University Symphony Orchestra

Tuesday, October 27, 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

James Welsch, *conductor*

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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

Procession of the Nobles ..... **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)**
from *Mlada*

Karelia Overture, op. 10 ..... **Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)**

Swedish Rhapsody No. 1, op. 19 - *Midsommarvaka* (Midsummer Vigil) ..... **Hugo Alfvén (1872-1960)**

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in D-flat Major, op. 30 ("Romantic") ..... **Howard Hanson (1896-1981)**
I. Adagio—Allegro moderato
II. Andante con tenerezza
III. Allegro con brio

Program Notes

Music has a remarkable ability to evoke a sense of place. It can suggest the sweep of a landscape, preserve the rhythms of a cultural tradition, or express the complicated ways in which heritage shapes identity. The works on this program approach these ideas from different directions, connecting musical imagination to geography, history, and the experience of belonging.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Procession of the Nobles*, from his opera *Mlada*, opens with ceremonial splendor. Its vivid orchestration and stately rhythms evoke a world of pageantry and inherited tradition, where music gives collective identity a public voice. In **Jean Sibelius**' *Karelia Overture*, place carries a more particular historical resonance. Karelia—a region rich in Finnish and Karelian cultural traditions—figured prominently in the development of Finnish national identity. Sibelius' music draws upon this sense of cultural memory, suggesting how a landscape can become inseparable from the stories a people tell about themselves.

Hugo Alfvén's *Swedish Rhapsody No. 1*, subtitled *Midsommarvaka* (*Midsummer Vigil*), turns toward the sounds and rituals of communal life. Inspired by Swedish midsummer celebrations, the work moves between folk-like melodies, exuberant dances, and sweeping orchestral color. Here, heritage is not simply something preserved from the past; it is something renewed through celebration, participation, and the shared experience of a community.

Howard Hanson's *Symphony No. 2*, the *"*Romantic"*,* brings these questions into an American context. The son of Swedish immigrants, Hanson forged a musical voice that reflects both his Scandinavian inheritance and his life in the United States. The symphony's expansive lyricism suggests that identity is rarely a matter of choosing between past and present, or one place and another. Instead, belonging can emerge from the meeting of different histories, transformed into something distinctly personal.

Together, these works offer more than portraits of northern European and American musical traditions. They invite us to consider how landscape shapes imagination, how heritage survives through music, and how identity evolves across generations. The voices are different, but each reveals music's power to connect who we are with where we have been—and with the places, histories, and communities we carry with us.

About the Ensemble

The PLU Symphony Orchestra has long stood as one of the cornerstones of PLU's rich musical tradition. Unique among the ensembles on campus, the orchestra plays a role in nearly every aspect of musical and ceremonial life at the University. Each academic year, the orchestras presents four feature concerts, performing works from the symphonic, concerto, ballet, and operatic repertoires—ranging from timeless classics to brand-new compositions, including an impressive number of world and regional premieres. They collaborate with students, faculty, and guest artists not only in their own concerts but also in opera and theatre productions, as well as with PLU's renowned choirs. Beyond campus, the orchestras represent PLU throughout the Pacific Northwest, across the country, and abroad. They perform in conventions, tour independently, and join the University's beloved Christmas Concerts.

About the Conductor

Dr. James O. Welsch is a conductor, educator, and musician whose career encompasses orchestral conducting, music education, composition, and artistic leadership. He currently serves as Director of Orchestral Studies at Pacific Lutheran University, Music Director of the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association, Music Director of the Kirkland Civic Orchestra, and Associate Conductor of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra.

At Pacific Lutheran University, Welsch leads the university's orchestral program, working to create an environment in which students develop as accomplished musicians, thoughtful artists, and engaged members of a musical community. His work with young musicians has been a defining element of his career. As Music Director of TYSA, he leads one of the region's prominent youth orchestra organizations, overseeing a comprehensive orchestral program serving hundreds of young musicians.

Prior to his work in the Pacific Northwest, Welsch served as Music Director and Symphonic Orchestra Conductor of the Florida Symphony Youth Orchestras, while also teaching at Stetson University and serving as Visiting Professor of Music and Director of Orchestras at the University of Central Florida. Earlier, he spent several years in El Paso as Associate Conductor of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra and Music Director and General Manager of the El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestras.

