

University Symphony Orchestra

Monday, November 4, 2024 at 7:30pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
The College of Professional Studies and School of Music, Theatre & Dance present

University Symphony Orchestra

Asieh Mahyar, *conductor*

Monday, November 4, 2024 at 7:30pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Welcome to Lagerquist Concert Hall.
Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.
Use of cameras, recording equipment, and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

PROGRAM

Ararat Suite, op. 34..... **Loris Tjeknavorian (b. 1937)**
V. Celebration Waltz, Dove Returns with Olive Branch – Genesis 8:11

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, op. 64 **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)**
Andante – Allegro con anima – Molto più tranquillo
Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza
Valse. Allegro moderato
Finale: Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace – Meno mosso

Program Notes

Celebration Waltz, Dove Returns with Olive Branch - Genesis 8:11 (2020)

Ararat Suite, op. 34, composed of seven movements, is related to the biblical legend of Noah's Ark finding a resting place on Earth on Mount Ararat after the Flood. At the same time, the work is an expression of the author's homage to his ancestors – Ararat, remaining outside the borders of Armenia, is the symbol, the eternal nostalgic image of the lost homeland. The fifth movement, *Celebration Waltz*, captures a sense of joy and spiritual renewal. Featuring lively, dance-like rhythms, the movement evokes a sense of hope and peace, signifying the end of the Great Flood.

Loris Tjeknavorian is an Iranian-Armenian composer and conductor, widely recognized for his significant contributions to the world of classical music and his deep connection to Armenian cultural heritage. Born in 1937 in Borujerd, Iran, to Armenian parents, Tjeknavorian demonstrated a passion for music from an early age, studying violin and piano before pursuing advanced studies in composition and conducting at the Vienna Music Academy. Under the mentorship of prominent figures like Carl Orff, he honed his skills and developed a distinct style that blends Western classical traditions with Armenian and Persian musical elements. His compositions include over 75 works, ranging from symphonies, operas, and ballets to chamber music, with some of his most celebrated pieces being the *Ararat Suite*, the opera *Rostam and Sohrab*—a retelling of the Persian epic *Shahnameh*—and the *Armenian Requiem*. As a conductor, Tjeknavorian has led renowned orchestras around the world, including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic, and the Philharmonia Orchestra. He served as the principal conductor and artistic director of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra for over a decade recording more than 30 albums featuring Armenian and classical repertoire. Tjeknavorian has been honored with numerous awards throughout his career, including Armenia's highest artistic award, the "Order of St. Mesrop Mashtots" and Iran's *Sepas* Award for his contributions to the arts. He also received the Gold Medal from the Armenian Ministry of Culture and the "Order of Honor" for his promotion of Armenian music worldwide. A true cultural ambassador, Tjeknavorian has used his artistry to bridge different musical traditions, bringing the rich legacy of Armenian and Persian music to global audiences while inspiring new generations of musicians and composers.

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, op. 64 (1888)

"I am passionately fond of the national element in all its varied expressions...I am Russian in the fullest sense of the word."

Tchaikovsky's deeply felt nationalist sentiments bound him closely to his contemporaries in the twilight of Czarist Russia. Yet—ironically—his musical expression of the "national element" placed him at the center of a bitter debate. While the central European musical world in the late 19th century argued over the relative merits of Wagner and Brahms, Russian musical society was marked by hostility between a progressive group of nationalists, the "Mighty Handful," and conservatives such as Anton and Nikolai Rubinstein, who wanted Russian music to reflect European techniques and standards.

Though he drew inspiration from Russia's rich vein of folk music, Tchaikovsky embraced his European training and rejected the attitudes of the nationalists as simplistic: "The young Petersburg composers are very gifted but they are all impregnated with the most horrible presumptuousness and a purely amateur conviction of their superiority over all other musicians in the universe," he once grumbled. But shortly after the premiere of his *Fifth Symphony* in November 1888, he wrote to his brother: "On Saturday I took part in a Russian symphony concert. I am very glad that I could prove, in public, that I do not belong to any particular party."

Tchaikovsky was sensitive to the public dimension; as the country's foremost composer and as a conductor with an international reputation, he was closely scrutinized. In an 1882 letter to a Russian critic, he argued: "It is not important that European audiences applauded me but that all Russian music and Russian art were received with enthusiasm in my person. The Russians ought to know that a Russian musician has held the banner of our art high in the big European centers."

Composed shortly after a long European tour, the *Fifth Symphony* is typical of the artistic balance Tchaikovsky struck; it is not explicitly nationalistic, but a distinctively Russian flavor pervades many of the themes.

There is also a related, but deeper, artistic issue in the work. As musicologist Leon Plantinga points out, Tchaikovsky's personal approach often conflicted with the strictures of his formal training: "He struggled ceaselessly with the opposed demands of formal traditions he had learned in the conservatory and his own predilection for an emotional and expressive progression of events corresponding to an unspoken program."

