Rco

REDLANDS COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA
2026 – 2027 CONCERT SEASON

AMERICA 250
Uncommon Women

JOAN TOWER

CHRISTINE RICHARDSON



FLORENCE PRICE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2026

REDLANDS HIGH SCHOOL
CLOCK AUDITORIUM

AMERICA 250™

James Benanti
Music Director and Conductor

Sunday, November 15, 2026

AMERICA 250: UNCOMMON WOMEN

Joan Tower
Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman

Christine Richardson
Whale Odyssey

Florence Price
Symphony No. 4 in D Minor

Tempo moderato
Andante cantabile
Juba: Allegro
Scherzo: Allegro

ABOUT US

The Redlands Community Orchestra is devoted to sharing the joy of music making, engaging our audience, and enriching the cultural life of our community through artistic expression. Based in Redlands, California, the Redlands Community Orchestra is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit community organization where amateur musicians of all ages can play orchestral music together for fun.

We rehearse weekly and perform three concerts per year. In addition to performing works by classical greats such as Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Mozart, we have also premiered original compositions.

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JAMES BENANTI



Music Director and Conductor James Benanti spent 19 years as Director of Instrumental Music at Redlands High School and is currently a Principal at Franklin Elementary. While at Redlands High School, Mr. Benanti oversaw all aspects of the instrumental music program, directing the Marching Band, Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Jazz Band, and String Ensemble.

A native of Southern California, Mr. Benanti received his bachelor's and Master of Music degrees from the University of Redlands, where he studied instrumental conducting with Eddie Smith. Mr. Benanti is a member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the California Band Directors Association, the California Orchestra Directors Association, and the California Music Educators Association. He is an active adjudicator for the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association and currently serves on the Board of the San Bernardino County Music Educators Association, having been President from 2008—2010.

ABOUT THE MUSIC



Joan Tower
Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman, No. 1

Composed: 1986
Scored for: Brass and percussion
World Premiere: January 10, 1987
Houston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hons Vonk
Approximate Duration: 2–3 minutes

Recommended Recording: Leonard Slatkin, St Louis Symphony Orchestra (1991)

Joan Tower's *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman, No. 1* (1986) is a celebration of women's achievements, strength, and determination. Written as a response to Aaron Copland's iconic *Fanfare for the Common Man* (1942), Tower's composition honors women who demonstrate courage, leadership, and perseverance in their professional and personal lives.

The first fanfare was commissioned by the Houston Symphony as part of its sesquicentennial celebration of Texas independence and was premiered in 1987. Tower dedicated the work to conductor Marin Alsop, who would become one of the most influential women in American orchestral music. The composition eventually became the first in a series of six fanfares, written between 1986 and 2016, collectively celebrating the contributions of women to society and the arts.

Like Copland's celebrated composition, Tower's first fanfare is scored for brass and percussion. However, while Copland employs broad, stately gestures to convey dignity and heroism, Tower introduces a more rhythmically complex and energetic musical language. Brilliant brass proclamations, driving percussion, syncopated rhythms, and rapidly shifting musical figures create a sense of urgency, excitement, and triumphant determination.

The work opens with forceful percussion and commanding brass gestures, establishing an atmosphere of anticipation and grandeur. As the composition unfolds, overlapping rhythmic patterns and increasingly animated exchanges between the brass instruments generate momentum. Towers' use of contrasting instrumental colors, sharp accents, and dramatic dynamic changes creates a musical dialogue that is both celebratory and assertive. The composition culminates in a powerful conclusion that reinforces its heroic character.

Historically, *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* reflects the growing recognition of women composers, conductors, and performers in American classical music during the late twentieth century. Tower, herself a pioneering figure in contemporary American composition, challenges traditional conventions surrounding the musical representation of heroism. Rather than simply

imitating Copland's earlier work, she reimagines the ceremonial fanfare through a distinctly modern musical vocabulary.

Ultimately, *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* stands as both a tribute and a declaration: a celebration of extraordinary women and a reminder that courage, achievement, and leadership transcend gender. Its brilliant orchestration and infectious rhythmic vitality make it one of the most recognizable and compelling American fanfares of the contemporary era.

