voice, Lawrence spins ethereal tales with a balance of macabre elements and kid-friendly whimsy ... that give her creations an instantly classic, fun-for-all-ages feel."

Lawrence's music and lyrics are unique and eclectic, colored by the diversified influences of Bach, Tori Amos, Loreena McKennitt, Elfman & Bartek, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Nightwish. Kristen incorporates these folk, classical, and rock genres to create her Halloween Carols.™ If Christmas has its carols, why not Halloween!

In addition to her original compositions, Lawrence has researched traditional folk songs and arranged them for organ. Her two versions of the English "Souling Song" are based on the older roots of Halloween traditions—one from pagan Samhain and the other from the Christian tradition of soul cakes that evolved into trick-or-treating. Her two versions of the American folk tune "Ghost of John" are loved by kids and their parents who sang it in grade school. Because of this research, Lawrence was asked to write about the music of Halloween for Halloween history expert Lesley Bannatyne's book, *Halloween Nation: Behind the Scenes of America's Fright Night*.

I ABOUT PSYWE

Established in 2007, Pacific Symphony Youth Wind Ensemble (PSYWE) made its debut under the baton of award winning music educator Dr. Michael J. Corrigan, later succeeded by Dr. Joshua Roach of the USC Thornton School of Music. In 2014, PSYWE welcomed its current music director Dr. Gregory Xavier Whitmore. Under Dr. Whitmore's visionary leadership,

An accomplished musician, she has been guest organist for *Halloween Spooktaculars* as well as many of Pacific Symphony's family programs, writing an accompanying *Jurassic Park* organ score for their *Dinosaurs!* program to highlight the 4322-pipe "monster" concert organ. Lawrence was also commissioned to compose organ music to accompany the Lon Chaney silent film classic, *Phantom of the Opera*, playing her counterpointed themes live on the oldest pipe organ in Orange County. Her musical setting of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" for strings and organ reflects her serious analysis of Poe's famous poem and has been called "exquisite" by Poe scholars. It has been featured for the National Endowment of the Arts' *THE BIG READ: Short Stories and Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe*.

A *Keyboard Magazine* review, reporting about Lawrence's elegant use of pipe organ, harpsichord, piano, and vocals in her Halloween carols, foretold a spooky coincidence by stating, "If the Halloween Town of Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* had a resident keyboardist, it would be Kristen Lawrence." Who would have guessed that the planets would align so that Steve Bartek—orchestrator for *Nightmare* and other Danny Elfman film music—would be playing guitar with Lawrence's latest music projects! Spooky good, indeed!

Some of these most recent songs show the "rock" side of Lawrence, and feature special guest performers Steve Bartek (Danny Elfman, Oingo Boingo), John Avila (Oingo Boingo), Jeff Friedl (Devo, A Perfect Circle), MB Gordy (Doobie Brothers), Monte Pittman (Madonna) and other magical musicians.

PSYWE has continued to develop into a nationally celebrated youth wind ensemble and has undertaken numerous commissions, world premieres, and the continued exploration of new music initiatives.

Under the creative leadership of Alexander Shelley, Pacific Symphony's Artistic and Music

Director Designate, PSYWE continues to build upon the rich legacy established by Music Director Laureate Carl St.Clair. Together, their vision reflects a shared commitment to inspiring the next generation of artists and audiences.

Representing over 25 schools in the Southern California region, PSYWE provides members with an advanced and innovative artistic environment and encourages musical and personal growth through the study and performance of outstanding symphonic wind band literature. PSYWE serves exceptional young instrumentalists in grades 9-12 and is one of four youth ensembles offered by Pacific Symphony's Youth Ensembles program.

PSYWE members benefit from the mentorship of Maestros Shelley and St.Clair, receive regular coaching from Pacific Symphony musicians and guest artists, perform at the magnificent Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Costa Mesa, CA, and enjoy periodic touring opportunities.