The idea of an "unspoken program" was certainly in the composer's mind as he sat down to compose this symphony; in the spring of 1888 he noted a possible approach: "Intr[oduction]. Complete resignation before Fate—or, what is the same thing, the inscrutable designs of Providence." Although he eventually dropped the specific programmatic references, the symphony projects some kind of dramatic significance. The broad outlines are made clear by a recurring idea that has become known as the "fate" motif; its original ominous character undergoes various metamorphoses, emerging triumphant in the score's concluding pages.

Low strings and woodwinds introduce the fate motif at the opening; it is followed by a theme reminiscent of a Slavic folk tune. The movement presents a wealth of themes, and the development presents material not previously introduced. The second movement's luscious main theme was adapted into a popular love song; Tchaikovsky's skillful orchestration, however, lifts the mood from sentimentality to high Romanticism. The movement's principal melody is presented in a memorable solo by the horn, followed by other appealing woodwind solos.

The third movement is the most distinctive, a graceful waltz in which Tchaikovsky again exploits a wide range of instrumental color.

The finale brings the emotional drama of the symphony to a climax. After opening with the fate motif, Tchaikovsky turns to the movement's militant main subject; the tension mounts (one New York critic referred to "slaughter, dire and bloody...across the storm-driven score") until a newly affirmative version of the fate motif bursts forth in the magnificent final moments.

– Susan Key

About the Conductor

Passionate about performing music from diverse cultural traditions, **Asieh Mahyar** serves as the Interim Director of Orchestral Studies at Pacific Lutheran University and the Symphony Orchestra Conductor at the West Seattle Community Orchestra. A Doctor of Musical Arts candidate in orchestral conducting at Michigan State University, Ms. Mahyar holds an MM in orchestral conducting from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a BM in choral conducting from the Komitas State Conservatory in Yerevan, Armenia. Originally from Iran, Ms. Mahyar is one of the few female conductors from her country, bringing a wealth of diverse conducting experience to her roles. Her past positions include Assistant Conductor at Michigan State University, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and Tchaikovsky Music College in Armenia. She has collaborated with professional orchestras such as the Grand Rapids Symphony and Jackson Symphony in Michigan, and the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra in Ohio. Her commitment to music education is evident through her work as a clinician and adjudicator with various high school orchestras, festivals, and conferences in Washington, including the WMEA Conference 2024-Junior All-State Orchestra, Lake Stevens High School Solo Ensemble Competition (MPMEA), PLU Invitational High School Orchestra and Bands Festivals, Mercer Island High School Festival, and Capital High School Orchestra Festival. Ms. Mahyar's extensive experience encompasses leading instrumental and vocal ensembles and directing full opera productions. Ms. Mahyar has been selected for prestigious conducting workshops and conferences, working alongside leading conductors such as Christian Macelaru and Octavio Más-Arocas at the Cabrillo Music Festival, Richard Rosenberg at the National Music Festival, Gerard Schwarz at the Eastern Music Festival, Miguel Harth-Bedoya at the Conducting Institute, Kenneth Kiesler at the Conductors Retreat at Medomak.

Acknowledgement

On behalf of the PLU Symphony Orchestra, I extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Ron Gerhardstein, Director of Band Studies at PLU, for his exceptional leadership of our rehearsals and performance over the past four weeks. His expertise and dedication have significantly enhanced the ensemble's progress during my medical leave, and his inspiring guidance has been invaluable. We are profoundly grateful for his unwavering support.

– Asieh Mahyar

University Symphony Orchestra

Asieh Mahyar, *conductor*

Flute

Katherine Gunter, *piccolo*
Blake Leahy+
Kade Levien+

Oboe

Sara Atwood+
Jayden White+

Clarinet

Meaghan Austin+
Caitlin Collins+

Bassoon

Thomas Tafoya+
Syd Thayer-O'Brien+

Horn

Benjamin Coats+
James Gibson+
Rosalyn Tobeck
Aleia Truman

Trumpet

Devin Bianchi-Rivera
Clara Chabot
Sylvie Manz+
Jess Mason+
Levi Read

Trombone

Joshua Green+
Max Minjares+
Sarah Zundel, *bass trombone*

Tuba

Cassidy Stanhope

Percussion

Ben Helgeson
Rory Lacey
Evan Nakanishi+
Joey Wilcher

Harp

Elizabeth Landis**

Violin I

Justinpal Singh*
Pablo Arellano Cardenas* (Tjeknavorian)
Janelle Barlow
Kyra Kehm-Goins
Cora Beeson
Adelaide Waite
Rebekah Doll

Violin II

Evelina Bozhko+
Elizabeth Bankowski
Joan Fort
Kaitlynn Koehn

Viola

Alyson Rake+
Kindra Gonsalves
Sofia Topete
Emily Bratcher
Damaris Ibrahim
Natalie Story

Cello

Marisa Robbins+
Ellen Coburn+ (Tjeknavorian)
Nathaniel Bratcher
Jeffrey Buetow
Kellen Gonsalves
Gabriela Vera-Kavanaugh
Elliot Capron
Soren Bostrom
Ralizsa Rosales
Cayla Low
John Coughlan
Bronwyn Poppen-Eagan