Christine Richardson

Whale Odyssey



Composed: 2026
Scored for: Strings, Winds, Brass
World Premiere: November 15, 2026
Redlands Community Orchestra, conducted James Benanti
Approximate Duration: 10 Minutes

Whale Odyssey is a symphonic tone poem. My teacher assigned me to compose music to enhance a video about whales, and I became entranced by the elegance of the whales. I loved the motion of them gliding so gracefully through the ocean depths. At the beginning of the video, there was a drone shot high above the ocean capturing the beauty and the entirety of it. The whales slowly appeared from the depths, rising to the surface. The whales were releasing huge bubbles to the surface. A friend suggested the title "Whale Odyssey", as the piece is about the beauty of the ocean and all its creatures. Use your imagination, as you picture the whales migrating thousands of miles each year through the abyss of the ocean. On a personal note, the year after I wrote this piece, I traveled to Baja California to Magdalena Bay, to see where the gray whales migrate, give birth, and often are seen spyhopping...a fantastic trip!

Florence Beatrice Price (1887–1953)

Symphony No. 4 in D Minor



Composed: 1945
World Premiere: May 12, 2018
Fort Smith Symphony Orchestra, conducted by John Jeter
Approximate duration: 35 Minutes

Recommended Recording: John Jeter, Fort Smith Symphony Orchestra

Movements:

Tempo moderato
Andante cantabile
Juba: Allegro
Scherzo: Allegro

Florence Beatrice Price's *Symphony No. 4 in D Minor* (1945) represents a remarkable synthesis of European symphonic traditions, African American spirituals, and vernacular musical expressions. As one of the pioneering African American women in classical composition, Price developed a distinctive musical language that combined the structural sophistication of nineteenth-century Romanticism with the melodic, rhythmic, and cultural traditions of African American life.

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, Price studied at the New England Conservatory of Music before establishing herself as a composer, pianist, and educator in Chicago. Her historic breakthrough came in 1933 when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, under Frederick Stock, performed her *Symphony No. 1 in E Minor*, making her the first African American woman to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra. Despite this achievement, Price continued to confront significant racial and gender discrimination throughout her professional career.

Composed in 1945, near the conclusion of World War II, the Fourth Symphony reflects Price's mature compositional voice. Although completed during her lifetime, the work remained unperformed for decades. In 2009, a substantial collection of Price's manuscripts was discovered in her former summer residence near St. Anne, Illinois, helping revive interest in her neglected compositions. The Fourth Symphony finally received its world premiere on May 12, 2018, performed by the Fort Smith Symphony under conductor John Jeter in Arkansas.

Structured in four movements, the symphony follows the general framework of the European Romantic symphonic tradition while incorporating distinctive African American musical influences.

I. Tempo moderato

The opening movement establishes a dramatic and expansive musical landscape through powerful orchestral statements, lyrical melodies, and richly developed thematic material. Its principal theme draws upon the African American spiritual *Wade in the Water*, integrating the spiritual's melodic identity into a larger symphonic structure. Price employs contrasting orchestral textures, rhythmic momentum, and dramatic changes in dynamics to create a movement that balances solemn reflection with heroic determination.

II. Andante cantabile

The second movement offers a contemplative contrast to the opening movement's dramatic intensity. Characterized by expressive woodwind melodies, warm orchestral harmonies, and hymn-like brass passages, the music evokes the spiritual and devotional traditions central to African American musical culture. Price's lyrical writing reflects the influence of Romantic composers, particularly Antonín Dvořák, while maintaining an individual musical voice rooted in American experience.

III. Juba: Allegro

The third movement is perhaps the symphony's most distinctive expression of African American cultural heritage. Rather than employing the traditional European minuet or scherzo, Price incorporates the *juba*, a dance associated with African American communities during the nineteenth century. Historically characterized by syncopated rhythms, foot-stomping, hand-clapping, and bodily percussion, the juba developed within the cultural traditions of enslaved African Americans. Price transforms these rhythmic elements into a lively orchestral movement featuring energetic syncopation, colorful instrumental exchanges, and passages suggestive of jazz and early twentieth-century popular music.

IV. Scherzo: Allegro

The concluding movement returns to a spirited and vigorous musical character. Rapid rhythmic figures, animated orchestral exchanges, and brilliant brass and percussion passages propel the symphony toward its emphatic conclusion. By placing a scherzo in the final movement, Price departs from the conventional Romantic symphonic sequence, creating a finale that emphasizes rhythmic vitality, orchestral brilliance, and celebratory energy.

