



REDLANDS COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA
12th CONCERT SEASON
2025 – 2026

BACH/STOKOWSKI
STRAUSS
TCHAIKOVSKY

SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 16, 2025
3:00 PM

REDLANDS HIGH SCHOOL
CLOCK AUDITORIUM





James Benanti

conductor and music director

Classical Essentials ~ Bach/Stokowski, Strauss, and Tchaikovsky!

Sunday, November 16, 2025

Johan Sebastian Bach
Arr. Leopold Stokowski

Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565

Johan Strauss II

Tales from the Vienna Woods

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Suite from "Swan Lake," Op. 20a

Upcoming Concerts:
Sunday, March 8, 2026

AMERICA 250
Debbie Prutsman & the RCO!

Sunday, May 24, 2026

AMERICA 250
Aaron Copland
Community Chorus of Redlands



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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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Ethan Anema
Avelino Aquino III
Lloyd Sherman

~Tuba

Steve Moore

~Harp

Emily Linlo

~Timpani

Dennis Dockstader

JAMES BENANTI



PHOTO ©2016 TYLER NIELL

Music Director and Conductor James Benanti spent 19 years as Director of Instrumental Music at Redlands High School. 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 previously served as President from 2008 to 2010.

THE MUSIC

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)
Arr. Leopold Stokowski (1882 – 1975)

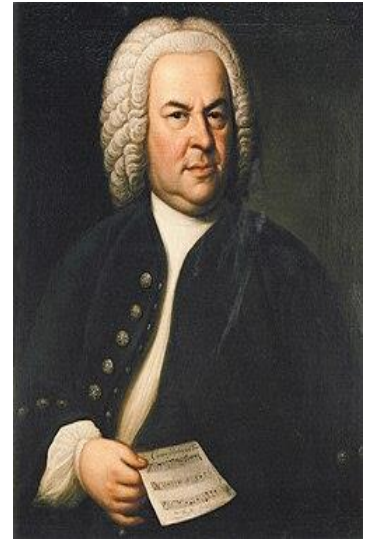
Toccatà and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565

Notes written by Dr. William Runyan, musicologist

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 5 horns, 3 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

Recommended Recording: Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra circa. 1934 ~ RCA Victor.

The marvelous resources of the nineteenth-century symphony orchestra serve the broadest musical imaginative purposes with amazing facility. Although the twentieth century added a broad array of percussion instruments, the fundamental sound resources of the orchestra were in place by around 1850. During the 1800s, the instrumental colors available in the orchestra grew tremendously as a result of the influence of the opera orchestra. Composers of opera were studiously incorporating new instruments into their works to heighten the dramatic atmosphere on the stage. French composers such as Meyerbeer led the way, followed by Wagner and others. A short list of newly-introduced instruments includes the tuba, trumpets, and horns with valves, the bass clarinet, English horn, keyboard instruments, multiple harps, thundersheets—the list goes on. At the same time, imaginative orchestrators were assiduously exploring the deep resources of the string family by pushing the limits of the higher register, developing a variety of figurations, using special effects such as multiple stops, playing with the wood of the bow (rather than the strings), pizzicato, harmonics, and novel combinations of divisi strings. And these are just a few of the deep well of possibilities that serve composers and orchestrators. What is more, and perhaps most important, is that these resources were varied and rich enough to serve not only nineteenth-century art, as well as the radical changes of musical style of the twentieth century, but still seem without limits of possibility in our new century.



With this as background, why should we listen to a twentieth-century arrangement for orchestra of an eighteenth-century masterpiece for organ: Bach's venerable Toccata and Fugue in D Minor? The short answer, of course, is that Leopold Stokowski, flamboyant showman and longtime conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, ran a cottage industry in the last century, making splashy arrangements for symphony orchestra of music from other media that showcased his "Fabulous Philadelphia Sound." Among them were several of J. S. Bach's organ works, arrangements of which he thought would better acquaint the public with these masterpieces; today, of course, long after the Baroque revival, this is superfluous. But these arrangements were all the rage earlier on—they were a hit in the movie, "The Big Broadcast of 1937," where Stokowski, flowing mane and all, played himself (of course). Later, we are familiar with the Toccata's appearance in Walt Disney's motion picture, *Fantasia*.

So, finally, why do we still perform this hoary warhorse of dubious artistic origin? Well, the answer is simple—it is a sonic feast, and just plainly a lot of innocent fun. The music's drama is enhanced immeasurably by the deep resources of the symphony orchestra. Clearly, Stokowski did a magnificent job in showing us another dimension of Bach's timeless music. This is no time for pedants and snobs. Enjoy!

—Wm. E. Runyan

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Johann Strauss II (1825-1899)

"Tales from the Vienna Woods"

Notes written by James Rippetoe

Instrumentation: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, and Eb clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

Recommended Recording: Carlos Kleiber conducting the Vienna Philharmonic circa 1992 ~ The Year's Eve Concert.



First performed in Vienna's Volksgarten on 19 June 1868, *Tales from the Vienna Woods* is one of Johann Strauss II's most atmospheric and beloved waltzes. Written at the height of his fame and dedicated to Prince Constantin zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst,

a high official at the imperial court, it reflects how far the once “questionable” country dance had risen in Viennese society. The title evokes the wooded hills west of the city—the Wienerwald—a favourite escape for urban residents and a cradle of local folk music, and the piece pays affectionate tribute to the rustic village dances from which the elegant ballroom waltz had grown.

