

Pasadena Community Orchestra

40th Anniversary Season

Bethany Pflueger, Conductor

www.pcomusic.org



Friday, January 27, 2023, 8:00 pm

First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena

Program

Toast of the Town Overture Quinn Mason (b. 1996)

Carmen Suite No. 1 Georges Bizet (1838-1875)

Prélude

Aragonaise

Intermezzo

Séguedille

Les Dragons d'Alcala

Les Toréadors

Intermission

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Allegro non troppo

Adagio

Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace

Audrey Park, violin solo, 2020 Young Artist Competition Winner

PROGRAM NOTES

The concert opens with the *Toast of the Town Overture* by the contemporary American composer **Quinn Mason**. This prolific young composer has written works for large ensembles, and chamber groups as well as solo instrumental and vocal music. Quinn has been described as “a brilliant composer just barely in his 20s who seems to make waves wherever he goes.” (Theater Jones) and “One of the most sought-after young composers in the country” (Texas Monthly).



Based in Dallas, Texas he currently serves as Artist in Residence of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. His music has been performed and commissioned by numerous renowned orchestras, including the San Francisco, Dallas, National and Detroit symphonies, Minnesota Orchestra and many more, as well as other bands and chamber ensembles around the world. He has also won multiple awards from several organizations. As a conductor, he has appeared with many orchestras around the country, including Houston Ballet Orchestra, West Virginia Symphony Orchestra and more.

The composer describes his *Toast of the Town* as “a festive and fun overture to an operetta that doesn't exist. It is designed in the style of light operetta, comparable to Gilbert and Sullivan or Offenbach overtures.” It is an instantly celebratory work, with march-like motives against fluttering, soaring melodies in the upper voices.

Georges Bizet's 1875 opera *Carmen* contains some of the most memorable classical music of all time, and it remains a fixture in opera houses around the world, and arguably the most popular opera. Based on Prosper Mérimée's novella from 1845, the plot is set in Seville and tells the story of protagonist Don José, in a narrative of lust and obsession, as he is seduced by the alluring Spanish gypsy, Carmen. Bizet never travelled to Spain, so he had to rely on his imagination and printed anthologies of traditional Spanish folksongs as potential source material and provide an authentic Spanish flavor.

After the composer's death, Bizet's friend Ernest Guiraud compiled two suites of orchestral music drawn from the opera, preserving most of the original orchestration. **Suite No. 1** was published in 1882, and features six numbers from the opera, though not in order of appearance in the opera. It ends with the famous “March of the Toreadors.”

Johannes Brahms wrote his only Violin Concerto in 1878 and dedicated it to his longtime friend and colleague the violinist Joseph Joachim. The work was premiered in Leipzig in 1879, with Joachim as soloist, and Brahms conducting. Although the concerto is now one of the most popular in the classical repertoire, it did not easily gain the acceptance it enjoys today. Joachim insisted on opening that concert with the Beethoven Violin Concerto, also in the key of D major, pitting an established work by the master against the ‘difficult’ new Brahms work. The virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate refused to play the concerto at all, saying that oboe solo at the start of the second movement would take the spotlight away from him. Fortunately for us, the work has stood the test of time, and today is one of the most beloved and moving of all concertos.

Brahms did not write it as a vehicle for virtuoso display, and our modern ears understand that the soloist plays ‘with’ the orchestra, not in a contest ‘against’ it. The first movement has a long orchestral introduction, and when the soloist enters, the mood alternates between dreamy lyricism and stormy outbursts. Toward the end, the soloist performs an unaccompanied cadenza as was the convention at the time, before full orchestra closes the movement. Many composers and soloists have continued the tradition of bringing their own cadenzas; the most popular remains Joachim’s. The second movement opens with a gorgeous and serene oboe solo that is taken up and varied by the violin. In the last movement, the mood changes. Drama and soulfulness are left behind, and it bursts with the the fun and energy of Gypsy dances.



Audrey Park, winner of the Orchestra’s 2020 Young Artist Competition, is tonight’s soloist. Praised for her “rich sound [and] excellent rhythmic drive” (violinist.com), Audrey Park currently studies at the Juilliard School under Mr. Hyo Kang, with additional instruction from Linda Rose, Almita Vamos, and Cho-Liang Lin.

Audrey has appeared as a soloist with the L.A. Virtuosi Orchestra, Peninsula Symphony, among many others. Receiving accolades at numerous competitions, Audrey was the Grand Prize Winner of the Bellagrande International Music Competition and Edith Knox Performance Competition. Ms. Park was also a scholarship recipient of the Mark Zinger Foundation and a Semi-Finalist at the 2022 National Schadt Violin Competition and the 2022 Indianapolis International Violin Competition.

Having participated in various music festivals, Audrey was chosen to be one of ten student artists to be featured in the prestigious 2019 Starling-DeLay Symposium at the Juilliard School. She has also attended the Young Artist Summer Program at the Curtis Institute of Music, Domaine Forget de Charlevoix Music Festival, as well as the Montecito International and Bravo International Music Festivals under a scholarship, and was invited to participate in masterclasses by Ray Chen, Glenn Dieterow, Cho-Liang Lin, Jan Sloman, and Vadim Gluzman. Other festival performance highlights include appearances at the La Jolla Music Society Summerfest with world-class soloists Hilary Hahn, Gil Shaham, Adele Anthony, Cho-Liang Lin, and Kyoko Takezawa.

When she is not performing, Audrey enjoys horseback riding and skiing.

About the **Young Artist** Competition. Every year, the Pasadena Community Orchestra holds a competition giving young instrumentalists in the Pasadena area a chance to perform as soloist with a full orchestra and win a cash prize. Awarded every year since 1986 (except in 2021), the Competition has helped several competitors to advance in careers as professional musicians. We are thrilled to offer this opportunity to talented young local musicians; and for our audience, there is the joy of witnessing and being part of the creative experience of a young artist early in their musical journey.

Program notes by Stephen Unwin, PCO Board member

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VIOLIN I

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Erin Chung
Deanna Kitamura
Curtis Horton
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Lenoie Schonbeck
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Mike Fedrick
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VIOLAS

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HARP

Paul Baker*

PERCUSSION

Matt Pollard*
Christine Gasparich
Therese Laux

STAGE MANAGER

Gary Green

*Principal or Guest Artist

UPCOMING CONCERT

Our 40th Anniversary Season continues on Friday, March 17, with a concert featuring our 2021 Young Artist Competition Winner, violinist Boxianzi Ling, playing the Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso by Camille Saint-Saëns. Also on the program are works by Louise Farrenc, Samuel Barber and Ludwig van Beethoven. Look for details on our website www.pcomusic.org. After that, the next concert will be on Friday, May 12, and will feature the winner of our 2023 Young Artist Competition.

STAY IN TOUCH

Stay informed about Orchestra events and news by visiting our website at www.pcomusic.org where you can check for up to date concert information. We're moving away from reliance on paper communication, but you can pick up a copy of the season brochure at any of our concerts.

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