



## LEOPOLD AND THE MAGIC FLUTE OPERA FOR KIDS!

Saturday, May 30, 2026 @ 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

**Join Leopold, Pacific Symphony's favorite furry puppet friend, as he embarks on a whimsical and wondrous journey into the world of opera!**

This delightful, family-friendly adaptation of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* brings to life the thrilling tale of princes, princesses, magic spells, and daring rescues—all with kid-friendly narration, lively characters, and, of course, world-class music performed by Pacific Symphony. Whether you're a young opera enthusiast or brand new to the art form, this performance is packed with laughter, adventure, and timeless melodies, making it the perfect introduction to the grandeur of opera!

**Lobby Activities:** Enjoy special activities for kids in the concert hall lobbies related to the theme of the concert, such as crafts, games, an instrument petting zoo, and more. Activities take place from 9 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. for 10 a.m. concertgoers, and from 12:15 p.m. – 1 p.m. for 11:30 a.m. concertgoers.



# LEOPOLD AND THE MAGIC FLUTE OPERA FOR KIDS!

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Presents Pacific Symphony Family Musical Mornings

Saturday, May 30, 2026 @ 10 a.m.  
Saturday, May 30, 2026 @ 11:30 a.m.

Pola Benke, conductor  
Victor Yerrid, director, scriptwriter/puppeteer  
Pacific Symphony

Cast  
Leopold: Victor Yerrid, puppeteer  
Tree: Paul McGinnis, puppeteer  
Tamino: Jonathan Tran, tenor  
Pamina: Sarah Lonsert, soprano  
Papageno: Wyatt Mitchison-Rojas, baritone  
Queen of the Night: Andrea Church, soprano  
Sarastro: Joe Chiapa, bass  
Papagena/3rd Spirit: Leeza Yorke, mezz-soprano  
Monastatos: Christopher Hi, tenor  
1st Spirit: Carol Tsai Bochkov, soprano  
2nd Spirit: Elle Moody, soprano



Technical Team  
Carlos Correa, producer  
Bonnie Babb-Chesul, graphic designer  
Josh Bishop, stage manager  
Kathy Pryzgoda, lighting designer  
Phillip Matsuura, accompanist

These performances are generously underwritten by  
**The Honorable H. Warren and Janet Siegel.**

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

# PROGRAM

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART  
(1756-1791)

*The Magic Flute* (selections)



## LEOPOLD AND THE MAGIC FLUTE OPERA FOR KIDS!

Dear Audience,

Thank you so much for joining us this season for our **Family Musical Mornings**. We have had a wonderful season of varied performances for you and your families, from Disney's *Fantasia* to ballet and opera!

These concerts are created especially with families in mind. It is very important to us to inspire young audiences and help everyone fall in love with music.

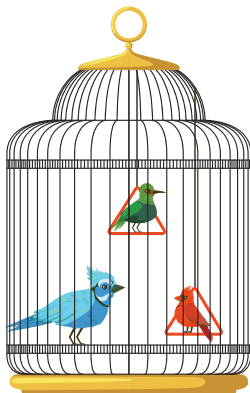
We hope you enjoyed this season, and we are excited to present our final show of the year: **Leopold and The Magic Flute: Opera for Kids!**

It has been my great pleasure to serve as your host and conductor this season. Thank you for your support, enthusiasm, and for sharing these musical mornings with us.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pola Benke".

Pola Benke



# MEET THE CONDUCTOR



**Pola Benke**

**Assistant Conductor for Pacific Symphony**

**Music Director for Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra**

**Mary E. Moore Family Assistant Conductor Chair**

Pola Benke is Assistant Conductor of Pacific Symphony and Music Director of the Santa Monica Symphony, where she is quickly establishing herself as one of Southern California's most versatile and dynamic conductors. Her work is distinguished by a precise and expressive podium style, a deep sense of narrative in programming, and an ability to draw vibrant, cohesive performances from orchestras of all levels.

She has previously held assistant conductor posts with the Long Beach Symphony and the Riverside Philharmonic, and her artistic growth has been shaped by mentorships with Neeme Järvi, Sian Edwards, and Paavo Järvi. Internationally, she has appeared at the Järvi Academy in Estonia, Dartington Music Festival in England, and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California, earning recognition for her curiosity, discipline, and musical insight.

Born in Poland, Benke holds Master's degrees in both cello performance and orchestral conducting—a dual path that informs her holistic approach to music-making. With the combined perspective of performer and conductor, she approaches each score with both analytical clarity and a performer's sensitivity.

A firm believer in the orchestra's role as a modern cultural voice, Benke is committed to programming that embraces tradition while welcoming new and diverse perspectives. Whether she is leading a cornerstone symphony or championing a contemporary work, Pola aims to shape performances that are both artistically rigorous and deeply engaging for audiences.

# MEET THE ARTISTS

**Victor Yerrid, director & puppeteer**



Victor Yerrid is a writer, show creator, DGA director, and world-renowned puppeteer. In the orchestral world, Yerrid has been commissioned by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra to create and produce several family concert series including "The Great Chipmunk Picnic" and "Race for the Reef." Off the success of those projects, he was invited to perform with numerous orchestras, domestic and abroad, and he is excited to be debuting two new works with Pacific Symphony

this season. Yerrid is a graduate of the esteemed Curtis Institute of Music. In film and television, Yerrid has been a puppeteer & voice artist for the Jim Henson Company, *Sid & Marty Krofft*, and *The Walt Disney Company* for almost thirty years. His work includes *Word Party*, *Sid the Science Kid*, *Slumberland*, *Mutt & Stuff*, *Hannah Montana*, *Sigmund & the Sea Monsters*, *Splash & Bubbles*, *Pajanimals*, *Sesame Street*, *Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance*, *The Hangover*, *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, *Men in Black II*, *Robot Chicken*, *Family Guy*, *The Simpsons*, *Community*, *Angel*, *Night Court*, *Miracle Workers*, *Greg the Bunny*, *The Tonight Show*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, and The 2010 GRAMMY® Awards. Today, Yerrid continues his work as a writer, director, and show creator, and still insists on playing with puppets.

## Paul McGinnis, Tree/puppeteer



Paul McGinnis is a puppeteer whose film and TV credits include *The Muppet Show*, *Sesame Street*, *Crank Yankers*, *Saturday Night Live*, *Eyeglass World's Mr. World*, *The Wiz Live!*, *Portlandia*, *Donkey Hodie*, *Helpsters*, *The Happytime Murders*, IFC's *Greg the Bunny*, *Warren the Ape*, *Crash & Bernstein*, *Dog with a Blog*, *Between the Lions*, *Julie's Greenroom*, *The Book of Pooh*, *It's a Big, Big World*, *The West Wing*, *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, *The Colbert Report*, *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*,

and *Good Morning America*. Live performance credits include the first national Broadway tour of *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Walking with Dinosaurs – The Arena Spectacular*, *The Muppets Take the Hollywood Bowl*, and a recent tour with *The Avett Brothers*.

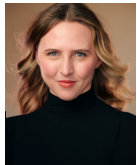
## Jonathan Tran, Tamino/tenor



Jonathan Tran is a Southern California-based lyric spinto tenor recognized for a voice of striking clarity, power, and tonal brilliance, combined with a distinctive dramatic presence that translates across both stage and screen. He makes his debut with Pacific Symphony as Tamino in *Leopold and the Magic Flute*. Recent stage appearances include Frodo in *Lady of the Ring* (Cinballera, 2025) and Ming in *On Gold Mountain* with LA Opera Connects. On screen, Jonathan appears as

the featured opera singer in the award-winning independent film *Lost With You* (dir. Mike Southerly), recipient of Best Indie Feature at the Los Angeles Film Awards. A frequent concert soloist, he has performed works including Handel's *Messiah* and Schubert's Mass in G with ensembles throughout California. While in Germany, Tran studied and coached German repertoire with resident artists of the Heidelberg Opera, informing his approach to language, style, and interpretation.

