

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pasadena Symphony Association
Pasadena Symphony & POPS
Contact: Marisa McCarthy
MMcCarthy@PasadenaSymphony-Pops.org
(626) 793-7172 ext. 13



April 11, 2025

For full artist bios and high-res images visit: pasadenasympphony-pops.org/beethoven-pastoral-symphony-press-release-2025/

**MUSIC DIRECTOR BRETT MITCHELL CLOSES INAUGURAL SEASON WITH A JUBILANT PROGRAM OF
BRUCH AND BEETHOVEN**

Acclaimed Violinist William Hagen Performs Bruch Violin Concerto

Pasadena, CA – Music Director Brett Mitchell and the Pasadena Symphony close the 2024-25 season with **Beethoven Symphony No. 6 “Pastoral”** on **Saturday, May 3, 2025** with performances at **2:00pm** and **8:00pm** at **Ambassador Auditorium**. **Chadwick’s A Pastoral Prelude for Orchestra** will open the bucolic program, followed by the **Bruch Violin Concerto**, and concluding with Beethoven’s sonic painting of the great outdoors, drawing the listener in with themes of spiritual renewal, pastoral landscapes, dramatic storms and startling beauty.

Acclaimed Violinist **William Hagen** returns to the Ambassador stage to perform Bruch’s playfully acrobatic and virtuosic Violin Concerto – a true showpiece for the master violinist. A “brilliant virtuoso” (*Dallas Morning News*), Hagen will delight audiences with his playing described as “... captivating, floating delicately above the orchestra” (*Chicago Classical Review*). Maestro Mitchell wraps his inaugural season in a cloak of musical beauty with this breathtaking season finale, closing with the optimism and joy of Beethoven’s expansive “Pastoral” Symphony.

The Pasadena Symphony provides a vibrant experience specially designed for the music lover, the social butterfly or a date night out. Want to learn more about the music? Arrive early for **Insights**, the pre-concert discussion with **KUSC Host Brian Lauritzen** and **Music Director Brett Mitchell**, which begins one hour prior to each performance. Or enjoy a bite or a glass in the Symphony Lounge, a posh setting along Ambassador Auditorium's beautiful outdoor plaza with a full-service beverage center serving coffee, spirits and wine, plus sandwiches, soup, appetizers and dessert before the concert and during intermission.

All concerts are held at Ambassador Auditorium, 131 South St. John Ave, Pasadena, CA. Single tickets start at \$49 and may be purchased online at www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org or by calling (626) 793-7172. Subscriptions for the 25/26 season now available.

IF YOU GO:

- **What:** The Pasadena Symphony presents **Beethoven “Pastoral” Symphony**
Brett Mitchell, conductor
William Hagen, violin

Chadwick A Pastoral Prelude for Orchestra

Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1

Beethoven Symphony No.6 “Pastoral”

- **When:** Saturday, May 3, 2025 at 2:00pm and 8:00pm
- **Where:** Ambassador Auditorium | 131 South St. John Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91105
- **Cost:** Tickets start at \$49.00
- **Parking:** Valet parking is available on St. John Ave for \$25. General parking is available in two locations for \$15 in advance, \$20 onsite: next to the Auditorium (entrance on St. John Ave) at the covered parking structure, and directly across the street at the Wells Fargo parking structure (entrance on Terrace at Green St). ADA parking is located at the above-ground parking lot adjacent to the Auditorium (entrance on St. John Ave.) for \$15. Parking may be pre-purchased or purchased onsite. **Parking purchased onsite is cash only.**

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Brett Mitchell **Music Director**

Hailed for presenting engaging, in-depth explorations of thoughtfully curated programs, American conductor **Brett Mitchell** is in consistent demand on the podium at home and abroad. In March 2024, he was named Music Director of the Pasadena Symphony, beginning an initial five-year term with the 2024-25 season. He has also served as Artistic Director & Conductor of Oregon’s Sunriver Music Festival since 2022.

Working widely as a guest conductor, Mr. Mitchell’s recent engagements have included appearances with the Dallas, Detroit, Edmonton, Fort Worth, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, National, North Carolina, Oregon, San Antonio, San Francisco, and Vancouver symphonies; the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl; the Cleveland and Minnesota orchestras; the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra; the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; the Grant Park Festival Orchestra; and a two-week tour with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Mitchell also regularly collaborates with the world’s leading soloists, including Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Itzhak Perlman, Kirill Gerstein, Conrad Tao, Rudolf Buchbinder, James Ehnes, Augustin Hadelich, Leila Josefowicz, and Alisa Weilerstein.

From 2017 to 2021, Mr. Mitchell served as Music Director of the Colorado Symphony in Denver; he previously served as Music Director Designate during the 2016-17 season. During his five-season tenure, he is credited with deepening the orchestra’s engagement with its audience via in-depth demonstrations from both the podium and the piano. He also expanded the orchestra’s commitment to contemporary American repertoire—with a particular focus on the music of Mason Bates, Missy Mazzoli, and Kevin Puts—through world premieres, recording projects, and commissions. In addition, Mr. Mitchell spearheaded collaborations with such local partners as Colorado Ballet, Denver Young Artists Orchestra, and El Sistema Colorado. In summarizing his tenure, *The Denver Post* wrote that

“Mitchell has been a bright and engaging presence over the years, delving into the history of certain well-worn pieces while leading expert renditions of them.”

From 2013 to 2017, Mr. Mitchell served on the conducting staff of The Cleveland Orchestra. He joined the orchestra as Assistant Conductor in 2013, and was promoted to Associate Conductor in 2015, becoming the first person to hold that title in over three decades and only the fifth in the orchestra’s hundred-year history. In these roles, he led the orchestra in several dozen concerts each season at Severance Hall, Blossom Music Center, and on tour.

