

# Disney FANTASIA

IN CONCERT LIVE TO FILM



Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025 @ 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

*Disney's Fantasia in Concert Live to Film* features highlights from two of Disney's most extraordinary and groundbreaking animated features, *Fantasia* (1940), and its sequel *Fantasia 2000* (1999).

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Pola Benke, conductor  
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Released to great acclaim in 1940, Walt Disney's *Fantasia* was his boldest experiment at the time and culminated in the creative visionary's desire to blend animated imagery with classical music. The original recording of the film's score was conducted by Leopold Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra, captured in stereophonic sound, which was still an experimental medium at the time. What had begun as a vehicle to develop Mickey Mouse's career with an animation short titled *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* went on to become a genuine cinema classic.



Presents Pacific Symphony Family Musical Mornings

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

# PROGRAM

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67  
*I. Allegro con brio*

RESPIGHI

*Pines of Rome*  
*I. Pines of the Villa Borghese*  
*III. Pines of the Janiculum*  
*IV. Pines of the Appian Way*

DUKAS

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice*

STRAVINSKY

*Firebird Suite*  
*The Princesses' Dance (Rondo)*  
*Infernal Dance of King Kastchei*  
*Finale*

SAINT-SAËNS/COUGHLIN

Finale from *Carnival of the Animals*



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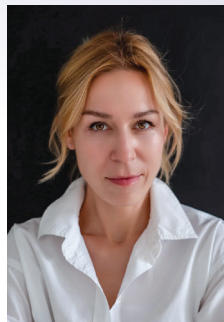
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# WELCOME TO *DISNEY'S FANTASIA IN CONCERT LIVE TO FILM*

Good morning!

I'm delighted to welcome you to the start of Pacific Symphony's Family Musical Mornings Concerts, presented by Farmers & Merchants Bank.

I'm your conductor, **Pola Benke**, and the orchestra and I are excited to take you on the **fun musical adventures** we've prepared for this season.



Today, we're shining the **Spotlight** on **animation** with *Disney's Fantasia in Concert Live to Film*, featuring highlights from two of Disney's most extraordinary and groundbreaking animated films — *Fantasia* (1940) and its sequel *Fantasia 2000* (1999).

Scenes from each of the two iconic films will be **projected** in high definition on a large screen above the orchestra as they perform classical selections including Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* and Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*. Blending **animated imagery** with **classical music**, the concert will ignite imaginations of a new generation. Scored to some of the world's most memorable classical compositions, *Fantasia* has provided four generations of children with their first introduction to the glorious sounds of an **orchestra's strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion**.

Every Family Musical Mornings Concert is created especially for you, and we're so happy to share this music with you and your families. I hope to see you all at our next concert in December, **Nutcracker for Kids!** It's going to be a wonderful season, and we're thrilled you're here to be part of it. From all of us at Pacific Symphony—**thank you** for your support. Now let your imaginations take flight!

Sincerely,

Pola Benke  
Assistant Conductor

# 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 a distinguished conductor and cellist, celebrated for her innovative approach to orchestral leadership and her commitment to inclusive, forward-thinking programming. Beginning in the 2025–26 season, she will serve as Music Director of the Santa Monica Symphony and Assistant Conductor of Pacific Symphony, marking the next chapter in a career defined by artistic excellence, thoughtful collaboration, and dynamic audience engagement.

A native of Poland, Pola's journey began with a strong foundation in performance, earning dual Master's degrees in cello performance and orchestral conducting. Her combined expertise as both conductor and instrumentalist offers a unique interpretive lens—merging analytical precision with deep musical empathy.

At the heart of Pola's artistry is her dedication to programming that reflects the rich tapestry of global culture. She is known for curating concerts that amplify underrepresented voices, reimagine the canon with fresh insight, and create meaningful experiences that resonate beyond the concert hall. Her ability to “sell the experience” of music—connecting audiences with the emotional and narrative power of every piece—distinguishes her as a conductor who bridges tradition and innovation with purpose.

Pola's professional path includes roles with the Long Beach Symphony and Riverside Philharmonic, and collaborations with renowned mentors such as Neeme Järvi, Sian Edwards, and Paavo Järvi. Her training at internationally respected institutions—including the Järvi Academy in Estonia, Dartington Music Festival in England, and Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music—has shaped her into a conductor admired for clarity, conviction, and creativity.

Whether leading a full symphonic program or guiding an educational ensemble, Pola is known for her warm and communicative leadership style. She fosters an environment of excellence through kindness, collaboration, and high artistic standards, inspiring musicians of all generations to realize their fullest potential.