Welsch's career in higher education began at the Setnor School of Music at Syracuse University, where following completion of his master's degree, he served for five years as Assistant Professor of Music Theory, Composition, and Conducting. There he taught undergraduate and graduate courses, conducted orchestras and ensembles, directed fully staged opera productions, advised students, and participated extensively in recruitment and university service. He was honored as the school's Outstanding Music Faculty Member in 2008.

Welsch is also the founding Music Director and Principal Conductor of Orquesta Filarmónica Juvenil México-USA "The Bridge," a binational youth orchestra bringing together young musicians from Ciudad Juárez and El Paso. The initiative reflects his longstanding belief in music's ability to create meaningful connections across cultural and geographic boundaries and has received recognition in both Mexico and the United States, including from Yo-Yo Ma.
As a conductor, Welsch is committed to both the established orchestral canon and the discovery of works by underrepresented and overlooked composers. His programming frequently explores connections between music, history, culture, and the human experience. He is an active guest conductor, adjudicator, clinician, masterclass teacher, composer, and arranger.

Welsch earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in orchestral conducting from The University of Texas at Austin, studying with Gerhardt Zimmermann. He holds a Master of Music in orchestral conducting from Syracuse University and a Bachelor's degree in theory and composition from Stetson University. His conducting studies have included work with Jorma Panula, Raffi Armenian, James Croft, Timothy Reynish, Kevin Noe, Joseph Kreines, and others. His composition teachers have included Kari Juusela, Sydney Hodkinson, Daniel Godfrey, and Joseph Kreines.

A French horn player by training, Welsch remains deeply engaged with music-making from both sides of the podium. At the heart of his work is a belief that orchestras are not simply vehicles for performing great music, but communities in which musicians learn to listen, collaborate, imagine, and create something larger than themselves.

University Symphony Orchestra
James Welsch, *conductor*

Flute
Annalise Sackreiter+
Daniel Sim
Raynah Brown, *piccolo*

Oboe
Jayden White+
Gabrielle Guerrero, *English horn*

Clarinet
Meaghan Austin-Cortez+
Cayman Huff
Madeleine Day, *bass clarinet*

Bassoon
Syd Thayer-O'Brien+
Thomas Tafoya, *contrabassoon*
Angel Rodriguez Gil, *contrabassoon*

Horn
Micaiah Tinkler+
Ella Wagner
Ciel Simpson
Max Kiger

Trumpet
Logan Johnson+
Dani Ballard
Moira Fender
Sylvie Manz

Trombone
Max Minjares+
Josh Green
Xander Pitruzzella, *bass trombone*

Tuba
Preston Hill

Percussion
Rory Lacy+
Cadence Philbeck

Harp
Mary Grace Cope+

Violin I
Pablo Arellano Cardenas*
Dominic Pollio**
Johanna Bozhko
Claire Raymond

Violin II
Adelaide Waite+
Shanaz Shamdeen
Ethan Serrano
Cezille Pachoca
Luna Song

Viola
Linnea Phillips+
Cas Hedtke++
Gibson Baggett
Natalie Story

Cello
Soren Bostrom+
Kellen Gonsalves++
May Kirkhart
Jensen Lees©
Cayla Low
Ralizsa Rosales©

Double Bass
Cameron McLennan+
Tucker Doering
Deborah McCoy©
Jasmine Abiva©

+ Principal
++ Assistant Principal
* Concert master
** Associate Concertmaster
© Community member

Dominic Pollio, *librarian*
Max Kiger, *stage manager*

PLU | SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE

ALL MUSIC EVENTS ARE IN MARY BAKER RUSSELL MUSIC CENTER, LAGERQUIST CONCERT HALL UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

SEPTEMBER

13 Sunday, 3pm
Faculty Recital: Erik Steighner, Saxophone & Oksana Ejokina, Piano, free admission

20 Sunday, 12pm
Faculty Recital: Vianna & Trindade, Brazilian Jazz Duo. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, free admission

