



REDLANDS COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA
13th CONCERT SEASON
2025 - 2026

“An Afternoon on Broadway”



AMERICA





James Benanti
conductor and music director

Sunday, March 8, 2026

“An Afternoon on Broadway!”

featuring...

Debbie Prutsman

&

T.J. Dawson

UPCOMING CONCERTS:

Sunday, May 24, 2026

“AMERICA 250”

Copland *“Fanfare for the Common Man”*

Copland *“Old American Songs”*

with the Community Chorus of Redlands

Copland *“Appalachian Spring”*



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.

2025 – 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President – James Rippetoe
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We are especially grateful to the following individuals and organizations whose time, effort, and support have not gone unnoticed.

Kent Hayworth
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Instrumental Music Department

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THE REDLANDS COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS

~Violin I

Charles Yoh, *principal*
Mark Vargas***
Thomas Chen
Isabella Showalter
Aaron Weintraub
Amy Crippen
Priscilla Ibarra
Larke Dockstader
Jocelyn Daniela
Marthinus van der Westhuizen

~Violin II

Greg Schneider, *principal*
Jennifer Aragon
Mary Bailey
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Christine Denstadt
Angel Grounds
Edward Irawan
Samantha Najarro
Elise Yenne

~Viola

Laurel Nelson, *principal* ***
Sarah Chan
Mary Moore
Peter Vasquez

~Cello

Grant Thomas, *principal*
Noah Poole
Beth Tamayose
Romulus 'Rom' Masterson
Frank Rangel
Caitlin Clement
Emily Torres

~Double Bass

James Rippetoe, *principal****
Jacquiline Razar
Jennifer Sherman
Janine Leslie

~Flute

Heather Thielen, *principal*
Maud Gillespie***

~Oboe

Joshua Chidester, *principal*
Lance Alloway

~Clarinet

Paula Sanchez, *principal*
Carissa Weintraub

~Bassoon

Katherine Hartman, *principal*
Ella Constable

~Horn

Eric Grenier, *principal*
Moses Chalmers
Josep Marquez
Christine Richardson
Marilyn Star Wasson

~Trumpet

Steve Morics, *principal*
Angel Rivas

~Trombone

Susan Collins, *principal*
Ethan Anema
Avelino Aquino III
Lloyd Sherman

~Tuba

Steve Moore

~Keyboards

Alejandro Ruiz

~Percussion

Dennis Dockstader, *principal*
Steven Devoe
Tyler Jacobson

*** *RCO Board Members*

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.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Good afternoon! Welcome to the second concert of our 13th season, and the first concert of 2026. As you probably know, 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. To celebrate the Sesquicentennial, RCO will feature music by American composers all year long!

With that in mind, what could be more American than an Afternoon on Broadway! Though the genre has its roots in 19th century European comic opera, and the famous operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, musical theatre (like pizza) was perfected in the United States. The "Golden Age of Broadway" began in the early 1940's with Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" marking a milestone where dialogue, music, and dance were blended together to move the story forward. Their works, along with those of Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe (for whom the recital hall at the University of Redlands is named), cemented modern Musical Theatre as a thoroughly American art form.

We are thrilled and honored to work with Debbie Prutsman and T.J. Dawson as we present music from Broadway's "Golden Age", along with the music of Stephen Sondheim, and Andrew Lloyd Webber (he may be British, but Sunset Boulevard is in California!).

This afternoon's concert would not be possible without audience support. The RCO would like to thank all of our donors, and also to express our sincere appreciation for a generous grant from the Redlands Community Foundation. We are your community orchestra, and we are grateful for your support to keep the music playing for years to come.

Please sit back, relax, and enjoy "An Afternoon on Broadway!"

~James Benanti
Conductor and Music Director

DEBBIE PRUTSMAN



Debbie is, essentially, a Redlands native, although technically raised in Yucaipa. In those days, Yucaipa was a tough place for an arts family to thrive, so Redlands was her life! She, along with brother, Steve, and sister, Becca, took ballet, tap, piano, guitar, puppetry, voice, and any other lesson their mother could find. “Mutti’s” motto was that busy kids can’t get into trouble! Debbie’s earliest memories are of dance at the YWCA and the Marsha McMillan School of Ballet, piano lessons with Everett Swank, guitar lessons with Wendy Hillard, voice lessons with Lila Stuart, and summer-after-summer with the University of Redlands Youth Theatre Program headed by Paul and JoAnn Little. It was during these summers that her love of musical theatre sprouted and grew as she worked with leaders who would become lifelong friends and colleagues: Gary Krinke, Kathy Talbert-Weller, Dennis and Roger Castellano, Kathy Logan-Brombacher, ALL of whom have had and continue to have such a powerful impact on her life!

