

AROUND TOWN/MUSIC: Pasadena Symphony resumes youth movement

By Robert D. Thomas

Music Critic

Pasadena Star-News/San Gabriel Valley Tribune/Whittier Daily News

A shorter version of this story was printed today in the above newspapers.

Pasadena Symphony; Andrew Grams, conductor, Simone Porter, violin
March 29 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Preview one hour before each performance.
Ambassador Auditorium; 131 South St. John Ave., Pasadena
Tickets: \$35-\$105.

Information: www.pasadenasymphony-pops.org



For more than a quarter-century the Pasadena Symphony has distinguished itself by discovering young, talented soloists. Earlier this year 13-year-old pianist Umi Garrett soloed in Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1. For the PSO's programs on March 29 at Ambassador Auditorium, a "grizzled veteran," 17-year-old violinist Simone Porter (*pictured right*), will join the orchestra and guest conductor Andrew Grams for a performance of Max Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1. The concerts will open with William Bolcom's *Commedia for (Almost) 18th Century Orchestra* and will conclude with Beethoven's Symphony No. 5.

Porter's PSO appearance is one of several important local concerts for her this year. On April 27 she will play Beethoven's *Romances 1 & 2* with the Pacific Symphony, led by Carl St.Clair, at the SOKA Performing Arts Center in Aliso Viejo. On Sept. 4 she will make her Hollywood Bowl debut as soloist in Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto with the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Seattle Symphony Music Director Ludovic Morlot.

A native of Seattle, Porter studies with Robert Lipsett at The Colburn Conservatory of

Music in downtown Los Angeles. She is also part of Colburn Artists, a program created in 2012 by The Colburn School to provide professional management services to its most-accomplished students.

The PSO's "youth movement" also includes its guest conductor. Grams, a 36-year-old Maryland native, last fall became music director of the Elgin Symphony just outside of Chicago, an ensemble that is similar in many respects to the Pasadena Symphony. In January he conducted the Baltimore Symphony in a concert that elicited from Tim Smith, music critic of *The Baltimore Sun*, the following: "The year is not even a week old, and there's a contender for highlight of the 2014 music season in Baltimore."

Meanwhile, two area choral groups resume their seasons this week.

- Jeffrey Bernstein leads the **Pasadena Master Chorale** in "The Voice of California" on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and next Sunday at 4 p.m. at Altadena Community Church. The program features music by Eric Whitacre and Morten Lauridsen, along with premieres by Los Angeles-based composers Matt Brown and Reena Esmail. **Information:**

www.pasadenamasterchorale.org

- Artistic Director John Sutton will lead his **Angeles Chorale** in "Romancing the Soul," an evening of Brahms love songs on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at Pasadena's First United Methodist Church and March 30 at 4 p.m. at Northridge United Methodist Church.

Information: www.angeleschorale.org

- This evening at 7 p.m. in Walt Disney Concert Hall, Grant Gershon leads 48 members of the **Los Angeles Master Chorale** in music by famed Southern California composer Morten Lauridsen. The program will include *Mid-Winter Songs*, *Ave Dulcissima Maria*, *Canticle/O Vos Omnes*, *O Magnum Mysterium*, , *Madrigali*, *Nocturnes* and *Les Chansons des Roses* (Lauridsen will accompany the last two pieces on the piano).

Ironically, the only major piece the Chorale won't be singing is *Lux Aeterna*, which has become a choral landmark since it was premiered and recorded by the Master Chorale in 1997. **Information:** www.lamc.org

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