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Pasadena Symphony Association
Pasadena Symphony & POPS
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For full artist bios and high res images visit: <https://pasadenasympphony-pops.org/beethoven-violin-concerto-press-release/>

FRANÇOIS LÓPEZ-FERRER RETURNS TO CONDUCT STRAVINSKY'S SOARING FIREBIRD AND BEETHOVEN'S ONLY VIOLIN CONCERTO WITH AVERY FISHER WINNER FRANCISCO FULLANA

Pasadena, CA – The Pasadena Symphony continues the 23/24 season with **Beethoven Violin Concerto** on **Saturday, March 23, 2024** with performances at **2:00pm** and **8:00pm** at **Ambassador Auditorium**. Avery Fisher-winning Spanish violinist **Francisco Fullana** will take center stage for **Beethoven's** only **Violin Concerto**. Described by Gustavo Dudamel as an “amazing talent” Fullana’s playing has been called as “explosive” (*Gramophone*) and “frighteningly awesome” (*Buffalo News*).

Spanish-American conductor **François López-Ferrer** returns as Artistic Partner to lead this colorful and majestic program. Currently serving as Resident Conductor of the Académie of the Opéra de Paris, **López-Ferrer** will conjure the magic and romance of **Stravinsky's** soaring **Firebird**. Grammy-nominated composer **Shawn Okpebholo's** **Kutimbua Kivumbi (Stomp the Dust!)** will open the program, showcasing the essence of Kenya with a soundscape that musically depicts its arid terrain and the dust rising from traditional rain dances.

The Pasadena Symphony provides a vibrant experience specially designed for the music lover, the social butterfly or a date night out. Arrive early for the pre-concert discussion *Insights*, or enjoy a bite or a glass in the Symphony Lounge, a posh setting along Ambassador Auditorium's beautiful outdoor plaza with a full service beverage center serving coffee, spirits, and fine wines from The Michero Family, plus sandwiches, soup, appetizers and dessert by **Cynthia Brooks Catering** before the concert and during intermission.

All concerts are held at Ambassador Auditorium, 131 South St. John Ave, Pasadena, CA. Single tickets start at \$42 and may be purchased online at www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org or by calling (626) 793-7172.

IF YOU GO:

- **What:** The Pasadena Symphony presents Beethoven Violin Concerto
François López-Ferrer, conductor
Francisco Fullana, violin

Shawn Okpebholo *Kutimbua Kivumbi (Stomp the Dust!)*

Stravinsky
Beethoven

The Firebird Suite
Violin Concerto

- **When:** Saturday, March 23, 2024 at 2:00pm and 8:00pm
- **Where:** Ambassador Auditorium | 131 South St. John Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91105
- **Cost:** Tickets start at \$42.00
- **Parking:** Valet parking is available on St. John Ave for \$20. General parking is available in two locations for \$10 in advance, \$15 onsite: next to the Auditorium (entrance on St. John Ave) at the covered parking structure, and directly across the street at the Wells Fargo parking structure (entrance on Terrace at Green St). ADA parking is located at the above-ground parking lot adjacent to the Auditorium (entrance on St. John Ave.) for \$10. Parking may be pre-purchased or purchased onsite. **Parking purchased onsite is cash only.**

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

François López-Ferrer **Conductor**

Spanish-American conductor François López-Ferrer currently serves as Resident Conductor of the Académie of the Opéra de Paris. Former Associate Conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and May Festival, and a 2021-22' Dudamel Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, López-Ferrer stepped in for Louis Langrée with the CSO in January of 2022 for the US premiere of Mark Simpson's Violin Concerto with Nicola Benedetti to great critical acclaim.

This season he has made brilliant debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Orquesta Nacional de España, Ensemble intercontemporain, Opéra de Lausanne, Orquesta de Valencia, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, Orquesta Sinfónica Radio Televisión Española, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Omaha Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, and Pasadena Symphony, and was featured in the 2022 Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview with Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. He previously served as Associate Conductor of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Chile and Principal Conductor of the Ballet Nacional Chileno.

An inaugural apprentice of the Verbier Festival's 2018 Conductor Mentorship Program, López-Ferrer made a last-minute critically-acclaimed debut with the Verbier Festival Orchestra jumping in for Iván Fischer in a shared program with Sir Simon Rattle and Gábor Takács-Nagy. He was recipient of a Career Assistance Award from the Solti Foundation U.S., winner of the inaugural 2015 Neeme Järvi Prize awarded at the Menuhin-Gstaad Festival, and a previous member of the Deutsche Dirigentenforum.

