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CALIFORNIA POPS ORCHESTRA'S "Holiday with the Pops FAMILY CHRISTMAS" San Mateo Performing Art Center

(PALO ALTO Nov. 28) **California Pops Orchestra** returns with its beloved "Holiday with the Pops Family Christmas Show" chock full of chuckles & holiday favorites. The Holiday show is performed one time only on **Sunday Dec 17, 2023 at 3pm** joined by singers Peter Vilkin & Dana Bauer. Holiday hits include "How the Grinch Stole Christmas", "I'll Be Home for Christmas", "Frosty", "Rudolph", a carol sing-along and much more. San Mateo Performing Arts Center, 600 N. Delaware St. San Mateo. FREE Parking. **Tickets:** Reserved regular & premium seats: \$20-\$55 + small service fee (Youth-Senior-Adult). Online www.calpops.org or Tix.com Call Center 1(800) 595-4849

"Holiday with the Pops" is musical fun for kids from 1 to 92: sleigh bells, musical memories, toy trumpets, and good cheer; holiday hits from Broadway, TV, Big Band, and Hollywood, as well as traditional Christmas favorites and a carol-sing-along. Children are delighted to be included in the Pops fun, especially during the holidays. Audiences can get into a warm and toasty holiday mood with plenty of time left over for the holidays themselves! (Audience members are, as always, invited to wear holiday dress.) Vocalists Dana Bauer and Peter Vilkin add their lyrical magic to the holiday mix.

Conductor Kim Venaas describes the preparations of the annual holiday show this way, “We actually started putting together the 2023 Christmas Show the day after the 2019 show (pre-pandemic!) when folks call, email or write in what they liked best, what their kids sang along to the loudest! And they always request songs because, well, that’s what we do. We’re an all-request symphony orchestra!” The biggest challenge isn’t coming up with music. It’s deciding what to leave out. Maestro Venaas says, “There is SO much great Christmas music from both the traditional and the pops side of the street that planning usually starts with a list of over 500 songs and medleys, maybe 35 hours of great music we have to winnow it down to just two delightful hours.”

Venaas also is not stingy with his praise for his players and vocalists. “This orchestra is the most fun-loving orchestra I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with. And a big part of that attitude is the music we perform, year-after-year. It’s the happiest, most romantic, wackiest, swingiest (is that a word?!) ever written so at the very core of our mission is bringing that joy to every audience member, every time. It’s so fulfilling as an artist.”

This show will include singer/narrator Dana Bauer in a kids’ favorite - “Twas the Night Before Christmas” in a sparkling musical setting with the orchestra sounding out all the reindeer hooves, chimney-descending, pipe-smoke-curling action of this heartwarming tale. The kids join Dana on stage as she paints the scene in her trademark vocal style.

Cellist, Alicia Wilmunder says, “before each Christmas show I think, ‘this is my favorite show’. But then I wind up thinking that about each show because they’re so different and so much fun.” This is a common feeling among the 65 orchestra players and the audience loves that.

Musical Highlights - Although many favorite holiday songs and traditional carols originated in Europe in the 1700s and 1800s, American composers came into their own during the time period between the Great Depression through the post-war 1950s and with these new pieces introduced to audiences through movies, radio, and television.

Featured will be dazzling arrangements by America's best composers including big symphony medleys as well as special, authentic radio arrangements of holiday songs as originally broadcast to the troops in WWII including -

- Irving Berlin's "White Christmas" made its debut in the 1942 movie "Holiday Inn," and was most famously sung by Bing Crosby. Its initial rendition took only 18 minutes to record — since then, there are reportedly over 500 recorded versions of this song in more than 12 different languages. "White Christmas" remains the biggest-selling Christmas song of all time.

- Another Bing Crosby favorite, "I'll Be Home for Christmas" (1943), was composed during the height of WWII, reflecting the longing of soldiers wanting to return home to be with their loved ones.

- "Winter Wonderland" was first recorded by Guy Lombardo in 1934, and became a big hit again in 1950 when it was recorded by the Andrews Sisters.

- "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town" was one of the first 'kiddie' songs introduced through the radio, circa 1933 and was more recently performed & recorded by Michael Buble.

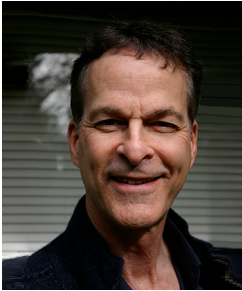
All these, plus blockbuster hits "How the Grinch Stole Christmas", "Charlie Brown's Christmas", "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer" and many other popular carols and songs sure to fill the audience with the holiday spirit.

Pops emcee and conductor Kim Venaas says, "This is the show which, better than all others, celebrates the Pops' style and relationship with its audience. From all the wonderful players and tireless volunteers to everyone in our audience, we're all friends and family and it really shows."

