

University Symphony Orchestra
Student Showcase

Thursday, March 19, 2026 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
Student Showcase

Wesley Schulz, *conductor*

Wednesday, March 19, 2026 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

Concerto for Marimba No. 1..... Ney Rosauro (b. 1952)

II. Lament
IV. Farewell

Evan Nakanishi, *marimba*

Liminal Landscapes.....Courtney Stark (b. 2004)

World premiere

Concerto for Horn No. 1 in E-flat Major, op. 11.....Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Allegro

James Gibson, *horn*

INTERMISSION

Concerto for Tuba in F Minor..... Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

I. Prelude: Allegro moderato
II. Romanza: Andante sostenuto
III. Finale-Rondo alla tedesca: Allegro

Cassidy Stanhope, *tuba*

Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy..... Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Program Notes

Today's concert highlights four exceptional PLU students. Three are winners of the annual Student Showcase Competition and one student was selected to have her work, *Liminal Landscapes*, premiered by the Symphony Orchestra. Along with the talented musicians of the orchestra, tonight is our Student Showcase performance.

Evan Nakanishi will perform two movements from Brazilian composer Ney Rosauro's *Concerto No 1. for Marimba*. Composed in 1986, this concerto has had over 4,000 performances with orchestra making it the most popular concerto ever written for marimba. This four-mallet concerto draws upon Brazilian motifs and elements of jazz while employing catchy rhythms and memorable melodies. James Gibson will perform Richard Strauss' *Concerto for Horn No. 1*. Richard's father, Franz, was a famed horn player who spent 49 years playing for the Munich Court Orchestra. When Richard was just eighteen years old, he composed his first concerto for the instrument inspired by his father's virtuosic playing. The First Concerto is in three movements with the first two linked without pause. The horn displays soaring lyricism and playful hunting calls throughout the piece while the orchestral accompaniment harkens back to Mozart – a favorite composer of Franz Strauss. Finally, Cassidy Stanhope will perform Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Concerto for Tuba*. This concerto, one of the first serious concertos for the instrument, was written in 1954 for the London Symphony Orchestra and tubist Philip Catelinet. Sonorous and lyrical but also incredibly acrobatic, this brief concerto is a tour-de-force for both the soloist and the orchestra.

Liminality is defined as a threshold or transition between spaces, a temporary state with an unknown destination. Thresholds can be found in many areas in life, and even life itself. Liminal is a beautiful word to describe the constant changes of our world. Inspired by the grand, colorful, and expressive orchestral writing of Aaron Copland, *Liminal Landscapes* reflects upon the beauty of this planet and the gifts of nature that we are able to witness in our lives. This beauty is expressed with lush harmonies, passionate melodies, and intricate textures. The piece flows between dark and bright timbres, representing liminality with an ostinato that shifts through various modes. The ostinato is played in the beginning in the clarinets and moves between the vibraphone and harp, developing throughout the piece.

– program note by Courtney Stark

Rounding out tonight's program is Piotr Tchaikovsky's tone poem, *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture*, inspired by Shakespeare's play. The *Fantasy-Overture* opens with hymn-like music depicting Friar Laurence. The Friar both enables the course of action of the play as well as stays outside the conflict. His music will return later in the overture but more as a desperate plea. The primary material after the lengthy introduction is brutal and represents the antagonism between the Montagues and Capulets. A musical sword fight can be heard from the wind players as the fleet feet of the fighters are heard in the scurrying strings. The rapturous second theme is the timeless depiction of love between Romeo and his Juliet. In the latter half of the work this theme will be interrupted by the music of the warring families as their feud takes a toll on the young lovers. The work ends, somber at first with a steady heartbeat of the timpani and then transfigured as the love theme soars into an otherworldly realm free of earthly strife.

– program notes by Wesley Schulz

About the Artists

Listed in order of appearance

Evan Nakanishi is a fourth-year music performance major and has been studying percussion for over thirteen years. He is originally from Portland, Oregon, and has been able to participate in many exciting programs, such as the Los Angeles Film Conducting Intensive 2025 at Warner Brothers and being a part of the “*Hollywood Collection*” album, which was considered for a Grammy. He has also participated in masterclasses with Reese Maulsby, Tambuco Percussion Ensemble, She-e Wu, and soon with Sandbox Percussion. When Evan is finished with his degree, he is going to take a gap year to prepare for graduate school auditions.

