

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pasadena Symphony Association
Pasadena Symphony & POPS
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For artist images and bios, visit: <https://pasadenasympphony-pops.org/kings-of-soul-press-release/>

Kings Of Soul Brings The Hits Of Motown and More with American Idol Finalist Michael Lynche

Pasadena, CA – The **Pasadena POPS Rusnak Summer Concert series** continues on **Saturday, July 15** with **Kings of Soul**. Resident Pops Conductor Larry Blank will lead the orchestra with special guests Kings of Soul, who will shine a spotlight on the hit songs of **Marvin Gaye, Jackie Wilson, James Brown, Otis Redding, The Temptations, Al Green, Barry White and Smokey Robinson** in an evening of soulful rhythms and melodies. Highlights include ***Soul Man, Shop Around, Get Ready, Try a Little Tenderness, Stand By Me, Move On Up, Your Love Keeps Lifting Me Higher*** and more to get the audience dancin' in the aisles!

Kings of Soul is comprised of three vocalists touting a breadth of stage and screen experience. **Chester Gregory's** Broadway credits include ***Motown the Musical, Dreamgirls*** and ***Sister Act***, and **Darren Lorenzo** has been seen on Broadway and touring productions of ***After Midnight, Legally Blonde, Saturday Night Fever, Madagascar, Fosse, Hair*** and ***Once on This Island***, among others. You may remember **Michael Lynche** or "**Big Mike**" from his turn as a finalist on ***American Idol*** season 9, where he wowed millions of fans with his comforting and powerful voice. Lynche has since toured as an opening act for **Boyz II Men, Lalah Hathaway** and **Faith Evans**.

All concerts are held at the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Gardens. Grounds open for picnicking and dining at 5:30pm and performances begin at 7:30pm. Don't miss the best outdoor dinner party in town with spacious circular table seating with fine linens, or lawn seating for those who want to bring a blanket – each option carries on the tradition of picnic-dining with your family and friends and the San Gabriel Valley's premier orchestra! Among many venue amenities, concert goers can enjoy pre-ordered gourmet box dinners for onsite pickup just steps from their table, two full-service beverage centers and a variety of food truck options.

The Arboretum is located at 301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA. Subscribers may purchase pre-paid on-site parking at the Arboretum, and all concertgoers can purchase guaranteed and convenient parking at Santa Anita Park, with non-stop shuttle service to the Arboretum's main entrance.

Single tickets start at \$30. Season subscriptions and single tickets are now on sale, and are available by calling the box office at (626) 793-7172, online at PasadenaSymphony-Pops.org or at the Arboretum on concert days.

IF YOU GO:

- **What:** The Pasadena POPS presents Kings of Soul
Larry Blank, *Resident Pops Conductor*
Kings of Soul, *special guests*
- **When:** Saturday, July 15, 2023. Concert starts at 7:30pm. Gates open at 5:30pm.
- **Where:** The LA County Arboretum | 301 N Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA 91007
- **Cost:** Tickets start at \$30.00
- **Dining:** Gates open at 5:30pm for picnicking. Guests are welcome to bring their own food and drink, pre-order boxed meals, or purchase from onsite food and beverage vendors.
- **Parking:** Subscribers have the opportunity to purchase onsite Arboretum parking. Single ticket holders may purchase guaranteed and convenient parking at Santa Anita Park Lot 6, located just across Baldwin Ave., with complimentary non-stop shuttle service to the Arboretum's main entrance. Lot 6 parking may be purchased in advanced at pasadenasympphony-pops.org or onsite (**cash only**) for \$15.

ABOUT THE PASADENA SYMPHONY AND POPS

Formed in 1928, the Pasadena Symphony and POPS is an ensemble of Hollywood's most talented, sought after musicians. With extensive credits in the film, television, recording and orchestral industries, the artists of Pasadena Symphony and POPS are the most heard in the world.

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 luxuriant Los Angeles Arboretum & Botanic Garden. The multi-platinum-selling, two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer dubbed "The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook," Michael Feinstein, leads the POPS as Principal Pops Conductor, succeeding Marvin Hamlisch.

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) comprised of seven performing ensembles, with over 400 gifted 4th-12th grade students from all over Southern California. The PYSO Symphony has performed at venues across the globe as well as on the television show GLEE.

The PSA provides people from all walks of life with powerful access points to the world of symphonic music.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Larry Blank
Resident Pops Conductor

Larry Blank is one of the most prolific and sought-after composers, conductors, and orchestrators in the entertainment business today. His work has been presented all over the world, including some of Broadway's most successful musicals, Carnegie Hall, and top television and film projects.

He was the Music Director/Conductor and/or vocal arranger for many shows on Broadway and in Los Angeles including *They're Playing Our Song*, *Evita*, *Sugar Babies*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Phantom Of The Opera*, *Onward Victoria*, *Copperfield*, *Colette*, *A Chorus Line* and *A Little Night Music*. He has been nominated three times for both the Tony Award and the Drama Desk Award for his orchestrations in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* and with Marc Shaiman for *Catch Me If You Can*. Larry received a Drama Desk Nomination for orchestrations for *A Christmas Story* and *Honeymoon in Vegas*.

Larry contributed to the orchestrations for both the stage and film production of *The Producers*, the film *Chicago* and is a regular conductor and arranger for BBC RADIO 2 Friday Night Is Music Night in the UK. Larry is also the Music Supervisor and Orchestrator (along with Mark Cumberland) for the *Olivier Awards* in London.

