

University Symphony Orchestra
Soaring Voices

Thursday, May 8, 2025 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

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Asieh Mahyar, *conductor*

Thursday, May 8, 2025 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

The Women's Studio (2013/arr. 2021) **Korine Fujiwara**
from *Claudel*

Azadeh Zanjani, *acting artist* • Parisa Ghaderi, *visual artist*

Elegy (2006/arr. 2025)..... **Dawn Sonntag**
World premiere of arrangement for PLU Symphony Orchestra

Symphony in D Minor **César Franck (1822-1890)**
I. Lento; Allegro ma non troppo
II. Allegretto
III. Allegro non troppo

Program Notes

“The Women’s Studio” from *Claudiel*

Camille Rosalie Claudel (1864-1943) was a French sculptor known for her figurative works in bronze and marble. “The Women’s Studio” was inspired by a photo of Camille and fellow sculptress Jessie Lipscomb working together in a Paris flat during a period of creative joy and freedom, unencumbered by society’s gender-specific expectations.

Many of the movements in the ballet are inspired by Claudel’s sculptures and photos of Claudel captured at various periods throughout her career. It also follows the story of her very tragic life. Of her immediate family, only her father supported her artistic creativity in a field normally reserved for men. Her mother and sister despised Claudel, thinking that her digging around in the clay and working with stone was no proper lifestyle for a woman. Claudel had a close relationship with her brother, who was also a struggling poet, but he later became involved with the church and distanced himself emotionally from Claudel.

Camille’s relationship with Rodin has been romanticized to reflect how the student/teacher relationship accelerated to muse/lover, and that Rodin recognized Claudel’s superior talent. His own art was influenced by the beauty of her artistic gifts. In today’s world Rodin’s advances would likely be seen as predatory, creating an inappropriate relationship where the balance of power of teacher over student is wrought with problems.

Camille, on the other hand, became increasingly frustrated that her reputation as an artist was always linked to and compared to Rodin’s, and found it impossible to separate herself from him professionally. I feel that had Claudel been born in the current time, she would have had the opportunities, resources, and support she so richly deserved and needed. Camille’s sculptures are stunningly beautiful, and she is now finally, albeit posthumously, receiving the recognition that she deserved while she was living.

The complete 82-minute ballet score *for Claudel* was composed between October and November 2013 and premiered in January 2014. Originally scored for string quartet, soprano, tenor, and spoken word, it has since been arranged into four separate suites for string orchestra, string quartet, violin/piano duo, and viola/cello/piano trio.

– Korine Fujiwara

Elegy for Adam, Ethan, and Nathan

This piece was composed in memory of two close friends of mine who died of suicide within four months of each other. Both were 53. While they lived hundreds of miles apart and did not know each other, the hymn “Jerusalem the Golden” was sung at both of their funerals. This piece was originally scored for string symphony and premiered by the University of Minnesota Orchestra. In 2006, I added some winds and percussion for a chamber orchestra performance in Minneapolis. I arranged the piece for the full orchestra in 2025 for a performance by the Pacific Lutheran University Symphony Orchestra.

– Dawn Sonntag

Symphony in D Minor

César Franck’s cyclic *Symphony in D Minor* was started in 1877 – a time where the slightly older composer was hitting his creative stride. Although firmly planted in the French music scene, Franck very much admired the Germanic stylings of composers before, including Beethoven and Mozart. This work remains the only completed mature symphony that Franck composed. The symphony received its European premiere in Paris in 1889. Mixed reviews came in about Franck’s new symphony, however the work still reached overseas and has remained in orchestral concert repertoire since.

The slightly unusual thing about this symphony is that although it is based on German Romantic conventions, Franck decided to limit himself to three movements instead of the more conventional four or five movements. Set in a cyclic form, many of the themes heard in the symphony return throughout all three movements, creating a close relationship between the music in each movement.

The slow and moody opening sets the scene for the longest movement of the three. The introductory four-bar theme returns throughout all three movements and acts as the central theme for the symphony. Set in sonata-allegro form, the

first movement is harmonically adventurous, with Franck moving rapidly through a number of keys. Full of life and vitality when the Allegro non troppo section begins, Franck's illuminating writing jumps out at the listener. Due to the sheer length of the movement, Franck takes his time building up themes and using the development section to change and enhance them. As the music reaches the big climax near the end of the movement, Franck's rich harmonic language explodes into fruitful colour. Unlike the opening, the movement ends dramatically, with the orchestra uniting for the final chords.

Opening with light pizzicato off-beats from the strings and harp, the second movement starts playfully. The cor anglais emerges with an elongated solo on top of the pizzicato accompaniment. Franck's thin textures here create space for the soloist, whilst also playing into a haunting atmosphere. The woodwind and horn writing in this movement is one of the best aspects of the music, with ranges being pushed and melodies soaring from this section. After two trio sections ensue, a lively scherzo section takes over. The bubbly character here is cheeky and much lighter than some of the other material in this movement. After a reprise of the main theme, this movement concludes quietly.

The final movement opens with big tutti chords from across the orchestra, before a light melody plays out in the upper strings. The atmosphere here is joyful, and when the orchestra unites within the melody it creates an effective atmosphere. Franck puts lots of focus onto the woodwind and brass during this movement, with dramatic outbursts from the brass adding to the drama of the finale. The exuberant music is woven together tidily, with the symphony concluding with a nostalgic coda.

– Alex Burns

About the Artists

Parisa Ghaderi is an Assistant Professor of Graphic Design at Shoreline Community College. Born and raised in Iran, she earned her Master of Fine Arts from the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design at the University of Michigan. Her work has been exhibited in renowned museums and galleries worldwide, including the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles, the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, and the Grand Rapids Art Museum, among others. Her art explores profound themes such as identity, belonging, and social issues, utilizing a wide array of mediums and techniques. Beyond her visual art practice, Parisa engages in diverse creative pursuits. She has curated exhibitions, directed performances, and created short films and animations, all reflecting her commitment to exploring new forms of expression and meaningful dialogue.

Azadeh Zanjani is a Seattle-based actor and multidisciplinary artist. Her recent stage credits include *Where Is Here* (solo, Seattle Public Theatre), *The Undercurrent of Silence* (Freehold Theatre), *Out of Time* (Shattered Glass Project), *The Forgotten History of Mastaneh* (Seattle Public Theatre/Seda Theatre), and *Play of Life and Death* (Seda Theatre/Macha Theatre Works). She also played a leading role in *The Title*, a short film by Naghmeh Samini. Beyond the stage, Azadeh designs buildings as an architect and enjoys painting and singing classical arias. Follow her on Instagram for updates on performances and projects: @azadeh.zanjani.actor.

About the Composers

Montana native **Korine Fujiwara** is a founding member of the Carpe Diem String Quartet, a devoted and sought-after chamber musician and teacher, and a gifted composer and arranger. Ms. Fujiwara teaches violin, viola, chamber music, and composition at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. She served for many years on the music faculty of Ohio Wesleyan University and is in great demand for master classes and clinics throughout the United States. Korine's students have been accepted into the performance programs of such institutions as Indiana University, Cincinnati College Conservatory, and Northwestern University to continue their musical studies.

Named as one of *Strings Magazine*'s "25 Contemporary Composers to Watch," Korine has received multiple commissions including works for opera, chamber ensembles, chorus, concerti, and music for modern dance. Her works have been performed throughout the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Italy, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain, Australia, China, and Japan. Her musical language encompasses a wide range of influences, including classical, folk, jazz, and rock and roll. Her diverse artistic collaborations have helped to infuse her work with a rhythmic power and intensity.