PROGRAM NOTES

Ron Nelson (1929-2023) has received high praise from esteemed American conductor Leonard Slatkin. He has been particularly interested in East Asian cultures. His **Lauds (Praise High Day)** (1991) is an exuberant, colorful work expressing praise and glorification.



Born in Australia, **Percy Grainger** (1882-1961) was perhaps one of the twentieth century's most idiosyncratic composers. **Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon** is one of his famous folksong settings.



Julie Giroux (b. 1961) has written for symphony orchestra, chorus, chamber ensembles, and brass and woodwind choirs. Giroux composed **One Life Beautiful** in 2010. The piece is dedicated to the memory of her beloved friend Heather Cramer Reu, who "brought so much love and joy to our lives."



Three Latin Dances (2018) by **Jeff Tyzik** (b. 1951) is a stirring setting of three popular Latin American dance styles:



In 2016-17, PSYWE celebrated its 10th anniversary with a tour to Austria's Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival in Vienna, where PSYWE took first prize in its category, performing in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein, the MuTh Concert Hall, and Vienna's legendary Konzerthaus. In 2025, PSYWE toured Costa Rica, collaborating with the National Institute of Music, working and performing with regional professional bands, and culminating in an enthusiastically received sold-out concert at the historic Teatro Nacional in the capital city of San José.

Membership in the Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles program is determined through annual auditions held each spring, drawing more than 700 applicants each year. Graduates of the program go on to study at leading institutions including Juilliard, Johns Hopkins University/Peabody Institute, UCLA, University of Michigan, Stanford, USC, Brown, Vanderbilt, Yale, and many more.

the *Danzón* (a slow, elegant Cuban dance), the *Cha Cha* (a more lively Cuban dance), and the *Malambo* (a fast Argentinian dance).

The organ compositions of **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750) represent a synthesis of many styles of organ music found in Germany in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The **Great Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, BWV 542** acquired its name to distinguish it from the earlier Little Fugue in G minor, which is a shorter work. The **Chorale Prelude, BWV 727, Fervent Is My Longing**, is based on a hymn adapted from a secular song by Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612). The dramatic **Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565** was first published in 1833 by Felix Mendelssohn, and is often associated with horror and the macabre.



John Philip Sousa (1854-1932) remains one of the most well-known names in music. **Nobles of the Mystic Shrine** (1923) was dedicated to the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, a masonic order.



Joshua Grayson, Ph.D., is an historical musicologist and graduate of the USC Thornton School of Music, and the program note annotator for Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles.



LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Tuesday, Nov. 25, 2025 @ 7 p.m.

Pola Benke, conductor
Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra

Scan the code below for full concert
information and program notes



**JOHANNES
BRAHMS**

*Academic Festival Overture,
Op. 80*

**DMITRI
SHOSTAKOVICH**

*Symphony No. 5 in D minor,
Op. 47*
I. Moderato
II. Allegretto
III. Largo
IV. Allegro non troppo

(No Intermission)

This evening's performance is generously
sponsored by **Pacific Life Foundation.**

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

MEET THE PSYO

Pola Benke / Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra Music Director

Vivian Junyuan Wu / Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra Manager

FLUTE

Erin Liao, *co-principal*
Yige (Gloria) Zhou, *co-principal*
Jia Kim
Connor Gong

OBOE

Junxi (Jesse) Hu, *co-principal*
Ahri Shin, *co-principal*
Connor Shim
Michelle Hsu

CLARINET

Kenny Song, *co-principal*
Mason Ahn, *co-principal*
Ian Suh
Sean Yu
Ken Liu

BASSOON

Tyler Phan, *principal*
Lyn Molinari

FRENCH HORN

Jude Vijay, *co-principal*
Angelina Lee, *co-principal*
Alexandre Hartling
Koen Wang
Rory Tran
Anna Wilsen