From 2007 to 2011, Mr. Mitchell led over one hundred performances as Assistant Conductor of the Houston Symphony. He also held Assistant Conductor posts with the Orchestre National de France, where he worked under Kurt Masur from 2006 to 2009, and the Castleton Festival, where he worked under Lorin Maazel in 2009 and 2010. In 2015, Mr. Mitchell completed a highly successful five-year appointment as Music Director of the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra, where an increased focus on locally relevant programming and community collaborations resulted in record attendance throughout his tenure.

As an opera conductor, Mr. Mitchell has served as music director of nearly a dozen productions, principally at his former post as Music Director of the Moores Opera Center in Houston, where he led eight productions from 2010 to 2013. His repertoire spans the core works of Mozart (*The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magic Flute*), Verdi (*Rigoletto* and *Falstaff*), and Stravinsky (*The Rake’s Progress*) to contemporary works by Mark Adamo (*Little Women*), Robert Aldridge (*Elmer Gantry*), Daniel Catán (*Il Postino* and *Salsipuedes*), and Daron Hagen (*Amelia*). As a ballet conductor, Mr. Mitchell most recently led a production of *The Nutcracker* with the Pennsylvania Ballet in collaboration with The Cleveland Orchestra during the 2016-17 season.

In addition to his work with professional orchestras, Mr. Mitchell is also well known for his affinity for working with and mentoring young musicians aspiring to be professional orchestral players. His tenure as Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra from 2013 to 2017 was highly praised, and included a four-city tour of China in June 2015, marking the orchestra’s second international tour and its first to Asia. Mr. Mitchell is regularly invited to work with the talented young musicians at this country’s high-level training programs, such as the Cleveland Institute of Music, the National Repertory Orchestra, Texas Music Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, and Interlochen Center for the Arts. He has also served on the faculties of the schools of music at Northern Illinois University (2005-07), the University of Houston (2012-13), and the University of Denver (2019, 2022-23).

Born in Seattle in 1979, Mr. Mitchell holds degrees in conducting from the University of Texas at Austin and composition from Western Washington University, which selected him as its Young Alumnus of the Year in 2014. He also studied with Leonard Slatkin at the National Conducting Institute and was selected by Kurt Masur as a recipient of the inaugural American Friends of the Mendelssohn Foundation Scholarship in 2008. Mr. Mitchell was also one of five recipients of the League of American Orchestras’ American Conducting Fellowship from 2007 to 2010.

William Hagen

Violin

“William Hagen’s violin rises from the orchestra to ever-loftier heights with a performance that is as passionate as it is poignantly phrased.” – *Florida Times-Union*

The riveting American violinist William Hagen has appeared as a soloist with many of the world's great orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, San Francisco Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, and many more. Already a seasoned international performer who has won friends around the world, William has been hailed as a "brilliant virtuoso...a standout" (*The Dallas Morning News*) whose playing is "...captivating, floating delicately above the orchestra" (*Chicago Classical Review*). He was the third-prize winner of the 2015 Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition, one of the highest-ranking Americans ever in the prestigious competition. William performs on the 1732 "Arkwright Lady Rebecca Sylvan" Antonio Stradivari, and on a violin bow by Francois Xavier Tourte, both on generous loan from the Rachel Barton Pine Foundation.

Hagen's recent performances include appearances with the Detroit Symphony and Utah Symphony, and performances at the Brevard Music Center & Festival and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

Hagen's 2024-25 season highlights include performances for the Richmond Symphony conducted by Valentina Peleggi, Lubbock Symphony under the direction of David Cho, Bozeman Symphony under the direction of Norman Huynh, and Pasadena Symphony conducted by Brett Mitchell.

William has performed with conductor Nicolas McGegan both at the Aspen Music Festival and with the Pasadena Symphony, and made his debut with the Oregon Symphony under Carlos Kalmar, performed with the Brussels Chamber Orchestra in Beijing and at the Aspen Music Festival with conductor Ludovic Morlot, and played recitals in Paris, Brussels, and at the Ravinia Festival.

Collaborations include those with Steven Isserlis at the Wigmore Hall, with Tabea Zimmermann at the Beethovenhaus in Bonn, with Gidon Kremer, Steven Isserlis, and Christian Tetzlaff in Germany, and in New York City with the Jupiter Chamber Players.

Since his debut with the Utah Symphony at age nine, William has performed with conductors such as Marin Alsop, Christian Arming, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Michel Tabachnik, and Hugh Wolff. A native of Salt Lake City, William first heard the violin when he was 3 and began taking lessons at age 4 with Natalie Reed, followed by Deborah Moench. At age 10, he began studying with Robert Lipsett at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, where he studied until the age of 17.

After studying at the Juilliard School for two years with Itzhak Perlman, William returned to Los Angeles to continue studying with Robert Lipsett at the Colburn Conservatory. He then went on to study at the Kronberg Academy in Germany with Christian Tetzlaff. William is an alumnus of the Verbier Academy in Switzerland, the Perlman Music Program, and the Aspen Music Festival.

ABOUT THE PASADENA SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION

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

Brett Mitchell assumes the post of Pasadena Symphony Music Director on April 1, 2024. Michael Feinstein – the multi-platinum-selling, two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer dubbed "The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook" – leads the POPS as Principal Pops Conductor, succeeding Marvin Hamlisch. 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 Los Angeles Arboretum & Botanic Garden.

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). PYSO offers supplemental in-class instruction within the Pasadena Unified School District and eleven performance ensembles, serving over 700 4th-12th grade students from all over Southern California. The PYSO has performed at venues across the globe as well as on the television show *GLEE*.

The Pasadena Symphony Association provides people from all walks of life with powerful access points to the world of symphonic music. www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org

- end -