



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Pasadena Symphony Association**

**Pasadena Symphony & POPS**

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June 18, 2024

For artist images and bios, visit: [pasadenasympphony-pops.org/harlem-nights-press-release/](https://pasadenasympphony-pops.org/harlem-nights-press-release/)

**MICHAEL FEINSTEIN KICKS OFF PASADENA POPS SUMMER SEASON WITH A CELEBRATION OF  
DUKE ELLINGTON'S 125<sup>th</sup>**

***With Legendary Trumpeter Byron Stripling and Grammy Award-Winning Singer Catherine Russell***

**Pasadena, CA** – Principal Pops Conductor **Michael Feinstein** kicks-off the **Pasadena POPS 2024 Rusnak Summer Concert series on Saturday, June 29** with **Harlem Nights**. The season opening concert will celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of Duke Ellington and the explosion of music in 1920s New York that gave birth to the Jazz Age, Swing Era and beyond. Hear timeless hits from **Ellington, Gershwin and Louis Armstrong** to **Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday** and more, all in symphonic sound by the San Gabriel Valley's premiere orchestra.

The stars will come out for this special celebration, with the return of larger-than-life jazz songstress **Catherine Russell**, who has toured with the likes of Steely Dan, David Bowie, Cyndi Lauper and Paul Simon, and earned a Grammy Award for her work on the soundtrack for the HBO series *Boardwalk Empire*. Russell will share the stage with legendary singer and trumpeter **Byron Stripling**, recently named Principal Pops Conductor of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Stripling also holds the post of Principal Pops Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and has been a frequent performer with the Boston Pops under the batons of both John Williams and Keith Lockhart. Stripling earned his stripes as lead trumpeter of the Count Basie Orchestra and has been likened to Louis Armstrong for his electrifying trumpet and vocals, which are sure to dazzle the POPS audience.

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 with Michael Feinstein and 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, two full-service beverage centers and a variety of food truck options.

The Arboretum is located at 301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA. Subscribers may purchase pre-paid on-site 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 start at \$30. Season subscriptions and single tickets are now on sale 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 Harlem Nights  
Michael Feinstein, *Principal Pops Conductor*  
Catherine Russell, vocalist  
Byron Stripling, trumpeter and vocalist
- **When:** Saturday, June 29, 2024. 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 \$30.00
- **Dining:** Gates open at 5:30pm for picnicking. Guests are welcome to bring their own food and drink, pre-order boxed meals, or purchase from onsite food and beverage vendors.
- **Parking:** Subscribers have the opportunity to purchase onsite Arboretum parking. Single ticket holders may purchase guaranteed and convenient parking at Santa Anita Park Lot 6, located just across Baldwin Ave., with complimentary non-stop shuttle service to the Arboretum's main entrance. Lot 6 parking may be purchased in advanced at [pasadenasymphony-pops.org](https://pasadenasymphony-pops.org) or onsite (**cash only**) for \$20.

#### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

##### **Michael Feinstein Principal Pops Conductor**

In addition to his recognition as one of the leading musical entertainers and piano virtuosos of recent decades, Michael Feinstein's work as an educator, archivist, interpreter, and Ambassador of the Great American Songbook have established the popular and honored musician as a pre-eminent force in contemporary music. His dazzling career as a top-selling and critically acclaimed recording artist and a star performer on Broadway, and the world's great concert stages has earned him five Grammy Award nominations, two Emmy nominations of his PBS-TV specials and acclaim for his NPR series. His live concerts have spanned the globe including such iconic venues such as The White House, Buckingham Palace, Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall, and the Sydney Opera House.

In 2022, Feinstein released to rave reviews, *Gershwin Country*, an album of standards in duet with some of the biggest names in Country Music from Dolly Parton and Alison Krauss to Brad Paisley and Amy Grant.

In 2007, as an extension of his work as a legendary performer and passionate guardian of his nation's greatest musical traditions, Mr. Feinstein founded the Great American Songbook Foundation. The Foundation works to preserve and elevate America's rich musical legacy by curating physical artifacts of its creators and performers; offering programs for the public and research opportunities for scholars, historians, and performers; and providing educational opportunities for student musicians, including the annual high school Songbook Academy®. For over a decade, Michael served as a Founding Member on the Library of Congress' National Recording Preservation Board; an organization dedicated to ensuring the survival, conservation and increased public availability of America's sound recording heritage.

