

Pasadena Community Orchestra

Bethany Pflueger, Conductor



Friday, May 10, 2024, 8:00 pm

2023-24 Young Artist Competition Winners Concert

First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena

Program

Leonore Overture No. 3Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, Op. 19Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Allegro con brio

Nathan Pak, piano solo
2024 Winner, Young Artist Competition Junior Division

Intermission

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35Pyotr IlyichTchaikovsky (1840-1893)
Allegro Moderato
Canzonetta: Andante
Finale: Allegro Vivacissimo

Ezra Shcolnik, violin solo
2024 Winner, Young Artist Competition Senior Division

Overture to Die Meistersinger Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

PERSONNEL

CONDUCTOR

Bethany Pflueger

VIOLIN I

Hong-Yi Hiroki Hon*
Ilana Amos
Alex Birkhold
Curtis Horton
Deanna Kitamura
Dayna Li
Frank Mori
David Ruest
Nancy Smith
Mary Yang
Jane Yu

VIOLIN II

Adrienne Lee*
Mike Fedrick
Melissa Froehlich
Reiko Goto
Daniel Hooper
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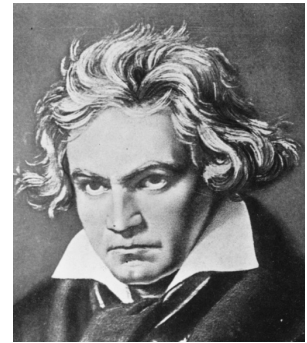
*Principal or Guest Artist

UPCOMING CONCERTS

Our 41st Season ends with our always-popular *Concert in the Park*, in Sierra Madre on Saturday, June 8, at 6:30pm <https://www.pcomusic.org/event/jun2024/>. The Orchestra will be back in the fall for a new season of glorious orchestral music! Sign up (below) for our email Newsletters for more details of our concerts. <https://www.pcomusic.org/pco-events/>.

PROGRAM NOTES – PCO CONCERT, MAY 10, 2024

Ludwig van Beethoven needs no introduction, as perhaps the most famous composer of the entire classical world. His only opera, *Fidelio*, was first performed in 1805, and it gave the composer many problems. The libretto, and the music, were repeatedly revised, and final version was shortened from three acts to two. In the story, the heroine Leonore rescues her husband Florestan from death in a political prison while disguised as a prison guard named “Fidelio”. Beethoven actually wrote four overtures for the opera. Only the last one, entitled *Fidelio*, and premiered in 1814, is performed as part of the opera. He deemed No. 1 too ‘slight’ and No. 2 too rough, so he set them aside during the opera’s many revisions. The *Leonore Overture No. 3* is in a grand symphonic style and is frequently played in the concert hall. It features many themes from the opera, highlighting the dramatic nature of the story, and ending in an uplifting celebration of freedom and love.

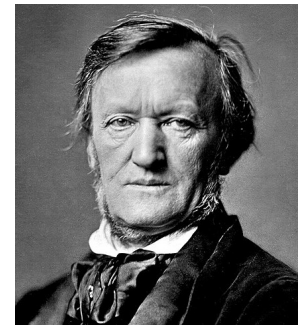


Beethoven’s *Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major* was actually his first, but it was published later. It was probably premiered in 1795, the year he moved from Bonn to Vienna, hoping to make a name for himself there. Playing in the salons of the Viennese nobility did not satisfy him, so he created the piano concertos to highlight his skills both as a composer and a virtuoso pianist to a wider audience. No. 2 features the traditional fast, slow, then fast movements and it has a bold and challenging cadenza for the piano soloist. Tonight, we hear the first movement played by the Junior Division winner of our Young Artist Competition, **Nathan Pak**.



The Violin Concerto in D major of **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** is one of the best loved concertos in the entire classical catalog. It was composed in 1878 in Switzerland, while Tchaikovsky was recovering from depression brought on by the failure of his disastrous marriage. As a gay man, he was forced into marriage by societal pressures, and he suffered under them his entire life, keeping this part of his identity from the public. The mountain air helped, and the work was completed in little more than a month. But the original dedicatee, Leopold Auer, was unimpressed and refused to play it, showering it with criticism, declaring much of it unplayable. Violinists have no such doubts today, and the concerto is a part of the repertoire of most professional soloists. It features three movements – fast, slow, fast – with the last movement continuing from the second without a pause. While the first movement contains complicated back and forth between the soloist and orchestra, the slow *Canzonetta* is simple and lyrical, introduced by a somber theme in the woodwinds. At the end, the mood suddenly jumps into the wild *Allegro vivacissimo* (very fast and lively) final movement, with many changes in tempo. Tonight, we hear the concerto played by the Senior Division winner of our Young Artist Competition, **Ezra Shcolnik**.

The final work on the program is the *Overture to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* by **Richard Wagner**. Unlike his many very serious operas, *Die Meistersinger* is relatively upbeat and comedic. The story is one of struggle between musical conservatism and change. It depicts a song contest conducted by the city’s guild of ‘master singers’, and features our hero, a young apprentice named Walther, and his Guild mentor, Hans



Sachs (both of whom were based on historical characters). In the end, Walter wins the contest and wins the hand of the girl! The Overture begins with processional music to accompany the Guild, and quotes several themes from the opera, and ends triumphantly, with the crowd cheering for Hans Sachs, the respected Master Singer.

About tonight's soloists:



Pianist **Nathan Pak** is the winner of the Junior Division of the Young Artist Competition. He is a sophomore at Taft High School, has been studying piano under the guidance of Dr. Agnes Kim since 2019. Last year, he brought in several honorable titles including the 1st place winner at the renowned Music Teachers' Association of California's Southern California Regional Solo Competition and honorable mention in Music Teachers National Association. Nathan has won first prize in open categories at Southwestern Youth Music Festival and Satori Competition, the Santa Clarita Valley Romantic Music Festival, and the Junior and Senior Divisions at the Antelope Valley Symphony Orchestra and Master Chorale Bach Competition. You can read more about Nathan on the website: <https://www.pcomusic.org/news/2024-junior-pak/>.

Violinist **Ezra Shcolnik** is the winner of the Senior Division of the Young Artist Competition. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree at the Colburn Conservatory of Music, where he studies with Robert Lipsett. This season, Ezra appears as a soloist with several orchestras in Southern California, including the Colburn Orchestra, the Peninsula Symphony as the top prizewinner of the 2024 Knox Competition, and the San Fernando Valley Symphony. Previously, he appeared with the New Mexico Philharmonic. Ezra is also a composer whose music has been performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, USC Thornton Edge, and Colburn Academy Virtuosi. Summers have found Ezra studying chamber, solo, and orchestral repertoire under the guidance of esteemed artist faculty at the Aspen Music Festival as the recipient of several fellowships, as well as at the Perlman Music Program. You can read more about Ezra on the website: <https://www.pcomusic.org/news/2024-senior-shcolnik/>.



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