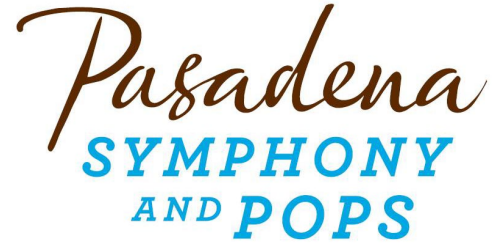


**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Pasadena Symphony Association  
Pasadena Symphony & POPS**  
Contact: Marisa McCarthy  
mmccarthy@PasadenaSymphony-Pops.org  
(626) 793-7172 ext. 13



September 8, 2023

For artist images, please visit: <https://pasadenasympphony-pops.org/press-release-moonlight-sonata-2023/>

**PASADENA SYMPHONY AND POPS HOST GLIMMERING ANNUAL GALA  
AT PASADENA CITY HALL**

**Pasadena, CA** – Join the **Pasadena Symphony Association (PSA)** for an unforgettable evening of enchantment and romance on Saturday, **September 23, 2023** as they host their annual **Moonlight Sonata Gala**, surrounded by the beauty of **Pasadena City Hall**. The festivities will kick off with an elegant courtyard reception, followed by a luxe dinner, live auction and program filled with music and dancing under a starry night in **Centennial Square**.

Music from the Pasadena Youth Symphony Orchestras will usher guests into Centennial Square with a warm welcome, and acclaimed Classical KUSC and Los Angeles Philharmonic’s “Inside the Music” host **Brian Lauritzen** will present the evening’s program as guests enjoy a decadent four-course meal by Claud & Co. To top off the elegant affair, a quartet of musicians from the Pasadena Symphony will perform an intimate set of Classical selections befitting this enchanted night of music and community. The soirée will close as guests dance the night away to music provided by a live band, The Mixtape.

This year’s event will honor two longtime Pasadena Symphony Association supporters as outstanding luminaries. *Philanthropist Luminaries* **Marlene R. Konnar and John D. Baldeschwieler** will be recognized for their longtime support of the Pasadena Symphony and POPS, unwavering enthusiasm, and community leadership. The PSA will also recognize *Leadership Luminary* **Lora Unger** for her decade-long tenure as CEO of the Pasadena Symphony Association, whose vision, tenacity, and energy has built the PSA into what it is today.

Tickets to the Moonlight Sonata Gala are limited. Individual tickets start at \$300 and may be purchased by visiting [PasadenaSymphony-Pops.org](https://PasadenaSymphony-Pops.org) or by contacting Kevin Batton, Development Associate at [kevin@pasadenasympphony-pops.org](mailto:kevin@pasadenasympphony-pops.org) or 626.793.7172 x27.

**IF YOU GO:**

**What:** The Pasadena Symphony and POPS 2023 Moonlight Sonata Gala

**When:** Saturday, September 23, 2023, 5:30pm – 10:30pm

**Where:** Centennial Square | 100 N. Garfield Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

**Parking:** Complimentary valet parking available onsite.

**Cost:** Individual tickets \$300 each; Patron level: \$1,500 includes two VIP tickets and listing in the event program book. Sponsorship and underwriting opportunities are also available at [bit.ly/moonlightsonata23](http://bit.ly/moonlightsonata23).

## **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 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students from all over Southern California.

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

## **ABOUT MARLENE R. KONNAR AND JOHN D. BALDSCHWIELER**

Devoted to Music. Committed to Community.

John R. Baldeschwieler is Professor Emeritus at the California Institute of Technology, where he has worked since 1973. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society. Brilliantly expansive, John previously taught at Harvard University and Stanford University, and he served as Deputy Director of the Office of Science and Technology in the White House. Baldeschwieler was a recipient of the National Medal of Science, 2000. He was an alumnus of Cornell University and the University of California, Berkeley. He has previously taught at Harvard University and Stanford University. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1970, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1972 and the American Philosophical Society in 1979.

Marlene D. Konnar lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan where she worked as the science news writer for the University of Michigan and then for two hi-tech companies, as Public Relations Manager for Titan Technologies, Inc. and as Marketing Communications Director for PC Technologies, Inc. With a strong entrepreneurial spirit, Marlene developed my own consulting business in the late 1970s. During this time, Marlene served on the Executive Board of the Professional Women in University, Communications and on the Public Relations Advisory Board of the GMI Engineering and Management Institute. I was a member of the National Association of Science Writers, the Public Relations Society of America and The Pen Dragons, a Michigan calligraphy society. Before that, she worked in science-related administrative positions at Stanford University, SRI International and the Mellon Institute (now part of Carnegie-Mellon University). Embracing an artistic drive, Marlene is also a professional calligrapher, an aspiring visual artist, and short story writer.

