

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Pasadena Symphony Association**  
**Pasadena Symphony & POPS**  
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For artist images and bios, visit: <https://pasadenasympphony-pops.org/aretha-a-tribute-press-release/>

**BROADWAY DIVA CAPATHIA JENKINS CHANNELS THE QUEEN OF SOUL FOR THE PASADENA POPS  
GLITTERING TRIBUTE TO ARETHA FRANKLIN**

**Pasadena, CA** – The **Pasadena POPS** continue their one-of-a kind, outdoor concert series with the timeless music of the Queen of Soul for **Aretha: A Tribute on Saturday, July 23 at the LA County Arboretum**. Broadway diva **Capathia Jenkins** will honor Aretha Franklin’s legacy in a show that’s been touring to national acclaim for this exclusive Southern California engagement. **Resident POPS Conductor Larry Blank** will lead the orchestra for your favorite Aretha hits including “Respect,” “Chain of Fools,” “I Say a Little Prayer,” “Natural Woman,” “Think,” as well other Motown chart-toppers, all in symphonic sound by Pasadena’s premiere orchestra.

Known for her “soaring voice – sweet, smart, sassy and full of soul” (*Chicago Tribune*), Capathia Jenkins has been praised for both her singing and acting chops, having graced Broadway with many leading roles, most recently as Medda in the hit Disney production of *Newsies*. Capathia will share the stage with triple threat **Matthew Johnson**, a Pasadena native who will get the audience on their feet. Trained through **Alvin Ailey** and by his mentor **Debbie Allen**, Johnson has performed with the likes of Pharrell, John Legend, Jennifer Lopez, Childish Gambino and Stevie Wonder. Gospel Choir **KJLH Radio Free Voices**, named as Stevie Wonder’s choir, will uplift the soulful program, acting as back-up on a selection of pieces.

All concerts are held at the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Gardens. Grounds open for picnicking and dining at 5:30pm and performances begin at 7:30pm. Don’t miss the best outdoor dinner party in town with spacious circular table seating with fine linens, or lawn seating for those who want to bring a blanket – each option carries on the tradition of picnic-dining with your family and friends listening to the San Gabriel Valley’s premier orchestra! Among many venue amenities, concert goers can enjoy pre-ordered gourmet box dinners for on-site pickup just steps from their table or a variety of food truck options.

The Arboretum is located at 301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA. Subscribers may purchase pre-paid onsite parking at the Arboretum, and all concertgoers can purchase guaranteed and convenient parking at Santa Anita Park, with non-stop shuttle service to the Arboretum’s main entrance.

Single tickets starting at \$25. Single tickets are on sale now, and are available by calling the box office at (626) 793-7172, online at [PasadenaSymphony-Pops.org](https://PasadenaSymphony-Pops.org) or at the Arboretum on concert days.

**IF YOU GO:**

- **What:** The Pasadena POPS presents Aretha: A Tribute  
Larry Blank, *Resident Pops Conductor*  
Capathia Jenkins, *soloist*  
Matthew Johnson, *soloist*  
KJLH Radio Free Voices, *choir*
- **When:** Saturday, July 23, 2022. Concert starts at 7:30pm. Gates open at 5:30pm.
- **Where:** The LA County Arboretum | 301 N Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA 91007
- **Cost:** Tickets start at \$25.00
- **Dining:** Gates open at 5:30pm for picnicking. Guests are welcome to bring their own food and drink or pre-order from onsite food vendors.
- **Parking:** Subscribers have the opportunity to purchase onsite Arboretum parking. Single ticket holders may purchase guaranteed and convenient parking at Santa Anita Park, located just across Baldwin Ave., with non-stop shuttle service to the Arboretum's main entrance for \$10. Available for pre-purchase or cash only on-site.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### Larry Blank Resident POPS 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.

He was the Music Director/Conductor and/or vocal arranger for many shows on Broadway and in Los Angeles including *They're Playing Our Song*, *Evita*, *Sugar Babies*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Phantom Of The Opera*, *Onward Victoria*, *Copperfield*, *Colette*, *A Chorus Line* and *A Little Night Music*. He has been nominated three times for both the Tony Award and the Drama Desk Award for his orchestrations in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* and with Marc Shaiman for *Catch Me If You Can*. Larry received a Drama Desk Nomination for orchestrations for *A Christmas Story*.

Larry contributed to the orchestrations for both the stage and film production of *The Producers*, the film *Chicago* and is a regular conductor and arranger for BBC RADIO 2 Friday Night Is Music Night in the UK. Larry is also the Music Supervisor and Orchestrator (along with Mark Cumberland) for the *Olivier Awards* in London.

Blank has worked with top talent from varied fields of the entertainment world, notably as personal conductor to Michael Crawford. He has also worked with Michael Feinstein, Marvin Hamlisch, Bernadette Peters, Kelsey Grammar, Christine Baranski, Roberta Flack, Pete Fountain, Peabo Bryson, Sally Kellerman, Nancy Dussault, Marc Shaiman, Jerry Herman, Ann- Margaret, Davis Gaines, Bette Midler, George Benson, Placido Domingo, Randy Newman, Trisha Yearwood, Tom Scott, Quincy Jones, Michael Bolton, John Raitt and Diana Rigg.

