

LONG BEACH  
SYMPHONY  
ECKART PREU, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2025-26 SEASON

9/27/25

# PASSION & TRAGEDY

Eckart Preu, conductor

Fei-Fei, piano

Concert generously sponsored by  
Gordon and Ruth Dougherty Foundation

Terrace Theater

Classical series



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## Music Director Eckart Preu

Eckart Preu (Eck-art Proy) began his tenure as Music Director of Long Beach Symphony in 2017. Critics, the orchestra, and audiences alike have celebrated his ability to combine well-loved masterworks with rare or newer works in programs offering dimension, sophistication, and spirit.

Preu also currently serves as Music Director of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra (OH) and Portland Symphony Orchestra (ME). Previously, he held the positions of Music Director of the Spokane Symphony (2004-2019) and Stamford Symphony (2005-2017), 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, Maestro 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), Philharmonic Orchestra in Jalisco (Mexico), and in Germany with the Jena Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philharmonic Orchestra in Baden-Baden. Guest conducting engagements include the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, the Delaware Symphony, the Duluth Superior Symphony, the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, and the Wichita Symphony. Recent international appearances include the National Symphony Orchestra of Columbia, National Philharmonic of Armenia, and Orquesta Sinfónica Sinaloa de las Artes in Mexico.

Career highlights include performances at Carnegie Hall, the Sorbonne in Paris, a live broadcast with the Jerusalem Symphony, commercial recordings with the Portland Symphony, Spokane Symphony, and New Zealand Philharmonia. His concerts have been aired from coast to coast and on Jerusalem Radio.



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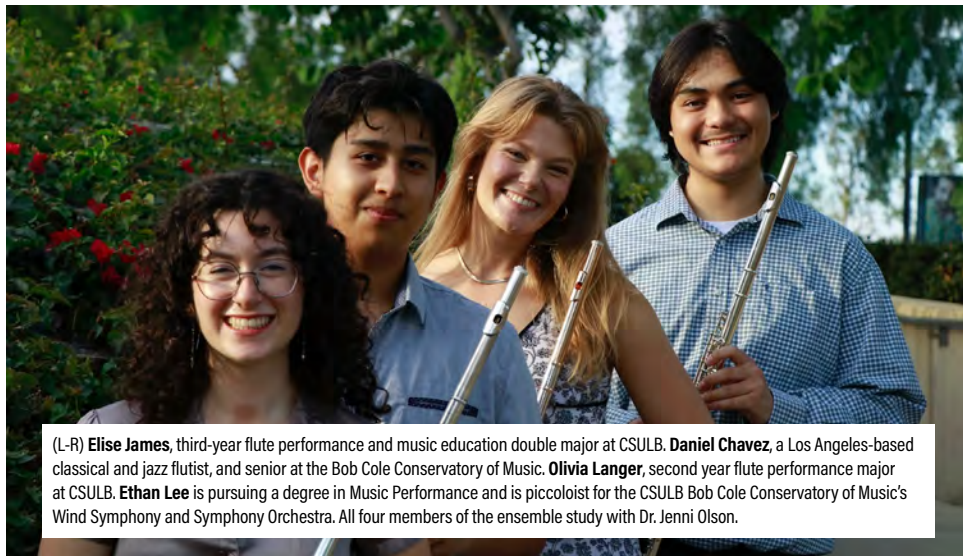


# Tonight's Prelude Ensemble

The **CSULB University Flute Quartet** is a distinguished chamber ensemble comprised of leading members of the CSULB Flute Studio. Under the guidance of Professor Darrin Thaves, the quartet performs regularly in a variety of concert settings throughout the year.

This evening's program features *Harmony in Blue and Gold* by Eric Ewazen, Walckiers' *Grand Quartett*, Op. 70, *Fioritura* by Satoshi Yagisawa, among other works.

The members of the Flute Quartet extend their sincere gratitude to the Long Beach Symphony and its community for their support.