TRUMPET

Daniel Lee, *co-principal*
Minseo (Leon) Chung, *co-principal*
Wade Hardy
Kaitlyn Chung

TENOR TROMBONE

Jerry Xu, *co-principal*
Kenneth Gong, *co-principal*
Jaden Jung

BASS TROMBONE

Zuriel Martinez, *principal*

TUBA

Ace Tecson, *principal*

PERCUSSION

Vivienne Hsi, *principal*
Daniel Kim
David Wong

HARP

Sydney Lee, *co-principal*
Noella Lee, *co-principal*

PIANO

Jonathan Doh, *co-principal*
Richard Feng, *co-principal*

VIOLIN I

Hannah Schweiger, *concertmaster*
Seaena Kim, *assistant concertmaster*
Natalie Xu
Daniel Park
Amelia Kang
Danny Yoo
Jimin Ha
Noel Jung
Ken Xiao
Andrew Kao
Maxwell Lee
Caleb Schweiger
Claire Yuan
Grace Chun
Dylan Nguyen

VIOLIN II

Jon Suh, *co-principal*
KariAnne Chien, *co-principal*
Abigail Chung
Nick Nguyen
Brendan Chang
Anika Chen
Sylvie Kim
Eric Shin
Chloe Woo
Victoria Park
Evan Kim*
Adam Liu*
Jaynie Lee
Ben Li
Ethan Wang
Haoqi Wang

VIOLA

Johan Sears, *co-principal*
Peter Lee, *co-principal*
Ethan Bei
Lyla Han
Olivia Guo
Nicholas To
Jayden Kim
Ken Chung
Peyton Tan
Madelyn Fu
Brian Kim
Miono Quoit-Minematsu
Pyron Tan
Joanne Chen
Annabelle Jin

CELLO

Cristian Santa Ana, *co-principal*
Alex Hwang, *co-principal*
Verena Lo
Zachary Kim
Jaxon Yoon
Seojun Baek
Kathryn Loutzenheiser
Jeremy Lee
Charlotte Yoh
Nash Wu
Aiden Kim
Aiden Chew
Erin Suh
Anastasia Catanus

DOUBLE BASS

Jacelle Penano, *co-principal*
Claire Holben, *co-principal*
Noa Stewart
Parker Brueggeman
Sydnee Yeh
Sartaj Benipal

*Shostakovich, 3rd mvmt: violin 2 co-principals.

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

Aliso Niguel High School
Arnold O. Beckman High School
Canyon High School
Crean Lutheran High School
Diamond Bar High School
Eleanor Roosevelt High School
Etiwanda School District ASC Program
Fountain Valley High School
Huntington Beach High School
Kraemer Middle School
Legacy Magnet Academy
Long Beach Polytechnic High School
Mira Costa High School

Northwood High School
Orange County School of the Arts
Oxford Academy
Pacific Academy
Pacifica Christian High School
Portola High School
Sage Hill School
San Joaquin High School
St. Margaret's Episcopal School
Sunny Hills High School
Tesoro High School
University High School
Valencia High School

ABOUT THE MUSIC DIRECTOR



Pola Benke is a distinguished conductor and cellist, celebrated for her innovative approach to orchestral leadership and her commitment to standardizing diverse programming

in the modern symphonic repertoire. Beginning in the 2025-26 season, she will serve as Assistant Conductor of Pacific Symphony and Music Director of the Santa Monica Symphony. She currently holds the position of Assistant Conductor with the Long Beach Symphony and the Riverside Philharmonic, demonstrating her growing influence across Southern California's musical landscape.

Born in Poland, Benke began her musical journey as a cellist and holds Master's degrees in both cello performance and orchestral conducting. Her dual expertise gives her a rare perspective—combining the analytical insight of a conductor with the empathy of a performer. Whether leading a full symphony or an intimate ensemble, she brings warmth, clarity, and a deep sense of purpose to every rehearsal and performance.

