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Pasadena Symphony & POPS
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For images and artist bios visit: <http://pasadenasympphony-pops.org/press-release-music-stars-2017/>

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**THE PASADENA SYMPHONY AND POPS CELEBRATES GEORGE GERSHWIN WITH
MUSIC UNDER THE STARS, A FREE CONCERT AT PASADENA'S CITY HALL**

*Presented by Bank of America, this family friendly event brings the stars of stage and screen to
Centennial Square*

Pasadena, CA – Stars of stage and screen will illuminate the night sky when the Pasadena Symphony and POPS presents its annual free *Music Under the Stars* concert on **Saturday, June 3** at **Pasadena City Hall's Centennial Square**. Presented with sponsorship support from the **Bank of America Charitable Foundation**, the 2017 Music Under the Stars concert will celebrate iconic music from the legendary George Gershwin with *Porgy and Bess*, *I Got Rhythm*, *Someone to Watch Over Me*, *Embraceable You*, and so many treasured songs penned by the iconic American composer.

Under the baton of Tony Award-nominated, Resident POPS Conductor Larry Blank, the orchestra will welcome three guest vocalists and the JPL Chorus to the stage. Best known today as a popular solo singer and ensemble vocalist, Kiki Ebsen brings her dynamic voice to the program after backing up such legendary artists such as Al Jarreau, Boz Scaggs, Tracy Chapman, and Christopher Cross. Valerie Perri, who made a successful career of performing the role of the charismatic Eva Peron from "Evita," will sweep you away with her dulcet tones. And, returning this year is Christina Saffran, a true triple threat, who will dazzle and amaze with her powerful yet sultry voice.

The family fun begins at 6:00pm with pre-concert activities, family-style picnicking and gourmet food trucks. Families can discover the wonder of creating their own music with the instruments of the orchestra at the instrument "petting zoo," where kids of all ages can toot flutes, blow trumpets, bow strings and bang on percussion instruments. Families can bring their own picnic along to enjoy at the site, or purchase a variety of offerings from a collection of gourmet food trucks.

This family-friendly event is presented with the support of Bank of America's arts program, which supports nonprofit arts and culture presenters at the local level and with leading world-class arts entities. Other programs include the *Museums on Us*® program, which offers Bank of America customers free access to 150 of America's finest cultural institutions, and the *Art in our Communities*® program through which the company shares its corporate collection with museums throughout the world.

Gates open at 6:00pm and the concert begins at 8:00pm. Admission to this event is free, and guests are encouraged to bring a picnic, blanket and low-back chairs. Rental chairs will also be available for purchase. For more information, visit PasadenaSymphony-Pops.org or call 626.793.7172.

IF YOU GO:

- **What:** Bank of America's Music Under the Stars with the Pasadena Symphony and POPS
- **Special Guests:** Larry Blank (conductor), Kiki Ebsen (vocalist), Valerie Perri (vocalist), Christina Saffran (vocalist)
- **When:** Saturday, June 3. Gates open for pre-concert festivities at 6:00 p.m.; concert begins at 8:00 p.m.
- **Where:** Pasadena City Hall Centennial Square
- **Cost:** Free, Chair Rentals \$3
- **Parking:** Plaza Las Fuentes Structure (Union Ave & Los Robles); School House Parking Facility (Green St. & Raymond Ave); Pasadena Center/Sheraton Parking Structure (Marengo & Cordova); Paseo Colorado Subterranean Garage; Paseo Colorado Marengo Avenue Parking Structure; Paseo Colorado Los Robles Parking Structure; Arroyo Seco Park Parking (Raymond Ave or Arroyo Blvd), and Marriott Courtyard Hotel Parking (enter on Raymond).

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Larry Blank Conductor

Resident Pops Conductor, Larry Blank is one of the most prolific and sought after composers, conductors, and orchestrators in the entertainment business today. His work has been presented all over the world, including some of Broadway's most successful musicals, Carnegie Hall, and top television and film projects.

Larry has received Tony and Drama Desk nominations for his orchestrations of *Catch Me If You Can*, *The Drowsy Chaperone* and *White Christmas*. Larry also received Drama Desk nominations for *A Christmas Story* and *Honeymoon in Vegas*.

Other Broadway orchestrations can be heard in the Lincoln Centre production of *The Nance* as well as *Fame Becomes Me*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *The Producers*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and *Tommy Tune: White Tie and Tails*.