Blank's background includes orchestrating and arranging songs for *South Park* and was Music Supervisor and Orchestrator for Jerry Herman's movie, *Mrs. Santa Claus* starring Angela Lansbury and Charles Durning. Some of the films he lent his talent to include *The Kid*, *Kiss The Girls*, *The American President*, *Forget Paris*, *City Slickers II*, *The Net*, *That's Entertainment III*, *North, I'd Do Anything*, and *Stuart Saves His Family*. Blank's music can be heard on the animated feature films, *Cats Don't Dance* and *All Dogs Go To Heaven* as well as the *101 Dalmatians Christmas Special*.

Mr. Blank's television work includes orchestrating and composing music for several of the Grammy Awards and Academy Award shows as well as numerous television movies and shows.

Mr. Blank has guest conducted most of the orchestras throughout the world, including *The San Francisco Symphony*, *The New York Philharmonic*, *Western Australia Symphony Orchestra*, *The Los Angeles Philharmonic*, *Palm Beach Pops*, *Auckland Symphony*, *The National Symphony Orchestra*, *The Boston Pops*, *The Chicago Symphony Orchestra*, *Calgary Symphony*, *New Orleans Symphony* and *Toronto*.

### **Capathia Jenkins** **Soloist**

Capathia Jenkins can definitely act but all those who know her also know that this diva can blow and blow and blow you right off this planet. This woman grapples with two dueling passions each with a strong grip: acting and music, yet she refuses to pick one because they both represent her soul. Capathia approaches a song the same way she approaches a script, like an artist. She looks for the nuances, the secret hidden within the notes or text. She seeks the melody, harmony and rhythm. She asks herself: what am I trying to say? What do I want my audience to experience with me? She wants to take her audience on a journey.

This Brooklyn-born and raised actress most recently starred as 'Medda' in the hit Disney production of *Newsies* on Broadway. She made her Broadway debut in *The Civil War*, where she created the role of Harriet Jackson. She then starred in the Off-Broadway 2000 revival of *Godspell*, where she wowed audiences with her stirring rendition of "Turn Back, O Man," which can still be heard on the original cast recording. She returned to Broadway in *The Look of Love* and was critically acclaimed for her performances of the Bacharach/David hits. Ms. Jenkins then created the roles of "The Washing Machine" in *Caroline, Or Change* and "Frieda May" in *Martin Short: Fame Becomes Me*, where she sang "Stop the Show" and brought the house down every night.

In 2007 she went back to Off-Broadway and starred in *(mis) Understanding Mammy-The Hattie McDaniel Story* for which she was nominated for a Drama Desk Award. She was also seen in Nora Ephron's *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*.

An active concert artist, Ms. Jenkins has appeared with orchestras around the world including the Cleveland Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony (with Marvin Hamlisch), National Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Utah Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, San Antonio Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Memphis Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Toledo Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Edmonton Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, Kansas City Symphony, San Diego Symphony and the Hong Kong Philharmonic. She was a soloist with the Festival Cesky Krumlov in the Czech Republic. In 2011 Capathia had the great honor of performing in the *Broadway Ambassadors to Cuba* concert as part of the Festival De Teatro De La Habana. Ms. Jenkins was a guest soloist with Peter Nero and the Philly Pops and with the Cincinnati Pops.

Her Television credits include *30 Rock*, *The Practice*, *Law & Order SVU*, the *Sopranos* and *Law & Order*. She can be seen in the 2012 film *Musical Chairs* directed by Susan Seidelman and she can be heard on the film soundtracks to *Nine*, *Chicago* and *Legally Blonde 2*.

### **Matthew Johnson**

#### **Soloist**

The multi-talented Matthew Johnson is an actor, singer, dancer, and musician who has performed with the likes of Pharrell, John Legend, Jennifer Lopez, Childish Gambino, and Stevie Wonder. His musical theater roots were cultivated at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, and through his mentor, Debbie Allen, who helped mold him into the triple threat performer he is today. Matthew has done vocal arrangements for the Grammy Awards as well as performed at the Emmys and the Billboard Awards. He honed his skills as a vocal chameleon on some of the world's most watched television shows such as *American Idol*, *The Voice*, *X Factor* and *Late Night with James Corden*. He's shared the stage and studio with some of Hollywood's biggest names including Kelly Clarkson, Sam Smith, Demi Lavato, and Jennifer Hudson. On the big screen, Matthew stars as Mack in Warner Brother's *Christmas on the Square* starring Dolly Parton and Christine Baranski which received an Emmy nomination this year.

### **KJLH Radio Free Voices**

#### **Choir**

The KJLH RADIOFREE VOICES is a Community Gospel Choir founded in 2012. The brain child of Traci "Ebony" Brown, Continuity Director at KJLH. It consists of Voices found within the community from all walks of life, all who enjoy singing praises to the masses.

They have been seen throughout the community at various events. Their first debut was made at the nationally known "KJLH Gospel Fest" which was given each year at Knott's Berry Farm. They also wowed the audiences at the Taste of Soul Event from 2012 thru 2019 this event attracts over 350,000 spectators each year.

Named as Stevie Wonder's choir they have served as an opening act for Stevie's House Full of Toys Benefit Concert for the past 6 years. He Branded them as HIS " KJLH Radio Free Voices." They were ALSO spotted singing their praises for Rev Al Sharpton, Justin Bieber, Zendaya, Childish Gambino sharing the stage with Dorinda Clark as well as Fred Hammond Ty Tribbett, Detrick Haddon and so many more.

This choir is on the rise with their magnificent blend of voices ready to be heard. KJLH Radio Free Voices is under the Directorship of Tyanta Snow. Ty currently works with various local church & community choirs. You, will find this young man has an infectious praise and his dedication to kingdom building through music is unmatched.

### **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 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. 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 700 gifted 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students from 85 schools 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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