López-Ferrer holds a master's degree in Orchestral Conducting from the Haute École de Musique de Lausanne and a bachelor's in Composition from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

Francisco Fullana **Violin**

Spanish-born violinist Francisco Fullana, winner of the 2018 Avery Fisher Career Grant, has been hailed as an “amazing talent” (Gustavo Dudamel) and “frighteningly awesome” (*Buffalo News*). His solo violin album *Bach’s Long Shadow*, was named BBC Music Magazine’s Instrumental Choice of the Month. Its five star review stated: ‘Fullana manages to combine Itzhak Perlman’s warmth with the aristocratic poise of Henryk Szeryng’

A native of Mallorca in the Balearic Islands of Spain, Francisco is making a name for himself as both a performer and a leader of innovative educational institutions. As a soloist, he has performed the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with the Bayerische Philharmonie led by the late Sir Colin Davis, the Sibelius Concerto with the Münchner Rundfunkorchester, and the Brahms Violin Concerto with Venezuela’s Teresa Carreño Orchestra under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel. His versatility as a performer has brought him to perform with numerous ensembles across the artistic spectrum: from major orchestras such as the City of Birmingham, Vancouver, Aachen, Pacific and Buffalo Symphony Orchestras, the chamber orchestras of Saint Paul and Philadelphia, to the baroque ensemble Apollo’s Fire and the new music driven Metropolis Ensemble. Francisco has worked under the batons of Hans Graf, Alondra de la Parra, Christoph Poppen, Jeannette Sorrell, and Joshua Weilerstein, among many others.

Fullana is one of the first international solo violinists to fully embrace and absorb the baroque language of historical performance. His passion for the gut strings has blossomed into fruitful collaborations with Baroque groups all over the world. Last season, Fullana was the Artist-in-Residence with the Grammy-winning ensemble Apollo’s Fire, performing 18 concerto performances on tour, including stops at Carnegie Hall and Severance Hall among many others. They recently released Vivaldi’s Four Seasons on Avie Records to great success: The album debut at #2 of the Billboard Charts and was named Top Ten Album Of the Year by the Sunday Times. BBC Music Magazine’s review stated: ‘*Francisco Fullana reveals Vivaldi’s poetry with effortless refinement.*’ The partnership continues this spring, performing Vivaldi’s *The Four Seasons* on tour around the UK, including stops at Aldenburgh Festival & St. Martin in the Fields.

Highlights of Francisco’s orchestral engagements for 2022-2023 include performances with Madrid, Málaga, Tallahassee, Xalapa and Zacatecas Symphonies, as well as the Symphony of the Americas. Francisco will also reappear with Alabama, Austin, Balearic Islands and Vancouver Symphony Orchestras and the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, as well as an ongoing collaboration as Artist-in-Residence with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra. Recent recital debuts included the Phillips Collection and Palm Beach’s Kravis Center as well as recitals debuts at the Mecklenburg-Vorlpolmmern and Gezeitenkonzerte festivals with his duo partner, pianist Matthias Kirchnerheit. In Asia, his two recital tours of eastern China and Japan have been rescheduled for 2023 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Fullana was 2021/22 Artist-in Residence for the 30th anniversary season of the Grammy-winning baroque ensemble Apollo’s Fire, performing 35 concerts as a soloist on tours around the country, including New York’s Carnegie Hall and Cleveland’s Severance Hall.

His passion for working with youth orchestras through the Fortissimo Youth Initiative will be at full display this season. His concerto debut at Carnegie Hall’s Stern Perelman Hall will feature Lalo’s *Symphonie Espagnole* with the New York Youth Symphony. In 2023, Francisco will embark on a European tour with the Spanish National Youth Symphony JONDE, premiering a new concerto by Mikel Urkiza across 5 countries, culminating at Berlin’s Konzerthaus under the baton of Pablo González.

In 2018 Orchid Classics released Francisco's acclaimed debut recording *Through the Lens of Time* performed with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Carlos Izcaray. Fullana's new double album on Orchid, *Bach's Long Shadow*, juxtaposes two of the monumental Bach's Partitas on gut strings and baroque setup with virtuoso solo violin works from the next 3 centuries. Fullana's love for the sound of gut strings and baroque music has blossomed into an artistic partnership with the baroque ensemble Apollo's Fire. The group led by Jeannette Sorrell joins forces with Francisco for their fiery take on Vivaldi's Four Seasons both on their newest album just released on Avie Records and was named 2022's Top Ten Record of the Year by the Sunday Times.

