

Eckart Preu, Music Director



Irv Miller, President

Kelly Ruggirello, Executive Director

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## NEWS RELEASE

### LONG BEACH SYMPHONY SELECTS ECKART PREU AS NEXT MUSIC DIRECTOR

**EMBARGO LONG BEACH, CA, August 19, 2016** – Following a 2-year search that brought 9 guest conductors to the stage of the Long Beach Performing Arts Center, Long Beach Symphony proudly announces today that it has selected Eckart Preu (rhymes with “joy”) to take the helm under a 3-year contract beginning with its 2017-18 season.

Commenting on the decision, Symphony Board President, Irv Miller, said, “Eckart Preu’s execution of Tchaikovsky’s *Symphony #4* at our June 4 Finale not only elevated the overall concert experience for our audience that night, but also excited our orchestra players. Maestro Preu’s genuine spirit of collaboration, partnership, and adventure makes us confident that we have identified a Music Director who can take our Symphony to the next phase of its development.”

Maestro Preu says he decided to accept the position with Long Beach Symphony “because of its pure excellence – an excellence that extends not only to the amazing quality of its musicians, but also to the excellence in how its staff and volunteers run the organization. He looks forward to getting to know the wider Long Beach community, including its inspired arts leaders, musicians, and supporters and relishes the opportunities that a community as large and impressive as Long Beach can bring.

When asked for comment on the appointment, Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia expressed his approval saying, “The Symphony and the arts play a crucial role in our thriving community. The City of Long Beach wants to be among the first to welcome our talented new Maestro!

Maestro Preu will serve as Long Beach Symphony’s **Music Director Designate** during the 2016-2017 season, returning to Long Beach to conduct the *Symphony Concerts for Young People* on February 1 and 2, 2017 for over 12,000 Long Beach Unified 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Within that same week, he will conduct Berlioz’s magnificent *Symphonie fantastique* and Saint-Saens’ *Danse macabre* as well as Dukas’ classic, *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice* at the February 4, 2017 Classical concert at the Long Beach Performing Arts Center, Terrace Theater. Tickets will be released on sale on September 10, 2016. Maestro Preu will continue to serve as Music Director of the Spokane Symphony (WA), but will step down from his current position with the Stamford Symphony (CT) next year.

Commencing in the 2017-2018 season, he will take on his full time Music Director position, and will program and conduct all six Classical series concerts, all Youth Concerts and one POPS! concert annually.



Maestro Preu's philosophy on classical music compliments the demographic make-up and cultural vibrancy of the Long Beach community. Paralleling the Symphony's current efforts to reach out to diverse segments of the City with its *Sounds and Spaces* program, Maestro Preu believes that classical music can be accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Long Beach Symphony Executive Director, Kelly Ruggirello remarked that "in Eckart Preu, I have found a partner who shares a vision for a future that will deepen our programming, provide greater access to more residents, and further our artistic excellence."

When he first began his tenure as Music Director of the Spokane Symphony, Maestro Preu led a night of cultural sharing through a Spokane Symphony performance with Spokane Tribal members. More recently, in March 2016, Maestro Preu collaborated with a local Washington state hip-hop collective, electro-pop duo, and singer-songwriters to mix their own original works with the Spokane Symphony's performance of *Peter and the Wolf*.

"The idea was to do something unpredictable, and to mesh things that, at first glance, don't go together," Preu said. "It's getting down to the roots of music – we all play with the same notes, just in different ways and with different approaches. ... It's bringing all these genres together that usually don't play in the same sandbox, and we basically just provide the sandbox."

Eckart Preu was born in Erfurt, a town that was, at that time, part of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). He and his older brother grew up with a musically-inclined father who started them on music lessons early in life. At age 10, they were enrolled in the Dresdner Kreuzchor (Dresden Boys' Choir), one of the world's oldest and most famous boys' choirs and boarding schools. Preu studied there for 8 years, eventually becoming a soloist, rehearsal pianist and assistant conductor. Subsequently, he earned a master's degree in conducting from the Hochschule fuer Musik in Weimar and then went to Paris for two years to study at the Conservatoire National Superieur de Musique, where he also served as Music Director of the Orchestre International de Paris from 1993-95.



