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**Pasadena Symphony
Announces 2024-25 Season,
Its First Under Recently Appointed Music Director Brett Mitchell,
Launching a New Era for the Esteemed Orchestra**

Mitchell Is Only the Sixth Conductor to Helm Pasadena Symphony in Its 96-Year History

Announcement Comes on the Heels of Pasadena Symphony's Highest-Grossing Season Ever

Highlights of 97th Season, which Opens October 26, 2024, Include:

- Six Distinctive Programs, all Led by Mitchell, with Matinee and Evening Performances at Orchestra's Long-Time Home at Pasadena's Ambassador Auditorium;
- Bold Season-Opener that Gives a Nod to Pasadena and Orchestra's Rich History and Looks Ahead;
- Range of Contemporary Works by Mason Bates; Peter Boyer; Adolphus Hailstork; Jessie Montgomery; and Samuel Jones, one of Mitchell's Early Mentors;
- Landmark Orchestral Works, such as Mahler's Symphony No. 1, "Titan"; Mozart's Symphony No. 41, "Jupiter"; Prokofiev's Classical Symphony; and Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, "Pastoral";
- Slate of Eminent Guest Artists, including Violinists William Hagen (Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1), Stefan Jackiw (Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5, "Turkish"), and Akiko Suwanai (Korngold's Violin Concerto); Pianists Inon Barnatan (Price's Concerto for Piano in One Movement) and Stewart Goodyear (Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue); and Cellist Mark Kosower (Dvorák's Cello Concerto);
- Popular Holiday Candlelight Concert, Featuring Mitchell on the Podium, Returns to All Saints Church.

PASADENA, CA (May 21, 2024 – updated 6/3/24) – Pasadena Symphony launches a bold new era with the announcement of its 2024-25 season, the first to be programmed and led by recently appointed Music Director **Brett Mitchell**, who is only the sixth conductor to helm the orchestra since it was founded in 1928. It features six distinctive programs selected by Mitchell to spotlight the critically acclaimed orchestra's virtuosic artistry, deep community roots, and unwavering commitment to championing emerging and established composers. The programming also reflects the considerable impact many of the orchestra's gifted musicians have had on the film industry and incorporates some of the musical influences on Mitchell's own career. Mitchell will conduct all six of the programs during his debut season with the orchestra, which marks Pasadena Symphony's 97th season.

"I'm particularly pleased during my first season with Pasadena Symphony to explore a wide variety of repertoire that will showcase the breadth and scope of my brilliant colleagues' musicianship while also featuring an inclusive roster of soloists and composers," says Mitchell. "My intention is to showcase great music performed by great musicians."

"I will strive to cover as many bases as I possibly can with each season's programs. That means we'll present works from the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th Century, and contemporary eras as well as a broad range of styles within each of those periods. Some works will be familiar while others lesser known."

Pasadena Symphony President & CEO **Andrew Brown** states, "This is a tremendously exciting time for the Pasadena Symphony as we embark on our next chapter under Brett Mitchell's artistic leadership. He has crafted a season of incredible music that touches, enthralls, inspires, challenges, and intrigues. We can't wait for audiences to experience all that he brings to the concert hall."

During Mitchell's inaugural season, he conducts from the canon of landmark orchestral works Mahler's Symphony No. 1, "Titan," a staggering work of tremendous emotional depth for massive forces; Mozart's masterly final symphony, Symphony No. 41, "Jupiter," completed just three years before the composer's death; Prokofiev's impeccably crafted Classical Symphony; and Beethoven's cheerful Symphony No. 6, "Pastoral," expressing the joy of nature.

Mitchell and the orchestra welcome six distinguished guest artists performing a range of seminal concertos, three of them violinists. Akiko Suwanai, who in 1990, at age 18, became the youngest winner of the violin portion of the prestigious International Tchaikovsky Competition, plays Korngold's Violin Concerto, also known as a "Hollywood Concerto" for integrating themes from films the composer scored during the Golden Age of cinema. It offers a subtle nod to the numerous Pasadena Symphony artists past and present whose work in the film recording industry spans the decades. Stefan Jackiw, a violinist with "talent that's off the scale" (*The Washington Post*), performs the sublime Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, "Turkish," composed by Mozart when he was still a teenager. Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1, a lush tour-de-force, features William Hagen, a violinist praised for his "glowing tone (and) virtuosic pyrotechnics" (*Chicago Classical Review*).