(L-R) **Elise James**, third-year flute performance and music education double major at CSULB. **Daniel Chavez**, a Los Angeles-based classical and jazz flutist, and senior at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music. **Olivia Langer**, second year flute performance major at CSULB. **Ethan Lee** is pursuing a degree in Music Performance and is piccoloist for the CSULB Bob Cole Conservatory of Music's Wind Symphony and Symphony Orchestra. All four members of the ensemble study with Dr. Jenni Olson.



Saturday, September 27, 2025 | 7:30PM

Terrace Theater

Fei-Fei, piano

# PASSION & TRAGEDY

Eckart Preu, conductor

**S. Guillaume** *Lavil Okap* (Approximately 13 minutes)

**Chopin** Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21  
(1810-1849) **Fei-Fei, piano**  
(Approximately 32 minutes)

\*\*\*\*\* 20 min. Intermission \*\*\*\*\*

**Tchaikovsky** *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*  
(1840-1893) (Approximately 19 minutes)

**Bernstein** *West Side Story Symphonic Dances*  
(1918-1990) (Approximately 24 minutes)

Tonight's Concert is generously sponsored by  
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Please refrain from  
photography while musicians  
are performing. Recordings  
are not allowed.

By attending this concert,  
you may be included in  
event photography.

Program and artists are  
subject to change.





**Fei-Fei**  
piano

Infusing “intoxicating grace” with “exceptional musicality” and “inconceivable virtuosity,” pianist Fei-Fei conjures a special and undeniable connectivity with her audiences that brings joy, passion, and deep musical understanding (Badische Neueste Nachrichten). Her engaging and endearing personality shines through in every note, word, and expression—whether performing as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician on world stages or as an advocate for community engagement.

“Sporting a naturally gracious charm and stage presence,” Fei-Fei has “shared her musical passions unstintingly” around the globe (Peninsula Review). Recent projects include her role as artist-in-residence with the Baden-Baden Philharmonic touring in Germany, a Carnegie Hall performance and tour of Spain with the New York Youth Symphony, a cross-disciplinary collaboration with Ballet Arkansas, a performance of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 3 at Lincoln Center with the Pegasus Symphony, a 19-city tour

of China with the Aletheia Piano Trio (of which she is a founding member), and performances of lesser-represented repertoire, including concertos by Leroy Anderson, Florence Price, Clara Schumann, and Xiaogang Ye.

Additional concerto highlights include performances with the Fort Worth Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Aspen Music Festival Orchestra, Illinois Philharmonic, Spokane Symphony, Corpus Christi Symphony, Austin Symphony, Denver Philharmonic, Anchorage Symphony, and the Juilliard Orchestra. Internationally, she has performed with Canada’s Calgary Philharmonic, Germany’s Rostock and Baden-Baden Philharmonic Orchestras, and in China with the Shenzhen Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and China National Symphony Orchestras.

Fei-Fei was featured prominently as a Cliburn finalist in the documentary film, *Virtuosity*, about the 2013 Cliburn Competition, which premiered on PBS in August 2015. Deeply committed to sharing her joy for music and connecting with communities, Fei-Fei frequently engages students and community audiences through school and outreach concerts and masterclasses.

Born in Shenzhen, Fei-Fei began piano lessons at the age of 5. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School where she studied with Dr. Yoheved Kaplinsky, and is currently pursuing Doctoral of Musical Arts degree with pianist Yefim Bronfman at Manhattan School of Music. Fei-Fei is also a member of the piano faculty at John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University and teaching associate to Yefim Bronfman at Manhattan School of Music beginning in Fall 2023.

For more information, please visit  
[www.cliburnagency.com/fei-fei](http://www.cliburnagency.com/fei-fei)





## Sydney Guillaume – *Lavil Okap*

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The title “Lavil Okap” is the Haitian Creole name for the City of [Cap-Haïtien](#), which served as the capital of the French colony of Saint-Domingue (also known as Saint Domingue) from its formal capital establishment in 1711 until 1770 when the capital was moved to Port-au-Prince; but Lavil Okap has remained a significant cultural center for the nation. Haitian-born [Sydney Guillaume](#) was commissioned to compose this orchestral celebration of the historic community in honor of its [350th anniversary](#) in the year 2020.

As a child, Guillaume spent family time in Cap-Haitien, where his mother spent much of her youth. His three-movement composition recognizes multiple elements of great importance in the timeline of the city's history. “The first movement of *Lavil Okap* was inspired by the journey of [King Henri Christophe](#) and the Haitian Revolution.” The second movement begins with “a jubilant atmosphere – what Cap-Haitien must have been like in its heyday [sic] after gaining independence,” but transitions to a more somber tone that acknowledges “the struggles Haiti has faced since becoming the world's first free black republic.” The third movement, he says, was inspired by the Haitian people's resilience, “symbolizing hope and optimism for a brighter future in Haiti.”

Things to listen for: The first movement incorporates rhythmic patterns from [Yanvalou](#), which dates back to the African slaves' homeland heritage in Benin. In the third movement, the trombones mimic Haitian bamboo instruments playing [Rara music](#), another local form of expression with roots in Africa.

**Fun fact:** King Henri Christophe is remembered as the one and only king – ever – of the Kingdom of Haiti's. His self-proclaimed rule from 1811 to his death in 1820 marked one of many turbulent eras in the nation, as power shifted among warring forces and factions that fractured the country. After Henri's death, the governance reunited to become what we today know as the Haitian nation. This piece was composed by Guillaume also to mark 200 years since Henri Christophe's death. First performance (world premiere) took place on April 1, 2023 in Cap-Haïtien, in front of the historic cathedral, with the Haitian Orchestra Institute under Guillaume's direction.

## Frederic Chopin – Piano Concerto No.2 in F minor, Op.21

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Frédéric Chopin, although he died at the young age of 39 in 1849, is arguably Poland's most renowned native composer. Born in 1810 near Warsaw, he showed extraordinary musical talent from early childhood: by 1817, at about age 7, he had composed his first polonaise (in G minor), and a B-flat major and other early polonaise also dates from that period (some early polonaises are lost). His earliest surviving manuscript among those juvenile works is a Polonaise in A-flat major composed around 1821, when he was 11.

Chopin was a prolific composer and performer, despite persistent illness that plagued him from early childhood and continued throughout his life. He composed an astonishing number of masterful, inspired, and often [devilishly difficult works](#). Among a total opus of more than 230 compositions, nearly all featuring the piano—solo pieces, two piano concertos, chamber works, and songs with piano.

Chopin moved to Paris in his early 20s and became a popular member of the artistic salon milieu alongside a host of other musicians, artists, and writers including Franz Liszt and, memorably, the scandalous early



feminist writer [George Sand](#) (pseudonym for Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin), with whom he maintained a stormy 10-year affair. He died of tuberculosis, though some call it a [somewhat mysterious death](#), only two years after the affair ended in 1849.

The Piano Concerto No.2 in F minor, Op. 21, was in fact the first written of Chopin's two concerti for piano. Composed in the fall of 1829, it premiered in Warsaw in March 1830 with the composer at the piano. Later the same year in October, he premiered his next piano concerto in E minor Op. 11, officially "No. 1." Are those numbers confusing? Yes, they are. It is because the E minor work was published first that the F minor composition received its "No. 2" designation. In between, indefatigable, Chopin composed nine other piano works ([Op. 12-20](#)).

For a cinematic look at the Parisian life of Chopin, his friendship with Franz Liszt, and his highly-charged romantic liaison with George Sand, view the 1991 film "[Impromptu](#)" starring a young Hugh Grant.

## Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky – *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*

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Some stories claim that Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky had never read Shakespeare's tragic masterpiece when he composed his *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture*. He was 29, working (unhappily) as an instructor at the Moscow Conservatory to pay the bills and contributing to his limited time was for composing. How, then, did it come to pass that he wrote this gorgeous, emotional, tragic work?