Critics have remarked of Ms. Fujiwara's music, "The ear is forever tickled by beautifully judged music that manages to be sophisticated and accessible at the same time;" "Contains a very rare attribute in contemporary classical music: happiness," (*Fanfare Magazine*). "She knows how to exploit all the resources of string instruments alone and together; her quartet writing is very democratic, with solos for everyone; her solo violin writing is fiendishly difficult," (*Strings Magazine*). "Fujiwara beautifully meets the challenge of weaving together different emotions across generations that make sense musically while delighting the ear," (*WOSU Classical 101 by Request*). "Fujiwara's music is rich and beguiling throughout," (*The Columbus Dispatch*); "Artfully layered and knitted together...While each 'room' has its own musical personality, the poignant sections in which characters in different periods actually sing together—a trio, a sextet, and even an octet—dovetail perfectly. The dramatic arc builds persuasively to the climactic moments, shifting with increasing speed between scenes to the culminating revelation," (*The Wall Street Journal*). "...the cumulative effect was dazzling. This is one of those pieces that all quartets will want to play – in the same way that Jessie Montgomery's *Strum* has taken hold. Once again now, to any quartet players reading this: you're welcome," (*New York Concert Review*).

Korine is a recipient of an Opera America Commissioning Grant from the Opera Grants for Female Composers program, made possible through the generosity of The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, for the composition of *The Flood*, an award-winning opera with Stephen Wadsworth, librettist, premiered by Opera Columbus and ProMusica Chamber Orchestra in February 2019.

Ms. Fujiwara is a gifted performer on both the violin and viola, and holds degrees from The Juilliard School and Northwestern University, where she studied with Joseph Fuchs and Myron Kartman, respectively. Her other mentors include Harvey Shapiro, Robert Mann, and Joel Krosnik. Ms. Fujiwara is a member of the music honorary society Pi Kappa Lambda.

Korine began her orchestral career with the Brooklyn Philharmonic and performed for many years with the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra of Columbus. She is also a former member of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, where she held the position of Acting Assistant Principal Second Violin. Korine performs on a 1790 Contreras violin, 2004 Kurt Widenhouse viola, and bows by three of today's finest makers, Paul Martin Siefried, Ole Kanestrom, and Charles Espey, all of Port Townsend, WA.

Composer **Dawn Sonntag**'s compositions include opera, art song, choral, wind, and orchestral works, and music for dance and film. Hailed as a "musician with exceptional ability" whose music is "hauntingly lyrical" (*Schaumburg-Lippe Landeszeitung*), Sonntag has also performed extensively as a collaborative pianist, choral conductor, and vocalist across the U.S. and in Germany, France, and Norway. Her music is indelibly influenced by both her experience as a performer and her interests in poetry and environmental and social justice.

Dr. Sonntag's commissions have included works for the Cleveland Opera Theater, Burning River Baroque, the Delgani Quartet, and choirs across the U.S. and in Europe. She is a featured composer in the new *Choral Repertoire by Women Composers*, edited by Alan Troy Davis and Hilary Apfelstadt. Her first opera, *Verlorene Heimat*, received Honorable Mention in the 2021 American Prize for opera composition, and her opera *For Life* was featured in the Operas in Place festival, a winner of Opera America's 2023 award for digital excellence. Four of her vocal and instrumental works are finalists in the 2025 American Prize composition competition. Sonntag was the Washington State Music Teachers Association Composer of the Year in 2021 and the Ohio State Music Teachers Association Distinguished Composer in 2010. As a three-time composer-in-residence at the Visby International Centre for Composers on the island of Gotland, Sweden, Sonntag was the recipient of a Swedish government intercultural arts grant. Her interest in Norwegian language and music led to a Foreign Language Area Studies fellowship for the study of advanced Norwegian at the University of Oslo and an American Scandinavian Foundation fellowship.

Self-taught as a pianist until the age of eighteen, she played the trumpet for eleven years as a child and youth, performing with the Milwaukee Symphony Youth Orchestra. She began her musical studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, completing her Bachelor of Music in voice performance at the University of Texas El Paso. She holds graduate degrees in composition, voice, choral conducting, and collaborative piano from the University of Minnesota (D.M.A.), the Ohio State University (M.M.), Antioch University McGregor School of the Arts in Tübingen, Germany (M.A.), and the Hochschule für Kirchenmusik Heidelberg (graduate artist degree). She also studied composition at the European American Musical Alliance in Paris. Her composition mentors include Alex Lubet, Narcis Bonet, and Claude Baker. She has served on the faculties of the University of St. Catherine, Hiram College, Gonzaga University, and Pacific Lutheran University. She has also worked extensively as a church musician and is currently Director of Music and

organist at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Olympia. Dr. Sonntag resides in East Olympia, Washington, with her husband Holger, and is an avid hiker and kayaker.

