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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/tchaikovsky-piano-concerto-no-1-press-release/>

**PRIZE-WINNING PIANIST WYNONA WANG BRINGS FIRE TO TCHAIKOVSKY PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 FOR PASADENA SYMPHONY'S ODE TO ROMANCE**

**Pasadena, CA** – The Pasadena Symphony presents **Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1** on **Saturday, February 17, 2024** with performances at **2:00pm** and **8:00pm** at **Ambassador Auditorium**. The Pasadena Symphony's ode to romance arrives just in time for Valentine's weekend, with Tchaikovsky's most popular piano concerto performed by award-winning Chinese pianist **Wynona Wang**, who continues to dazzles on the international stage since winning First Prize at the Concert Artists Guild International Competition.

Accomplished conductor **Kyle Dickson** will take the podium to lead the orchestra for this romantic and revelatory program. Winner of the Concert Artists Guild's Richard S. Weinert Award, Dickson was a recent Salonen Conducting Fellow with the San Francisco Symphony and is Assistant Conductor of both the Memphis Symphony and Chicago Sinfonietta. Dickson will open the program with **Jessie Montgomery's Strum**, hot off her **GRAMMY win for Best Contemporary Classical Composition**, and will conclude the program with **Sibelius' sumptuous Second Symphony**.

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. Subscription packages start at as low as \$99, with single tickets starting at \$42. Both may be purchased online at [www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org](http://www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org) or by calling (626) 793-7172.

## IF YOU GO:

- **What:** The Pasadena Symphony presents Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1  
**Kyle Dickson**, conductor  
**Wynona Wang**, piano  
  

<b>Jessie Montgomery</b>	Strum
<b>Tchaikovsky</b>	Piano Concerto No. 1
<b>Sibelius</b>	Symphony No. 2
- **When:** Saturday, February 17, 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

### **Kyle Dickson** **Conductor**

American conductor Kyle Dickson is quickly building a reputation as an innovative and compelling presence on the podium. Recipient of the 2021 GPMF Advocate for Arts Award, Dickson is a Salonen Conducting Fellow with the San Francisco Symphony under the guidance of Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen through the Negaunee Conducting Program at the Colburn Conservatory in Los Angeles. In 2021 he became the recipient of the Richard S. Weinert Award from Concert Artists Guild.

He is Assistant Conductor of the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles and previously served as Music Director of Chicago's South Loop Symphony. Dickson was a Conducting Fellow at the 2021 National Orchestral Institute's Conducting Academy with Marin Alsop and James Ross, and from 2019 to 2021 was a Project Inclusion Freeman Conducting Fellow with Chicago Sinfonietta under the mentorship of Music Director Mei-Ann Chen. In 2020, he was selected as

Assistant Conductor of Spoleto Festival USA for the world premiere of Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels' opera, *Omar*.

Dickson works regularly with youth ensembles and has given numerous masterclasses and webinars for many arts programs including the Chicago Youth Symphony Ensembles and Ravinia's El Sistema program. Beginning his career as a violinist, Dickson was a prizewinner at the 2010 NANM National Concerto Competition and has held residencies at Indiana University-South Bend and the United World College of South East Asia as a chamber musician. In 2021, Dickson earned his master's degree in orchestral conducting from Northwestern University studying with Victor Yampolsky. He also received degrees in violin performance from Michigan State University (BM) and DePaul University (MM).

### **Wynona Wang**

#### **Piano**

Pianist **Wynona Wang** was selected as First Prize winner of the 2018 Concert Artists Guild International Competition, which is just the latest in a series of impressive first prize performances, along with the 2017 Wideman International Piano Competition in Louisiana. Wynona was also awarded the 2019 "Charlotte White" Career Grant awarded by the Salon de Virtuosi in New York City.

An active performer in China, Europe and the United States, Wynona's recent performances include appearances with the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, the Meadows Symphony Orchestra of SMU in Dallas, and such major festivals as PianoTexas, Morningside Music Bridge in Calgary, Canada, the International Keyboard Institute & Festival in New York City, and the Chautauqua Institution. Internationally, Wynona has been a featured soloist with the Academic Symphony Orchestra of the National Philharmonic Society of Ukraine, and the Romanian Mihail Jora Philharmonic Orchestra in Italy. She has also given numerous solo piano recitals in China—including cities such as Beijing, Qingdao, Hangzhou, Wuhan, Shenzhen, Kunming, Ningbo, and Dalian—as well as in Spain (Madrid) and Indonesia (Jakarta).