The suggestion to compose a musical fantasy based on the fated star-crossed lovers' story came from Tchaikovsky's friend and mentor [Mily Balakirev](#). Balakirev, together with Aleksandr Borodin, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, and Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, were well-known in Moscow for their efforts to promote "Russian" music, advocating for diminished dependence on Italian, German, and other European traditions. Known as "[The Five](#)," they were a prominent and patriotic voice in musical circles. Tchaikovsky, being conservatory-trained, was not a member of their group, but Balakirev greatly respected his talent. He took seriously his role as Tchaikovsky's musical advisor, sharing very specific ideas for the Romeo and Juliet piece he envisioned. He not only explained the main characters, themes, and elements of the story, but also offered his opinions as to what key to compose in, where certain harmonies and other musical structures would best suit the mood, and which instruments would be most representative of the action.

Tchaikovsky willingly took on the project, using some but not all of Balakirev's recommendations. The work premiered in 1870 but received only a lukewarm reception. Over the course of the next ten years Tchaikovsky made significant revisions. The finished piece that is so well-known today was finally completed in 1880, but that version was first performed in 1886. However, audiences clearly agree that it was worth the wait!

The iconic love theme from the *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* has found its way into innumerable films, TV shows, and other performances, including *Wayne's World*, *Columbo*, *South Park*, *The Simpsons*, *Sesame Street*, and *SpongeBob SquarePants*, just to name a few.

## Upcoming Concert, 11/1/25



**Beethoven & Beyond**  
November 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Silver-Garburg** piano duo  
**Roger Wilkie**, violin  
**Houtaf Khoury** *The Journey*  
**Martinu** Concerto for Two Pianos  
**Beethoven**  
Symphony No. 6, in F major, "Pastoral"

Reserve your tickets at:  
**LongBeachSymphony.org/Calendar**

### Leonard Bernstein - *West Side Story Symphonic Dances*

Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, now almost 70 years old, was both an unprecedented popular phenomenon and a **turning point** in the evolution of the American stage musical when it premiered in 1957. For anyone who might not know, the production retells *Romeo and Juliet*, setting the story amid rival immigrant gangs in mid-20th century New York City. It was such an instantaneous popular juggernaut that Hollywood became immediately interested and the creative team set to work on creating a movie version. The film, released in 1961, took the movie-going public by storm, winning 10 of the 11 Oscars for which it was nominated, including best picture, best sound and best score.

The *West Side Story Symphonic Dances* was created for the concert stage for a special 1961 named "A Valentine for Leonard Bernstein" benefiting the pension fund of the New York Philharmonic. Bernstein and his trusted collaborators, orchestrators Irwin Kostal and Sid Ramin, reworked the themes from the musical, creating a soaring and passionate piece that revisits all the important moments and scenes.

The *Symphonic Dances* weave together many distinct themes and motifs from the musical's story and score - *Somewhere*, *Mambo*, *Cha-Cha*, *Cool*, *Rumble*, and more - to create an emotionally charged concert piece that runs the gamut from young love and joyous celebration, to confrontation and combat, resolution, tragedy, and poignant closure.

Susan Swinburne has been a lover and student of music since demanding piano lessons at age six. Her work in orchestra management has enriched her life personally and professionally for the past three decades. A habitué of concert halls throughout southern California, she lives, listens, writes, and researches in the South Bay.



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Lelie Resnick

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The Mission of Long Beach Symphony is to engage audiences of all ages and cultures through exceptional orchestral performances, community partnerships, and meaningful educational experiences.

## Our Vision

Our Vision is to inspire and unite ALL people through the transformative power of music.

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The Foundation for the Long Beach Symphony is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization which oversees the management of the Long Beach Symphony Endowment Fund. Gifts to the Endowment Fund remain invested in perpetuity, and the income provides crucial annual support to the Symphony. For more information, please call **John Cross at (562) 436-3203, ext. 222.**

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