About the Conductor

Passionate about innovation and diversity in performing and performance, **Asieh Mahyar** is a dynamic conductor dedicated to creating engaging and inclusive musical experiences. Originally from Iran, she has led orchestras, choirs, and full opera productions across diverse settings, championing new repertoire and fostering artistic collaborations that reflect a broad cultural spectrum.

Ms. Mahyar currently serves as the Interim Director of Orchestral Studies at Pacific Lutheran University and the Symphony Orchestra Conductor of the West Seattle Community Orchestra. Her past positions include Assistant Conductor at the Tchaikovsky Music College in Yerevan, Armenia, and Teaching Assistant at Michigan State University and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She has collaborated with professional orchestras such as the Grand Rapids Symphony (MI), the Jackson Symphony (MI), the Northwest Mahler Festival (WA), and the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra (OH).

Her commitment to music education is evident through her engagements as a clinician and adjudicator with high school orchestras, festivals, and conferences, including the Washington Music Educators Association Conference (2024, WA), the Mount Pilchuck Music Educators Association (WA), the Chinook Music Educators Association (WA), and Valley Music Education Association (WA). Ms. Mahyar's extensive experience encompasses leading instrumental and vocal ensembles and directing full opera productions.

A DMA 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. She has been selected for prestigious masterclasses and workshops, working alongside leading conductors such as Cristian Măcelaru and Octavio Más-Arocas at the Cabrillo Music Festival, Gerard Schwarz at the Eastern Music Festival, Richard Rosenberg at the National Music Festival, Miguel Harth-Bedoya at The Conducting Institute, Kenneth Kiesler at the Conductors Retreat at Medomak, and Johannes Schlaefli and James Lowe at the Spokane Conducting Workshop.

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Asieh Mahyar, *conductor*

Flute

Katherine Gunter
Blake Leahy
Kade Levien

Oboe

Sara Atwood, *English horn*
Gabrielle Guerrero ©
Jayden White

Clarinet

Meaghan Austin-Cortez
Abigail Caprye, *bass clarinet*
Matthew Helmer

Bassoon

Thomas Tafoya
Syd Thayer-O'Brien

Horn

Benjamin Coats
James Gibson
Aleia Truman ©

Trumpet

Devin Bianchi-Rivera
Clara Chabot
Connor Kaczkowski
Jess Mason

Trombone

Joshua Green
Max Minjares
Sarah Zundel, *bass trombone*

Tuba

Cassidy Stanhope

Harp

Elizabeth Landis **

Percussion

Rory Lacey +
Brandon Liukkonen
Joseph Wilcher

Violin I

Justinpal Singh*
Janelle Barlow (*Sonntag)
Kyra Kehm-Goins
Melaku Akalwold ©
Cora Beeson
Rebekah Doll ©

Violin II

Pablo Arellano Cardenas+
Adelaide Waite
Joan Fort
Tatianna Berganio ©
Kyla Rivera
Kaitlynn Koehn
Dominic Pollio

Viola

Alyson Rake+
Kindra Gonsalves (+Sonntag)
Sofia Topete
Natalie Story

Cello

Ellen Coburn+
Marisa Robbins (+Fujiwara/Sonntag)
Elliot Capron
Jeffrey Buetow
Kellen Gonsalves
Cayla Low
Nathaniel Bratcher
Bronwyn Poppen-Eagen
Soren Bostrom
Ralizsa Rosales

