

# *Pasadena Community Orchestra*

Bethany Pflueger, Conductor



**Friday, March 14, 2025, 8:00 pm**  
**Pre-Concert Discussion at 7:15 pm**

**First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena**

## **Program**

A Short Piece for Orchestra ..... Julia Perry (1924-1979)

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47 ..... Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)  
Allegro moderato

Minji Choi, violin solo  
2025 Winner, Young Artist Competition, Junior Division

## **Intermission**

Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op.88 ..... Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)  
Allegro con brio  
Adagio  
Allegretto grazioso  
Allegro ma non troppo

## PERSONNEL

### CONDUCTOR

Bethany Pflueger

### VIOLIN I

Hong-Yi Hiroki Hon\*

Concertmaster

Jane Yu\*

Associate Concertmaster

Alex Birkhold

Melissa Froehlich

Curtis Horton

Deanna Kitamura

Frank Mori

Corinne Newbegin

David Ruest

Nancy Smith

Mary Yang

### VIOLIN II

Adrienne Lee\*

Principal

Christopher Lange\*

Associate Principal

David Daniels

Mike Fedrick

Harim Fuentes

Daniel Hooper

Joe Kertes

Kristen Lee

Dayna Li

Oliver Truong

### VIOLAS

Tammy Cogna\*<sup>\*</sup>

Elizabeth Giles

Rachel Goodrich

Janina Morrison

Yoji Sierra

Xan Urso

Kris Wittry

### CELLOS

Kristin Nyquist\*

Celeste Alexander

Lara Ausubel

Thom Fountain

Angela Kang

Michael Pinkham

Elizabeth Wood

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Keith Brown\*

Sam Hwang

Masis Parunyun

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Emily Kramer

Mariela Lee

Jennifer Thayer

Michael Turf

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Mathew Harwich\*

Bruce Haines

Joel Stoup

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Chuck Jacks\*

Eric Kirchhoff

Olivia Nava

### TUBA

Felix Diaz

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## NEXT CONCERT ~ FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2025

Be sure to attend our next concert, which features the Open Division winner of our annual Young Artist Competition, Romain Jansen, playing Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto. Also on the program are works by Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, and John Williams. The concert starts at 8:00pm, but come early to join a pre-concert discussion with our Conductor, Beth Pflueger at 7:15pm.

## PROGRAM NOTES – PCO CONCERT, MARCH 14, 2025



African-American composer **Julia Perry** was a 20th-century composer who is not well-known, but whose music is long overdue for a revival. She received musical training at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood, and later at the Juilliard School of Music. Studying conducting and composing, she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1954. She was a student of the legendary teacher Nadia Boulanger in Paris, winning the Boulanger Grand Prix for her Viola Sonata, and she received a second Guggenheim Fellowship to study in Italy.

Perry's early work was strongly influenced by African-American musical styles, including many songs. Later she became more adventurous, experimenting with dissonance, an example being her *Stabat Mater* for contralto and string orchestra. She went on to write music in many genres within the classical realm, including chamber music, concertos for violin and for piano, a ballet, three operas, and twelve symphonies. Her output runs to many dozens of works, many of which are unpublished or have been neglected.

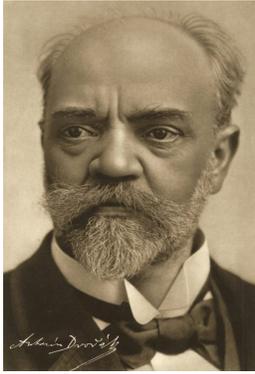
The *Short Piece for Orchestra* from 1952 is one of a handful of Perry's works to be recorded. It's energetic and dramatic, making full use of the orchestral color palette, and featuring sharp contrasts in mood and a haunting slow section before the abrupt ending.