Courtney Stark is a composer, arranger, and pianist. She began learning piano at age seven and studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music throughout school before starting her education at PLU. During her time at PLU she has been involved in many ensembles, including Piano Ensemble, Guitar Ensemble, and Steel Band. She has accompanied both instrumental, vocal ensembles, and soloists. She has also taken on leadership roles in the gamelan ensemble and one of the PLU acapella ensembles. In the past, Courtney has written many pieces for solo piano and small ensembles, and is currently expanding her knowledge by exploring electronic music and learning how to compose with digital audio workstations. She looks forward to writing more pieces for orchestra and other large ensembles after she graduates in the spring.

James Gibson is a senior at PLU majoring in horn performance and music composition. While at PLU, he has studied with both Prof. Danielle Lemieux and Dr. Gina Gillie on horn, and has studied composition with both Dr. Baldwin Giang and Lauren Brake. Outside of school, he works as a freelance composer and horn player, coaches horn at Graham-Kapowsin High School, and teaches private lessons. He has performed with regional ensembles such as Mid-Columbia Symphony, Puget Chamber Winds, and Tacoma Concert Band. James recently attended the Los Angeles Film Scoring Institute, Cormont Horn Camp, and Raphael-Mendez Brass Institute.

Cassidy Stanhope is a fourth-year music performance major, studying tuba at PLU. A student of Andy Abel, Cassidy has taken nearly every chance to perform what has come her way during her time at PLU. This orchestra cycle will be her fifteenth with the PLU Symphony Orchestra, while also performing in multiple other major ensembles, and in the Puget Sound area. In addition to studying tuba, Cassidy is also a freelance musician and private instructor, regularly performing in various ensembles and teaching private low brass lessons around the Puget Sound area on both tuba and trombone. Cassidy is an Agnes Berge Smith music scholar, and an S.E. Shires Rising Artist. She has dedicated tonight’s performance of Ralph Vaughan Williams’s *Concerto for Bass Tuba* to her grandmother, Carol.

About the Conductor

Wesley Schulz is Music Director and Conductor of the Auburn Symphony Orchestra (WA) and was formerly the Associate Conductor of the North Carolina Symphony. As a guest conductor, Schulz has appeared with the Seattle, Utah, Austin, Tallahassee, Canton, Williamsburg, Greenville, Richmond (IN), Waco, and Bozeman Symphony Orchestras, among many others. Additionally, Schulz is Principal Guest Conductor at the Pacific Northwest Ballet, having led productions such as Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* as well as annual performances of Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker*. Schulz has collaborated with some of the most dynamic musical artists of our time including Tessa Lark, Leslie Odom Jr., John Williams, Philippe Quint, Bella Hristova, Rachel Lee Priday, Richard Lin, Pink Martini, Randall Goosby, Cirque de la Symphonie, Amos Lee, and many more. When not on the podium, Schulz enjoys spending time with his partner, Cameron, doing CrossFit, snowboarding, cooking, and playing endless fetch with their two dogs, Chewbacca and Han Solo.