Beyond its musical achievements, *Symphony No. 4 in D Minor* occupies an important position in American cultural history. Composed during an era when racial segregation and discrimination restricted opportunities for African American musicians, the work demonstrates Price's determination to establish African American musical traditions as integral components of the American classical repertoire. Her integration of spirituals, dance rhythms, and European compositional techniques reflects a broader artistic effort to define an authentically American symphonic identity.

Today, the Fourth Symphony stands as both a significant artistic achievement and a testament to the recovery of historically overlooked voices in American classical music. Through its expressive melodies, sophisticated orchestration, and compelling rhythmic energy, Price's final completed symphony affirms the richness of African American musical heritage and its enduring contribution to the development of American concert music.

ANNUAL FUND DONORS

The Redlands Community Orchestra extends sincere appreciation to its many donors. The generosity of individuals, foundations, and corporations makes an extraordinary impact on the RCO's mission. Those donors give the gift of live music to our community. The following is a list of patrons who contributed or pledged their annual support. Thank you!

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CONCERT ETIQUETTE 101

TO CLAP, OR NOT TO CLAP?

We're so glad you're here! You enjoying our concerts not only makes us happy because we get to share our music with you but also makes us all stronger as a community. Although no special knowledge or experience is needed to enjoy an orchestral concert, certain practices have become customary:

After the orchestra is seated, the first person to come on stage is the concertmaster (the lead first violinist), who is greeted with applause and then initiates the tuning process.

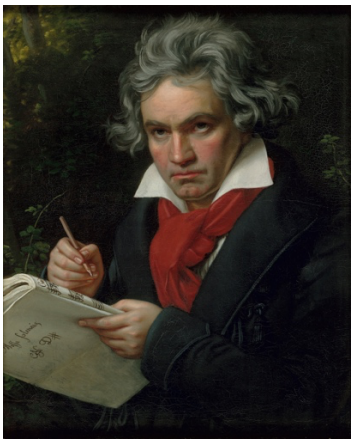
Next comes the conductor (with or without a soloist), who is again greeted with applause. Once the conductor has bowed – he or she will turn to the orchestra, and the audience becomes quiet so the music can begin.

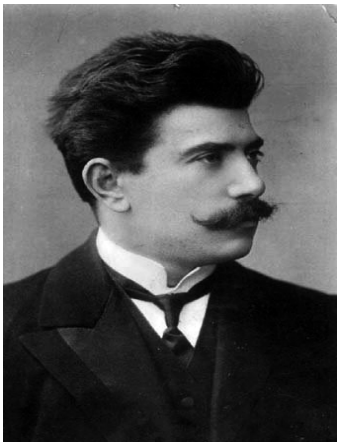
Silence is the canvas on which music is experienced, so the audience should be as quiet as possible for maximum concentration and enjoyment. In the sensitive acoustics of a concert hall, even the slightest noise can be a significant distraction.

What would typically go unheard in daily life (whispering, humming, tapping, turning pages, etc.) is noticed by everyone around you. Of course, mobile phones and all other electronic devices must be silenced before the performance begins.

When should I applaud? This has been the subject of much debate. The tradition for the last hundred years has been to clap only at the end of a piece, no matter how many individual movements there are. (In a recital, the custom is to applaud after a group of pieces, as indicated in the program.) The purpose of waiting is to maintain an unbroken atmosphere so that the piece retains its unity and that any spell the music has cast remains unbroken. In earlier times, it was not unusual for the audience to respond with spontaneous applause, sometimes even insisting that a movement be repeated before a piece could continue. Today, as more music lovers attend classical programs for the first time, enthusiastic applause occasionally breaks out between movements. If you are worried about when to applaud, the safest course is waiting until the conductor has turned around to face the audience, and everyone claps.

REDLANDS COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA







UPCOMING CONCERTS

Sunday ~ March 14th 2026 ~ 3:00 PM

Ludwig van Beethoven
Corolian Overture, Op. 62

Reinhold Glière
Concerto for Harp and Orchestra in E-Flat Major
Featuring: Emily Linlo, *harp*

Joseph Haydn
Symphony No. 104 in D Major, Hob. I/104 "London"

Sunday ~ May 23rd 2026 ~ 3:00 PM

Gustav Mahler
Symphony No. 1 in D Major
"Titan"