Two leading pianists also join Pasadena Symphony: Inon Barnatan, "one of the most admired pianists of his generation" (*The New York Times*), presenting Florence Price's Concerto for Piano in One

Movement, and Canadian pianist Stewart Goodyear, interpreting Gershwin's iconic jazz-infused Rhapsody in Blue as part of the work's 2024 global centenary celebration. Additionally, Mark Kosower, the eminent Principal Cello of the Cleveland Orchestra, takes the stage for a performance of Dvořák's beloved Cello Concerto.

Providing further musical texture, Mitchell introduces audiences to a selection of works by composers he calls "near and dear to my heart." They include former Pasadena Symphony Composer in Residence, prolific film score orchestrator and GRAMMY-nominated Altadena resident Peter Boyer's dazzling fanfare *New Beginnings*, which launches the orchestra's 2024-25 season and aptly signals Mitchell's first podium appearance as Music Director. Mitchell illuminates Mason Bates' *Sea-Blue Circuitry*, mimicking a computer motherboard; and Samuel Jones' *Hymn to the Earth*, a suite derived from his larger symphonic work entitled "Roundings: Musings and Meditations on Texas New Deal Murals," which contemplates Earth's enduring power; Adolphus Hailstork's Baroque Suite, filtering his unique compositional voice through a historical musical lens; and 2024 GRAMMY-winning composer Jessie Montgomery's vivid *Starburst*.

Mitchell states, "These contemporary works are all part of the great continuum of classical music. The 'conversations' that take place between these newer works and the great masterworks of the past—how one work causes us to hear the next work differently—are part of the great joy of being in the concert hall."

Themes of nature also punctuate the programming this season with Mitchell and the orchestra exploring the classical elements: earth, water, air, and fire.

Mitchell explains, "One of the things I've always loved about California is the diversity of its nature. There are countless examples of composers writing works inspired by nature, and I've selected a handful of favorites to share." In addition to Beethoven's sunny "Pastoral" Symphony celebrating the bucolic countryside, and Jones' homage to our planet, he leads Wagner's thrilling "Magic Fire Music" from *Die Walküre*, considered the composer's magnum opus; Debussy's shimmering *La Mer* ("The Sea"); and Ravel's descriptive *Une barque sur l'océan* ("A boat on the ocean").

In December, the Pasadena Symphony continues its tradition of presenting its annually sold-out Holiday Candlelight Concert at All Saints Church, with Mitchell conducting timeless seasonal favorites with special guests, including the LA Bronze Handbell Ensemble, Los Angeles Children's Chorus, the Donald Brinegar Singers and JPL Chorus.

2024-25 Season Follows Highest Grossing Season in Orchestra's History

Brown, Pasadena Symphony's President and CEO, notes that the 2024-25 season announcement comes just days after the conclusion of the Pasadena Symphony's record-breaking 2023-24 season. "It was the highest grossing season in the orchestra's history, generating more than \$700,000 in ticket sales. It also included the orchestra's highest grossing single concert ever, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* on April 20, 2024, which brought in \$161,861, besting the previous record of \$157,936 for a program of Beethoven and Rachmaninoff the previous season. This is an incredible way for the orchestra to lead into a new artistic era under Brett's leadership!"

Mitchell has been hailed for his "deftly rendered" performances (*The Plain Dealer*) and "engaging, in-depth explorations of thoughtfully curated programs" (*Cascade A&E*). A passionate advocate for classical music who is also known for his love of popular music and "warm, down-to-earth demeanor" (*Houstonia Magazine*), Mitchell's five-year tenure with the Pasadena Symphony began on April 1, 2024.

Pre-Concert Talks, Tickets, and Information

Each of the Pasadena Symphony's concerts during the 2024-25 season include Insights, a pre-concert conversation hosted by KUSC Classical California's Brian Lauritzen, who will interview Brett Mitchell, special guests, and many of the artists appearing with the orchestra, offering a deep and entertaining dive into every program.

Pasadena Symphony season subscriptions (starting at \$99) are available now; single tickets (starting at \$45) go on sale July 15, 2024. For tickets and information, visit www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org.