University Symphony Orchestra

Wesley Schulz, *conductor*

Flute

Katherine Gunter++

Kade Levien++

Raynah Brown, *piccolo*

Oboe

Jayden White+

Gabrielle Guerrero

Sara Atwood, *English horn*

Clarinet

Meaghan Austin-Cortez

Bethani Juarez

Bassoon

Thomas Tafoya++

Syd Thayer-O'Brien++

Rameses Unat-Almanza

Horn

Benjamin Coats

James Gibson

Max Kiger

Ciel Simpson

Micaiah Tinkler

Trumpet

Devin Bianchi-Rivera+

Clay Chabot

Kurtis Sacksteder

Trombone

Sabien Kinchlow-McConnaughey+

Joshua Green

Sophia Okan, *bass trombone*

Tuba

Cassidy Stanhope

Percussion

Evan Nakanishi+

Laura Bahrt

Ronin Schoolcraft

Violin I

Janelle Barlow*

Pablo Arellano Cardenas**

Adelaide Waite

Kyra Kehm-Goins

Kira Miyamoto

Rebekah Doll©

Violin II

Dominic Pollio+

Claire Raymond^

Kaitlynn Koehn

Ana Navas

Viola

Kindra Gonsalves+

Linnea Phillips^

Cas Hedtke

Natalie Story

Sof Topete©

Cello

Jeffrey Buetow+

Marisa Robbins^

Kellen Gonsalves

Ralizza Rosales

Soren Bostrom

Cayla Low

Double Bass

Cameron McLennan+

Nolan Eastwood©

Deborah McCoy©

Harp

Sarah Harker

* Concertmaster

** Associate Concertmaster

+ Principal

++ Co-Principal

^ Assistant Principal

© Community Member

Dominic Pollio, *librarian*

Kindra Gonsalves, *stage manager*

FEBRUARY

7 Sunday, 7:30pm

Faculty Recital: Justin Lader with Guest David Helfand: Celtic Harp, Viola, and More, free admission

8 Sunday, 3pm

Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series: Justin J. Murphy-Mancini, University Organist

12 Thursday, 7:30pm

Choir of the West Tour Homecoming Concert

15 Sunday, 3pm

Faculty Recital: Jennifer Rhyne and Friends, free admission

28 Saturday, 2pm

Guitar Orchestra & Guitar Ensemble, free admission

28 Saturday, 5:30pm

Guitar Faculty Recital, free admission

MARCH

5 Thursday, 1:45pm

Nicholas May Saxophone Masterclass, free admission

5 Thursday, 7:30pm

Guest Artist Recital: Nicholas May, Saxophone. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, free admission

8 Sunday, 3pm

Choral Union

10 Tuesday, 7:30pm

Faculty Recital: Craig Rine, Clarinet, free admission

15 Sunday, 3pm

University Wind Ensemble

17 Tuesday, 7:30pm

Anat Cohen with the Pacific Lutheran University Jazz Ensemble. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center

19 Thursday, 7:30pm

University Symphony Orchestra: Student Showcase

21 Saturday

Pacific NW Trombone Symposium 2026, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

22 Sunday, 1pm

Rhythm Celebration concert. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center, free admission

APRIL

11 Saturday, 10:30am

Mehrdad Gholami Flute Masterclass, Mary Baker Russell Music Center Room 334, free admission

15 Wednesday, 7:30pm

Keyboard Students Recital, free admission

19 Sunday, 3pm

Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series: Stephen Price, Organist

21 Tuesday, 7:30pm

Steel Band, free admission

22 Wednesday, 7:30pm

Percussion Ensemble, free admission

26 Sunday, 3pm

University Singers & Knights Chorus

28 Tuesday, 7:30pm

University Chorale

29 Wednesday, 7:30pm

University Symphony Orchestra

30 Thursday, 7:30pm

Choir of the West

MAY

1 Friday, 3:30pm

Kayo Iwama Voice Masterclass. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, free admission

1 Friday, 7:30pm

Sølvvinden Flute Ensemble, free admission

2 Saturday, 7:30pm

Guitar Orchestra & Guitar Ensemble, free admission

3 Sunday, 12pm

Evelina Bozhko, Piano - Forestine Wise Monsen Scholarship Recital, free admission

3 Sunday, 3pm

University Wind Ensemble

5 Tuesday, 6pm

Saxophone Quartets & Jazz Combos. The Cave, Anderson University Center, free admission

6 Wednesday, 7:30pm

Piano Ensemble, free admission

7 Thursday, 7:30pm

Composers Forum, free admission

8-9 Friday-Saturday, 7:30pm and 10 Sunday, 2pm

Spotlight Series: *The Light in the Piazza the Musical*. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center

9 Saturday, 3pm

Woodwind Students Recital, free admission

9 Saturday, 4:30pm

Brass Students Recital, free admission

11 Tuesday, 7:30pm

PLUtonic/Gold Rush. The Cave, Anderson University Center, free admission

12 Tuesday, 7:30pm

University Concert Band

13 Wednesday, 7:30pm

University Jazz Ensemble. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center

14 Thursday, 6pm

Chamber Music Kaleidoscope, free admission

14 Thursday, 7:30pm

String Kaleidoscope, free admission

16 Saturday, 3pm

Mariachi del Pacifico. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center

16 Saturday, 7:30pm

Choral Union