The big entertainment orchestra is conducted by Kim Venaas who is also the show's M.C., resident stand-up comedian and champion of America's Popular Music heritage. The orchestra has played its family-friendly, interactive shows in Los Gatos, Flint Center in Cupertino, Palo Alto and San Mateo for the past 31 years. However, this special holiday extravaganza will be presented only in San Mateo this season according to Alicia

Wilmunder, Executive Director. Wilmunder explains, “We had moved to San Mateo in 2019 and then the pandemic hit in the middle of our 31st season, closing all the theaters. It’s wonderful to be able to continue that 31st season presenting our shows here in the geographic heart of our audience.”

About our Guest Singers



Peter Vilkin is one of the Bay Area’s brightest singers and has toured nationally in Broadway roles. “Peter has that warm, rich voice and a personality to match. He has an amazing vocal and stylistic range that makes him the perfect Pops guest singer”, says Venaas. “The audience just loves him!”

Peter has sung with the Black Tie Jazz Orchestra at Davies Symphony Hall and every big hotel ballroom in San Francisco. He has played Curley in Oklahoma!, Sky Masterson in Guys and Dolls and Emile De Becque in South Pacific (Theatre Critic's Circle Award). He appeared in An Immaculate Misconception, Scotland Road, Dancing at Lughnasa, Beau Jest, Terra Nova, Three Sisters, Give 'Em Hell Harry!, A Little Night Music, Taming of the Shrew and as Javert in the National Tour of Les Miserables. He also played David Duchovny's pal in the television movie "Babysnatcher".

His hobbies are real estate development and flying airplanes.



Dana Bauer returns to The California Pops to everyone's delight! Dana grew up as part of a musical family in Vallejo, California. Already a professional vocalist by the time she went to college, she majored in oboe performance at San Francisco State University. From there, Dana toured America and the world with the orchestras of "A Chorus Line" and "Les Miserables". Locally, in between stints in the orchestras of shows like

"Legally Blonde", "Wicked" and "Frozen", you can find Dana singing at various Bay Area jazz clubs and, if you're lucky, hear her narrating any number of commercials and industrial projects. Her album of jazz standards, "Dana Bauer: In My Own Voice" can be purchased or downloaded on CDBaby.com, Amazon.com, iTunes and wherever fine music is sold. Dana

lives in the San Francisco area with two cats, a poodle and a drummer.

About the Pops

Debonair conductor and MC Kim Venaas has crafted the California Pops as "your kind of music, your kind of orchestra", the country's only all-request symphony orchestra.

Composed of musicians from throughout Silicon Valley and the Bay Area, the California Pops has been described as "the Boston Pops meets Prairie Home Companion" for its relaxed and informal format. Audience-friendly features are hearty sing-alongs, jokes submitted by the audience plus musical requests from the audience. Says Venaas, "I get such a kick out of hearing an audience member's astonishment that the piece she requested in February is on the show in April. No other orchestra does this. We do "shows" not "concerts".

California Pops' play-lists are from movies old and new, Broadway shows, jazz, Big Band hits of the 1930s and 1940s and the greatest music of what is called The American Songbook. The orchestra is also building a musical library that includes light classics, jazz, latin, movie, Broadway, TV, cartoon, circus, vaudeville and Big Band music. They have rescued many orchestrations long out-of-print and represent a uniquely American musical heritage that is quickly slipping away.



Reviews say –

"The California Pops Orchestra treats the Great American Songbook as it should be treated - with excellent musicianship, clear affection, and the respect these pop music classics deserve."
Leigh Weimers, KLIV/Gentry Magazine

"The California Pops gives new meaning and vitality to the popular music of 20th Century America. The ensemble magically restores life to a bygone age."
John Stanley former host of KTVU (Creature Features)

"The California Pops - Spectacular music!" *John Orr, Palo Alto Daily*

"Fun for the musicians as well as the audience" *Marge Speidel, Palo Alto Weekly*

"Who knew, besides musicians, that music could be so fun?" *A. Guerra*

"Expect the unexpected! Surprises from Big Band and Broadway Musicals to Jazz and movie hits plus fun and laughs. A hoot!" *Vic Befera*

Next Shows

"Pops Family Christmas" – December 17th, 2023 – Sunday, 3pm

"Tribute to the Big Bands" April 26th 2024 – Friday, 8pm

Location

All shows are at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center at 600 N. Delaware St. San Mateo. Easy free parking

Reserved Ticket prices

\$20-\$55 Youth (18 & younger)-Senior-Adult reserved regular and premium seats.

Purchase online at www.calpops.org or by phone at (650) 856-8432.

Website: www.calpops.org

Media Online Press Room with Download Link: <http://www.calpops.org/pressroom>

Downloads of Hi-Res photos, press release, details on our guest artists, calendar listings and more.

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