**Jean Sibelius** was widely credited with helping his native Finland develop a national identity and resist control by Russia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He showed a strong interest in nature from an early age, and this is captured in many of his mature works. Originally studying law, he switched to the Helsinki Music Institute where he studied composition and developed a lifelong friendship with the pianist-composer Ferruccio Busoni. He wrote music in many genres, but he is best-known for his set of seven symphonies which are a staple of the orchestral repertoire, the nationalistic tone poem *Finlandia*, and several orchestral color pieces inspired by nature and based on Nordic mythology.



The epic *Violin Concerto* was composed shortly after his First Symphony. It is one of the few 20<sup>th</sup> century violin concertos to have reached the stature of the 'greats', like Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Tchaikovsky, and it has since become a staple of the concerto repertoire, despite its formidable technical challenges. It is orchestral in scope, with huge climaxes interspersed with calm and lyrical episodes, usually led by the soloist. An atmosphere of mystery is created at the very start, with shimmering violins that usher in the soloist's first theme. Much of the music is dark and brooding, but with interludes of lightness and transparency. The boisterous finale is a breathtaking race to the finish line.

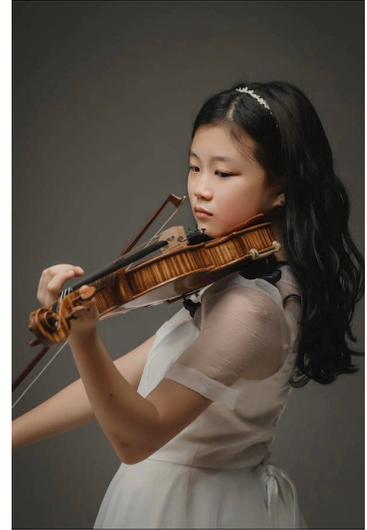
**Antonín Dvořák** was a Czech composer of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century who often used rhythms and melodic styles from the folk music of Moravia and his native Bohemia. He was a master of blending folk influences into the long tradition of symphonic orchestral music. Talented as a violinist from an early age, he attended several music schools while developing his composing skills. He struggled to make a living in music until a strong endorsement by Johannes Brahms set him on a path to well-deserved fame. He wrote piano and chamber music, symphonies, and a *Cello Concerto*, one of the all-time favorites in this genre. Dvořák's visit to the US in 1892 was at the height of his fame. There, he wrote two of his best-loved works – the Twelfth String Quartet, the *American*, and the *New World*



*Symphony*. He was a strong advocate for the music of Native Americans and African-Americans, feeling that these could form the basis for a national style of ‘classical’ music.

Written a year before his visit to America, Dvořák’s *Symphony No. 8* is a work of almost pure joy. Rich in beautiful melodies, and sumptuously orchestrated, it’s a celebration of optimism in life. There are darker moments, like the brooding opening before the cheery flute enters, but influenced by the peace and beauty of the fields and woods at his home in southern Bohemia, the overall mood feels poetic and relaxed.

**About tonight’s soloist.** Performing the first movement of the Sibelius Concerto is the Orchestra’s 2025 winner in the Junior Division of the Young Artist Competition, violinist **Minji Choi**. Minji Choi is a 15-year-old South Korean violinist who aspires to share her passion and connect with the audience through music. She has played for renowned violinists such as Donald Weilerstein, Stefan Jackiw, Jessica Lee, Jinjoo Cho, Paul Kantor, Qian Zhou, Margaret Batjer, and Bing Wang. Choi has appeared as a soloist with the Bellflower Symphony, the Sierra Vista Chamber Orchestra, and the Southern California Philharmonic. Significant awards include the 2025 YoungArts Winner, the Young Artist Award at the Singapore Violin Festival, and honorable mention in the 2024 LA Music Center’s Spotlight Awards.



An active ensemble player, Choi has participated in the Chamber Music OC Pre-College Program, and has played in chamber music masterclasses for Julian Martin, Jean-Michel Fonteneau, Natasha Brofsky, Seth Knopp, Rohan de Silva, Margaret Batjer, Paul Katz, and Pei-Shan Lee. Choi was also a member of the Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra and previously served as the concertmaster of the Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings, selected for its Quartet and Soloist.

Program notes by Stephen Unwin, PCO Board member

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