At the core of Benke's artistry is her dedication to diverse programming that reflects the world's rich cultural tapestry. She believes that music has the

power to unite and inspire, and she is committed to curating concerts that showcase voices from underrepresented communities while reimagining the classics through fresh interpretations. Her leadership style is marked by kindness, collaboration, and the ability to inspire musicians of all generations to perform at their best. Whether leading a large-scale symphonic work or rehearsing an intimate chamber ensemble, she brings energy and precision that elevates every performance.

Benke's professional path has been shaped by collaborations with leading conductors and ensembles, including Maestro Neeme Järvi, Sian Edwards, and Paavo Järvi. Her participation in prestigious programs like the Järvi Academy in Estonia, the Dartington Music Festival in England, and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music has further refined her craft, earning her recognition as a forward-thinking and impactful conductor.

Influenced by composers like Krzysztof Penderecki, Igor Stravinsky, and Jennifer Higdon, Pola embodies a modern approach to conducting—honoring the past while boldly shaping the future of orchestral music.

I ABOUT PSYO

Founded in 1993, Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra (PSYO) has emerged as one of the leading pre-professional training orchestras in the nation. Led by Pola Benke, Pacific Symphony Assistant Conductor and PSYO Music Director, the ensemble provides its members with advanced artistic and technical training that cultivates musical excellence, personal growth, and lifelong engagement with the art of orchestral performance.

Under the creative leadership of Alexander Shelley, Pacific Symphony's Artistic and Music Director Designate, PSSS continues to build upon the rich legacy established by Music Director Laureate Carl St.Clair. Together, their vision reflects a shared commitment to inspiring the next generation of artists and audiences.

Representing over 26 schools in the Southern California region, PSYO provides members with in-depth exposure to the traditional orchestral canon, as well as engagement with exciting new works and

living composers. PSYO serves exceptional young instrumentalists in grades 9-12 and is one of four youth ensembles offered by Pacific Symphony's Youth Ensembles program.

PSYO members benefit from the mentorship of Maestros Shelley and St.Clair, receive regular coaching from Pacific Symphony musicians, perform at the magnificent Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Costa Mesa, CA, and enjoy periodic touring opportunities, including tours to Bulgaria in 2011, to China in 2016, and to the Czech Republic and Austria in 2023.

Membership in the Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles program is determined through annual auditions held each spring, drawing more than 700 applicants each year. Graduates of the program go on to study at leading institutions including Juilliard, Johns Hopkins University/Peabody Institute, UCLA, University of Michigan, Stanford, USC, Brown, Vanderbilt, Yale, and many more.

I PROGRAM NOTES

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

was perhaps the most widely respected composer during his lifetime. He composed his **Academic Festival Overture** in summer of 1880. The light, optimistic work, standing in stark contrast to the *Tragic Overture* also composed that summer, was written on the occasion of Brahms receiving an honorary doctorate at the University of Breslau. The work is based on half a dozen student drinking songs and popular melodies.



Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

is now generally considered the greatest symphonist of the mid-twentieth century. By the 1930s, the totalitarian Soviet regime decided that art and music should be required to fit its ideological dictates.



Composers who wrote music according to their own desires instead of what the government told them to write saw their music banned, were openly ridiculed, and were fired from positions. Like much of Shostakovich's music, the **Fifth Symphony** includes numerous veiled references—termed “Aesopian” by Shostakovich scholars. Yet the work itself is as much a victim of the Great Terror as any of its audience members had been. In a country in which freedom of speech was not only nonexistent but outright banned, the composer had offered it as his official apology for his earlier music, written in a prescribed style not his own, and altered the trajectory of his musical language for decades to come. Yet despite its difficult political circumstances, the work today remains by far the composer's most performed symphony, particularly in the United States.

Joshua Grayson, Ph.D., is an historical musicologist and graduate of the USC Thornton School of Music, and the program note annotator for Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles.