

LIVERMORE AMADOR SYMPHONY

Lara Webber
Music Director & Conductor
Sat. April 12, 2025, 7:30 p.m.
Inside the Music talk by
Lara Webber, 7:00–7:15 p.m.
Bankhead Theater, Livermore

Romantic Masterpieces



Polonaise from *Eugene Onegin* (1878)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893)

Violin Concerto in D Major (1878)

Tchaikovsky

Opus 35

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Canzonetta: Andante
- III. Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

Elizabeth Pitcairn, soloist

INTERMISSION

Open Strings World Music Ensemble
will perform in the lobby with director Jim Hurley

Presentation of Donation from the Symphony Guild

by LAS Guild President PJ Wells
to LAS Association President Tim Barry

Symphony in D Minor (1888)

César Franck
(1822–1890)

- I. Lento; Allegro non troppo
- II. Allegretto
- III. Finale: Allegro non troppo

**The audience and performers are invited to enjoy a reception
hosted by the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild
and featuring wines from Cuda Ridge Wines and Las Positas Vineyards
in the lobby after the concert.**

Music Director position underwritten by the Chet and Henrietta Fankhauser Trust.

Orchestra

Conductor

Lara Webber

First Violin

Josephah Fath
Concertmaster

Juliana Zolynas
*Assistant
Concertmaster*

Norman Back
Feliza Bourguet
Judy Eckart
Kuan-Yu Liu
Jutta Massoud
Doug Morrison
Johan Qin
Nick Travia
Anthony Westrope

Second Violin

Ursula Goldstein
Principal
Anne Anaya
Stephanie Black
Jena Ernst
Miriam Flock
Susan Ivie
Denise Leddon
Jacqueline McBride
Nissa Nack
Kevin Patel
Leslie Stevens

Viola

Dora Scott
Principal
Lynda Alvarez
David Friburg
Audrey Horning
Jill Pellett
Fernanda Van Atta

Cello

Peter Bedrossian
Principal
Claire Armstrong
Nita Cooley
Kate Fisher
Chris Jackson
Joanne Lenigan
Paul Pappas
Sharon Schumacher
Katie Stobbe
Elise Van Gelder

String Bass

Aaron Plattner
Principal
Richard Hibbs
Nick James
Navaz Jasavala

Flute

Lisa Maher
Acting Principal
Josephine Clements-Cain

Oboe

Eva Langfeldt
Principal
Jeff Lenigan
Robert Wakefield-Carl

English Horn

Jeff Lenigan

Clarinet

Kathy Boster
Acting Principal
Christy Diggins

Bass Clarinet

Niko Morales

Bassoon

Doug Stark
Principal
Katie Brunner

Horn

Christine-Ann Immesoete
Principal
James Hartman
Roger Henderson
Bryan Waugh

Trumpet

Michael Portnoff
Principal
Bob Bryant
Rick Fleer
Anthony Manuel

Trombone

Tom Munns
Acting Principal
Alice Williams

Bass Trombone

Marcus Schildbach

Tuba

Robert Huntington

Timpani

April Nissen

Harp

Constance Koo

Librarians

Audrey Horning
Stacy Hughes
Patty Crohare
Ian Zolynas

Program Notes

Polonaise from *Eugene Onegin* (1878)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893)

Best known today for his symphonic music, Tchaikovsky also composed eleven operas, two of which, *The Queen of Spades* and *Eugene Onegin*, are frequently produced. Both operas are based on works by the premier poet of nineteenth-century Russia, Alexander Pushkin.

Eugene Onegin is a masterpiece of Russian Romanticism, exploring themes of love, fate, and social convention. The “Polonaise” is from one of its most famous scenes. It opens Act III, at a grand ball held at the home of a St. Petersburg nobleman, and begins with an elaborate fanfare. As a stand-alone piece, it remains one of Tchaikovsky’s most beloved orchestral works. Its grandeur and charm continue to captivate audiences.

The dance rhythm known as *polonaise* is a stately Polish national dance that acquired its current form in Poland around 1800. The polonaise from *Eugene Onegin* is structured like a classic minuet/trio, with the polonaise section constituting the main theme, followed by a section with a transition that leads back into the repeat of the theme. Tchaikovsky combines rich orchestration with a dignified melody, introduced in the strings and brass. The stately triple-time rhythm is well suited to the image of elegant guests moving in carefully choreographed patterns. As the dance progresses, the music swells and becomes more vibrant.

Violin Concerto in D Major (1878)

Tchaikovsky

Opus 35

Tchaikovsky’s violin concerto is one of the cornerstones of the violin repertoire, celebrated for its emotional depth, technical brilliance, and sweeping melodic grandeur. Composed in 1878, during a period when Tchaikovsky was in personal turmoil, this concerto represents a powerful fusion of his distinctive melodic style with the virtuosic demands of the violin. The piece, considered a true test of the violinist’s skill, reveals Tchaikovsky’s gift for unforgettable, sweeping melodies and vibrant orchestral colors.

In the wake of a failed marriage and ongoing struggles with depression, Tchaikovsky retreated to the countryside in Switzerland to recover. Despite his emotional challenges, he found solace in his music, and he completed the violin concerto in just a few months, from February to March 1878. It was premiered in 1881 by the great violinist Leopold Auer, although Auer was initially reluctant to perform it, feeling that the concerto was too difficult for the instrument. Despite Auer’s reservations, the concerto quickly became a staple of the violin repertoire. It remains one of the most beloved and frequently performed concerti for the instrument, admired for both its technical demands and its expressive range. Soaring themes and intricate dialogues between the soloist and orchestra highlight Tchaikovsky’s mastery in blending the potential of the violin with his distinctive Romantic style.

The concerto is structured in three contrasting movements:

- The first movement, “Allegro moderato,” opens with a bold and exuberant theme in the orchestra. The violin enters with a soaring, lyrical melody, and from the outset, Tchaikovsky sets up a dialogue between the soloist and the orchestra. The music shifts between joyful and dramatic moments, culminating in a powerful cadenza.
- The second movement, “Canzonetta: Andante,” contrasts sharply with the energetic first. A melancholy, lyrical melody, introduced by the violin, is the heart of this movement. It is not without drama, but its overarching mood is one of lyrical serenity, showcasing Tchaikovsky’s ability to create deeply moving, songlike lines.
- The final movement, “Allegro vivacissimo,” is a brilliant, energetic conclusion to the concerto, full of spirited rhythms and folklike themes. It has a dancelike character and incorporates elements of Russian folk music. The violin part is virtuosic, requiring exceptional agility and stamina as it weaves through rapid runs and dazzling chords. The movement’s infectious exuberance builds to a triumphant and exhilarating conclusion.

Symphony in D Minor (1888)

César Franck
(1822–1890)

César Franck's *Symphony in D Minor* is one of the most celebrated works in the French symphonic repertoire. Composed late in his life, when he was well known as a distinguished organist and a prominent composer of religious and choral music, this is Franck's only symphony. It represents a bold exploration of the symphonic tradition, drawing on both Germanic and French stylistic elements. Winding chromatic themes, moving in a narrow melodic range, and a full, thick orchestral style are prominent characteristics. The work is deeply emotional, often shifting between dark, stormy passages and moments of warmth and light.

The symphony was commissioned by the Brussels Conservatory for its 50th anniversary celebrations. Franck, a native of Liège, Belgium, had a close connection with the institution and had been teaching there for several years, but he was reluctant at first to compose a symphony, as he felt his strengths lay more in other genres. Nevertheless, he embarked on the project and composed a deeply personal and distinctive symphonic work, known for its complex thematic development and its innovative use of cyclic form.

This cyclic technique, which involves recurring themes that evolve throughout the piece, influenced many other composers, particularly Franck's contemporaries and students (including Paul Dukas and Ernest Chausson). The technique may produce a sense of organic unity and thematic coherence. Some critics, though, have called Franck's symphony structurally weak. After the work's U.S. debut by the Boston Symphony in 1899, the *Boston Herald* referred to "wearisome repetitions" (plus a "certain weird fascination that it exerts").

The *Symphony in D Minor* is structured in three movements:

- The symphony opens with a sweeping, slow introduction ("Lento") in which the strings gently introduce a somber, lyrical theme that sets the mood for the entire piece. The movement transitions into an "Allegro non troppo" section, where the music becomes livelier and more energetic. There are dramatic contrasts but a sense of continuity, with themes that are developed and transformed throughout the movement. The cyclic form is introduced here, with themes that will return in later movements.
- The second movement is a lyrical contrast to the more turbulent first movement. It is structured as a hybrid between a scherzo and a slow movement and opens with a mesmerizing harp and pizzicato string motive. The English horn introduces the main theme, a warm but melancholy, songlike melody. This theme is later taken up by the strings, expanding into a flowing, expressive passage. A more animated middle section follows, where the scherzo-like character emerges, featuring energetic exchanges between strings and woodwinds punctuated by brass interjections. Franck's use of cyclic themes, weaving in motives from the first movement, is evident. The movement closes with a return to the initial mood, with the English horn's melody reappearing, now even more reflective, before the music fades into a tranquil resolution.
- The finale begins with a triumphant and heroic theme that grows from the quiet opening into a stirring full-orchestra declaration. Franck recapitulates the major thematic material from earlier movements. There are dramatic contrasts between fast, intense passages and more lyrical, meditative moments. The symphony concludes with an exuberant return to its opening theme.

*Program notes written by Kathy Boster
Edited by Eva Langfeldt*

Violin Soloist Elizabeth Pitcairn

Violin virtuoso Elizabeth Pitcairn performed Beethoven with LAS at its May 2015 concert. The Symphony is very pleased to welcome her back to Livermore! Pitcairn has earned a reputation as one of America's most beloved soloists. She appeared as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Academy of Music and in 2000 gave her New York debut at Alice Tully Hall with the New York String Orchestra. She has since performed at Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Fisher Center, and the Kimmel Center. Passionate about youth and education, she serves as president and artistic director of the Luzerne Music Center, which provides training for gifted young musicians ages 9 to 18 in upstate New York.

Pitcairn was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and began playing the violin at age 3. She made her orchestra debut at 14. At the University of Southern California, she studied with violin professor Robert Lipsett. Her past teachers include Julian Meyer, Sylvia Ahranjian, Jascha Brodsky, and Shmuel Ashkenasi. She is a former faculty member of USC and the Colburn School in Los Angeles; an alumna of the Marlboro Music Festival, Temple University's Center for Gifted Young Musicians, the Meadowmount School, the Encore School for Strings, and the National Repertory Orchestra; and a former concertmaster of Southern California's New West Symphony.

Pitcairn performs with one of the world's most legendary instruments, the Red Mendelssohn Stradivarius of 1720, said to have inspired the Academy Award-winning film *The Red Violin*. She is featured in "The Auction Block" section of a special-edition DVD of the film. Named the Red Stradivarius violin while in the possession of Joseph Joachim, the violin was a gift from her grandfather in 1990 at Christie's Auction in London.

Pitcairn believes strongly in philanthropy and is a frequent performer at charitable events for the American Cancer Society, the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, the Helping Hands and Hearts Foundation, the Nakashima Foundation for Peace, and more. Her favorite activities are skiing, tennis, horseback riding, and wine tasting.



photo: Joy Stroz

Music Director Lara Webber

Lara Webber is dedicated to inspiring audiences and community engagement through the power of symphonic music. She has been praised by fellow musicians for her musical depth, genuine expression, strong personal vision, and collaborative spirit. Now in her eleventh season as music director and conductor of LAS, she has brought music to Tri-Valley elementary schools, coached chamber musicians, and advocated for the arts.

Webber holds degrees in music from Oberlin and USC and has held the positions of both assistant and associate conductor of the symphony orchestras of Baltimore and Charleston and music director of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra Chorus. She is music director of the Palo Alto Philharmonic. Her guest-conducting activities have included multiple performances with the symphonies of Houston, Pittsburgh, Santa Barbara, and Modesto, among others. She has served as cover conductor for the San Francisco Symphony and the National Symphony Orchestra and was a conductor of the Emmy-nominated Disney's Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra. Her operatic associations include posts as assistant conductor at Glimmerglass Opera and conductor of the Baltimore Opera Studio.