Then in 1996, Preu won the National Conducting Competition of the German Academic Exchange Service, which afforded him the opportunity to come to the United States for graduate studies at the Hartt School of Music in Connecticut. Upon completion of his studies there, Preu became Assistant Conductor for the American Symphony Orchestra, a position he held from 1997-2004. During these years, he also held posts as principal conductor of the New Amsterdam (NY) Symphony Orchestra and associate conductor of the Richmond Symphony, among others.

In 2004, Preu decided to make a fresh start by moving to the state of Washington to accept the position of music director with the Spokane Symphony Orchestra. To welcome him to the area, the Symphony put up billboards around town bearing Preu's image. As the story goes, a young woman who drove by took one look at his fetching visage and instantly decided that was the man she was going to marry. The

rest, as they say, is history. Eckart and that same woman, his wife, Neeley, currently reside in Spokane with their two daughters, ages 8 and 5.

Though his rigorous schedule, community involvement and young family do not leave much time for R&R, when he does manage to carve out some time for himself, Preu seeks quiet. “I am around music all day, so at the end of the day, I relish quiet. It is sacred to me.” It is partly for this reason that he has recently taken up golf. He enjoys the peacefulness of the golf course and the opportunity to commune with nature. And, in seemingly diametric opposition to that, Preu also loves action movies!

### **ABOUT LONG BEACH SYMPHONY**

Established in 1935, the **Long Beach Symphony** marks its 82nd season in 2016-2017. Each year the Symphony draws loyal audiences from the South Bay, Long Beach, and North Orange County area to its six Classical concerts in the Terrace Theater and five POPS! events in the Long Beach Arena, plus intimate, free music concerts at various locations. The Symphony partners with the Long Beach Unified School District to provide sequential, curriculum-based music education opportunities throughout the year. Through its comprehensive music education programs—including professional ensembles in elementary and middle schools and widely acclaimed Miller Foundation Symphony Concerts for Young People – the Symphony reaches more than 25,000 students a year. For more information, please visit [www.LongBeachSymphony.org](http://www.LongBeachSymphony.org).

### **SEASON DETAILS – 2016-17**

#### **CLASSICAL SEASON – All concerts in Terrace Theater of the Long Beach Performing Arts Center at 8 pm**

##### 10.1.16 | OPENING NIGHT

**Benjamin Rous**, conductor | **Doug Tornquist**, tuba  
**Tchaikovsky** *Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy*  
**Vaughan Williams** *Tuba Concerto*  
**Prokofiev** *Symphony No.5 in B-flat major*

##### 11.19.16 | RACHMANINOFF WITH JOYCE YANG

**Mei-Ann Chen**, conductor | **Joyce Yang**, piano  
**Glinka** *Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture*  
**Rachmaninoff** *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, op. 43*  
**Respighi** *Fountains of Rome and Pines of Rome*

##### 2.4.17 | SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

**Eckart Preu**, conductor  
**Saint-Saëns** *Danse macabre*  
**Debussy** *Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun*  
**Dukas** *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*  
**Berlioz** *Symphonie fantastique*

##### 3.4.17 | BEETHOVEN & DVOŘÁK

**Paul Polivnick**, conductor | **Rong-Huey Liu**, oboe

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**Beethoven** *Leonore Overture No. 3*  
**Lebrun** Oboe Concerto No. 2 in G minor  
**Dvořák** Symphony No. 8 in G major

4.29.17 | AN EVENING OF MOZART

**Robert Istad**, conductor | **Long Beach Camerata Singers**

**Mozart** Overture to *The Magic Flute*  
**Mozart** Symphony No. 25 in G minor  
**Mozart** *Requiem*

6.10.17 | A JOANN FALLETTA HOMECOMING

**JoAnn Falletta**, conductor | **George Li**, piano

**Shostakovich** *The Gadfly Suite* (Overture, Fair, Gallop, Romance)  
**Prokofiev** Suite from *Cinderella*  
**Tchaikovsky** Piano Concerto No.1 in B-flat minor

**POPS! SEASON – All concerts are held at Long Beach Arena, doors open at 6:30 pm for picnicking, concerts begin at 8 pm**

10.15.16 | MONSTER MASH-UP – A HALLOWEEN DANCE PARTY

**Matt Catingub**, conductor | **Steve Moretti**, drums

Enjoy comic-book themes, movie monster medleys, party anthems and other terrifying tunes. Costumes encouraged!