Active as a chamber musician, Francisco is a performing artist at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and has participated in the Marlboro Music Festival, the Musicians from Marlboro tours, the Perlman Music Program, the Da Camera Society, and the LaJolla, Moab, Music@Menlo, Mainly Mozart, Music in the Vineyards, and Newport music festivals. His musical collaborators have included Viviane Hagner, Nobuko Imai, Mitsuko Uchida, and members of the Guarneri, Juilliard, Takács, and Cleveland quartets. Francisco's Spanish roots are also often explored in collaboration with Hispanic artists such as guitarist Pablo Sainz-Villegas and bandoneonist JP Jofre. Their recital for The Violin Channel's Vanguard Concerts at Merkin Hall was just released for worldwide release this past month on all major streaming platforms.

Born into a family of educators, Francisco is a graduate of the Royal Conservatory of Madrid, where he matriculated under the tutelage of Manuel Guillén. He received Bachelor's and Master's degrees from The Juilliard School following studies with Donald Weilerstein and Masao Kawasaki, and holds an Artist Diploma from the USC Thornton School of Music, where he worked with the renowned violinist Midori.

In 2015 Francisco was honored with First Prize in Japan's Munetsugu Angel Violin Competition, as well as all four of that competition's special prizes including the Audience and Orchestra awards. Additional awards include First Prizes at the Johannes Brahms and Julio Cardona International Violin Competitions, the Pro Musicis International Award, and the Pablo Sarasate National Competition.

Francisco is a committed innovator, leading new institutions of musical education for young people. He is a co-founder of San Antonio's Classical Music Summer Institute, where he currently serves as Chamber Music Director. He also created the Fortissimo Youth Initiative, a series of music seminars and performances with youth orchestras, which aims to explore and deepen young musicians' understanding of 18th-century music. The seminars are deeply immersive, thrusting youngsters into the sonic world of a single period while inspiring them to channel their overwhelming energy in the service of vibrant older styles of musical expression. The results can be galvanic, and Francisco continues to build on these educational models.

Francisco Fullana performs on the 1735 "Mary Portman" ex-Kreisler Guarneri del Gesù violin, kindly on loan from Clement and Karen Arrison through the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

Shawn Okpebholo **Composer**

Shawn E. Okpebholo is a GRAMMY®-nominated, critically-acclaimed and award-winning composer whose music has been described as "devastatingly beautiful" and "fresh and new and fearless" (*The Washington Post*), "affecting" (*The New York Times*), "searing" (*The Chicago Tribune*), "staggering" (*The New Yorker*), "lyrical, complex, singular" (*The Guardian*) and "powerful" (*BBC Music Magazine*). Some honors include The Academy of Arts and Letters Walter Hinrichsen Award, 2022 Winner of Barlow

Endowment for Music Composition, First Place Winner of the 2020 American Prize in Composition (professional/wind band division), Second Place Winner in the 2017 American Prize in Composition (professional/orchestral division), First Prize Winner in the Flute New Music Consortium Composition Competition and the Inaugural Awardee of the Leslie Adams-Robert Owens Composition Award. Okpebholo's music has been featured in recital and concert series in nearly every state in America and all over the world, including Aspen Music Festival; Bowdoin International Music Festival; Newport New Music Festival; concerts presented by Chicago Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Urban Arias, Portland Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater; Chicago Symphony Orchestra Music Now Series; Cincinnati and Houston Symphony Orchestras; United States Airfare Strings, among others.

Okpebholo's work as a composer and his music has been featured on PBS Newshour, and radio broadcasts across the country, including NPR's All Things Considered, NPR's Morning Edition SiriusXM's "Living American" series on Symphony Hall Channel, and Chicago's WFMT. And NPR selected his art song *The Rainas* one of the 100 Best Songs of 2021; only a few classical works made the ranking. His artistry has resulted in many prizes and honors, including The Academy of Arts and Letters Walter Hinrichsen Award, 2022 Winner of Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, First Place Winner of the 2020 American Prize in Composition (professional/wind band division), Second Place Winner in the 2017 American Prize in Composition (professional/orchestral division), First Prize Winner in the Flute New Music Consortium Composition Competition and the Inaugural Awardee of the Leslie Adams-Robert Owens Composition Award.