PASADENA SYMPHONY 2024-25 SEASON PROGRAMS DETAILED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Mahler Symphony No. 1

Saturday, October 26, 2024, 2 pm & 8 pm, Ambassador Auditorium

Brett Mitchell, conductor

Akiko Suwanai, violin

PETER BOYER *New Beginnings*

KORNGOLD Violin Concerto

MAHLER Symphony No. 1, "Titan"

Pasadena Symphony launches its 2024-25 season and a new era under Music Director Brett Mitchell – only the sixth music director to lead the orchestra since it was founded in 1928 – with a program filled with symbolism: It is

deeply rooted in Pasadena, simultaneously looks both forward and back, and, also, reflects the orchestra members' strong ties to the film and television recording industry. To commence his tenure, Mitchell conducts *New Beginnings*, a celebratory fanfare by GRAMMY-nominated Altadena resident Peter Boyer, who served as Pasadena Symphony's 2012-13 Composer in Residence and has also contributed orchestrations to more than 35 film scores. One of the composer's earliest orchestral commissions, *New Beginnings* has been heard from Carnegie Hall to the Kansas prairie and adapted for background music on *CBS This Morning*. It has been hailed as "a well-crafted piece that mixes blazing fanfare-like material with a sweet secondary tune that could have come from the pen of Aaron Copland" (*The Providence Journal*).

In another nod to the orchestra's cinematic connections and musical virtuosity, Mitchell next leads guest violinist Akiko Suwanai on the Violin Concerto by Korngold, a masterful composer who brilliantly straddled both Hollywood and the rigorous Viennese classical musical tradition from which he emerged. The beloved Violin Concerto, referred to as a "Hollywood Concerto," draws on Korngold's movie themes from Hollywood's golden age. In 2019, Mitchell conducted the work to great critical acclaim with Suwanai with the Orquesta Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias in Spain.

Mitchell caps his first program as Pasadena Symphony Music Director with Mahler's Symphony No. 1, "Titan," an audacious symphonic poem for massive orchestral forces that defiantly melds traditional and modernist musical ideas while shifting moods from joy and exuberance to introspection and melancholy. NPR states, "It's hard to resist the pull of a piece that begins like Mahler's First: The strings play a single note spread out over seven octaves."

Rhapsody in Blue

Saturday, November 16, 2024, 2 pm & 8 pm, Ambassador Auditorium

Brett Mitchell, conductor

Stewart Goodyear, piano

MASON BATES *Sea-Blue Circuitry*

GERSHWIN *Rhapsody in Blue*

RAVEL *Une barque sur l'océan*

DEBUSSY *La Mer*

Mitchell's second Pasadena Symphony program comprises four works with distinctive and colorful themes that play off Southern California's adjacency to the Pacific Ocean and its leading role in the tech industry. The concert opens with Mason Bates' computer motherboard-inspired *Sea-Blue Circuitry*, an all-acoustic work that departs from his more typical electronic music. Bates explains, "The grooves of *Sea-Blue Circuitry* hiccup from measure to measure as rapidly as data quietly flashing on the silicon innards of a computer, yet the piece is entirely unplugged. It explores ways of recreating the precision of electronica through the instruments alone."

Shifting the focus to an entirely different musical realm, featured guest pianist Stewart Goodyear, proclaimed "one of the best pianists of his generation" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*), joins Mitchell and the orchestra to interpret George Gershwin's iconic jazz-infused *Rhapsody in Blue* as part of the 2024 global celebration of the beloved work's centenary. Two impressionistic works by French composers complete the program with Ravel's *Une barque sur l'océan* ("A boat on the ocean"), capturing the sense of a boat adrift on a powerful and endless sea, and Debussy's symphonic sketch *La Mer* ("The Sea"), offering "a rich and evocative depiction of the underwater realm" (Classic FM).

Holiday Candlelight

Saturday, December 14, 2024, 4 pm & 7 pm, All Saints Church

Brett Mitchell, conductor

Vocalist, tba

LA Bronze Handbell Ensemble

Donald Brinegar Singers and JPL Chorus

Los Angeles Children's Chorus

The Pasadena Symphony rings in the season with its annual sold-out Holiday Candlelight concert. Providing joyous musical splendor, Mitchell conducts timeless seasonal favorites with an array of choruses and handbells.

The architecturally exquisite and acoustically sonorous All Saints Church – Pasadena’s equivalent of a European cathedral – glows with candlelight for this cherished community tradition. *Travel Awaits* decrees, “This show is one you will not want to miss.”

