

# *Pasadena Community Orchestra*

Bethany Pflueger, Conductor



**Friday, March 13, 2026, 8:00 pm**  
**Pre-Concert Discussion at 7:15 pm**

**First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena**

## **Program**

Overture for Winds, Op. 24 ..... Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, Op. 46 ..... Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

Morning Mood

Åse's Death

Anitra's Dance

In the Hall of the Mountain King

## **Intermission**

Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20 ..... Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908)

Naomi Jones, violin

2026 Young Artist Competition Winner, Junior Division

Scherzo from Symphony No. 9, Op. 125 ..... Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

## PROGRAM NOTES – PCO CONCERT, MARCH 13, 2026

**Felix Mendelssohn** was a German composer of the early Romantic period in classical music. He was also a pianist, conductor and organist. He grew up in an intellectual, well-to-do family where his astonishing early musical talents were nurtured by his pianist mother and a series of influential teachers of the day. He was warmly welcomed in London many times, where he composed and conducted London orchestras. Even Queen Victoria was a fan!



Mendelssohn's musical style was rooted in a mastery of the classical masters like Mozart and Beethoven and he opened the door to the Romantic period of Chopin, Brahms, and Wagner. Often in a light and energetic style, his works are a beloved staple of the orchestral scene. The *Overture for Winds* was written when he was 15 for an 11-member group and later arranged for a much larger wind ensemble in the tradition of German wind bands. It is graceful and elegant, with a slow stately opening transitioning to a faster and lighter section with many shifts between soft and loud.

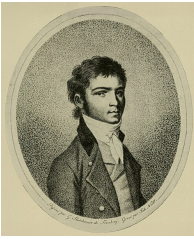


The city of Bergen in Norway celebrates its most famous citizen, **Edvard Grieg**, with numerous statues in his image, a large concert hall, and its most advanced music school. He was raised in a musical family that sent him to the Leipzig Conservatory to continue his studies. His best-loved work is surely the *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*, originally written as incidental music to a play by the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen. The first movement, *Morning Mood*, is a graceful depiction of sunrise over the Moroccan desert, reflecting a scene in the play. The final movement entitled *In the Hall of the Mountain King*, depicts the trolls of Norwegian myth. It is a great example of Grieg's skill in orchestration, and especially, the pacing which gradually gets faster and more frenetic. This exciting piece was *not* selected for Disney's classic film *Fantasia*. But surely, what cinematic imagination might it have stirred?

**Pablo de Sarasate** was a Spanish virtuoso violinist of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. His technical mastery of the violin was legendary, and he excelled in arrangements of showpieces. Today he is best known for his own compositions, including the *Carmen Fantasy*, and tonight's work, *Zigeunerweisen*. The story goes that the age of five, he grabbed his father's violin and played it perfectly. Encouraged by his parents, he studied at the Conservatoire de Paris where he competed and won the prestigious Premier Prix. He was renowned not just for his technical skill, but for his pure tone and avoidance of the sentimental or over-dramatic. Success carried him all over Europe, and North and South America.



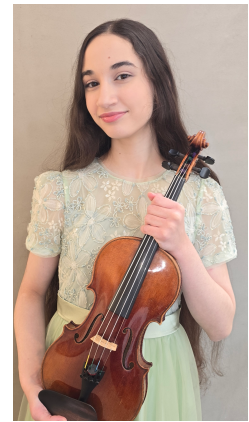
*Zigeunerweisen* (Gypsy Airs) is a showpiece for violin and orchestra and is one of Sarasate's most popular works, beloved by violinists capable of mastering its technical challenges – like tonight's soloist, **Naomi Jones**. It is played as a single movement but can be divided into four distinct sections. A majestic intro from the orchestra welcomes the violin which enters softly, followed by a section that requires advanced bowing to produce rapid notes. Then follows a melancholic tune in a short/long rhythm and it ends with a breathtaking passage with many advanced playing techniques. A showpiece indeed!



**Ludwig van Beethoven** needs no introduction, though you might not recognize him as a young man of 29 in this engraving, as he is not scowling! *Symphony No. 9*, his last, is epic on a scale then unknown in the classical world in form, length, and emotional intensity. From the hushed opening phrase, the audience is drawn into a new sound world. Audiences would have been stunned by the entry of a baritone soloist in the glorious *Ode to Joy* that ends the work.

Tonight, we hear the second movement *Scherzo*. In Beethoven's hands, it has an exciting drive that barely lightens up. Throughout, the tympani (kettledrums) play an outsized role, emphasizing the rhythm. At the very start they leap into a gap in the music with a 3-note figure that permeates the movement. In the middle there is a 'trio' interlude that prominently features the winds. But then the rhyimical drive returns and carries the music to a sudden and dramatic conclusion.

**About tonight's soloist.** **Naomi Jones** is 12 years old, and her passion is playing violin. She is a student of renowned violinist Joan Kwuon, at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, California. Naomi began studying the violin at the age of 4 with Megan Shung and subsequently with Aimee Kreston at the Pasadena Conservatory of Music.



Recently, Naomi won first place in the 2026 Los Angeles Youth Classical Competition for Piano and Strings at Fried Music. Notable achievements include being a prizewinner in the 2023 Music Teachers' Association of California VOCE State Finals (solo strings competition) and awarded honorable mention in 2024. She was also a prizewinner in the 2024 Bellflower Young Artist Concerto Competition, and won the MTAC – Glendale Branch, Orchestra Performance Competition.

Naomi has been the Concertmaster of the Pasadena Youth Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia in 2024-2025 and the Concertmaster of PYSO, Overture Strings in 2023-2024, performing at the Ambassador Auditorium. She has also been a member of several chamber music quartets. Naomi has performed in solo masterclasses for Almita Vamos, Martin Beaver and Lina Bahn and performed in chamber music masterclasses for Moni Simeonov and Jonathan Moerschel. During the summer of 2025, Naomi attended Sounding Point Academy at Colburn School with Kathleen Winkler as her teacher. Naomi also enjoys opera singing, playing piano, studying music theory, as well as reading and photography.

Program notes by Stephen Unwin, PCO Board member

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**Saturday, June 6**, 6:30pm - Annual Concert in the Park, at Sierra Madre Memorial Park

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