Feinstein earned his fifth Grammy Award nomination in 2009 for *The Sinatra Project*, his CD celebrating the music of "Ol' Blue Eyes." *The Sinatra Project, Volume II: The Good Life* was released in 2011. He released the CDs *The Power Of Two* – collaborating with *Glee* and *30 Rock* star Cheyenne Jackson – and *Cheek To Cheek*, recorded with Broadway legend Barbara Cook. For Feinstein's CD *We Dreamed These Days*, he co-wrote the title song with Dr. Maya Angelou.

His Emmy Award-nominated TV special *Michael Feinstein – The Sinatra Legacy*, which was taped live at the Palladium in Carmel, IN, aired across the country in 2011. The PBS series *Michael Feinstein's American Songbook*, the recipient of the ASCAP Deems-Taylor Television Broadcast Award, was broadcast for three seasons and is available on DVD. His most recent primetime PBS-TV Special, *New Year's Eve at The Rainbow Room* – written and directed by *Desperate Housewives* creator Marc Cherry – aired in 2014. For his nationally syndicated public radio program *Song Travels*, Michael interviewed and performed alongside of music luminaries such as Bette Midler, Neil Sedaka, Liza Minnelli, Rickie Lee Jones, David Hyde Pierce and more.

Feinstein was named Principal Pops Conductor for the Pasadena Symphony in 2012 and made his conducting debut in June 2013 to celebrated critical acclaim. Under Feinstein's leadership, the Pasadena Pops has quickly become a premier orchestral presenter of the Great American Songbook with definitive performances of rare orchestrations and classic arrangements. He launched an additional Pops series at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in Palm Beach, Florida in 2014.

Michael's book *The Gershwins and Me* – the *Los Angeles Times* best-seller from Simon & Schuster – features a new CD of Gershwin standards performed with Cyrus Chestnut at the piano.

Feinstein serves as Artistic Director of the Center for the Performing Arts, a \$170 million, three-theatre venue in Carmel, Indiana, which opened in January 2011. The theater is home to diverse live programming and a museum for his rare memorabilia and manuscripts. Since 1999, he has served as Artistic Director for Carnegie Hall's "Standard Time with Michael Feinstein" in conjunction with ASCAP.

In 2010 he became the director of the Jazz and Popular Song Series at New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Feinstein's at the Nikko, Michael's nightclub at San Francisco's Nikko Hotel, has presented the top talents of pop and jazz since 2013. He debuted at Feinstein's/54 Below, his new club in New York, late in 2015. His first venue in New York, Feinstein's at the Regency, featured major entertainers such as Rosemary Clooney, Glen Campbell, Barbara Cook, Diahann Carroll, Jane Krakowski, Lea Michele, Cyndi Lauper, Jason Mraz, and Alan Cumming from 1999 to 2012. Most recently, Feinstein opened his first Los Angeles location, Feinstein's at Vitello's in June of 2019.

He has designed a new piano for Steinway called "The First Ladies," inspired by the White House piano and signed by several former First Ladies. It was first played to commemorate the Ronald Regan centennial on February 6, 2011.

In 2013 Michael released *Change Of Heart: The Songs of Andre Previn* in collaboration with four time Oscar and eleven time Grammy Award-winning composer-conductor-pianist Andre Previn. The album celebrates Previn's pop songs and motion picture classics. Earlier album highlights include *Hopeless Romantics*, a songbook of classics by Michael's late friend Harry Warren, recording with legendary jazz pianist George Shearing. His album with songwriting icon Jimmy Webb, *Only One Life – The Songs of Jimmy Webb*, was named one of "10 Best CDs of the Year" by *USA Today*.

Feinstein received his fourth Grammy nomination for *Michael Feinstein with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra*, his first recording with a symphony orchestra. The year before, Rhino/Elektra Music released *The Michael Feinstein Anthology*, a two-disc compilation spanning 1987 to 1996 and featuring old favorites and previously unreleased tracks.