Mozart “Jupiter” Symphony

Saturday, January 25, 2025, 2 pm & 8 pm, Ambassador Auditorium

Brett Mitchell, conductor

Inon Barnatan, piano

JESSIE MONTGOMERY *Starburst*

PRICE Concerto for Piano in One Movement

MOZART Symphony No. 41, “Jupiter”

Pasadena Symphony heralds the new year with Mitchell conducting Mozart’s incomparable and deeply emotional Symphony No. 41, “Jupiter,” the composer’s final symphony, which is considered among the greatest ever written. It is set against Florence Price’s Concerto for Piano in One Movement, featuring Inon Barnatan, “one of the most admired pianists of his generation” (*The New York Times*), and *Starburst*, a vibrant piece by 2024 GRAMMY-winner Jessie Montgomery, who was named Musical America 2023 Composer of the Year and is recognized for creating music “exploding with life” (*The Washington Post*).

Dvořák Cello Concerto

Saturday, February 15, 2025, 2 pm & 8 pm, Ambassador Auditorium

Brett Mitchell, conductor

Mark Kosower, cello

WAGNER “Magic Fire Music” from *Die Walküre*

DVOŘÁK Cello Concerto

BARTÓK Concerto for Orchestra

Mitchell returns to Pasadena Symphony’s podium to conduct two masterworks that straddle the 20th century, both written in New York almost 50 years apart by composers transplanted to America and greatly influenced by the folk traditions of their native Eastern Europe. They include Dvořák’s Cello Concerto, featuring guest artist Mark Kosower, Principal Cello of the Cleveland Orchestra, acclaimed for performances that are “emotive...and blazing” (*South Florida Review*). Composed in 1894, Dvořák’s tender work is noted for its lilting virtuosic solo passages and has become a treasured part of the cello repertoire. It juxtaposes Bartók’s beloved Concerto for Orchestra, a commanding orchestral show piece rich with color and rhythmic power written in 1943. Setting the tone for this program of epic music is Wagner’s thrilling “Magic Fire Music” from *Die Walküre*, considered his magnum opus.

Mozart “Turkish” Violin Concerto

Saturday, March 22, 2025, 2 pm & 8 pm, Ambassador Auditorium

Brett Mitchell, conductor

Stefan Jackiw, violin

ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK Baroque Suite

MOZART Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, “Turkish”

PROKOFIEV Classical Symphony

STRAVINSKY Suite from *Pulcinella*

Pasadena Symphony spotlights Stefan Jackiw, “one of the most insightful violinists of his generation” (*Boston Globe*) with “talent that’s off the scale” (*The Washington Post*), on Mozart’s imaginative and elegant Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major, “Turkish.” Mitchell also leads Adolphus Hailstork’s Baroque Suite, a contemporary Baroque-infused work that embraces the eminent composer’s “‘historical curiosity’ of classical music” (WRTI). Prokofiev’s impeccably crafted Classical Symphony, which has become one of the composer’s most popular works, and Stravinsky’s charming Suite from his ballet *Pulcinella*, with its instantly recognizable opening passage, complete the program.

Beethoven “Pastoral” Symphony
Saturday, May 3, 2025, 2 pm & 8 pm, Ambassador Auditorium
Brett Mitchell, conductor
William Hagen, violin
SAMUEL JONES Hymn to the Earth (Roundings: Suite No. 1)
BRUCH Violin Concerto No. 1
BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 6, ‘Pastoral’

Pasadena Symphony wraps its 2024-25 season – its first helmed by Mitchell – in a cloak of exquisite musical beauty. Violinist William Hagen, a “brilliant virtuoso” (*The Dallas Morning News*), performs Bruch’s Violin Concerto No. 1, a stunning tour-de-force filled with lush themes and soaring melodies. It is bookended by works that draw inspiration from the natural world with Mitchell opening the program with Samuel Jones’ “Hymn to the Earth,” a meditative suite derived from a larger symphonic work entitled “Roundings: Musings and Meditations on Texas New Deal Murals,” which contemplates the cyclical aspects of life and the power of Earth to endure. The concert and season conclude with a sense of optimism and joy as Mitchell leads Beethoven’s expansive Symphony No. 6, ‘Pastoral,’ reflecting a day in the countryside that unfolds, as the composer himself expressed, with a gradual “awakening of cheerful feelings.”

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Tickets for Pasadena Symphony’s 2024-25 season are available online at www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org on the following dates:

- Subscriptions (starting at \$99) now available
- Single tickets (\$45 – \$142) available Monday, July 15, 2024

VENUE ADDRESSES

Ambassador Auditorium, 131 South St. John Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91105
All Saints Church, 132 North Euclid Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

ABOUT PASADENA SYMPHONY MUSIC DIRECTOR BRETT MITCHELL

Hailed for presenting engaging, in-depth explorations of thoughtfully curated programs, American conductor Brett Mitchell is in consistent demand on the podium at home and abroad. He is the Music Director of Pasadena Symphony and has served as Artistic Director & Conductor of Oregon’s Sunriver Music Festival since August 2022.

