STOCKTON SYMPHONY
PETER JAFFE | MUSIC DIRECTOR

presents

STEPPIN' OUT TIMES

Volume 28 • January 2026

Welcome to Connections@TheSymphony

Remember the A-B-C song? When we're learning the alphabet, a simple melody makes the task easier. In fact, isn't it amazing that this "extra" task—adding music—doesn't make it harder?

It goes both ways: not only can music help us learn, but other fields can inspire a musical masterpiece. All the selections you'll hear the Stockton Symphony play show fascinating connections with other key subjects:

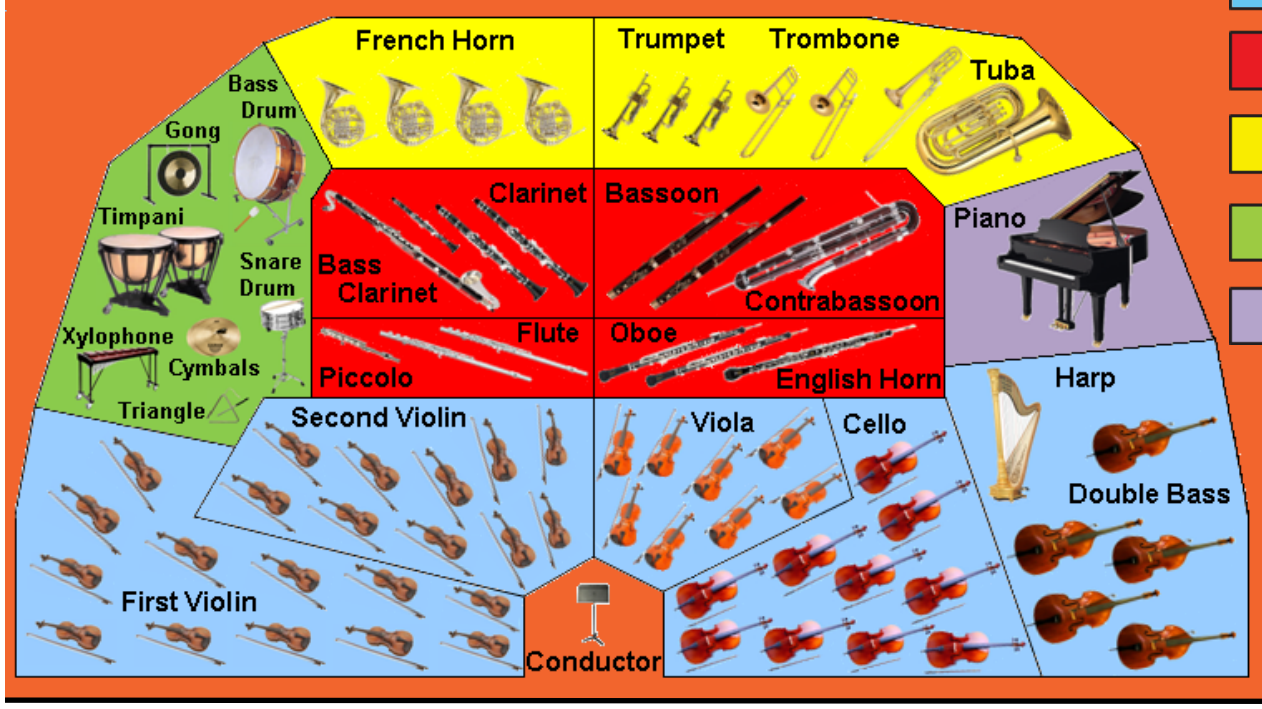
- The stirring music of our **National Anthem** recalls a crucial point in our country's history. We really hope you'll sing along!
- Geography and world culture had a wonderful influence on Barroso's lively samba, ***Brazil***.
- We'll explore fascinating connections between music, mathematics, and time in Bizet's **Danse bohème**.
- Biology gets into the picture when you'll hear actual sounds of humpbacks in ***And God Created Great Whales***.
- Music plays a big role in sports, and John Williams's grand **Fanfare and Theme** has become the signature theme of the Olympic Games.
- *America's Got Talent* winner Brandon Leake connects to literature by combining slam poetry with gospel style in **"I've Got"**—YOU will be the first to hear this world premiere!
- Artwork inspired Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, and **Baba Yaga** and **The Great Gate of Kyiv** are majestic pieces that a symphony can play.