Larry is currently orchestrating *Roman Holiday* (Golden Gate Theatre, San Francisco).

Recent projects include *Holiday Inn* (Universal/Roundabout Theater); *Guys and Dolls* (Chichester Festival Theatre, West End and Tour); *Mrs Henderson Presents* (Theatre Royal Bath, West End & Toronto); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Vaudeville) and *Mack & Mabel* (Chichester Festival Theatre and UK Tour).

In the West End, Larry orchestrated *City of Angels* (Donmar Warehouse); *White Christmas* (Dominion); *Singin' in the Rain* (Palace Theatre, UK tour, Japan, International tour, Russia and Australia); *Carousel*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Guys and Dolls*, *The Producers*, *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Mack & Mabel*.

Larry's film orchestrations can be heard in *The Producers* and *Chicago*. Larry was the conductor/arranger/orchestrator for Jerry Herman's title song for the film *Barney's Great Adventure*, sung by Bernadette Peters, as well as orchestrating/arranging two songs for *South Park* for Marc Shaiman; music supervisor/orchestrator for Jerry Herman's *Mrs Santa Claus* with Angela Lansbury; arranger/orchestrator for the films *What's the Worst That Could Happen?*, *The Kid*, *Kiss the Girls*, *The American President*, *Forget Paris*, *City Slickers II: the Legend of Curly's Gold*, *The Net*, *That's Entertainment! III*, *All Dogs Go to Heaven 2*, *Bogus*, *North*, *Speechless*, *I'd Do Anything*, *Stuart Saves His Family*, *Aladdin and the King of Thieves*, *The Jungle Book 2* and *Cats Don't Dance*; composer for two episodes of the television series *In the Heat of the Night*, as well as music for *Sweating Bullets* and the Grammys.

Larry has arranged and/or conducted for Barbra Streisand, Michael Feinstein (including two tours of Australia and New Zealand), Marilyn Horne, Michael Crawford, Christine Andreas, Joe Williams, Yanni, Marvin Hamlisch, Bernadette Peters, Steve Lawrence, Vikki Carr, Pete Fountain, Elaine Stritch, Lorna Luft, Elaine Paige, Jason Alexander, Martin Short, Georgia Brown and many others.

Larry has orchestrated and arranged for four Academy Awards shows including parts of the (Marc Shaiman-arranged) Billy Crystal medleys.

Larry regularly conducts for BBC Radio 2 *Friday Night is Music Night*. Larry orchestrates the *Olivier Awards* for the Society of London Theatre. Larry conducted the *Olivier Awards* at the Royal Opera House in 2015 and 2016.

Kiki Ebsen **Vocalist**

Kiki Ebsen has loved the music of George Gershwin all her life. His signature inspirational melodies, lyrics, and rhythms appealed to the California native, who makes her Pasadena POPS debut this summer. As the youngest daughter born into a famous Hollywood family, Kiki began life surveying the world from Balboa Island before the family relocated to a secluded ranch in the quiet beauty of the Santa Monica Mountains. Wherever she was, the beauty of arts and music enveloped her in creativity.

At a very early age, Ms. Ebsen embraced the classics, opera, and jazz and sat extremely still for performances of the great works in music. Seeing extraordinary art exhibits added fuel to her creative muse. As an adult, she came to realize the connectivity between art and nature, noting how seamlessly one flowed into the other. This observation then explains the range and scope of Kiki's career to date and how she can move among multiple artistic genres with great ease.

Acting may have been the family business, but music was the canvas where Kiki could paint her own unique portrait. Over a few fast decades, Kiki established a dynamic career as a solo artist, separate from her famous parents. Ms. Ebsen garnered great acclaim and a faithful following as singer/songwriter, musical accompanist, vocal soloist, stage performer, and actress, time permitting.

Ms. Ebsen's path to the POPS was inevitable, after years of working on- and off-stage, paying her dues, embracing each musical genre. Early teenage years were divided between performing in rock bands, participating in national equestrian competitions, learning every nuance of stage productions in

her mother's community theatre, and performing on the road with her father's creation, "An Evening That's Entertainment," her first taste of the road on the unglamorous tour bus.