20 Sunday, 3pm
Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series: Christa Rakich, Organist

OCTOBER

4 Sunday, 5pm
Evelina Bozhko, Piano – Forestine Wise Monsen Memorial Scholarship Recital, free admission

7 Wednesday, 7:30pm
Guest Artist Lecture Recital: Alejandro Cremaschi, Piano, free admission

11 Sunday, 3pm
University Wind Ensemble

15 Thursday, 1:45pm
Jessica Dodge-Overstreet Saxophone Masterclass. Mary Baker Russell Music Center Room 334, free admission

15 Thursday, 7:30pm
Guest Artist Recital: Jessica Dodge-Overstreet, Saxophone, free admission

18 Sunday, 3pm
South Sound Saxophone Ensemble, free admission

19 Monday, 7:30pm
University Jazz Ensemble: Miles Davis Centennial. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center

20 Tuesday, 7:30pm
Fall Festival of Choirs

25 Sunday, 2pm
Choir of the West Centennial Celebration

27 Tuesday, 7:30pm
University Symphony Orchestra

29 Thursday, 1:30pm
Emely Phelps Piano Masterclass, free admission

29 Thursday, 7:30pm
Guest Artist Recital: Emely Phelps, Piano, free admission

30 Friday, 12pm
Orchestra Festival concert, free admission

NOVEMBER

1 Sunday, 3pm
Angela Meade Vocal Competition, free admission

3 Tuesday, 7:30pm
Keyboard Students Recital, free admission

8 Sunday, 3pm
Richard D. Moe Organ Recital Series: Justin J. Murphy-Mancini and Friends

11 Wednesday, 7:30pm
Early Music Concert, free admission

14 Saturday, 3pm
Woodwind Students Recital, free admission

14 Saturday, 4:30pm
Brass Students Recital, free admission

15 Sunday, 3pm
University Wind Ensemble

15 Sunday, 5:45pm
Tracy Doyle Flute Masterclass. Mary Baker Russell Music Center Room 334, free admission

17 Tuesday, 7:30pm
University Concert Band

18 Wednesday, 7:30pm
Percussion Ensemble, free admission

NOVEMBER, Cont.

20-21 Friday-Saturday, 7:30pm
Opera Scenes. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center

21 Saturday, 3pm
Steel Band, free admission

22 Sunday, 3pm
Choral Union

22 Sunday, 7:30pm
Guitar Orchestra & Guitar Ensemble, free admission

23 Monday, 7:30pm
University Jazz Ensemble. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center

24 Tuesday, 7:30pm
Mariachi del Pacifico. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center, free admission

DECEMBER

***Light Beyond Shadow*, A PLU Christmas Concert**
Tickets go on sale Wednesday, November 4

Friday, December 4, at 7:30pm - Lagerquist Concert Hall
Saturday, December 5, at 2pm - Lagerquist Concert Hall
Saturday, December 5, at 7:30pm - Lagerquist Concert Hall
Sunday, December 6, at 2pm - Lagerquist Concert Hall
Monday, December 7, at 7:30pm - Benaroya Hall, Seattle

1 Tuesday, 6pm
Saxophone Quartets & Jazz Combos. The Cave, Anderson University Center, free admission

2 Wednesday, 7:30pm
Piano Ensemble, free admission

8 Tuesday, 6pm
Chamber Music Kaleidoscope, free admission

8 Tuesday, 7:30pm
String Kaleidoscope, free admission

9 Wednesday, 7:30pm
Let Your Heart Be Light, featuring University Singers, Knights Chorus, and PLU Ringers

10 Thursday, 7:30pm
Sølvvinden Flute Ensemble, free admission

13 Sunday, 3pm
Composers Forum, free admission

JANUARY

9 Saturday, 4:30 and 6:30pm
Northwest High School Honor Band, free admission

12 Tuesday, 12:30pm
TBDetermined!, free admission

17 Sunday, 6pm
PLU Honor Orchestra for Strings, free admission

28-30 Thursday-Saturday, 7:30pm and 31 Sunday, 2pm
The Magic Flute by W. A. Mozart. Eastvold Auditorium, Karen Hille Phillips Center

To view more detailed event information, please visit:
www.plu.edu/music/calendar (Updated October 22, 2026)