

Pasadena Community Orchestra

Bethany Pflueger, Conductor



Friday, May 8, 2026, 8:00 pm
Pre-Concert Discussion at 7:15 pm

First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena

Program

Overture to The Marriage of Figaro, KV 492 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Dances in the Canebrakes Florence Price (1887-1953)

Nimble Feet

Tropical Noon

Silk Hat and Walking Cane

Waltz No. 2 from Second Suite for Orchestra Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Intermission

Violin Concerto in e minor, Op. 1 Julius Conus (1869-1942)

Rachael Kim violin

2026 Young Artist Competition Winner, Open Division

Conga del Fuego Nuevo Arturo Marquez (b. 1950)

PROGRAM NOTES – PCO CONCERT, MAY 8, 2026



Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* is one of his best-known works and is a beloved staple of the operatic repertoire. The story itself is a sequel to *The Barber of Seville*, later made famous by Rossini. Written in the *opera buffa* (comic opera) style, it recounts a 'single day of madness' in the palace of a Spanish Count. The plot is insanely complicated, but that doesn't matter, because in the end his servants are more than a match for the scheming Count in matters of love and intrigue! Mozart's overture overflows with optimism and wild fun that doesn't let up. Picture Mozart himself at the keyboard conducting the premiere in Vienna in 1786; he probably had a big grin on his face, introducing the light-hearted fun that evening!

Florence Price was a prolific African-American composer of the early 20th century, writing over 300 works. She was a piano prodigy, and studied at the New England Conservatory of Music, passing as Mexican to minimize the racial prejudice of the era. She became active in the Chicago Black Renaissance, along with another Black composer, Margaret Bonds. She received major recognition with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra playing her first symphony in 1933. Her musical style was influenced by late-romantic European composers like Dvorak, but her music is characteristically American, weaving spirituals, blues, gospel harmonies and the rhythm of the Juba dance.



Dances in the Canebrakes was composed for the piano in 1953 and orchestrated after her death that year by the much better-known Black composer, William Grant Still. A *canebrake* is a thicket of bamboo-like grasses that grow along rivers in the American Southeast. The huge task of clearing land for planting was done in pre-Civil War days by Black slaves. The *Dances* feature popular styles of the time. *Nimble Feet* is a rag (Scott Joplin style); *Tropical Noon* is a lazy slow dance in a style popularized by jazz-blues composer Jelly Roll Morton; and *Silk Hat and Walking Stick* evokes the antebellum South tradition of 'cakewalk', an excuse to show off elaborate dress finery in a ballroom dance.



Dmitri Shostakovich lived much of his life under the long shadow of a Soviet state that sought to steer the creative efforts of writers and composers toward works aligned with Socialist ideals. Shostakovich would often challenge this ideal – most of his works are filled with great personal angst. He narrowly escaped being swept up in Stalin's 1936 'Great Purge', and wisely made his next major work, the Fifth Symphony, much more approachable, and to be sure, he described it as "A Soviet artist's creative response to just criticism".

There is barely a trace of this stress in the delightful *Waltz No. 2*, originally written for the Russian film *The First Echelon* (1955). But even when he wrote in a very accessible style, there was often tension just below the surface. Is there a hint of nostalgia in this joyful music? You decide. Orchestras love this work – especially saxophone players – who don't often feature in classical orchestral music. Tonight we hear gorgeous harmonies from our four saxes!

PERSONNEL

CONDUCTOR

Bethany Pflueger

VIOLIN I

Hong-Yi Hiroki Hon*

Concertmaster

Jane Yu*

Co-Concertmaster

Ilana Amos

Alex Birkhold

Curtis Horton

Deanna Kitamura

Frank Mori

David Lee Ruest

Nancy Smith

Mary Yang

VIOLIN II

Melissa Froehlich*

Acting Principal

Armand Asatoorian

Martina Chen

Yuri Choe

Michael Fedrick

Daniel Hooper

Joe Kertes

Tim McElrath

Hani Nejadriahi

Oliver Truong

Erica Zabowski

VIOLAS

Tammy Cognetta*

Kelly Christ

Elizabeth Giles

Rachel Goodrich

Mary House

Janina Morrison

Yoji Sierra

Kris Witty

CELLOS

Kristin Nyquist*

Ryan Fogal

Carrie Lux

Michael Pinkham

Angelina Reddy

Elizabeth Wood

BASSES

Keith Brown*

Sam Hwang

Masis Parunyun

Manny Gutierrez

David Tranchina

FLUTES

Chase Rizkalla*

Olga Bergh

Irene Kim

OBOES

Aubree Cedillo*

Lynn Olson

Alex Banbury

CLARINETS

Richard Holloway*

Kaitlyn Davidson

Jess Joswick

SAXOPHONES

Joe DiFiore*

Neil Cole*

Jose Moreno*

Brandon Wilkins*

BASSOONS

Daniel Goldblum*

John Nunez*

HORNS

Emily Kramer

Mariela Roper

Sam Park-Beaty

Jennifer Thayer

TRUMPETS

Mathew Harwich*

Bruce Haines

Joel Stoup

TROMBONES

Stephen Hannan*

Eric Kirchhoff

Olivia Nava

TUBA

Felix Diaz

PERCUSSION

Alexa Clawson

Derrick Jaramillo

Therese Laux

Brendan Moriak

HARP

Paul Baker*

PIANO

Hong-Yi Hiroki Hon

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*Principal or Guest
Artist

UPCOMING CONCERT

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Features a program of popular themes and film music. Bring the family; bring a picnic!

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