Working widely as a guest conductor, Mitchell’s recent engagements have included appearances with the Dallas, Detroit, Edmonton, Fort Worth, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, National, North Carolina, Oregon, Pasadena, San Antonio, San Francisco, and Vancouver symphonies; the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl; the Cleveland and Minnesota orchestras; the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra; the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; the Grant Park Festival Orchestra; and a two-week tour with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Mitchell also regularly collaborates with the world’s leading soloists, including Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Itzhak Perlman, Kirill Gerstein, Conrad Tao, Rudolf Buchbinder, James Ehnes, Augustin Hadelich, Leila Josefowicz, and Alisa Weilerstein.

From 2017 to 2021, Mitchell served as Music Director of the Colorado Symphony in Denver; he previously served as Music Director Designate during the 2016-17 season. During his five-season tenure, he is credited with deepening the orchestra’s engagement with its audience via in-depth demonstrations from both the podium and the piano. He also expanded the orchestra’s commitment to contemporary American repertoire—with a particular focus on the music of Mason Bates, Missy Mazzoli, and Kevin Puts—through world premieres, recording projects, and commissions. In addition, Mitchell spearheaded collaborations with such local partners as Colorado Ballet, Denver Young Artists Orchestra, and El Sistema Colorado. In summarizing his tenure, *The Denver Post* wrote that “Mitchell has been a bright and engaging presence over the years, delving into the history of certain well-worn pieces while leading expert renditions of them.”

From 2013 to 2017, Mitchell served on the conducting staff of The Cleveland Orchestra. He joined the orchestra as Assistant Conductor in 2013, and was promoted to Associate Conductor in 2015, becoming the first person to hold that title in over three decades and only the fifth in the orchestra’s hundred-year history. In these roles, he led the orchestra in several dozen concerts each season at Severance Hall, Blossom Music Center, and on tour.

From 2007 to 2011, Mitchell led over one hundred performances as Assistant Conductor of the Houston Symphony. He also held Assistant Conductor posts with the Orchestre National de France, where he worked under Kurt Masur from 2006 to 2009, and the Castleton Festival, where he worked under Lorin Maazel in 2009 and 2010. In 2015, Mitchell completed a highly successful five-year appointment as Music Director of the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra, where an increased focus on locally relevant programming and community collaborations resulted in record attendance throughout his tenure.

As an opera conductor, Mitchell has served as music director of nearly a dozen productions, principally at his former post as Music Director of the Moores Opera Center in Houston, where he led eight productions from 2010 to 2013. His repertoire spans the core works of Mozart (The Marriage of Figaro and The Magic Flute), Verdi (Rigoletto and Falstaff), and Stravinsky (The Rake's Progress) to contemporary works by Mark Adamo (Little Women), Robert Aldridge (Elmer Gantry), Daniel Catán (Il Postino and Salsipuedes), and Daron Hagen (Amelia). As a ballet conductor, Mitchell most recently led a production of The Nutcracker with the Pennsylvania Ballet in collaboration with The Cleveland Orchestra during the 2016-17 season.

In addition to his work with professional orchestras, Mitchell is also well known for his affinity for working with and mentoring young musicians aspiring to be professional orchestral players. His tenure as Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra from 2013 to 2017 was highly praised and included a four-city tour of China in June 2015, marking the orchestra's second international tour and its first to Asia. Mitchell is regularly invited to work with the talented young musicians at this country's high-level training programs, such as the Cleveland Institute of Music, the National Repertory Orchestra, Texas Music Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, and Interlochen Center for the Arts. He has also served on the faculties of the schools of music at Northern Illinois University (2005-07), the University of Houston (2012-13), and the University of Denver (2019); during the 2022-23 academic year, Mitchell will again serve as Adjunct Professor of Music at the University of Denver, acting as Interim Director of Orchestras and Professor of Conducting.

Born in Seattle in 1979, Mitchell holds degrees in conducting from the University of Texas at Austin and composition from Western Washington University, which selected him as its Young Alumnus of the Year in 2014. He also studied with Leonard Slatkin at the National Conducting Institut and was selected by Kurt Masur as a recipient of the inaugural American Friends of the Mendelssohn Foundation Scholarship in 2008. Mitchell was also one of five recipients of the League of American Orchestras' American Conducting Fellowship from 2007 to 2010. <https://www.brettmitchellconductor.com/>

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

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