

Pasadena Community Orchestra

Bethany Pflueger, Conductor
Daniel Goldblum, Guest Conductor



Friday, November 7, 2025, 8:00 pm
Pre-Concert Discussion at 7:15 pm

First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena

Program

Dance of the Hours from *La Gioconda* Amilcare Ponchielli (1834-1886)

Andante from Symphony No. 94 Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Intermission

Scheherazade, Op. 35 Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

The Sea and Sinbad's Ship

The Story of the Kalendar Prince

The Young Prince and the Young Princess

Festival at Baghdad; The Sea; The Ship Breaks against a Cliff Surmounted
by a Bronze Horsemen

Jane Yu, violin soloist

PROGRAM NOTES – PCO CONCERT, NOVEMBER 7, 2025



Amilcare Ponchielli was an Italian opera composer, well-known and influential in his day, but today is best known for the opera *La Gioconda* (usually rendered in English as *The Ballad Singer*). He had a rocky early career, having been maneuvered out of a professorship at the Milan Conservatory that he had won in a competition. Working small-time gigs, he eventually found his way to La Scala and later had several of his operas performed in that famous theater.

La Gioconda, completed in 1876 is still widely performed. It is based on a play by Victor Hugo which was previously been set to music by at least two earlier composers. It is a convoluted story of romantic rivalry and murder. But fortunately, none of that is reflected in the delightful *Dance of the Hours* that we hear this evening. It is a ballet from the final act of the opera (18th and 19th century operas often featured short ballets woven into the story). Here, it's an interlude in contrast to the drama of the opera, depicting the hours of the day through a series of short numbers.

Both the name, *La Gioconda*, and the music, may feel familiar even if you've never seen the opera. *La Gioconda* (Lisa del Giocondo) was the subject of Leonardo da Vinci's famous *Mona Lisa*. And the music of *Dance of the Hours* was immortalized in Disney's 1940 film *Fantasia*, as a comic ballet in which all the dancers are animals. You might also recognize the theme from a 1963 satirical song *Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh* by Allan Sherman, featuring a letter-writing boy having a miserable time at summer camp.

Franz Joseph Haydn was a prolific Austrian composer often credited as “Father of the Symphony” and “Father of the String Quartet”. Indeed, his numbered symphonies run to a total of 104. Haydn was fortunate to have a patron to support his composition, and who provided an orchestra for him to perform and mature his symphonies. Later in his career he visited London where he was hugely popular and composed a set of six symphonies. *Symphony No. 94* is one of those. This evening, we hear the delightful second movement *Andante* (the musical indication for a walking pace) which features a theme of nursery-tune simplicity, followed by a seamless set of variations. The interplay of winds and strings near the end is a tender balance of elegance and simplicity from a master composer at the height of his powers.



Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was a 19th century composer and a member of the Russian group known as *The Five* (Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, Alexander Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov). He is considered a principal architect of the ‘Russian Style’ in orchestral music, influencing a generation of younger composers, including non-Russians like Ravel, Debussy, Dukas, and Respighi. In addition to composing and teaching, Rimsky-Korsakov had a long and distinguished career in the Russian Navy.

Largely self-taught, with a natural talent for inventive orchestration, he became a professor of composition at the St Petersburg Conservatory. But conscious of his lack of understanding of basic music theory, he spent much time studying – to stay ahead of his students!

He is famous for a large body of popular orchestral works, including the *Russian Easter Festival Overture*, *Capriccio Espagnol*, *Flight of the Bumblebee*, and of course, ***Scheherazade***. This symphonic suite was inspired by the collection of Middle Eastern folktales called *One Thousand and One Nights* (or *The Arabian Nights*), compiled in the Arabic language during the Islamic Golden Age. The heroine of the story survives mortal threats every night from her husband the Sunan by captivating him with stories.



Scheherazade was first performed as a ballet in Paris in 1910 by the famous *Ballets Russes*. Rimsky-Korsakov depicts four of these in music. The dazzling orchestration spans a huge range of colors and styles, from grand and majestic to boisterous dances to tender and sweet and always infused with an oriental flavor. It is deservedly one of the most popular works in the entire orchestral repertoire.

About tonight's Guest Conductor

Daniel Goldblum is a bassoonist, conductor, teaching artist, and music and filmmaker. He teaches with Youth Orchestra Los Angeles as a bassoonist and conductor at their Heart of Los Angeles site, and for four years was the winds teaching artist and an assistant conductor with the Eisner Intergenerational Orchestra. Daniel completed his Master of Music at the Manhattan School of Music, his Bachelor of Music at the University of Michigan, certificate studies at Bard, and non-degree studies at the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna. He has conducted previously with the Kadima Conservatory of Music and taught at Bard College Conservatory and the Crescendo Summer Institute in Hungary.

As a bassoonist Daniel has appeared with the Sarasota, Moritzburg, and Bowdoin Music Festivals, the Orchestra Now, and the Neue Philharmonie München. He is principal bassoon of the Peninsula Symphony and the Chamber Orchestra of the South Bay. As an interdisciplinary artist combining music and film, Daniel premiered his live silent film score for *Man with a Movie Camera* at the Wende Museum of the Cold War in Culver City, and his *Bassoon Rap* premiered at the New York City Independent Film Festival.

Program notes by Stephen Unwin, PCO Board member

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Daniel Goldblum

VIOLIN I

Hong-Yi Hiroki Hon*

Concertmaster

Jane Yu*

Co-Concertmaster

Ilana Amos

Alex Birkhold

Melissa Froehlich

Curtis Horton

Deanna Kitamura

Frank Mori

David Lee Ruest

Nancy Smith

Mary Yang

VIOLIN II

Adrienne Lee*

Principal

Yuri Choe

Martina Chen

David Daniels

Daniel Hooper

Joe Kertes

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NEXT CONCERT ~ FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2026

Be sure to attend our next concert, which features story telling in music, with works by Copland, Respighi, Prokofiev and John Willams. The concert starts at 8:00pm, but come early to join a pre-concert discussion with our Conductor, Beth Pflueger at 7:15pm.

◆ www.pcomusic.org ◆

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