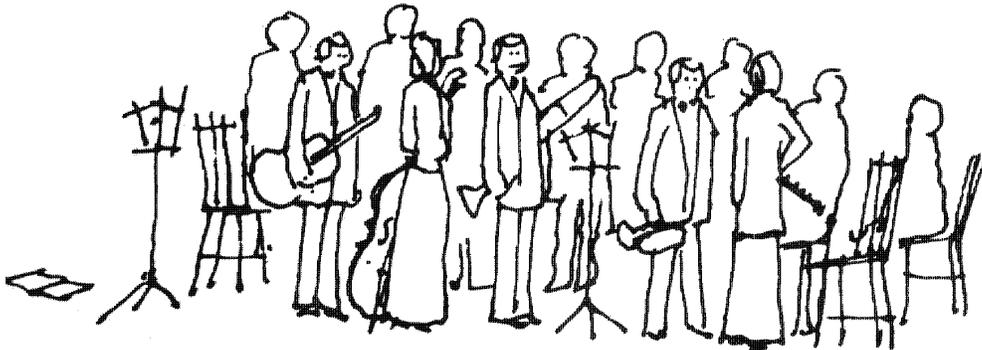


# PASADENA COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

Bethany Pflueger, Conductor

Friday, March 16, 2018, 8:00 p.m.



## PROGRAM

- Waltz from Sleeping Beauty.....Peter Iilich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)  
Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral .....Richard Wagner (1813-1883)  
Le Chasseur Maudit (The Accursed Huntsman).....César Franck (1822-1890)

## INTERMISSION

- Concerto for Bass Drum and Orchestra .....Gabriel Prokofiev (b. 1975)  
    Bass War  
    In the Steppes  
    Four to the Floor  
    May Speed

Nikolaus Keelaghan, bass drum soloist

## CONCERT NOTES

**Tchaikovsky's "Sleeping Beauty Ballet"** was completed in 1889 and premiered in St. Petersburg's famous Marinsky Theatre in 1890. Often considered the finest achievement of classical ballet, the story is based on a French seventeenth century tale known as "La belle au bois dormant" by Charles Perrault (*one of the Mother Goose stories first published in 1697*). It is a tale about fate and life woven from an old tale of a princess who pricks her finger and is put under a hundred-year spell to be awakened by a handsome prince. The piece was choreographed in strict association with Tchaikovsky's music by Marius Petipa. Inversely, Tchaikovsky willingly took instruction from Petipa as to the length of tempo and character of each musical sequence. A young girl's coming of age and the triumph of good over evil are developed dramatically and musically during the course of the ballet. The lush "Garland Waltz" which occurs during the first Act, features the entrance of the fairies and villagers as well as the start of the finale of the Prologue, where the Lilac Fairy approaches Aurora's Cradle. This piece is the inspiration for Disney's song "Once Upon a Dream."

**Wagner's "Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral"** comes at the end of Act II of the medieval Lohengrin opera written in 1848. Elsa is unfairly accused of killing her brother. Lohengrin, a knight and guardian of the grail, protects Elsa from any harm. During the procession, Elsa is on her way to be married to the knight, who we later learn is Lohengrin, knight of the Holy Grail. The music heard in her procession is overflowing with medieval color and has an ageless elegance. Lohengrin eventually reveals his name, his status as a knight of the Holy Grail and son of Parsifal, and having done so, he must leave. At Lohengrin's departure, Elsa dies of a broken heart for the loss of her true love. It is almost a band piece because it is dominated by winds and percussion and therefore, has become a staple of the band repertoire as a standalone piece.

**Franck's "The Accursed Huntsman"** (*a.k.a. La Chasseur maudit*) is a German symphonic poem written in 1882, based on a poem by 18<sup>th</sup> century poet and novelist Gottfried August Bürger (1796). It is a richly evocative orchestral piece about the adventure of Count Hackenberg who defies the Sabbath and blasphemes God in order to go hunting instead. The piece is laid out in four sections; The Peaceful Sunday Landscape; The Hunt; The Curse; The Demons Chase – in which the Count tries to escape his sentence from a voice in the clouds, but his horse is surrounded by flames and imps and demons pursue him into hell. The music begins quietly, representing Sunday morning and joyous songs of praise. Then, the Count's rude horn announcing the hunt is heard which is sacrilege. Eventually, the curse comes upon him until the end of time. The ceaseless clatter of the horse's hooves can be heard with the 9/8 time signature and repeated syncopation.