## Sarah Lonsert, Pamina/soprano



Sarah Lonsert is a versatile vocalist known for her "angelic voice" and authentic artistry across genres. Currently, she performs with several acclaimed ensembles, including the L.A. Master Chorale under Grant Gershon, Pacific Chorale under Dr. Robert Istad, Long Beach Camerata Singers under Dr. James K. Bass, the vibrant team at Voices of Terpsichor, is the soprano/section leader at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newport, and is the cantorial soloist for

Desert Outreach Synagogue under Rabbi-Chazzan Danny Maseng. She continues her vocal studies with Diane Ketchie, refining her craft in both classical and musical theatre. Lonsert has had the honor of recording with John Williams and Steven Spielberg and was part of the GRAMMY® Award-winning choir on Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*, conducted by Gustavo Dudamel with the LA Phil, which won Best Choral Performance in 2022. She has shared the stage with Andrea Bocelli, the L.A. Symphony, and performed internationally in Taipei, Rome, Paris, Germany, Russia (Glinka Cappella), and Estonia (The Rock Church). She holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from California State University, Fullerton and a Master of Music from California State University, Northridge. Favorite roles include Rose Maurant (*Street Scene*), Juliette understudy (*Roméo et Juliette*), Fire (*L'enfant et les sortilèges*), Lois Warner (*Breaking Up Is Hard to Do*), and the narrator (*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*). What began as a form of therapy for her high-functioning autism blossomed into a lifelong passion for music and performance. Rooted in musical theatre from a young age, Lonsert's love for classical music was sparked—serendipitously—through an accidental enrollment in a college Music 101 course. Since then, she has built a dynamic career spanning classical, musical theatre, and pop, with a focus on genuine storytelling and connection through music. Above all, she is passionate about storytelling and making music accessible to all. Whether on the concert stage or in an intimate theatre, she believes music and stories—no matter the genre—have the power to connect, heal, and inspire.

## Wyatt Mitchison-Rojas, Papageno/baritone



Wyatt Mitchison-Rojas is thrilled to be making his debut with Pacific Symphony! Last summer, he made his international debut in Bulgaria and Italy, singing the titular role of *Gianni Schicchi* with the Varna International Music Academy. This summer, Mitchison-Rojas will be performing with the Vienna Opera Festival singing the role of Bartolo and covering the role of Figaro in Mozart's *Le Nozze Di Figaro* and El Dancaïre in Bizet's *Carmen*. Previous theatrical credits include: Beast (*Beauty and the Beast*); Orin Scrivello, DDS (*Little Shop of Horrors*); The Baker (*Into The Woods*); Mercutio (*Roméo et Juliette*); Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*); Usher (*Trial By Jury*); and Antipholus of Syracuse (*The Comedy of Errors*).



## Andrea Church Durant, Queen of the Night/soprano



Andrea Church Durant is a vocalist and pianist from Lindon, Utah. She completed her Master's degree in Music at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music (USC). She currently works as an accompanist and vocal coach in the Los Angeles area. This season, she studied with Anne Larlee-Bosbach of Frankfurt Opera as the Resident Collaborative Pianist in the St. Andrews, New Brunswick Opera Festival and sings with Voices of Terpsichor and Sterling Ensemble L.A. She recently performed "Spiral II" by Cambodian California resident Chinary Ung with LA Tubist Logan Westerviller, a chamber work featuring Balinese throat singing and extended vocal techniques. Church Durant has been seen previously as Queen of the Night in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at California State University, Long Beach as a 2025 Professional Guest Artist and at the Hawai'i Performing Arts Festival as an Encrantz Professional Fellow in 2023. Other credits include the role of The Controller in *Flight* by Jonathan Dove, Violetta in *La Traviata*, and Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, Suor Angelica in *Suor Angelica*, Cherubin in *Cherubin* by Massenet, and Simone in *La passione de Simone* by Kaja Saariajo. She loved singing in the 2021-22 Utah Opera Chorus Season and collaborating with the Utah Symphony. Church Durant earned a Bachelor's of Music at Utah Valley University (UVU), simultaneously studying Voice, Piano, and Music Education. She was a collaborative pianist and vocal TA for Utah Vocal Arts Academy, as well as a collaborative pianist with Utah Lyric Opera, Mediterranean Opera Studio in Sicily, Cedar City Heritage Theater, Brigham Young University, The Hale Center Theater, and The Utah Shakespeare Festival.