Influenced by composers such as Antonín Dvořák, Krzysztof Penderecki, Igor Stravinsky, and Jennifer Higdon, Pola Benke represents a modern vision for classical music—one that honors tradition while boldly shaping the future of the art form.

She currently resides in Redondo Beach with her husband and their dog, Bobby.

# ABOUT FANTASIA

When *Fantasia* premiered in 1940, audiences of all ages and backgrounds were introduced to classical music in a revolutionary new way. Walt Disney's vision united the art of animation with the power of orchestral music, resulting in a full-length "concert feature" unlike anything audiences had seen before. Each musical selection was brought to life through animation—some with abstract designs and imagery, others with complete stories told entirely through music and visuals. What began as the idea of Mickey Mouse starring in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* grew into a groundbreaking project that reshaped the possibilities of both film and music.

The original *Fantasia* featured Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra and introduced audiences to a new world of sound. Using an innovative system called "Fantasound," Disney created one of the first forms of surround sound, with multiple speakers placed throughout theaters to immerse listeners in the music. This technical achievement not only enhanced the film but also set new standards for how music and film could be experienced.



Disney Animation for Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals* in *Fantasia 2000*

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Walt Disney imagined *Fantasia* as a living, evolving work that would continually add new pieces over time. While this dream was not realized in his lifetime, it came to fruition nearly 60 years later with *Fantasia 2000*. Guided by Walt's nephew, Roy E. Disney, the film showcased the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the direction of James Levine and reflected decades of advancements in both sound technology and animation.

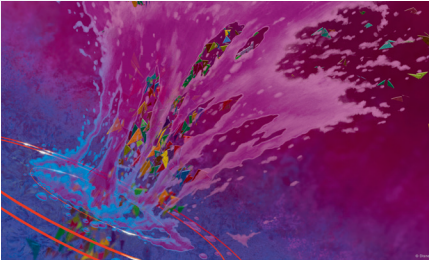
Together, *Fantasia* and *Fantasia 2000* made classical music accessible to audiences who may never have set foot in a concert hall. By pairing works from Bach, Stravinsky, Beethoven, and others with vivid imagery inspired by art, science, and mythology, the films encouraged viewers to imagine new stories while listening. Their cultural impact endures as a testament to the power of blending art forms and sharing timeless music with the world.

# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

## Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5

Ludwig van Beethoven, considered one of the greatest German composers of all time, was born in 1770. By the age of 30, Beethoven had begun to lose his hearing and was completely deaf by the age of 49. Despite this setback, Beethoven persisted and wrote some of his most popular compositions after he had lost his hearing.

What emotions do you feel when you hear Beethoven's Fifth Symphony?



Disney Animation for Beethoven's 5th in *Fantasia 2000*  
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*Fantasia 2000* opened with Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and its famous first four notes: di-di-di-dah! This piece served as an example of **absolute music**, or music that stands alone and is not "about" anything in particular. The dramatic and energetic music could evoke powerful emotions without the help of a story.

## Ottorino Respighi: *Pines of Rome*

Ottorino Respighi was an Italian composer, violinist, and **musicologist** born in 1879. A **musicologist** is a person who studies music, including its history, theory, and cultural contexts. Fascinated by Rome, Respighi wrote a series of compositions dedicated to Roman scenes. The second of these compositions, *Pines of Rome*, is a symphonic **tone poem** that depicted Roman pine trees in various settings.



Disney Animation for *Pines of Rome* in *Fantasia 2000*  
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A **tone poem** is a type of **program music** that tells a story or paints a picture through sound. The movements performed in today's concert depict, first, children playing in the pine groves of the Villa Borghese, then a nightingale singing in the moonlit pine trees of the Janiculum, and finally a Roman army marching at dawn past the pine trees along Appian Way. In contrast to these wooded scenes, *Fantasia 2000* introduced audiences to *Pines of Rome* with help from a family of whales who—after a brief separation—reunite and fly into the stars.

## Paul Dukas: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*

Another great **tone poem**, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, is the most famous work by the French composer Paul Dukas. Inspired by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's poem of the same name, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* tells the cautionary



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# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

tale of an apprentice who uses the sorcerer's magic to enchant a broom. He instructs the broom to fetch water, but without the magic words to stop the broom, the room begins to flood. Panicked, the apprentice chops the broom with an axe just to find that the pieces continue the work —now even faster. Just in time, the sorcerer returns, disenchanting the brooms and ending the flood.