### **Gabriel Prokofiev's notes on his "Concerto for Bass Drum"**

Also known as the la Grancassa (Italian), basstrommel (German), and la Grosse Caisse (French) - which can literally be translated as 'fat drum' (or even 'phat drum'). It produces the lowest frequencies of the orchestra, and is used to create some of the most thunderous climaxes, but it's never been considered as a 'solo' instrument or been given a Concerto. As it's un-pitched, and on the surface seems quite a limited instrument, that's not surprising; but back in 2011 I perversely thought it would be interesting to attempt to compose a Concerto for Bass Drum... in February 2012 after 3-4 months of composing, and a few hours of rehearsing it was premiered by British percussion virtuoso Joby Burgess with Princeton Symphony (conducted by Rossen Milanov) in Princeton, New Jersey on 9th Feb 2012; then performed by The Chicago Composers Orchestra on 21st Feb (conducted by Matthew Kasper); and had its European premier with the London Contemporary Orchestra (conducted by Hugh Brunt) in the Roundhouse, Camden, on 3rd March 2012.

## CONCERT NOTES - continued

### Bethany Pflueger



A native of central Ohio, Bethany Pflueger is an active flutist, conductor and Department Chair of the Music Department at Glendale Community College. She serves as principal flutist of the Burbank Philharmonic and Peninsula Symphonies, and performs regularly as a freelance player with regional orchestras and chamber music ensembles. Ms. Pflueger is a 2005 Grammy Award winner for her recorded piccolo performance with the Southwest Chamber Music Ensemble. She joined PCO as Music Director in July 2013.

### Pasadena Community Orchestra

The musicians of the Pasadena Community Orchestra graciously donate their services for every concert. One of the only Los Angeles area orchestras to provide fine music to the public for free, PCO is supported through generous benefactor sponsorship, board members and volunteers. Audience members may meet the Music Director and other musicians at a reception following the concert. Admission is free, and no reservations are necessary. Concerts are made possible in part by the Pasadena Arts & Culture Commission and the City of Pasadena Cultural Affairs Division, Pasadena Rotary, LA County Arts Commission, Pasadena Community Foundation and Pasadena Showcase House for the Arts.

### 2018 Young Artist Competition Winner



Max Hammond, 17, has been in the winners circle of many piano competitions, with top finishes that include first place awards in the Lansum International Piano Competition, the State Finals of the CAPMT Honors Competition (twice), the Glendale Piano Competition, the Los Angeles Young Pianist Competition, the CAPMT District III Sonata Competition (twice), the Turner Concerto Competition and the Southwestern Youth Music Festival (SYMF) Young Pianist Competition. Max has performed as concerto soloist with the Los Angeles Doctors Symphony Orchestra, with the SYMF Orchestra and with the Bellflower Symphony.

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Special thanks to our event sponsors, whose donations made the Fundraiser so elegant, and to PCO board members whose tireless work made it a spectacular success. Sponsors include: Bar Celona Tapas Bar, Green Street Restaurant, and FrenchiFornia Bakery, all in Pasadena.

### Remaining 2018 Concert Season Concerts

Friday, May 11, 2018, 8:00 p.m., Holst + Borodin + Mozart + YAC Winner

Saturday, June 09, 2018, 6:30 p.m., Annual Concert in the Park, Sierra Madre Memorial Park

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Bethany Pflueger

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\*Principal

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### IN-KIND

PCO thanks Graziela Camacho, Graphic Design/Webmaster; Candace Dougherty, Videography; and the many volunteers whose behind-the-scenes help makes these concerts possible. We could not do it without them. PCO thanks La Salle High School, Pasadena, for their generous ongoing gift of rehearsal space.

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PCO is partially funded by the Pasadena Arts & Culture Commission, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Pasadena Showcase House for the Arts, Pasadena Rotary International, and Pasadena Community Foundation.

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## CONCERT NOTES - continued

A Concerto for Bass Drum is by no means a gimmick or a joke piece, there are real reasons why the Bass Drum deserves a Concerto:

Firstly, the Bass Drum is actually one of the most ubiquitous instruments of our time. Where ever I go in London I hear Bass Drums thumping out of people's car stereos, out of shops, out of night-club and bars; the bass drum is everywhere... More often than not the Bass Drum is the first sound you hear when you approach a club or music event; in electronic dance music most producers obsess over getting the perfect Bass Drum sound; and though it can drive you crazy when its pounding through your walls at 4am when your neighbours having a party; it's one of the essential instruments of the 21st century. In classical music it only gets occasional and very simple use, but it has a serious range of sonic possibilities and once you experiment with the Bass Drum many sounds emerge:

- wooden 'tocks' & 'clicks' from hitting the rim of the drum
- metallic snaps from striking the metal lugs
- whale-like moans through to rubbing the skin with a wet finger or Super-Ball
- Then hitting the skin itself can give so much variety depending on what type of mallet is used; where on the skin it is hit; and very importantly how much the drum is dampened... and there's more.