Michael was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio, where he started playing piano by ear as a 5-year-old. After graduating from high school, he moved to Los Angeles when he was 20. The widow of legendary concert pianist-actor Oscar Levant introduced him to Ira Gershwin in July 1977. Feinstein became Gershwin's assistant for six years, which earned him access to numerous unpublished Gershwin songs, many of which he has since performed and recorded.

Gershwin's influence provided a solid base upon which Feinstein evolved into a captivating performer, composer, and arranger of his own original music. He also has become an unparalleled interpreter of music legends such as Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Johnny Mercer, Duke Ellington, and Harry Warren. Feinstein has received three honorary doctorates.

Through his live performances, recordings, film and television appearances, and his songwriting (in collaboration with Alan and Marilyn Bergman, Lindy Robbins, Bob Merrill, and Marshall Barer), Feinstein is an all-star force in American music.

For more information, please visit [www.MichaelFeinstein.com](http://www.MichaelFeinstein.com).

## **Catherine Russell**

### **Soloist**

Vocalist Catherine Russell is a native New Yorker, born into musical royalty. Her father, the late Luis Russell, was a legendary pianist / composer / bandleader, and Louis Armstrong's long-time musical director. Her mother, the late Carline Ray, was a pioneering vocalist / guitarist / bassist who performed with International Sweethearts of Rhythm, Mary Lou Williams, and Sy Oliver. Catherine's professional life began early. After graduating with honors from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, she toured and recorded with Carrie Smith, Steely Dan, David Bowie, Cyndi Lauper, Paul Simon, Jackson Browne, Michael Feinstein, Levon Helm, Toshi Reagon and Rosanne Cash, among others, appearing on over 200 albums.

Her 2006 debut album *Cat*, (World Village/Harmonia Mundi), garnered rave reviews, paving the way for her 2008 sophomore release, *Sentimental Streak*. Catherine was a guest on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, PBS-TV's *Tavis Smiley Show*, and NPR's *Fresh Air*, *Piano Jazz*, *Mountain Stage*, *World Café*, and *Jazz Night in America*. She has won a prestigious German Record Critics' Award and a Living Blues magazine critics' poll. Catherine Russell's third album, *Inside This Heart of Mine*, reached #1 on JazzWeek and Roots Music Report radio charts, while also charting on Billboard and reaching #1 on iTunes jazz charts. A fourth album, *Strictly Romancin'* was released in February 2012, and was awarded Prix du Jazz Vocal (Vocal Album of The Year) by the French Jazz Academy, Grand Prix du Hot Club de France, and a Bistro Award for Outstanding Recording. Also in 2012, Catherine Russell received a Grammy® Award as a featured artist on the soundtrack album for the HBO-TV series, *Boardwalk Empire*.

In 2013, Catherine contributed 3 songs to the soundtrack of the film, *Kill Your Darlings*. Her 5th solo album, *Bring It Back*, was released worldwide in February of 2014 on the Jazz Village label, receiving a ★★★★★ 5 Star Review in *Downbeat Magazine*. In September 2016, Catherine Russell released her 6th solo album, titled *Harlem On My Mind*, featuring songs from the Great African American Songbook, receiving a Grammy® Nomination for Best Jazz Vocal Album. Her 7th album as a leader, *Alone Together*, was released in March 2019 on Dot Time Records, held the #1 position on the JazzWeek 2019 Year End chart for national airplay and received her second Grammy® Nomination for Best Jazz Vocal Album. Also in 2019, Catherine appeared in the feature film *Bolden*, and contributed vocals to the soundtrack album by Wynton Marsalis. She appears as featured vocalist on three tracks on *Big Band Holidays II*, accompanied by Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis.

In 2022, Catherine Russell released *Send For Me*, her 8th album as a leader, receiving rave reviews in national media outlets; *The Wall Street Journal*, *Relix*, *No Depression*, *JazzTimes*, *WBGO*, *Pop Matters*, and others, while also performing a concert for NPR Tiny Desk (Home).