After high school, Debbie toured the US and Europe for years. After returning to the IE, she realized Redlands was where she wanted to put down roots. After earning a BS in Sociology and Biology as well as a teaching credential from UC Riverside, she taught elementary school in Riverside while she continued to work in professional musical theatre. She’s had the honor of sharing the stage with greats like Carol Burnett, Patrick

Cassidy, Eden Espinoza, Paige O’Hare, and so many more. Her talent has taken her to theaters all over SoCal, the east coast, and even into rural Minnesota, her momma’s birthplace.

Debbie taught K-12 in Redlands Unified, having started the choral program at Beattie Middle School and both the choral and theatre programs at Citrus Vally High School. She created a developmental music program for Redlands kindergarteners, eventually retiring from Redlands Unified in 2023.

Debbie has enjoyed continued work in theatre. Redlands audiences remember her as Ursula in “The Little Mermaid” and Dolly Levi in “Hello Dolly” at the Redlands Bowl – the very first stage she trod at only 4 years old! She can currently be seen as the Bird Woman/Miss Andrew in “Mary Poppins” at the Lewis Family Playhouse at Victoria Gardens - roles she recently performed at Tustin Arts in the Park under the direction of friend and hero, TJ Dawson!

Debbie remains grateful to live in this glorious community (with her incredible husband, Bobby Bellue) and counts it an immeasurable honor to sing with this wonderful orchestra for all of you! She thanks YOU for being a patron of the arts.



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T.J. DAWSON



T.J. is so honored and thankful Debbie asked him to be part of this incredible evening. T.J. is the Co-Founder and Executive Producer of 3-D Theatricals which was one of Southern California's major Regional Theaters until they shifted their focus to commercial theater. They have since made their Broadway debut on the Revival of SPAMALOT and now looking to launch a world tour of a new production of JERSEY BOYS.

His first passion though was performing, and he rarely gets the opportunity these days, so today is very special! Select acting credits: European Tour: GREASE (Roger), National Tour: WINTER DANCE PARTY (Big Bopper), Regional: SHREK (Shrek), THE FULL MONTY (Dave), SEUSSICAL (Horton), GUYS AND DOLLS (Nicely Nicely), CRAZY FOR YOU (Moose). He has been more focused on directing almost exclusively since 2009 and has been honored to receive several awards and nominations over this time. His SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE was the most nominated musical for the San Diego Critics Choice Awards winning several including Best Resident Musical! He has received Ovation nominations, as well as an L.A. Drama Critics Circle Lifetime Achievement Award for his direction of the critically acclaimed productions of PARADE (13 nominations and 4 Ovation awards including Best Musical) and RAGTIME. Other directing credits include: JERSEY BOYS, THE DROWSY CHAPERONE (w/ Sally Struthers), ALL SHOOK UP, THE SOUND OF MUSIC, A CHORUS LINE, AVENUE Q

(Ovation Nomination), 9 TO 5 (staring Tony Nominee Beth Malone), INTO THE WOODS, PETER PAN, SIDE SHOW (Robby Award – Best Director, Best Musical), THE ADDAMS FAMILY (staring Bronson Pinchot & Rachel York), HELLO DOLLY, BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, THE FULL MONTY, OKLAHOMA!, THE SECRET GARDEN, THE WILD PARTY, BAT BOY THE MUSICAL, CABARET, SEUSSICAL and NEWSIES. He is also the co-creator, member and director of the a cappella group @westbeatsings which performs year-round at the Disneyland Resort as well as all over Southern California! He would like to thank Debbie for being an absolute dream and for tolerating how star struck he is by her and to James for making him feel so welcome and safe to return to the stage under his incredible leadership. "Jude, Isaac and Haven, you are my every breath, and I am the luckiest dad alive. Mi amor, mi corazón, Ander... I love you with all that I am. Lastly, thank you to God for being my constant source of love, strength and inspiration." IG: @tjdawson81

IN MEMORIAM



It is with great sadness that the Redlands Community Orchestra mourns one of our own: Dr. Donna McNeese-Smith. Donna passed away on December 15, 2026. As a long-term member of the second violin section, Donna was an inspiration to us all.

Born on February 21, 1939, Donna McNeese-Smith, RN, EdD, CNAA, was a professor emerita at the UCLA Joe C. Wen School of Nursing. Dr. McNeese-Smith was a distinguished educator, researcher, and leader in nursing administration. Throughout her career, she was honored with several distinguished awards, including the Nurse's Week Nursing Excellence Award for Teaching in 2001, the Excellence in Advancing Clinical Practice Award from the Association of California Nurse Leaders (ACNL) in 2006, and the Diane Cooper Lifetime Achievement Award sponsored by Nurse.Com Nursing Excellence Awards in 2012. As a Fulbright Scholar, she shared her expertise internationally and mentored countless students and colleagues throughout her career. Her contributions to both the RCO, nursing scholarship and practice leave an enduring legacy. Donna was 86.

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.

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!

BENEFACTOR \$1,000 +	PATRON \$500-\$999	ADVOCATE \$100-\$499	FRIEND \$1-\$99
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