12.10.16 | A BROADWAY HOLIDAY WITH ANA GASTEYER

**Larry Blank**, conductor | **Ana Gasteyer**, vocals

Broadway leading lady and *Saturday Night Live* alumna, Ana Gasteyer, and conductor, Larry Blank, present spectacular Broadway songs and other holiday surprises!

2.18.17 | THE NAT KING COLE SONGBOOK

**Stuart Malina**, conductor | **Denzal Sinclair**, vocals

Canadian jazz singer Denzal Sinclair's caressing baritone voice will have you swooning to this classic songbook. A perfect concert for you and your Valentine!

3.11.17 | SYMPHONIC SPECTACULAR – SEE THE MUSIC!

**Michael Krajewski**, conductor | **Elliott Forrest**, imagery

Enjoy symphonic music enhanced with video imagery and stunning lighting effects. Known for his unique sense of humor, Michael Krajewski and visual producer, Elliott Forrest, provide fabulous music and vivid imagery of Long Beach to enhance the listening experience.

5.12.17 | UP ALL NIGHT – MUSIC OF THE '80s

**Stuart Chafetz**, conductor | **Nicole Parker & Aaron Finley**, vocals

A finale of totally awesome '80s music including hits by Lionel Richie, Sting, Michael Jackson, John Williams, Toto and more.

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## LONG BEACH SYMPHONY

Featuring some of Southern California's finest symphonic musicians, Long Beach Symphony celebrates its 82<sup>nd</sup> year in Long Beach. It welcomes its new Music Director Designate, Maestro Eckart Preu (Eck-art Proy) in this 2016-2017 season who begins his first tenure with the Symphony as Music Director in the 2017-2018 season!

The Symphony produces six full symphonic Classical concerts throughout the year at the Long Beach Performing Arts Center Terrace Theater and five POPS! concert events in the Long Beach Arena, attracting more than 32,000 residents. The Symphony also provides a sequential, comprehensive music education program serving over 24,000 local school children with access to music at their schools, local libraries, and community centers, as well as educational ensembles and concert field trips for EVERY LBUSD 2nd - 5th grader in the public school system. The Symphony also presents a series of free smaller venue concerts and fun instrument petting zoos in dozens of spaces throughout the City of Long Beach, most recently at Cesar Chavez Park, Rainbow Harbor Lagoon, City Parking Garage, and Homeland Cultural Center.

Founded in 1935 as a permanent and professional symphonic orchestra, Long Beach Symphony has enjoyed consistent, generous, and enthusiastic support from individuals and businesses throughout the community. The Symphony has served as the city's cultural institution and symbol of the growth and history of Long Beach. It has also benefited from a successful and storied past, including being the first regional orchestra to appoint a woman as its music director in 1989-JoAnn Falletta, who will be leading the orchestra as guest conductor on June 10, 2017.

The Symphony grew in international stature and influence under the direction of its 7<sup>th</sup> Music Director, Maestro Enrique Diemecke, who brought original compositions, world-premieres, and celebrated soloists to the Symphony's repertoire. Under his tenure, Maestro Diemecke conducted the world premiere of his own work, *Concierto a Celedonio*, composed at the request of the celebrated guitarist Pepe Romero to standing ovation. He also conducted the U.S. premiere of a multimedia composition *Dos Visiones*, a unique collaboration between the Long Beach Symphony, the Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA) with Gregory Luke, and the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional de Mexico. In the 2006-2007 season, the Symphony commissioned David Newman to compose Concerto for Winds, uniquely featuring principal woodwinds as soloists. In 2012-2013, the Symphony performed the World Premiere of composer Steven Mackey's *Urban Ocean*.