Double Bass

Campian Roberts+
Cameron McLennan
Madi Cline+
Tucker Doering

+ Section leader

* Concert master

** PLU faculty

Jess Mason, *librarian*

Alyson Rake, *stage manager*

Fall Events

at Pacific Lutheran University

ALL MUSIC EVENTS ARE IN MARY BAKER RUSSELL MUSIC CENTER, LAGERQUIST CONCERT HALL UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

SEPTEMBER

- 8 Sunday, 3pm**
Faculty Recital: Erik Steighner, Saxophone, free admission
- 14 Saturday, 7:30pm**
Faculty Recital: Dawn Sonntag, Composer, free admission
- 29 Sunday, 3pm**
Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series: Justin Murphy-Mancini,
Organist

OCTOBER

- 6 Sunday, 6pm**
Jubilee Day Celebration Concert, in partnership with Seattle Opera,
free admission
- 9 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
University Jazz Ensemble. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille
Phillips Center
- 13 Sunday, 3pm**
University Wind Ensemble
- 15 Tuesday and 16 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Choral Concert
- 19 Saturday, 5pm**
PLU Faculty Brass Showcase
- 25 Friday, 12pm**
Orchestra Festival concert, free admission
- 27 Sunday, 3pm**
South Sound Saxophone Ensemble, free admission

NOVEMBER

- 3 Sunday, 3pm**
Angela Meade Vocal Competition, free admission
- 4 Monday, 7:30pm**
University Symphony Orchestra
- 6 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Keyboard Students Recital, free admission
- 10 Sunday, 3pm**
Faculty Recital: Korine Fujiwara and Family, free admission
- 13 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Early Music Concert, free admission
- 16 Saturday, 3pm**
Woodwind Students Recital, free admission
- 16 Saturday, 4:30pm**
Brass Students Recital, free admission
- 17 Sunday, 3pm**
University Wind Ensemble
- 19 Tuesday, 7:30pm**
University Concert Band
- 20 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Piano Ensemble, free admission
- 21 Thursday, 6:30pm**
Steel Band. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center, free
admission
- 22 Friday, 7:30pm**
University Jazz Ensemble. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille
Phillips Center
- 23 Saturday, 3pm**
Sølvvinden Flute Ensemble, free admission
- 23 Saturday, 7:30pm**
Percussion Ensemble, free admission
- 24 Sunday, 12pm**
Guest Artist Recital: April Clayton, Flute & Miguel del Aguila,
Composer and Piano, free admission
- 24 Sunday, 2:30pm**
April Clayton Flute Masterclass and Burkhardt Flutes Exhibit. Room
322, Mary Baker Russell Music Center, free admission
- 24 Sunday, 3pm**
Choral Union
- 24 Sunday, 5pm**
PLUtonic/Gold Rush. The Cave, Anderson
University Center, free admission

NOVEMBER, Cont.

- 24 Sunday, 7:30pm**
Guitar Orchestra & Guitar Ensemble, free admission
- 26 Tuesday, 6pm**
Chamber Music Kaleidoscope, free admission
- 26 Tuesday, 7:30pm**
String Kaleidoscope, free admission

DECEMBER

In excelsis Deo, A PLU Christmas Concert

Tickets go on sale Wednesday, October 30

Friday, December 6, at 7:30pm - Lagerquist Concert Hall
Saturday, December 7, at 2pm - Lagerquist Concert Hall
Saturday, December 7, at 7:30pm - Lagerquist Concert Hall
Sunday, December 8, at 2pm - Lagerquist Concert Hall
Monday, December 9, at 7:30pm - Benaroya Hall, Seattle

- 3 Tuesday, 6pm**
Saxophone Quartets & Jazz Combos. The Cave, Anderson
University Center, free admission
- 4 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Sounds of Christmas, featuring University Singers and Knights
Chorus

JANUARY

- 11 Saturday, 4:30 and 6:30pm**
Northwest High School Honor Band, free admission
- 19 Sunday, 5pm**
PLU Honor Orchestra for Strings, free admission
- 31 Friday, 7:30pm**
Great Moments in Opera. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips
Center

FEBRUARY

- 1 Saturday, 7:30pm**
Great Moments in Opera. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips
Center

To Order Tickets:

On Line: www.plu.edu/music/tickets

At the Concert: Lobby Desk in Mary Baker Russell Music Center
or Karen Hille Phillips Center (depending on performance location)

CONCERTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE
All ticket sales are final - no refunds

MUSIC EVENT TICKET PRICES: \$16 GENERAL PUBLIC; \$12 PLU FACULTY/STAFF, ALUMNI, MILITARY,
SENIORS (60); \$8 IMMEDIATE FAMILY OF PERFORMERS, PATRONS UNDER 18; FREE TO PLU STUDENTS
WITH STUDENT ID. CONCERTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND SOME CONCERTS MAY BE ADDED
AFTER PUBLICATION. www.plu.edu/music/calendar (updated October 22, 2024)