Marlene and John met many times over the years as their social and professional circles overlapped. Marlene thoughtfully considered John marriage proposal several times before saying yes and moving to Pasadena in 1991. Once settled in the City of Roses, Marlene joined the Women's Committee of the Pasadena Symphony Association, and has since been the auxiliary group's Holiday Look In Co-Chair (1993), Chair (1994), and President (1995-1997). She has also served in the Board of Directors from 1993-1997, and is currently a member of the organization's Advisory Board of Directors. John has dedicated his time as Marlene's right-hand helper on dozens of Holiday Look Ins events as a ticket taker, refreshment server, and a docent. Marlene and John are loyal Pasadena Symphony audience members, and devoted to the overall well-being of the orchestra.

Marlene and John have been enthusiastic, passionate, and visionary supporters of the Pasadena Symphony and POPS for decades; underwriting individual concerts, launching artistic initiatives, and contributing to the overall success of the Pasadena Symphony Association's financial health and community impact.

The Pasadena Symphony Association is honored and humbled to present this year's Philanthropist Luminary to Marlene and John. Congratulations!

## **ABOUT LORA UNGER**

Fearless. Passionate. Visionary.

Originally from Louisville, Kentucky, Lora Unger knew at a very young age she wanted to have a career in the fine arts while also using her savvy business mindset. She received her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Louisville and attended the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music for her graduate degree in Arts Administration.

Lora Unger has received numerous awards throughout her career and has been recognized for her outstanding leadership and commitment to the music industry. She has been featured as a Woman Achiever in Business Life Magazine, in The Pulse Magazine with a featured article and 2018, she was selected by the New York-based International Association of Top Professionals as Top CEO of the Year.

Lora Unger lead the Pasadena Symphony and POPS for over ten years, but has been leading in the music industry for over two decades. As a dynamic, results-driven leader, Lora has demonstrated success as the organization's former CEO, but also played a critical role in transforming the orchestra's artistic leadership, reinventing its brand, and, during her tenure, moved the orchestra into two world-class performance venues, the Ambassador Auditorium and the LA County Arboretum and Botanic Gardens. While at the helm, she more than tripled the Pasadena Symphony and POPS' audience base and cemented the orchestra's place in the region as the pre-eminent voice for live symphonic music.

Lora has said, "It's an emotional transaction that reflects the intrinsic value of how deeply music can transform people, and I am have been deeply honored to be part of that with the Pasadena Symphony Association."

In 2023, Lora Unger joined the leadership team at the Performing Arts Center Eastside (PACE) in Bellevue, Washington. There her unique combination of high-level executive, artistic and fundraising experience together with her entrepreneurial approach as a performing arts programmer and community builder has dazzled the Pacific Northwest.

The Pasadena Symphony Association congratulates Lora Unger on receiving its augural Leadership Luminary Award.

## **ABOUT BRIAN LAURTIZEN**

The answer to the question Brian Lauritzen gets most often is no.\*

Brian believes that classical music is deeply serious, riotously humorous, and everything in between. He exhibits a healthy respect for this great art, and the great artists who create it, and balances that regard with a tasteful irreverence in his presentations on Classical KUSC.

Ultimately, Brian believes there are few absolutes when it comes to music—only personal taste. If you don't like something, you're not wrong. Brian has occasionally been criticized for using words like, "awesome," "facepalm," and "dude" on the air...and he's fine with that. Classical music purists may not fully understand Brian's love for hip-hop and bluegrass music, but then when he begins to geek out over the intricacies of a Mahler symphony everything begins to make sense again.

Although, he doesn't count as a passenger for HOV lane restrictions, Brian is happy to ride shotgun with you during your commute home. You can catch him weekdays from 3:00-7:00 p.m. He presides over the celebrated Classical Anti-Road-Rage Melody (CarTune), every day at 5:00, now expanded to a full 20-minute set of soothing selections designed to help you keep calm on the roadways of Southern California.

As the multi-award-winning host of Arts Alive, Brian has had conversations with dozens of top classical musicians and artists. Among them, Gustavo Dudamel, Dawn Upshaw, Frank Gehry, Hilary Hahn, Pierre Boulez, Wynton Marsalis, Sir Simon Rattle, and many others.

More than three million people tune in each season for the internationally-syndicated concert broadcasts of the Los Angeles Philharmonic that Brian produces and hosts. He has traveled to Europe, Asia, and South America with the LA Phil. His choral music program, Soul Music, is consistently one of the most popular programs on Classical KUSC.

While much of his life is spent behind triple-paned glass in a soundproof studio underground in Downtown Los Angeles, Brian does occasionally see the light of day. He is, in fact, one of Southern California's most sought-after speakers about classical music. His pontifications (rarely boring) bring the music of the past to life, contextualizing it for the present moment, and are just as likely to include deep musical analysis as well as references to a TV show or movie that he saw recently. Brian hosts a series called "Inside the Music" at the LA Phil. He's also the Resident Host for the Salastina Music Society and makes regular appearances with Los Angeles Opera, the Philharmonic Society of Orange County, and the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Beverly Hills.

On social media, you can find Brian sharing interesting tidbits about music, life behind the scenes at KUSC, and way fewer food pictures than he used to. His Twitter feed (@BrianKUSC) has been highlighted by National Public Radio and the LA Times. His advocacy for women in classical music has earned him praise from the San Francisco Chronicle and elsewhere.

\*Brian Lauritzen is not related to composer Morten Lauridsen.

- end -