Enrolling at California Institute of the Arts, Kiki auditioned for the chamber singers, where her operatic voice was discovered and encouraged by mentors there. She concentrated primarily on classical voice and piano, but remained steadfast in her love of pop-rock music. In school, Kiki's first opera role was as Barbarina in "The Marriage of Figaro," backed by the California Institute of Arts Orchestra.

After she received her BFA in Vocal Performance from The California Institute of the Arts, Kiki entered and subsequently won the American Collegiate Talent Showcase. She then embarked on a singing and playing career, touring the United States and internationally, supporting platinum-selling artists including Chicago, Tracy Chapman, Al Jarreau, James Ingram, Boz Scaggs, Michael McDonald, and Christopher Cross. Her spare time was spent writing and recording on her own albums. Ms. Ebsen was then invited to perform as the opening act for select artists who graciously endorsed her music while she was on their tours.

In the fall of 2015, Ms. Ebsen was featured with Central Texas Medical Orchestra in Austin, TX. With Christopher Cross, Kiki performed with the Nashville Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony and the Honolulu Symphony. With Colin Hay (Men at Work) she performed with The Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra as well as an international appearance with David Benoit and Michael Paulo with the Magenta Symphony Orchestra at the Java Jazz Festival in Jakarta, Indonesia. Other recent notable appearances include the Laguna Festival of Arts, the Divine Jazz Cruise and the Monarchs of Jazz Festival with David Benoit and Deniece Williams.

Ms. Ebsen's work has regularly included television appearances, i.e., The Grammy Awards (Tracy Chapman) and backing Grammy-winners including Al Jarreau, James Ingram, Peter Cetera, Patti Austin, and Tevin Campbell on "The Tonight Show" starring Jay Leno, "The Late Show" with David Letterman, and "The Arsenio Hall Show." She spent a season on the Emmy-winning daytime, "The Wayne Brady Show" as part of his featured house band.

Kiki served as Vocal Arranger/Co-Music Director from 2001–2005 for Lifetime TV's "Women Rock!" music specials, starring Pat Benatar, Chaka Khan, Dolly Parton, Bonnie Raitt, and Ann Wilson. Her original compositions have been recorded by Boney James, Eric Marienthal, Jessy J, and Deniece Williams for their albums, and her voice is heard on six songs on Peter White's latest CD, "Groovin,'" released in October 2016. Currently she is in the studio working on her seventh solo CD, set for a summer 2017 release.

Ebsen's first foray into films was "hopeful band member" in "Back to the Future" (1985) and reprised the uncredited role of "piano player" on "Glee" (Fox, 2014), "Speechless" (ABC, 2016) and "Life in Pieces" (CBS, 2017). Numerous credited video performances on DVDs include tours with Grammy winners and platinum-selling recording artists Namie Amuro, Belinda Carlisle, Bill Champlin, Tracy Chapman, and Christopher Cross.

Recent performances of The Kiki Ebsen Band offer audiences their favorite originals, popular jazz standards, and beloved Hollywood melodies. When she performs her multimedia show, "To Dad with Love: A Tribute to Buddy Ebsen," focus is on the Great American Songbook. Then, at her Joni Mitchell Project, you will hear a variety of diverse songs from "Song to a Seagull," "For the Roses," and "The Hissing of Summer Lawns."

Ms. Ebsen notes, "Joni Mitchell is a brave and fearless explorer of the heart and soul. Her music continues to inspire others." John K. Adams (Tolucan Times) wrote of Kiki's style, "her honest

delivery also coaxed nuances out of the songs that I'd never heard before. She and her band really brought Mitchell's music to fresh life." Over a dozen first-call Los Angeles recording and touring musicians comprise her musical ensembles.

Through the years, Kiki has received acclaim for her recordings of originals, standards and popular jazz songs. Steve Wagner (American Songwriter) calls her "...a world-class songwriter-performer...with a polished vocal style and songs of substance." Simply at home on any stage she graces, Mary Bogue (Cabaret Scenes) says of "To Dad with Love," Kiki delivers "an exceptional cabaret experience...tender, plaintive and adoring, captivating the audience ...honest connection to the lyrics...It's the best show in town!"

For the past decade, Kiki has grown her educational programs at her Southern California nonprofit, The Healing Equine Ranch. There, classes are offered in natural horsemanship principles, with an emphasis on human growth and awareness to promote healing.