Long Beach Symphony's award-winning education and community engagement programs benefit from a dedicated staff and volunteer society. From instrument petting zoos at local libraries, festivals, and elementary school programs for 2nd-5th graders to our middle, high school and university master classes, the Symphony continues in its mission to enrich our community.

Eckart Preu, Music Director

# LONG BEACH SYMPHONY

ECKART PREU, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Irv Miller, President

Kelly Ruggirello, Executive Director



**MAESTRO ECKART PREU** (Eck-art Proy) Long Beach Symphony welcomes Maestro Eckart Preu as its new Music Director Designate for the 2016-2017 season. Maestro Preu will begin his tenure with the Long Beach Symphony as its 8th Music Director in the 2017-2018 season. He currently serves as Music Director of the Spokane Symphony (WA) and Stamford Symphony (CT) and previously held the positions of Associate Conductor of the Richmond Symphony (2001–2004), Resident Conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra (1997–2004) and of the American Russian Young Artists Orchestra (1999–2004). Other former posts include Music Director of the Norwalk (CT) Youth Symphony and Principal Conductor of the New Amsterdam Symphony (NY). He was associated with the Bard Music Festival from 1997 to 2004 as both Assistant and Guest Conductor. In Europe, Mr. Preu served as Music Director of the Orchestre International de Paris (1993–1995).

As a guest conductor, he has appeared with the Jerusalem Symphony (Israel), Symphony Orchestra of Chile, Auckland Philharmonia (New Zealand), Radio Philharmonic of Slovenia, Pecs Philharmonic (Hungary), Varna Philharmonic (Bulgaria), and in Germany with the Jenaer Philharmoniker. Recent and upcoming guest conducting engagements include concerts with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, the Delaware Symphony, the Duluth Superior Symphony, the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, the Wichita Symphony, and the Portland Symphony (Maine). Recent international appearances include performances with the Orquesta Sinfonica de Chile, the Auckland Philharmonia in New Zealand, and the Philharmonie Baden-Baden in Germany.

Career highlights include performances at Carnegie Hall, the Sorbonne in Paris, a live broadcast with the Jerusalem Symphony, and his first commercial recording of the world premiere of Letters from Lincoln - a work commissioned by the Spokane Symphony from Michael Daugherty featuring baritone soloist Thomas Hampson. 2012 also saw a live CD recording featuring Paganini's Violin concerto No. 2 with Sergey Malov and the New Zealand Philharmonia. His concerts have been aired from coast to coast and on Jerusalem Radio. He currently resides in Spokane with his wife Neeley and two daughters.

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**KELLY RUGGIRELLO** was appointed Executive Director of the Long Beach Symphony Association in March 2013 and during her 3-year tenure Ms. Ruggirello's successes include ending each year with a surplus; adding eighteen new members to the Board of Directors; increasing the donor base by over one-hundred new Symphony supporters; negotiating two collective bargaining agreements with the local musicians union providing modest increases to musicians' salaries; managing a music director search process; formalizing a planned giving program; increasing education and community engagement programs; and assembling a new, strong administrative team.

Ms. Ruggirello comes from Pacific Chorale in Orange County, where she served as President & CEO for the past nine years and achieved an 86% increase in contributed revenue and a 50% increase in ticket revenue.

Under her leadership, the Chorale relocated to the world-class Renée & Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, produced 7 recordings and commissioned 9 world premieres, received an ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, and operated with a balanced budget for seven consecutive years.

Previously serving as Vice President of Development, Public Relations and Marketing for the Orange County School of the Arts, Ms. Ruggirello raised over \$39 million, including \$25 million for a capital campaign. A former teacher and arts mentor for the Downey Unified School District, she has held positions with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Pacific Symphony.

An advocate for giving back to her community and to supporting the arts, Ms. Ruggirello won a prestigious and highly coveted President Emeritus position with the Association of California Symphony Orchestras. As well, she was named in 2015 as a City Commissioner by Mayor Garcia to the Queen Mary Land Development Task Force, and has been elected a 2016–2017 Vice President of the Long Beach Rotary – one of the largest clubs in the world. Additionally, she actively consults with local, regional and national orchestras and choruses and serves as a presenter at state and national conferences.