You can read here about the composers and their pieces, and your teacher has links to the music. Listen to it many times if you can, and notice how composers use catchy rhythms, bright sound colors, and imaginative combinations of instruments to create magic connections.

You are preparing for a special event that requires you to be at your very best. We want you to be a great audience member, because hearing and seeing music performed by a live orchestra is an unforgettable experience. We'll see you this coming January!

Peter Jaffe
Music Director and Conductor

ORCHESTRA SEATING MAP



= Strings
= Woodwinds
= Brass
= Percussion
= Keyboard*

*Piano is technically percussion because its sound is made by hammers striking strings when keys are pressed.

Concert Program

Peter Jaffe, *conductor*
Brandon Leake, *poetic performer*

Tue., Wed., Jan. 27, 28, 2026
9:45, 11:15 am
Atherton Auditorium, Stockton

Thu., Jan. 29, 2026
9:15, 10:45 am
Hutchins Street Square, Lodi

Music and History
Smith/Key: The Star-Spangled Banner

Music and Geography
Barroso: Brazil

Music and Mathematics
Bizet: Danse bohème from *Carmen*

Music and Biology
Hovhaness: And God Created Great Whales

Music and Sports
John Williams: Olympic Fanfare

Music and Literature
Brandon Leake, John Wineglass: I've Got (World Premiere)
Brandon Leake, *poetic performer*

Music and Art
Musorgsky: The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga) and The Great Gate of Kyiv from Pictures at an Exhibition

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:

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Mario Gardea, District 1
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Get Ready to Sing with Us!

The Star-Spangled Banner

Oh, say, can you see,
by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed
at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars
through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched
were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare,
the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night
that our flag was still there.
Oh, say, does that star-spangled
banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free,
and the home of the brave?

Words by Francis Scott Key
Music by John Stafford Smith

–anonymous 5th grader

Meet the Conductor

Peter Jaffe–or "Maestro (MY-stroh) Jaffe," as an orchestra's conductor is sometimes called–has been the music director and **conductor** of the Stockton Symphony since 1995. He also conducts the Folsom Lake Symphony and guest-conducts Symphony San Jose. In addition to conducting, he frequently arranges music for orchestras, and he plays piano, violin, and viola.

Jaffe has conducted many orchestras across the country. He received a Special Friend of Education award for his Steppin' Out concerts, as well as the Goodwill Helping Hands award. He also received the Stockton Arts Commission's STAR Award–Stockton's highest honor for anyone in the arts. Check out Maestro Jaffe at any of the Stockton Symphony's concerts–bring your family and friends!

Meet the Guest Artist

Brandon Leake–a Stockton native–is the season 15 winner of *America's Got Talent*, a seven-time Telly Award winner, a Society of Voice Arts and Sciences (SOVAS) Award winner, and an Emmy Award winner. Brandon has been a **poetic performer**, keynote speaker, and workshop leader for over a decade, traveling to locations such as New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, and forty-two states. Brandon has **collaborated** with Meta, CBS, the California Hospital Association, *Good Morning America*, the Golden State Warriors, and the Sacramento Kings, among others.

Brandon's use of personal narrative with his gift in poetic prose allows him to speak not merely to crowds but to their inner being, to connect one soul to another, to connect people to a sense of communal humanity that is at times severely lacking in our world. Brandon Leake is a visionary whose words, but most importantly actions, reflect his love of Christ, people, and the world.

In the Know

For the names of instruments defined by pictures, see Orchestra Seating Map, page 1.

Collaborate Work jointly to create something
Commission Give an order to create a work of art
Composer Person who writes music
Conductor Person who directs the performance of an orchestra or choir
Meter Pattern in which rhythmic pulses are organized
Mortar Bowl for grinding substances into powder
Poetic performer Person who presents their poetry in live performance, also known as a spoken word artist
Score, Scoring The printed notation of a piece of music; the arrangement of musical ideas for different instruments or voices
Syncopation The shifting of the normal accent from a strong to a weak beat
Wordsmith Writer (especially a skillful one) of poetry, books, lyrics or other works using words

Meet the Composers and Wordsmiths

By Jane Vial Jaffe

The Star-Spangled Banner

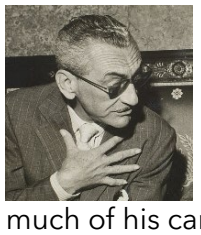
Francis Scott Key
(1779–1843)
John Stafford Smith
(1750–1836)

Francis Scott Key was an American lawyer who also wrote poetry. He wrote a poem called *Defence of Fort McHenry* after being held aboard a British ship that bombarded the American fort on September 13, 1814. He specifically had in mind how his words would fit with a tune that was popular in the United States called "The Anacreontic Song."