Double Bass

Cameron McLennan
Madi Cline (+Sonntag)
Tucker Doering

* Concertmaster

+ Section leader

**Faculty member

© Guest artist

Jess Mason, *librarian*

Alyson Rake, *stage manager*

FEBRUARY

- 8 Saturday, 7:30pm**
Puget Sound Concert Opera: *Highway 1, USA* and opera by William Grant Still, free admission (donations accepted)
- 9 Sunday, 3pm**
Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series: Barbara Baird, Organist
- 19 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Faculty Recital: Er-Hsuan Li, Piano, free admission
- 20 Thursday, 7pm**
United States Coast Guard Band Presents: "Centennial Celebration" Concert Tour, free admission but ticket is required:
<https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/us-coast-guard-band/Tacoma>

MARCH

- 1 Saturday, 2pm**
Guitar Orchestra & Guitar Ensemble, free admission
- 1 Saturday, 5pm**
Guitar Faculty Recital, free admission
- 2 Sunday, 3pm**
Second City Chamber Series: Bon Anniversaire, M. Ravell. Tickets: \$40, purchased through Second City Chamber Series only, by phone at 253-572-8863 or at their website:
www.sccchamberseries.org
- 9 Sunday, 3pm**
Choral Union
- 16 Sunday, 7:30pm**
University Wind Ensemble
- 18 Tuesday, 7:30pm**
Wayne Bergeron with the Pacific Lutheran University Jazz Ensemble. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center
- 19 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
University Symphony Orchestra: Student Showcase
- 22 Saturday, 1pm**
Rhythm Celebration concert. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center, free admission
- 30 Sunday**
Pacific NW Trombone Symposium 2025, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

APRIL

- 6 Sunday, 3pm**
Faculty Recital: Oksana Ejokina, Piano with Guest Artists, free admission
- 16 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Keyboard Students Recital, free admission
- 19 Saturday, 7:30pm**
Faculty Recital: Jason Gilliam, Euphonium, free admission
- 22 Tuesday, 7:30pm**
Steel Band, free admission
- 23 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Percussion Ensemble, free admission
- 27 Sunday, 3pm**
University Singers & Knights Chorus
- 27 Sunday, 7:30pm**
Faculty Recital: Jennifer Rhyne, Flute & Shelly Myers, Oboe, free admission
- 29 Thursday, 7:30pm**
University Chorale

MAY

- 1 Thursday, 7:30pm**
Choir of the West
- 2 Friday, 3:30pm**
Caitlin Lynch Voice Masterclass. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, free admission

MAY, Cont.

- 2 Friday, 7:30pm**
Sølvvinden Flute Ensemble, free admission
- 3 Saturday, 7:30pm**
Guitar Orchestra & Guitar Ensemble, free admission
- 4 Sunday, 3pm**
University Wind Ensemble
- 6 Tuesday, 6pm**
Saxophone Quartets & Jazz Combos. The Cave, Anderson University Center, free admission
- 6 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Piano Ensemble, free admission
- 8 Thursday, 7:30pm**
University Symphony Orchestra
- 9-10 Friday-Saturday, 7:30pm**
The Fairy Queen by Henry Purcell. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center
- 10 Saturday, 3pm**
Woodwind Students Recital, free admission
- 10 Saturday, 4:30pm**
Brass Students Recital, free admission
- 11 Sunday, 6pm**
Chamber Music Kaleidoscope, free admission
- 11 Sunday, 7:30pm**
String Kaleidoscope, free admission
- 13 Tuesday, 7:30pm**
University Concert Band
- 14 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
University Jazz Ensemble. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center
- 15 Thursday, 7:30pm**
PLUtonic/Gold Rush. The Cave, Anderson University Center, free admission
- 17 Saturday, 3pm**
Mariyka Vasilchuk Piano - Forestine Wise Monsen Scholarship Recital, free admission
- 17 Saturday, 7:30pm**
Choral Union
- 18 Sunday, 3pm**
Choir International Open Rehearsal, free admission
- 18 Sunday, 7:30pm**
Composers Forum, free admission

To view more detailed event information, please visit:

www.plu.edu/music/calendar (Updated April 30, 2025)