One of the work’s most distinctive features is its use of the zither, the plucked folk instrument associated with taverns, wine gardens, and informal music-making in and around Vienna. *Tales from the Vienna Woods* is one of six Strauss waltzes to include a prominent, virtuoso zither part; at the premiere it was played by Anton J. Paschinger, a leading Viennese zither player. Formally, the waltz is unusually expansive. It opens with one of Strauss’s longest introductions—about 119 bars—more like a miniature tone poem than a simple prelude, complete with distant horn calls, solo violin, and birdsong-like flute writing that suggests dawn in the forest.

Only after this extended scene-painting does the zither enter with music recalling a rustic Ländler, the slower country dance that predates the urban waltz. Strauss then unfolds five linked waltz sections whose contrasting melodies range from tender and nostalgic to exuberant, before earlier themes return in a brilliant coda. This ending brings back the zither sonority and fragments of earlier tunes, symbolically uniting the simple, outdoor music of the Vienna Woods with the sophisticated world of the Ringstrasse salons. Now a staple of the Vienna Philharmonic’s New Year’s Concert, the waltz is cherished both as a showcase of Strauss’s melodic and orchestral gifts and as a musical postcard from a vanished, idealized Vienna.

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1818 – 1893)

Suite from “Swan Lake,” Op. 20a

Notes written by James Rippetoe

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 4 horns, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

Recommended Recording: Andre Previn conducting the London Symphony Orchestra circa. 1976 ~ Warner Classics.



When Tchaikovsky composed *Swan Lake* in 1875–76, ballet music was usually treated as decorative background rather than fully symphonic. Drawing on his experience in opera and orchestral writing, he created a dramatically unified score whose melodic richness and vivid orchestration rival a symphony more than mere stage

“accompaniment.” The 1877 Bolshoi premiere in Moscow met with only modest success, but the score soon took on a life of its own, and *Swan Lake* is now among the most frequently performed ballets in the repertoire.

Hoping to bring the music to a wider concert audience, Tchaikovsky wrote in 1882 of his wish to preserve its finest numbers in an orchestral suite. Whether he ever completed that plan is unclear, but seven years after his death his publisher Pyotr Jurgenson issued the six-movement *Suite from Swan Lake*, Op. 20a. The precise authorship of its final shape remains debated, though it likely reflects ideas Tchaikovsky had considered in the 1880s. First performed at London’s Queen’s Hall on 1/14 September 1901 under Sir Henry Wood, the suite soon became a concert favorite, offering a compact 20–25-minute journey through some of the ballet’s most memorable and dramatically shaped music.

Movements

Scène (Moderato) – Drawn from Act II, this opening scene introduces the famous “swan theme,” sung by the oboe over shimmering strings and harp. The music paints the moonlit lakeside where Prince Siegfried first encounters Odette, the Swan Princess. Its long-breathed melody, tinged with melancholy, has become one of Tchaikovsky’s most recognizable inspirations and sets the emotional tone for the entire suite.

Valse (Tempo di valse) – Returning to Act I, the Waltz presents the glittering courtly world of Siegfried’s birthday celebration. Graceful phrases, swept along by characteristic Tchaikovskian “swing,” alternate with more robust tutti from the whole orchestra. Though conceived as a ballroom dance, the piece stands easily on its own as a concert waltz, already hinting at the composer’s later mastery of the genre in *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*.

Danse des cygnes (Allegro moderato) – Sometimes known as the “Dance of the Little Swans,” this quick, tightly knit number is part of the larger sequence of swan dances in Act II. Its propulsive accompaniment and clipped, almost playful melody belie the technical demands of the choreography. In the concert setting, the music’s sharply etched rhythms and light scoring create a delightful contrast to the lushness of the surrounding movements.

Scène (Andante – Andante non troppo – Allegro) – This extended scene, also from Act II, accompanies an intimate pas d’action between Odette and Siegfried. The music unfolds in several sections, moving from tender lyricism—often carried by solo woodwinds and strings—to more passionate outbursts.

Here, Tchaikovsky's gifts as an operatic dramatist come to the fore: the music seems to "speak" the characters' vows of love and foreshadows their fate with dark undercurrents in the harmony.

Czardas: Danse hongroise (Moderato assai – Allegro moderato – Vivace)

– The national dances of Act III provide a colorful diversion in the ballet, and the Hungarian-style czardas is among the most striking. It begins with a broad, quasi-improvised introduction, then accelerates through increasingly animated dance episodes. Syncopations, sudden dynamic contrasts, and brilliant orchestration (especially in the brass) evoke both the stylized "Hungarian" flavor beloved in 19th-century ballet and the dazzling spectacle of the court ball.

Scène (Allegro agitato – Andante) – The final movement combines music from the stormy climax and closing tableau of Act IV. Turbulent strings, driving rhythms, and dramatic brass fanfares depict the struggle against the sorcerer Rothbart and the lovers' ultimate decision to sacrifice themselves. In the concluding Andante, the music expands into a radiant, hymn-like apotheosis, suggesting spiritual transfiguration and bringing the suite to a profoundly emotional close.

Scored for a full late-Romantic orchestra with prominent roles for woodwinds, brass, harp, and percussion, the *Suite from Swan Lake* demonstrates why Tchaikovsky's ballets were so decisive for the later history of dance and concert music alike. Heard without dancers, the suite reveals the structural clarity, thematic unity, and sheer melodic invention that have made *Swan Lake* a cornerstone of both the ballet stage and the symphonic repertoire.



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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; therefore, the audience should be as quiet as possible to ensure 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, regardless of the number of individual movements it contains. (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 unsure about when to applaud, the safest course is to wait until the conductor has turned around to face the audience and everyone else has clapped.

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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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