This tune had been composed in England, probably in the 1760s by John Stafford Smith when he was

a teenager. With Key's words and Smith's tune combined, the song was renamed "The Star-Spangled Banner." By congressional decree "The Star-Spangled Banner" became the national anthem of the United States on March 3, 1931. The song has four verses, but people usually sing just the first.

Pronunciation Guide
Anacreaontic: uh-na-cree-ON-tic



Brazil

Ari Barroso
(1903–1964)

Brazilian composer Ari Barroso spent much of his career in Rio de Janeiro, first as a pianist for dance bands and movies, then as a composer for musical theater. He also worked as a radio and television programmer, and he wrote the music for Disney's *The Three Caballeros* in 1944.

Barroso wrote more than 160 dances called sambas. The **samba** is a popular Afro-Brazilian dance form with catchy **syncopation** and lively back and forth steps. Barroso composed his most famous samba, *Aquarelo do Brasil* (Watercolor of Brazil), in 1939. Its name became *Brazil* when it was recorded in the United States. *Brazil* also has patriotic words in the sung version, and its upbeat music has made it almost a Brazilian national anthem.

Pronunciation Guide
Ari Barroso: AH-ree bah-ROH-zoh

Danse bohème from *Carmen*

Georges Bizet
(1838–1875)

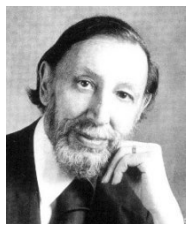
French composer Georges Bizet wrote his Danse bohème (Gypsy Dance) as part of his famous opera *Carmen*, which opened after many delays in 1875. Unfortunately, Bizet died on the night of its thirty-third performance, so he never got to know that it became one of the world's most popular operas.

The Danse bohème opens Act II in a tavern. The main character, Carmen, and her girlfriends sing and dance to a Gypsy song with a captivating rhythm. Starting daintily with a flute duet, the music gradually speeds up, becoming wilder and wilder. Slow or fast, Bizet keeps three beats to the measure (bar) in 3/4 **meter**.

Pronunciation Guide
Danse bohème: dah(n)ss boh-EM
Georges Bizet: zhorzh ("zh" sounds like the "s" in pleasure) bee-ZAY

And God Created Great Whales

Alan Hovhaness
(1911–2000)



In 1970 American composer Alan Hovhaness was **commissioned** to compose a piece for the New York Philharmonic and conductor André Kostelanetz using recorded whale sounds. Hovhaness already had an interest in music of other cultures—India, Armenia (part of his own heritage), Japan, and Korea—so why not whales?

And God Created Great Whales shows Hovhaness's love of unusual sounds and instrumental colors. He included passages of recorded whale sounds alternating with

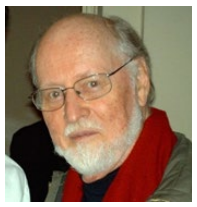
orchestral sections that sometimes create images of the motion of the sea, undersea mountains, tiny sea creatures, and giant waves.

Performances of the work have helped to encourage human interest in preserving these great creatures.

Pronunciation Guide
Hovhaness: hoh-VAH-ness

Olympic Theme

John Williams
(b. 1932)



American composer and conductor John Williams has written some of the world's best-known film music, such as for the *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* movies, *Superman*, and the *Indiana Jones* series. For the 1984 Olympic Games, the Los Angeles Olympic Committee commissioned him to compose a theme that would be played at the opening ceremony.

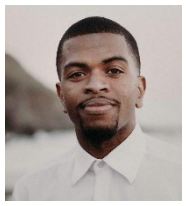
After previewing his *Olympic Theme* in Boston, he conducted it on July 28 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the opening ceremonies in Los Angeles. His stirring theme continues to be heard on Olympic broadcasts.

Like most of us Williams had gained his only Olympic experience by watching the games on TV, but he greatly appreciated the athletes' striving to produce their best efforts. He likened this "stretching of the human spirit" to "what musicians attempt to achieve in a symphonic effort." He said later that he intended the work to represent musically "the spirit of cooperation, of heroic achievement, all the striving and preparation that go before the events, and all the applause that comes after them."