Blank has worked with top talent from varied fields of the entertainment world, notably as personal conductor to Michael Crawford. He has also worked with Michael Feinstein, Marvin Hamlisch, Bernadette Peters, Kelsey Grammar, Christine Baranski, Roberta Flack, Pete Fountain, Peabo Bryson, Sally Kellerman, Nancy Dussault, Marc Shaiman, Jerry Herman, Ann- Margaret, Davis Gaines, Bette Midler, George Benson, Placido Domingo, Randy Newman, Trisha Yearwood, Tom Scott, Quincy Jones, Michael Bolton, John Raitt and Diana Rigg.

Blank's background includes orchestrating and arranging songs for *South Park* and was Music Supervisor and Orchestrator for Jerry Herman's movie, *Mrs. Santa Claus* starring Angela Lansbury and Charles Durning. Some of the films he lent his talent to include *The Kid*, *Kiss The Girls*, *The American President*, *Forget Paris*, *City Slickers II*, *The Net*, *That's Entertainment III*, *North, I'd Do Anything*, and *Stuart Saves His Family*. Blank's music can be heard on the animated feature films, *Cats Don't Dance* and *All Dogs Go To Heaven* as well as the *101 Dalmatians Christmas Special*.

Mr. Blank's television work includes orchestrating and composing music for several of the *Grammy Awards* and *Academy Award* shows as well as numerous television movies and shows. Most recently Larry orchestrated and conducted FX's *Fosse/Verdon* and Dolly Parton's latest project *Christmas On The Square* for Warner Brothers.

Mr. Blank has guest conducted most of the orchestras throughout the world, including The San Francisco Symphony, The New York Philharmonic, Western Australia Symphony Orchestra, The Los Angeles Philharmonic, Palm Beach Pops, Auckland Symphony, The National Symphony Orchestra, The Boston Pops, The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Symphony, New Orleans Symphony and Toronto.

Chester Gregory **Special Guest**

Chester Gregory is an award-winning singer and actor. He was last seen starring in *Motown The Musical* as Berry Gordy. Broadway credits include *Motown the Musical*, *Hairspray*, *Tarzan*, *Cry-Baby* and *Sister*

Act. Other credits include August Wilson's *Fences* and *Two Trains Running*. He has toured nationally with *Dreamgirls*, *Sister Act*, as well as his one-man show *The Eve of Jackie Wilson*. Chester has received many awards, including the Jeff Award and a NAACP Theatre Award, and has been presented the key to the city of his hometown of Gary, Indiana and in East Chicago. He has also been chosen as an Honorary State Representative of Indiana and has received an Honorary Doctorate from his *alma mater* Columbia College Chicago. He is currently producing several projects and recordings. Add him on social media @ChesterGregory and chestergregory.com

Darren Lorenzo
Special Guest

Darren Lorenzo is a veteran performer, hailing straight from Atlanta, Georgia. Lorenzo has appeared in numerous productions both nationally and internationally. He received his B.A. in Mass Communications at Clark Atlanta University and further trained with Broadway Theatre Project at the University of South Florida, University of Tampa and with Theatre Emory of Emory University. He has wowed audiences with roles on Cruise Ships; Headlining in Vegas; multiple regional, off Broadway, Broadway, national, and international touring productions of *After Midnight*, *Vegas the Show*, *Legally Blonde*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Madagascar*, *Smokey Joes Cafe*, *No Strings*, *Fosse*, *Hair*, *Tony and Tina's Wedding*, *Once on This Island*, *What The World Needs Now*, and several gospel and Motown tribute tours throughout Europe. In addition to acting and singing, he also works as a writer, producer, teacher, director and performs with various club date and corporate Top 40, R&B/Soul and Jazz bands.

Michael Lynche
Special Guest

American Idol Michael Lynche is a new breed of soul singer with completely classic influences. Traces of Donny Hathaway, Al Green, Luther Vandross, Sam Cooke and James Brown all seem to flash in this uniquely talented performer. Undeniable charisma, well-crafted song arrangements and a voice soaked in soul give the big man class all his own. "Big Mike"—as he was known while winning over the hearts of a nation during his stint on American Idol—has talent so versatile, he's played intimate jazz and blues clubs, 20,000 seat arenas and opera halls with 100 piece orchestras backing him. Through it all "Big Mike" has always had one singular goal: to spread a message of love wherever he goes.

A New York City resident for the last 15+ years, this Florida native rose from obscurity as a finalist on season 9 of the hit phenomenon, American Idol. After wowing millions of fans on American Idol with his comforting and powerful voice and performing throughout the United States as part of the American Idol LIVE! Tour, Big Mike has released two studio albums, toured as an opening act for Boyz II Men, Lalah Hathaway, Faith Evans, and Lyfe Jennings and toured the world with his honest storytelling brand of soul music.

Since 2012, Big Mike has been a frequent featured guest vocalist with Maestro Jeff Tyzik and his hit show -- *Let's Dance!*. With the perfect repertoire to showcase his dynamic song range, "Let's Dance!" has been performed with orchestras all over the US and Canada, including the Dallas Symphony, Utah Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony, Detroit Symphony Orchestra and many many more.

Tyzik has been an incredible mentor for Michael over the years, recognizing a passion and drive in the big man that has made his own career successful. The two have spent the last years collaborating on new, sensational soul inspired Pops concerts including *R&B Legends*, *Kings of Soul* and *Dancing in the Street - The Music of Motown*.

"Big Mike" brings an inspirational story and a searing, soulful, one-of-a-kind voice. He leaves you breathless and wanting more when the night is over. This extraordinary vocal talent seamlessly fuses classic R&B, thoroughly modern urban grooves, and swoon-worthy vintage soul into a fresh, unique sound. Big, yes—and beautiful, too; Michael Lynche makes music that's unforgettable.

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