There are four movements in this concerto (with an optional Overture/Introduction movement). Each movement explores different possibilities and moods of the drum; and it's relationship with the orchestra. Also many of the different rhythms & beats that are often associated with Bass Drum are explored, and of course the power and energy of the Bass Drum were a big inspiration:

### *Lento Scuro (Bass War)*

The dampening is taken off the drum and it's full bass & power is revealed with a super slow crescendoing roll. Then there is a sort of 'bass-off' between the Bass Drum and the low-end of the orchestra. Then a chain is placed on the drum to give a grimy, aggressive rumble to it (a dirty, metallic, snare effect), playing a 'half-step' type groove. At the end of the movement he rotates the drum to reveal a gut-string coming out of the centre of the drum which he bows to give a Lion's Roar effect.

### *Largo Mesto (in the Steppes)*

The mood is more contemplative, less dissonant with a slightly Russian, modal-minor feel (hence the sub-title: in the Steppes). The soloist uses only his/her hands for the entire movement: gentle tapping it with his palms, fist and fingers, using thimbles on his fingers to create clicks and ticks on the rims and lugs. The second-half freezes to an open, non vibrato strings chord over which the soloist rubs the drum skin with a wet finger and a super-ball to create haunting whale-like moans and super-deep sub-bass tones.

### *Allegro Moderato Leggiero (four to the floor)*

A Concerto for Bass Drum wouldn't be complete without a section dedicated to the ubiquitous 'thud thud thud thud' four-to-the-floor bass drum beat of club music. Though it's rhythmically simple, the subtlety is found in the way the soloist alters the damping of the drum, starting completely dead; just like an electronic bass drum, and then musically varying the tone. The orchestra play a repetitive off-beat chords (based on a corrupted B minor chord), starting with 1/8th notes, but subtly slipping in and out of triplets, playing with the difference between a swinging & straight groove.

## CONCERT NOTES - continued

### *Allegro Brillante (May Speed)*

This is a break-neck-speed finale, in which the soloist smacks the hell out of the drum with 2 wooden sticks (slightly reminiscent of Japanese Taiko drumming at times), and the orchestra play a spiralling Hindemith-esque continuously modulating melody. There's much more to say about this Concerto. The orchestra's role is equal to that of the Bass, and of course they carry all the harmony and melody, but the bass drum is definitely the soloist and is still able to lead most of the melodic shapes; Joby can produce several clearly different tones, with the Bass Drum marked to help consistency. There is also a strong sense of musical journey in the Concerto, influenced by the simple excitement of composing for a huge drum! through to subconscious (and occasionally conscious) influences from the often tumultuous events (such as the riots in London, the Arab Spring ) that happened across the world during 2011.

© Gabriel Prokofiev 2012

### **Gabriel Prokofiev**



A prominent figure in the alt-classical scene, Gabriel Prokofiev is an English-born composer, producer, DJ and artistic director who is the grandson of Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev. Mr. Prokofiev's father was also an artist who has exhibited his artwork worldwide. Composing music that both embraces and challenges western classical traditions, Mr. Prokofiev has emerged at the forefront of a new approach to classical music in the U.K. at the beginning of the 21st century. Mr. Prokofiev's own distinctive sound is informed by his background as a producer of hip-hop, grime, and electro records, as well as his earlier involvement in electroacoustic music at York and Birmingham universities, which saw him win a Residency prize at the prestigious Bourges International Electroacoustic Music Competition in 1998. Mr. Prokofiev is currently the composer in residence for Orchestre de Pau Pays de Béarn in southern France, who premiered the first

chapter of his new orchestral City inspired series: *Carnet de Voyage* in September 2015, with movements on St Petersburg, London & Vienna.

### **Nikolaus Keelaghan**



Nikolaus Keelaghan could be described as a percussionist with a nearly unlimited supply of energy and passion for music. He is the principal timpanist/percussionist of the Pasadena Community Orchestra, and will be performing the U.S. premier of Gabriel Prokofiev's Concerto for Bass Drum with the group on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Mr. Keelaghan began studying classical music as a freshman at California State University, Fullerton, under the tutelage of Todd Miller and Ken McGrath, and graduated magna cum laude. He finished his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in percussion performance from UCLA, having studied with Raynor Carroll and Theresa Dimond. He enjoys pushing the boundaries of his abilities, indulging in the extended technique of six-mallet marimba playing, and doubling on viola.