Born in Beijing, Wynona Wang began playing piano at age 4, and went on to study at both the Music Elementary and Secondary schools at the prestigious Central Conservatory of Music (CCOM) in Beijing. In fall 2016, she was awarded a full scholarship for her Performer's Diploma at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and she now lives in New York while pursuing her undergraduate degree at The Juilliard School as a student of Dr. Robert McDonald.

### **Jessie Montgomery**

#### **Composer**

Jessie Montgomery is a GRAMMY Award-winning composer, violinist and educator. She is the recipient of the Leonard Bernstein Award from the ASCAP Foundation, and her works are performed frequently around the world by leading musicians and ensembles. Her music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, language, and social justice, placing her squarely as one of the most relevant interpreters of 21st-century

American sound and experience. Her profoundly felt works have been described as “turbulent, wildly colorful and exploding with life” (*The Washington Post*).

Jessie was born and raised in Manhattan’s Lower East Side in the 1980s during a time when the neighborhood was at a major turning point in its history. Artists gravitated to the hotbed of artistic experimentation and community development. Her parents – her father a musician, her mother a theater artist and storyteller – were engaged in the activities of the neighborhood and regularly brought Jessie to rallies, performances, and parties where neighbors, activists, and artists gathered to celebrate and support the movements of the time. It is from this unique experience that Jessie has created a life that merges composing, performance, education, and advocacy.

Since 1999, Jessie has been affiliated with The Sphinx Organization, which supports young African-American and Latinx string players. She currently serves as composer-in-residence for the Sphinx Virtuosi, the Organization’s flagship professional touring ensemble. She was a two-time laureate of the annual Sphinx Competition and was awarded a generous MPower grant to assist in the development of her debut album, *Strum: Music for Strings* (Azica Records). She has received additional grants and awards from the ASCAP Foundation, Chamber Music America, American Composers Orchestra, the Joyce Foundation, and the Sorel Organization.

Her growing body of work includes solo, chamber, vocal, and orchestral works. Some recent highlights include *Five Slave Songs* (2018) commissioned for soprano Julia Bullock by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Records from a Vanishing City* (2016) for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, *Caught by the Wind* (2016) for the Albany Symphony and the American Music Festival, and *Banner* (2014) – written to mark the 200th anniversary of The Star-Spangled Banner – for The Sphinx Organization and the Joyce Foundation.

In the 2019-20 season, new commissioned works will be premiered by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the National Choral Society, and ASCAP Foundation. Jessie is also teaming up with composer-violinist Jannina Norpoth to reimagine Scott Joplin’s opera *Treemonisha*; it is being produced by Volcano Theatre and co-commissioned by Washington Performing Arts, Stanford University, Southbank Centre (London), National Arts Centre (Ottawa), and the Banff Centre for the Arts. Additionally, the Philharmonia Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony will all perform Montgomery’s works this season.

The New York Philharmonic has selected Jessie as one of the featured composers for their Project 19, which marks the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, granting equal voting rights in the United States to women. Other forthcoming works include a nonet inspired by the Great Migration, told from the perspective of Montgomery’s great-grandfather William McCauley and to be performed by Imani Winds and the Catalyst Quartet; a cello concerto for Thomas Mesa jointly commissioned by Carnegie Hall, New World Symphony, and The Sphinx Organization; and a new orchestral work for the National Symphony.

Jessie began her violin studies, at the Third Street Music School Settlement, one of the oldest community organizations in the country. A founding member of PUBLIQuartet and currently a member of the Catalyst Quartet, she continues to maintain an active performance career as a violinist appearing regularly with her own ensembles, as well as with the Silkroad Ensemble and Sphinx Virtuosi.

Jessie's teachers and mentors include Sally Thomas, Ann Setzer, Alice Kanack, Joan Tower, Derek Bermel, Mark Suozzo, Ira Newborn, and Laura Kaminsky. She holds degrees from the Juilliard School and New York University and is currently a Graduate Fellow in Music Composition at Princeton University.

### **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 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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