With universal acclaim, Catherine Russell has performed on four continents. She's been a hit at major Jazz Festivals including Monterey, Newport, North Sea, JazzAscona, Montreal, Bern, Rochester International, Panama, Tanglewood, and at sold out venues like The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Scullers in Boston, The Dakota in Minneapolis, Jazz at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall in NYC, SFJazz in San Francisco, and Pasadena Pops in Los Angeles. All Music Guide says, "Russell emerged as a retro old school vocalist for the ages."

Her repertoire features a selection of gems from the 1920s through the Present; vital interpretations, bursting with soul and humor. With an off-the-beaten-path song selection, sparkling acoustic swing, and a stunning vocal approach, Catherine Russell has joined the ranks of the greatest interpreters and performers of American Popular Song.

### **Byron Stripling** **Trumpet and vocal soloist**

With a contagious smile and captivating charm, the conductor, trumpet virtuoso, singer and actor Byron Stripling has ignited audiences across the globe. His baton has led orchestras throughout the United States and Canada, and he currently serves as Principal Pops Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Director and Conductor of the Columbus Jazz Orchestra. Stripling was recently named Principal Pops Conductor of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra beginning in the 24-25 season. As soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra, Stripling has performed frequently under the baton of Keith

Lockhart, as well as being featured soloist on the PBS television special, *Evening at Pops*, with conductors John Williams and Mr. Lockhart.

Since his Carnegie Hall debut with Skitch Henderson and the New York Pops, Byron Stripling has become a pops orchestra favorite throughout the country, soloing with over 100 orchestras around the world including the Boston Pops, National Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Cincinnati Pops, Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Toronto Symphony, and orchestras throughout Europe and Asia. He has been a featured soloist at the Hollywood Bowl and performs at festivals around the world.

An accomplished actor and singer, Byron Stripling was chosen, following a worldwide search, to star in the lead role of the Broadway bound musical, *Satchmo*. Many will remember his featured cameo performance in the television movie, *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, and his critically acclaimed virtuoso trumpet and riotous comedic performance in the 42nd Street production of *From Second Avenue to Broadway*.

Television viewers have enjoyed his work as soloist on the worldwide telecast of The Grammy Awards. Millions have heard his trumpet and voice on television commercials, TV theme songs including "20/20," CNN, and soundtracks of favorite movies. In addition to multiple recordings with his quintet, work with artists from Tony Bennett to Whitney Houston, his prolific recording career includes hundreds of albums with the greatest pop, Broadway, soul and jazz artists of all time.

Byron Stripling earned his stripes as lead trumpeter and soloist with the Count Basie Orchestra under the direction of Thad Jones and Frank Foster. He has also played and recorded extensively with the bands of Dizzy Gillespie, Woody Herman, Dave Brubeck, Lionel Hampton, Clark Terry, Louis Bellson, and Buck Clayton in addition to The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, and The GRP All Star Big Band.

Byron Stripling is devoted to giving back and supports several philanthropic organizations including The United Way and Homelessness advocate and The Community Shelter Board. He also enjoys sharing the power of music through Seminars and Master Classes at colleges, universities, conservatories, and high schools. His informative talks, combined with his incomparable wit and charm, make him a favorite guest speaker to groups of all ages.

Byron Stripling was educated at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York and the Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan. One of his greatest joys is to return, periodically, to Eastman and Interlochen as a special guest lecturer.

A resident of Ohio, Stripling lives in the country with his wife Alexis, a former dancer, writer and poet and their beautiful daughters.

## **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 film, television, recording and the orchestral industry, the artists of the Pasadena Symphony and POPS are some of the most heard in the world.

Brett Mitchell assumed the post of Pasadena Symphony Music Director on April 1, 2024. Michael Feinstein – the multi-platinum-selling, two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer dubbed “The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook” – leads the POPS as Principal Pops Conductor, succeeding Marvin Hamlisch.

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 Los Angeles Arboretum & Botanic Garden.

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). PYSO offers supplemental in-class instruction within the Pasadena Unified School District and eleven performance ensembles, serving over 700 4th-12th grade students from all over Southern California. The PYSO has performed at venues across the globe as well as on the television show *GLEE*. The Pasadena Symphony Association provides people from all walks of life with powerful access points to the world of symphonic music. [www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org](http://www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org)

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