## Joe Chiapa, Sarastro/bass-baritone



Bass-baritone Joe Chiapa works as a solo artist in the L.A. and Orange County areas in both the operatic and musical theater genres. Operatic highlights include Escamillo in *Carmen* by Georges Bizet, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* by Henry Purcell, Salieri in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mozart and Salieri*, and the title role in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Musical theater productions include Collins in *Rent*, The Phantom in a concert version of *Phantom of the Opera* by Andrew Lloyd Webber, and Jud Fry in *Oklahoma!* by Rodgers and Hammerstein. He is on faculty as a professor of singing at Loyola Marymount University and Pierce College.



## Leeza Yorke, Papagena and 3rd Spirit/mezzo-soprano



Leeza Yorke, mezzo-soprano, a native of Rancho Cucamonga, California, is an emerging artist whose work spans opera, recital, and concert stages. She holds degrees in Vocal Performance from Indiana University, Bloomington and California State University, Fullerton, and is a winner of the Redlands Bowl Vocal Competition and an Honorable Mention recipient in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition (San Diego District, 2024). Yorke has performed leading and featured roles with Lyric Opera of Orange County and Mission Opera and made her international debut with the International Lyric Academy in Vicenza, Italy. Recent engagements include Houston Grand Opera's 2025 production of *Porgy and Bess* and her 2026 debut with the Metropolitan Opera in the same work. In 2026 she joins Cincinnati Opera for the world premiere of *Lalovavi* by Kevin Day and Tifara Brown and *Carmen*.



## Christopher Hi, Monostatos/tenor



Christopher Hi is an up-and-coming Tenor currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Music at California Baptist University. He is honored and excited to be part of this production of *The Magic Flute*. Hi has appeared in university productions and ensembles including playing Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* and performing with the Metropolitan Master Chorale. As part of his studies, he toured Italy with California Baptist University's Camerata, performing in historic basilicas, including appearances in Lucca, Rome and Vatican City. He continues to improve upon and hone his artistry through both operatic and choral repertoire and is passionate about bringing interesting and engaging characters to life. This being his first professional performance, he is excited to bring his training and passion to the stage.

## Carol Tsai Bochkov, 1st Spirit/soprano



Carol Tsai Bochkov is a soprano and Orange County native who is thrilled to join Pacific Symphony for this magical production. She holds a Master's degree in Voice and began her musical journey with piano and violin before falling in love with singing. In addition to her musical pursuits, she has a PhD in physical chemistry and works as a scientific consultant. She hopes this performance inspires young audiences to explore the joy of music!

## Elle Moody, 2nd Spirit/soprano



Elle Moody studied vocal performance at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University, Long Beach, where she graduated summa cum laude with her Bachelor of Music. Moody's performance highlights include singing with the Seattle Opera Children's Chorus, touring nationally and internationally with numerous choirs, being a featured artist at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music's Evening of Song, where she presented a set in Mandarin, and performing as a soloist in the Liederabend Concert in Salzburg, Austria. Moody has sung with the Santa Clarita Master Chorale and her operatic roles include Wallis Simpson (*King George VI*), Orpheus Student, Love Police, Venus (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*), and Musetta (*La Bohème*). This spring, she will be performing Adele (*Die Fledermaus*).



# ABOUT MOZART



**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**, born in 1756, was an Austrian pianist, violinist, and **composer**. A **composer** is a person who writes music. Mozart composed his first piece of music at age 5 and wrote his first opera when he was only 12 years old!

In the 1700s, musicians often earned a living performing for royals and aristocrats. When they were young, Wolfgang and his sister, Maria Anna, traveled across Europe performing in the courts of Salzburg, Munich, Paris, London, and more. Later in his life, Mozart was appointed Composer of Court Chamber Music to Emperor Joseph II in Vienna.

Throughout his life, Mozart composed more than 600 musical works, including more than 20 **operas** and 40 **symphonies**. Even though Mozart's music is more than 200 years old, his pieces are still loved by musicians and audiences alike.



