

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
Moiria 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©
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*

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
- 31 Saturday**
Athena Music & Leadership Summit, Mary Baker Russell Music
Center

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
- 14 Saturday, 6:30pm**
Tracy Doyle Flute Masterclass. Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, free
admission
- 15 Sunday, 3pm**
University Wind Ensemble
- 17 Tuesday, 7:30pm**
University Concert Band

NOVEMBER, Cont.

- 18 Wednesday, 7:30pm**
Percussion Ensemble, free admission
- 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 5, 2026)