I've Got

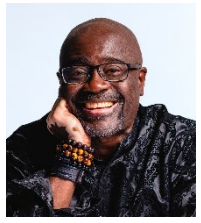
Brandon Leake
(b. 1992)

John Wineglass
(b. 1973)



For bio of Brandon Leake, please see "Meet the Guest Artist" on page 2.

Two years ago Maestro Jaffe and the Stockton Symphony commissioned Brandon Leake to create a new work featuring his poetry. They brought in composer John Wineglass to collaborate with Brandon on the musical portions.



John Wineglass writes music for TV shows, movies, and concert halls. He has won three Emmys and many other awards for his excellent work.

His music celebrates nature's beauty and tells important stories about fairness and equality.

From Brandon's full show of nine numbers, we will hear the second, titled "I've Got." This gorgeous fusion of gospel, orchestra, and hip hop "speaks to the hope we can place in God," says Brandon. You will be the first to hear this piece performed!

Bring your family and friends to the Stockton Symphony concert on February 7 for Brandon's full show! More info at stocktonsymphony.org

The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga) and The Great Gate of Kyiv from Pictures at an Exhibition

Modest Musorgsky/Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937)/(1839–1881)

Russian composer Modest Musorgsky was great friends with art and music critic Viktor Stassov, and they were both struck with grief when their artist friend Viktor Hartmann suddenly died in 1839 at age thirty-nine.

Stassov organized an exhibition of Hartmann's works, and Musorgsky composed a piano composition inspired by some of these artworks.

Several decades later French composer Maurice Ravel, who was famous for his imaginative **scoring** for orchestra, created an orchestral version. In this version it has become one of the most spectacular pieces in the orchestral repertoire.

We hear **The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga)**, inspired by Hartmann's drawing of a clock in the form of Baba Yaga's hut, which sits on fowl's legs. Baba Yaga is the scariest witch in Russian folklore. Musorgsky's music sounds like the witch's hut is stomping around on huge chicken legs, followed by faster music when Baba Yaga takes off in her oversized mortar (bowl for grinding substances into powder) to chase after little children.

This leads directly into **The Great Gate of Kyiv**, inspired by Hartmann's sketch for a city gate at Kyiv in the ancient Russian massive style. Hartmann had entered this work into a competition to commemorate Czar Alexander II's escape from assassination in 1866. Sadly, the competition was called off for lack of money.

Pronunciation Guide
Modest Musorgsky: Moh-DEST MOO-ZORG-skee
Maurice Ravel: moh-REES rah-VEL
Kyiv: KEEV

WHEN DO I APPLAUD?

1. When the concertmaster walks on stage.
The concertmaster, who is the leader of the first violins, will come out to tune the orchestra. Welcome this musician to the stage by applauding. The whole orchestra will tune to the note "A," starting with the oboe.

2. When Maestro Jaffe walks on stage.
Maestro Jaffe is the conductor who will be leading the orchestra. Welcome him with applause as he takes his place on the podium and bows.

3. When the music is over and Maestro Jaffe puts down his arms.
Sometimes when the orchestra stops, the piece isn't really over. You will know for sure when the conductor puts down his arms.

WHEN AM I QUIET?

1. While the orchestra tunes.
It is important to be quiet so that the players can hear one another.

2. When Maestro Jaffe turns around to face the orchestra.
This means they are about to start the first piece.

3. After the applause is over.
The audience should become quiet again right away so the orchestra can begin the next piece.

That's all you need to know! And just remember to have fun!

Music and Literature

You can be a poetic performer, too, but first you need to write a poem! Here are some simple guidelines:

1. **Use your five senses**: Describe what you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. Instead of just saying "the music was exciting," tell us something like it "raged like thunder" or it "felt like diving into a deep pool."
2. **Show your feelings**: Write about things that make you happy, sad, excited, or scared. Your honest feelings make your poem unique.
3. **Play with words**: You can break the rules in poetry! Make up new words, repeat words for effect, or arrange them in fun ways. You don't always need complete sentences, and poems don't have to rhyme (though they can if you want them to).
4. **Read it out loud**: The best way to know if your poem sounds good is to say it out loud. Listen to how the words sound together. If something sounds clunky or boring, change it until it sounds just right.

