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



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For full artist bios and high-res images visit: <https://pasadenasymphony-pops.org/rhapsody-in-blue-la-mer-press-release/>

**PASADENA SYMPHONY CELEBRATES RHAPSODY IN BLUE'S 100<sup>TH</sup> WITH A TOUR DE FORCE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY PROGRAM**

**With Debussy's *La Mer*, Ravel's *Une barque sur l'océan* and Mason Bates' *Sea-Blue Circuitry***

**Pasadena, CA** – The Pasadena Symphony continues its 2024-25 season under the baton of newly appointed Music Director Brett Mitchell with *Rhapsody in Blue/La Mer* on **Saturday, November 16, 2024** with performances at **2:00pm** and **8:00pm** at **Ambassador Auditorium**. This *tour de force* program commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gershwin's iconic Jazz-Age treasure and brings together two of the most beloved works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with Debussy's *La Mer* closing out the program. The repertoire will excite the senses, kicking off with Mason Bates' motherboard-inspired *Sea-Blue Circuitry* and the city sounds of *Rhapsody in Blue*. In the second half, audiences will float away on the emotional imagery of Ravel's *Une barque sur l'océan* and *La Mer* will paint a majestic picture of the sea with a mosaic of orchestral colors.

**Music Director Brett Mitchell** will lead the orchestra hot off the heels of his October 26<sup>th</sup> debut conducting Mahler Symphony No. 1, which "under [his] baton... came across brilliantly in lush, orchestral Technicolor" (*Classical Voice*). Proclaimed "a phenomenon" by the *Los Angeles Times* and "one of the best pianists of his generation" by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, acclaimed pianist and recording artist **Stewart Goodyear** will join the orchestra for *Rhapsody in Blue*, while the talented musicians of the orchestra will fill the stage to conclude the program with Debussy's impressionist masterpiece.

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* with **KUSC host Brian Lauritzen** and **Music Director Brett Mitchell**. 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, plus sandwiches, soup, appetizers and dessert before the concert and during intermission.

All concerts are held at Ambassador Auditorium, 131 South St. John Ave, Pasadena, CA. Single tickets (starting) at \$49 and subscriptions (starting at \$99) may be purchased online at [www.pasadenasymphony-pops.org](http://www.pasadenasymphony-pops.org) or by calling the Box Office at (626) 793-7172.

**IF YOU GO:**

- **What:** The Pasadena Symphony presents **Rhapsody in Blue/La Mer**  
**Brett Mitchell**, conductor  
**Stewart Goodyear**, piano

<b>Mason Bates</b>	<i>Sea-Blue Circuitry</i>
<b>Gershwin</b>	<i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>
<b>Ravel</b>	<i>Une barque sur l'océan</i>
<b>Debussy</b>	<i>La Mer</i>

- **When:** Saturday, November 16, 2024 at 2:00pm and 8:00pm
- **Where:** Ambassador Auditorium | 131 South St. John Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91105
- **Cost:** Tickets start at \$49.00
- **Parking:** Valet parking is available on St. John Ave for \$25. General parking is available in two locations: 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.). Parking may be pre-purchased for \$15 or purchased onsite for \$20. **Parking purchased onsite is cash only.**

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### **Brett Mitchell** **Music Director**

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. In March 2024, he was named Music Director of the Pasadena Symphony, beginning an initial five-year term with the 2024-25 season. He has also served as Artistic Director & Conductor of Oregon's Sunriver Music Festival since 2022.

Working widely as a guest conductor, Mr. Mitchell's recent engagements have included appearances with the Dallas, Detroit, Edmonton, Fort Worth, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, National, North Carolina, Oregon, 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. Mr. 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, Mr. 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, Mr. 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, Mr. 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, Mr. 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, Mr. 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, Mr. 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, Mr. 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, Mr. 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. Mr. 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, 2022-23).

Born in Seattle in 1979, Mr. 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 Institute, and was selected by Kurt Masur as a recipient of the inaugural American Friends of the Mendelssohn Foundation Scholarship in 2008. Mr. Mitchell was also one of five recipients of the League of American Orchestras’ American Conducting Fellowship from 2007 to 2010.