Open Strings Music Studio

Open Strings Music Studio is where Jim Hurley teaches kids, teens, and adults the knowledge and skills to be well-informed, able participants in the modern world of music. Hurley has been teaching for more than 30 years, and he opened the studio in 1997. He also is a member of the jazz fusion group Night Harvest. One of his students is LAS Association President Tim Barry, who now plays in Hurley's Friday night jam group, "The Jammies." Performing at intermission in the lobby are eight middle-school violin and guitar players from Open Strings.

School Outreach Concerts

On April 17, Lara Webber will conduct members of LAS at assemblies at Croce and Sunset Elementary Schools in Livermore. Each of the three short concerts will begin with the "Star-Spangled Banner" and will include a variety of pieces: an exciting part of the "William Tell Overture," some music from *Star Wars*, "Ram Tori Maya" (with singing and dancing) from this season's February concert, and more. As one of its many behind-the-scenes activities, the Symphony Guild will provide lunch for the musicians.

Youth Orchestra: Register by April 26

The Livermore-Amador Symphony Youth Orchestra, LASYO, is a summer orchestra open to musicians ages 11 (or in 6th grade) through 21. The orchestra will be conducted this year by Don Adkins, music director, and Justin Enright, winds director.



Registration forms are available at livermoreamadorsymphony.org (look under the Youth menu tab for Youth Orchestra). The forms and a registration fee are due by April 26.

Auditions are in May. Rehearsals are on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from June 17 through July 22, with a dress rehearsal on July 25 and a free public concert at Livermore's First Presbyterian Church on Saturday July 26. Questions? Please contact Betsy Hausburg, the

LASYO program coordinator, at vdt.director@gmail.com.

Next Concert: Celestial Sounds, May 31

Inside the Music, 7:00–7:15 p.m.; concert at 7:30 p.m.

Lift off with the symphony as we explore the universe in all its celestial wonder. You'll hear music inspired by planets, comets, moons, and stars accompanied by images from our galaxy and beyond.

The concert will feature Claude Debussy's "Claire de Lune,"



selections from Gustav Holst's *The Planets* and John Williams's *Star Wars Suite*, soprano Heidi Moss Erickson singing Antonin Dvořák's "Song to the Moon," and even more. Join us as we bring our season to a spectacular conclusion!



photo: Marc Olivier LeBlanc

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The Livermore-Amador Symphony Association and Guild gratefully acknowledge donations received during the past year from the following.

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www.livermoreamadorsymphony.org

Donations corrections or questions?

Contact Judy Eckart: judy@justjudy.com

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The Livermore-Amador Symphony Association and Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild gratefully acknowledge funding support from:

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Members of the A.P. Barnes Society
bequeathed donations to the symphony
or have included the symphony in their estate plans.

For information, please contact president@livermoreamadorsymphony.org.

Harmony & Historic Home Tour on May 10

Visit eight Livermore historic homes in May while enjoying live music throughout your trip, a self-paced walk/drive route.

Buy tickets through the Livermore Heritage Guild, and pick up tickets at Carnegie Park, 2155 Third Street, Livermore, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the tour day, Saturday May 10. Homes will be open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Livermore Heritage Guild coordinated the eight vintage homes to tour, and the Symphony Guild coordinated groups of musicians to play during your visits. Your ticket allows you to visit the properties and go inside the homes. Do not miss this unique opportunity to see and hear a sweet slice of Livermore. It is a perfect outing for Mother's Day weekend—and you can still take Mom to brunch on Sunday!

Tickets for this joint fundraiser of the Heritage and Symphony Guilds are available now at www.lhg.org/HomeTour2025.html.

Livermore-Amador Symphony is a member of the Livermore Cultural Arts Council and a resident company of the Bankhead Theater. The Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center is a sponsor of this event.

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