## MOZART FUN FACT



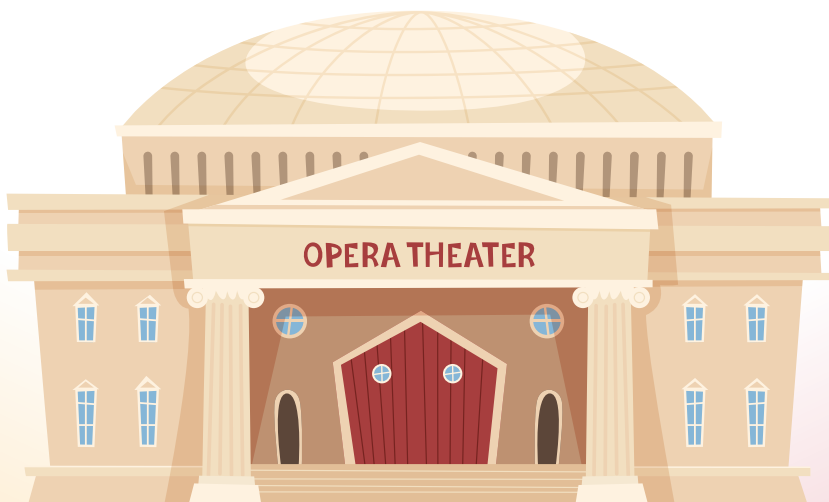
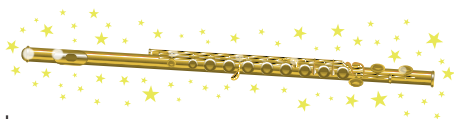
There is a chocolate candy named Mozartkugel that was invented in Mozart's birthplace, Salzburg, Austria, in honor of the famous composer.

# ABOUT THE MAGIC FLUTE

*The Magic Flute* was the final opera that Mozart composed. Opera is a dramatic art form that uses singing and orchestral music to tell a story. Operas are often based on stories that already exist, such as ancient myths, folk tales, or books.

*The Magic Flute* is a **Singspiel**, which means it includes singing and spoken dialogue.

The story of *The Magic Flute* follows Prince Tamino on his journey to rescue Princess Pamina with a Magic Flute he receives from the Queen of the Night. With the help of Papageno, a comical birdcatcher, Tamino travels to the wizard Sarastro's castle to save Pamina and face several magical tests before living happily ever after.



# SPOTLIGHT ON THE VOICE

Just like your speaking voice, everyone has a unique singing voice. Characters in operas are written for people with specific **voice types**. Your **voice type** is determined by your **vocal range**: how high and low you can sing. A person with the **highest voice type** is called a **soprano**. A **soprano** typically plays the lead female character in an opera. Some of the most popular arias are sung by **sopranos**.

Sometimes the lead character is performed by a **mezzo-soprano** instead, who sings slightly lower than a soprano. Other times, **mezzo-sopranos** are used as supporting characters.



Still lower, is a **tenor** who often plays the male hero of an opera or the romantic lead. A person with the **lowest voice type** is called a **bass**. A **bass** is usually an older, wiser character. In between the tenor and bass voices is the **baritone**. A baritone typically plays the villain who propels the story forward with exciting music. In this performance, you will hear two **sopranos**, a **tenor**, and a **baritone** sing.

**Mozart** wrote for a special type of singer called a **coloratura soprano** in *The Magic Flute*. A coloratura soprano is trained to sing many **fast notes** and **ornamented**, or complicated, melodies. Listen to the Queen of the Night as she demonstrates this voice type in today's concert!

## MATCH GAME!

Listen closely! Can you match the character to their voice type?

Match the character to their voice type!

1: Tenor  
2: Baritone  
3: Soprano  
4: Bass

Characters: Pamina, Papageno, Tamino, Sarastro

A blue and yellow snake with a red tongue, coiled around the match game area.

Place the correct number in the window of each character

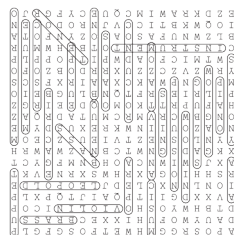


# THE MAGIC FLUTE WORD SEARCH

A P O S R G G M H W E T F O S G F G L P  
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ARIA  
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BIRDCAGE  
BRASS  
COMPOSER  
CONDUCTOR  
EUROPE  
INSTRUMENT  
LEOPOLD  
MAGIC FLUTE  
MEZZO SOPRANO  
MOZART  
MUSIC

OPERA  
PERCUSSION  
PIANO  
PUPPET  
QUEEN  
SALZBURG  
SOPRANO  
STRING  
SYMPHONY  
TENOR  
VIENNA  
VIOLIN  
WOLFGANG  
WOODWIND



Answer Key

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