Okpebholo's music has been featured in recital and concert series in nearly every state in America and all over the world, including Aspen Music Festival; Bowdoin International Music Festival; Newport New Music Festival; Monte Music Festival (Goa, India); MusicX Contemporary Music Festival; The Uncommon Music Festival (Alaska); concerts presented by Chicago Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Urban Arias, Portland Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater; Chicago Symphony Orchestra Music Now Series; Cincinnati and Houston Symphony Orchestras; United States Air Force Strings; Urban Arias and the Inscape Chamber Orchestra; Copland House Ensemble, Picoso, Fifth House Ensemble, Lincoln Trio, among others. Some solo artists include vocalists J'Nai Bridges, Will Liverman, Michael Michael Mayes, Ryan McKinney, Robert Sims, and Tamera Wilson; pianists Paul Sánchez, Mark Markham, Craig Terry, and Robert Ainsley; euphonium virtuoso Steven Mead, flutists Jennie Oh Brown and Caen-Thomason-Redus.

Okpebholo regularly receives commissions from noted soloists, universities, and organizations, including the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Astral Artists, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, International Tuba and Euphonium Association, The Meir Rimon Commissioning Program of the International Horn Society, among others. His compositions have been featured on six commercially released albums, including his first album solely devoted to his music, *Steal Away*, a collection of re-imagined Negro spirituals, and his second solo album, GRAMMY®-nominated *Lord, How Come Me Here?*

As a pedagogue, Okpebholo has given masterclasses at many academic institutions worldwide, including two universities in Nigeria, and has served on the faculty of summer music festivals, currently on the Fresh Inc Festival's composition faculty. His compositional and research interests have been a gateway for ethnomusicological fieldwork in both East and West Africa. He has studied the music of the Esan people in southern Nigeria, the Akambe people in the Machakos region of Kenya, and South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda. His field research has resulted in two chamber works, two symphonic works, transcriptions, and academic lectures. Grants from the Endowment of the Arts, Illinois Arts

Council, Tangemen Sacred Music Center, Wheaton College, and Pew Research Grant (Union University) have supported his work.

He earned his master's and doctoral degrees in composition from the College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) at the University of Cincinnati, where he also studied music theory. He completed a bachelor's degree in composition and music history from Asbury College. He had additional studies in film scoring from New York University through the Buddy Baker Film Scoring Program. Growing up, a significant part of his music education was through The Salvation Army church, where he regularly received free music lessons. Inspired by that charity, Okpebholo is passionate about offering his musical expertise to underserved communities. Currently, he is Jonathan Blanchard Professor of Music Composition and Theory at Wheaton College-Conservatory of Music (IL), having also taught at Union University (TN), Northern Kentucky University, and CCM. He served as also the Composer-in-Residence of the renowned Fifth House Ensemble. And he is currently in residence with the Chicago Opera Theater (2021-2023 seasons), culminating with an opera commission with librettist Mark Campbell, librettist for the Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *Silent Night*.

He lives in Wheaton, IL, a suburb of Chicago, with his wife, violist Dorthy, and his daughters, Eva and Corinne.

ABOUT THE PASADENA SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION

Formed in 1928, the Pasadena Symphony and POPS is an ensemble of Hollywood's most talented, sought after musicians. With extensive credits in the film, television, recording and orchestral industries, the artists of Pasadena Symphony and POPS are the most heard in the world.

The Pasadena Symphony and POPS performs in two of the most extraordinary venues in the United States: Ambassador Auditorium, known as the *Carnegie Hall of the West*, and the luxuriant Los Angeles Arboretum & Botanic Garden. The multi-platinum-selling, two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer dubbed "The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook," Michael Feinstein, leads the POPS as Principal Pops Conductor, succeeding Marvin Hamlisch.

A hallmark of its robust education programs, the Pasadena Symphony Association has served the youth of the region for over five decades through the Pasadena Youth Symphony Orchestras (PYSO) comprised of seven performing ensembles, with over 400 gifted 4th-12th grade students from all over Southern California. The PYSO Symphony has performed at venues across the globe as well as on the television show *GLEE*.

The PSA provides people from all walks of life with powerful access points to the world of symphonic music.

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