Now, just like a musician or athlete preparing to perform, practice reciting it many times. Now you're ready to perform it for your class or your friends and family.

For more creativity, try setting your poem to music! See if it suggests a beat pattern or melody.

Music and Geography

Draw a line from the composer or poet's name to his native country.
Lines can curve or cross.

Ari Barroso
Georges Bizet
Alan Hovhaness
Francis Scott Key
Brandon Leake
Modest Musorgsky
Maurice Ravel
John Stafford Smith
John Williams
John Wineglass

Music and Biology

Scientists are finding out more and more about what and how animals, insects, and even plants communicate with each other. Think about how you communicate with words, tone of voice, and body language. Listen to whale sounds or choose another species, and create an imaginary conversation based on what you think they might need to communicate.

Steppin' Out Word Search

Find the words from the word bank in the grid.
Words can go in any direction.
Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

Drawing by Maya

Clarinet by Leanne

Music stand with score by Andrew

T	O	Y	J	O	H	N	W	I	N	E	G	L	A	S	S	M	H	J
K	P	I	K	S	M	A	I	L	L	I	W	N	H	O	J	A	Y	O
S	Z	V	Y	S	G	T	P	H	B	E	B	N	I	L	P	U	K	H
S	Q	O	I	S	G	L	E	V	A	R	E	C	I	R	U	A	M	N
E	X	F	D	K	W	R	W	J	M	E	E	R	C	B	O	R	S	S
N	N	Y	R	I	T	S	O	E	W	T	Q	V	Y	Q	I	C	A	T
A	A	N	H	A	G	O	C	S	A	S	E	A	U	P	A	I	S	A
H	R	A	K	E	N	E	R	R	U	A	B	M	S	E	V	I	A	F
V	E	C	Z	R	D	C	O	H	O	M	H	M	B	X	R	K	O	F
O	S	O	R	R	A	B	I	R	A	T	T	A	G	H	A	O	C	O
H	O	M	I	P	A	U	I	S	G	R	C	S	J	F	R	W	M	R
N	P	Z	B	L	Q	G	R	V	S	E	T	U	E	O	M	K	P	D
A	M	O	L	O	L	Y	M	P	I	C	S	M	D	D	G	C	H	S
L	O	O	R	U	V	B	N	W	I	N	O	B	A	N	O	R	C	M
A	C	D	A	F	G	M	V	O	E	O	J	T	I	N	O	M	F	I
B	V	Q	C	G	L	R	W	V	U	C	W	Y	T	Z	N	C	D	T
X	K	T	R	B	R	A	N	D	O	N	L	E	A	K	E	D	L	H
P	O	E	T	I	C	P	E	R	F	O	R	M	E	R	E	T	E	M
J	J	I	T	L	M	F	N	O	I	T	A	P	O	C	N	Y	S	E

French horn by Vince

Double bass by Zhuo

Timpani by Patricia

Word Bank

ARI BARROSO	ALAN HOVHANESS	MAURICE RAVEL
GEORGES BIZET	FRANCIS SCOTT KEY	SAMBA
COLLABORATE	BRANDON LEAKE	SCORING
COMPOSER	METER	JOHN STAFFORD SMITH
CONCERTMASTER	MODEST MUSORGSKY	SYNCOPATION
CONDUCTOR	OLYMPICS	JOHN WILLIAMS
VIKTOR HARTMANN	POETIC PERFORMER	JOHN WINEGLASS

We Love to Hear from You

Send us your thoughts about the concert. We'd also love to see your drawings or poems inspired by the music.

Stockton Symphony
4629 Quail Lakes Dr.
Stockton, CA 95207

Or email us at
boxoffice@stocktonsymphony.org

Excerpts we loved from some of your letters:

Thank you for a dazzling performance! The way you put your heart into conducting is so amazing to watch! –Chad

I love how you played classical music. It made me feel like I was in Disneyland. And sometimes it sounds like a lullaby or sometimes it makes me want to get up and dance. –Aliha

Maestro Jaffe answers questions from your letters:

Mathew: Maestro Jaffe, what inspired you to do conducting?

Maestro Jaffe: I played violin in many orchestras under some really inspiring conductors, such as Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, Gunther Schuller, and Denis de Coteau.

Mishel: I have a question, how long have you been a conductor? You were really funny and you inspired me.

Maestro Jaffe: More than 40 years, and I've been with the awesome Stockton Symphony for 30.