When asked to describe her philosophy on life, creativity, and joy, Ms. Ebsen says, citing a favorite quote by Oscar Wilde, "Be yourself; everyone else is already taken!" Kiki Ebsen continues to create a vibrant life with her own voice, and remains true to her creative muse today, as she paints, sketches and writes on canvas, as well as on her keyboard. Living proof that you really can "do it all" if you are willing to put in the work and honor your gifts and talents, Kiki Ebsen truly is, an artist of the heart.

Valerie Perri **Vocalist**

Valerie Perri recently starred as Dolly Levi in 3D-Theatricals HELLO DOLLY. Eric Marchese of the Orange County Register said, "Valerie Perri delivers a knockout performance as Dolly. Proving a worthy successor to past stars, she's part Channing, part Streisand, part Fanny Brice and 100 percent Dolly." Valerie's career began under the direction of legendary Director/Producer Harold Prince when he chose her to play Eva Peron in the Broadway National of EVITA. She has also had the honor of working with esteemed Director/Choreographer Jerome Robbins in the Broadway National of JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY. She starred as Norma Desmond in the hit musical SUNSET BLVD at The Karen and Richard Carpenter Center which garnered her best actress nomination from Broadway World and also a Los Angeles Stage Scene Award for Best Performance of the Year 2013. She is a recipient of the John Raitt Award for best Cabaret Performance 2014. She has sung for concert hall audiences worldwide, from Disney Hall to Carnegie Hall and internationally at the Opera House in Frankfurt and the London Palladium. Her television and film credits include Criminal Minds, ER, Another World, The Out of Towners, George of the Jungle, Grease, and Dickie Roberts. Valerie's compact disc, "Sweet Conversation" is available on iTunes and you can find her on all social media platforms.

Christina Saffran **Vocalist**

Christina's Broadway career is extensive, having starred as Kathy Seldon in *Singin' in the Rain*, (cast recording), Maggie in *A Chorus Line*, Shoo Shoo in *Sophisticated Ladies*, Rosa Bud and Edwin Drood in *Drood*, and Zaneeta in *The Music Man*.

A true triple threat, audiences throughout the world have been thrilled by her leading performances in *My Fair Lady*, *Showboat*, *South Pacific*, *Phantom*, *White Christmas*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Damn Yankees*, *Sound of Music*, *Pajama*

*Game, She Loves Me, Street Scene, Grease, Company, My One and Only, Chess, Aspects of Love, Me and My Girl, I Do I Do...*the list goes on.

Her concert work includes a multitude of styles ranging from engagements as the lead chanteuse for Herbie Hancock, to soloist with numerous national symphony orchestras, and the Duke Ellington Orchestra as well opening for Don Rickles, with her own show in Las Vegas.

She has provided animated voices for Disney's *Aladdin, Mulan, Magic Flute, 102 Dalmatians, A Bug's Life, Armageddon, Pocahontas II, Hunchback II, and Lady and the Tramp II*, and is heard on *Enchanted, Cinderella, Galaxy Quest, Polar Express, Christmas with the Kranks, The Lorax* and *The Santa Clause II*. Her solo CD entitled *Temporary Insanity* is available at www.LMLMusic.com

Christina is a Founding Board member of Retinoblastoma International (www.retinoblastoma.net), an active member of SGI-USA and the International Committee of Artists for Peace. She is a private vocal teacher/coach/vocal contractor in Los Angeles and the mother of two amazing daughters, Grace and Emma.

ABOUT THE PASADENA SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION

Recent Acclaim for the Pasadena Symphony and POPS:

"The Pasadena Symphony signals a new direction...teeming with vitality...dripping with opulent, sexy emotion." – *Los Angeles Times*.

"...full of pulsating energy from first note to last... the strings were lushly resonant, the wind principals were at the top of their games, and the brass rang out with gleaming vigor." – *Pasadena Star News*.

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 industry, 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. Internationally recognized, Grammy-nominated conductor, David Lockington, serves as the Pasadena Symphony Association's Music Director, with performance-practice specialist Nicholas McGegan serving as Principal Guest Conductor. The multi-platinum-selling, two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer dubbed "The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook," Michael Feinstein, is the Principal Pops Conductor, who succeeded Marvin Hamlisch in the newly created *Marvin Hamlisch Chair*.

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 five performing ensembles, with over 250 gifted 4th-12th grade students from more than 50 schools all over the Southern California region. The PYSO Symphony often performs on the popular 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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