**Stewart Goodyear**

**Piano**

Proclaimed “a phenomenon” by the *Los Angeles Times* and “one of the best pianists of his generation” by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Stewart Goodyear is an accomplished concert pianist, improviser and

composer. Mr. Goodyear has performed with, and has been commissioned by, many of the major orchestras and chamber music organizations around the world.

Last year, Orchid Classics released Mr. Goodyear’s recording of his suite for piano and orchestra, “Callaloo” and his piano sonata. His recent commissions include an orchestral work for the Chineke! Orchestra, his Piano Quintet for the Penderecki String Quartet, and a piano work for the Honens Piano Competition. His suite for solo violin, “Solo” was recorded by violinist Miranda Cuckson on the Urlicht Audiovisual label, and his work for cello and piano, “The Kapak” was recording by cellist Inbal Segev on the Avie Records label.

Mr. Goodyear’s discography includes the complete sonatas and piano concertos of Beethoven, as well as concertos by Tchaikovsky, Grieg and Rachmaninov, an album of Ravel piano works, and an album, entitled *For Glenn Gould*, which combines repertoire from Mr. Gould’s US and Montreal debuts. His Rachmaninov recording received a Juno nomination for Best Classical Album for Soloist and Large Ensemble Accompaniment. Mr. Goodyear’s recording of his own transcription of Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker (Complete Ballet)*, was chosen by the New York Times as one of the best classical music recordings of 2015. His discography is released on the Orchid Classics, Naxos, Analekta, Bright Shiny Things, Marquis Classics, and Steinway and Sons labels. Mr. Goodyear releases his recording of Prokofiev’s 2nd and 3rd Concertos with Andrew Litton and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the composer’s 7th Sonata, on Orchid Classics this September 2024.

Highlights for the 2024-25 season are his performances at the BBC Proms with the Chineke! Orchestra, his return to the Phillips Collection (Washington D.C.), and performances with the Vancouver and Toronto Symphonies, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Rochester Philharmonic, Frankfurt Museumgesellschaft, and A Far Cry in Boston.

### **Mason Bates** **Composer**

Composer of the Grammy-winning opera *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, Mason Bates is imaginatively transforming the way classical music is created and experienced as a composer, DJ, and curator. As the first composer-in-residence appointed by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, he presented a diverse array of artists on his series *KC Jukebox* using immersive production and stagecraft. Championed by legendary conductors from Riccardo Muti, Michael Tilson Thomas and Marin Alsop, his symphonic music is the first to receive widespread acceptance for its unique integration of electronic sounds. Named as the most-performed composer of his generation in a recent survey of American music, Bates has also composed for feature film including Gus Van Sant’s *The Sea of Trees* starring Matthew McConaughey and Naomi Watts.

Appearing on international stages this season is *Philharmonia Fantastique: The Making of the Orchestra*, for animated film and live orchestra. A collaboration with multi-Oscar-winning Gary Rydstrom of Lucasfilm and Jim Capobianco of Aerial Contrivance, the work explores the connection between creativity and technology with the help of a magical Sprite, who flies through instruments as they are played. The film is available to rent or purchase on Apple TV or stream on Apple Music. The Grammy-

nominated soundtrack was recorded by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Edwin Outwater for Sony Classical.

Recent and upcoming premieres include *Whalesong*, conducted by Kwamé Ryan and commissioned by the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall London for radio and television broadcast, and a new work for period instruments for Philharmonia Baroque. In 2022, acclaimed pianist Daniil Trifonov took Bates' Piano Concert on tour including performances by The Philadelphia Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Spanish National Orchestra and the Orchestra Philharmonique de Radio France.

Now in its second production, his hit opera *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, which one the 2019 Grammy for Best Opera, goes to Calgary Opera and Utah Opera this season. The concert opener *Rhapsody of Steve Jobs*, based on the opera, saw its premiere performance by the Philadelphia Orchestra followed by performances at Atlanta Symphony. A new opera is in the works based on *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* for the Metropolitan Opera.

Highly informed by his work as a DJ, his curatorial approach integrates adventurous music, ambient information, and social platforms in a fluid and immersive way. Working in clubs under the name DJ Masonic, Bates has developed *Mercury Soul*, a show combining DJing and classical music, to packed crowds with clubs and orchestras around the country. A diverse artist exploring the ways classical music integrates into contemporary cultures, he serves on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

#### **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 assumes 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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