## Igor Stravinsky: *Firebird Suite*

Russian composer Igor Stravinsky was born in 1882. He is considered one of the most influential composers of the 20th century. At the age of 58, Stravinsky was the only composer alive to hear his work featured in *Fantasia*, with his piece *The Rite of Spring*. *Firebird Suite* was adapted from Stravinsky's ballet, *The Firebird*. The original ballet depicted an evil ogre who kidnapped princesses and turned knights to stone. A noble prince, with the help of the magical Firebird, destroyed the ogre and freed the princesses. In *Fantasia 2000*'s visual reimagining of the *Firebird Suite*, a Spring Sprite brings renewal to the land after the Firebird, presented as a dangerous spirit, sets her forest ablaze.



Disney Animation for *The Firebird Suite* in *Fantasia 2000*

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## Camille Saint-Saëns: *Carnival of the Animals*

Camille Saint-Saëns was born in Paris in 1835. At just three years old, he started composing music on the piano. By age ten, Saint-Saëns was a celebrated organist and had memorized all of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas.

Written for a Mardi Gras party, *Carnival of the Animals* is a comedic 14-part suite, with each movement dedicated to a different animal. Saint-Saëns feared that *Carnival of the Animals* would ruin his reputation as a "serious" composer and prohibited the piece from being performed until after his death. Today, the piece is praised for the "unserious" and amusing scenes it evokes.



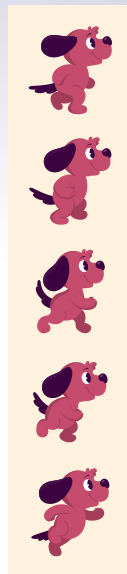
# MAKE A FLIP BOOK AT HOME!

## Materials:

- A small notepad or several sheets of paper attached at one end with staples, clips, or glue. When choosing paper, keep in mind that smaller pages are easier to flip.
- Something to draw with. Try using a pencil with an eraser in case you make a mistake. When you are done, you can add color with markers or crayons!

## How to create your animation flipbook:

1. **Think of a simple story.** Pick a character and decide what they are going to do. For example: a pink dog character running.
2. **Create your first drawing on the last page of the book.** It is easier to flip pages from back to front.
3. **Make small changes to your drawing** on each page to show motion.
4. **When you are done, add a title and sign your name.**
5. **Starting from the last page, flip through the pages** of your book quickly to see the animation!



# FANTASIA WORD SEARCH

ANSWERS ON BOTTOM OF PAGE 9

F I C O N D U C T O R P Y T I  
 I G N V C N D I S N E Y W R Q  
 L T S T G E S Z V K I B U O B  
 M P R J E Q L H E O N A D M A  
 C F D U W R D L U R Q S E B S  
 L L A U M Q M S O C R S B O S  
 A U N O K P O I G H E P U N O  
 R T I B F A E U S E S I S E O  
 I E M O Z R S T R S P C S H N  
 N P A E V M G G K T I C Y T V  
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INTERMISSION  
 CONDUCTOR  
 RESPIGI  
 TRUMPET  
 DISNEY  
 CLARINET  
 OBOE  
 ORCHESTRA  
 ANIMATION  
 VIOLIN  
 DUKAS  
 PICCOLO  
 FILM  
 PONCHIELLI  
 BEETHOVEN  
 BASSOON  
 PIANO  
 ELGAR  
 DUBUSSY  
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 VIOLA  
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# DISCOVER THE JOY OF MUSIC!

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Pacific Symphony Family Musical Mornings

Family Musical Mornings are 45-minute concerts perfect for families and designed to inspire a lifelong love of music. Enjoy an engaging multimedia experience featuring the Symphony, singers, actors, and dancers. Share the joy of music and create unforgettable memories. Scan the code to purchase tickets!



## THE NUTCRACKER FOR KIDS!

Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025  
10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

This narrated adaptation of Tchaikovsky's timeless ballet features dancers from the American Ballet Theatre William J. Gillespie School. Join Clara on her journey to the Land of Sweets, where she meets the mischievous Mouse King, the heroic Nutcracker, and the enchanting Sugar Plum Fairy. This engaging performance introduces children to the magic of ballet and joy of the season.



## PETER AND THE WOLF

Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026  
10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* introduces children to the orchestra in a timeless tale of courage and adventure. With vivid narration, each instrument brings a character to life as young Peter embarks on a daring journey to outsmart the cunning Wolf—an unforgettable first symphonic experience.



## LEOPOLD & THE MAGIC FLUTE: OPERA FOR KIDS!

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

Join Leopold, Pacific Symphony's furry puppet friend, for a whimsical journey into Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. This family-friendly adaptation features lively narration, colorful characters, and world-class music—an enchanting introduction to opera filled with laughter, adventure, and timeless melodies.