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CALIFORNIA POPS ORCHESTRA CELEBRATES THE SEASON WITH “POPS’ FAMILY CHRISTMAS” DECEMBER 3, 2017

Matthew Hall, Carly Honfi Join the Pops for Holiday Fun

(OCTOBER 28, 2017, Palo Alto, CA) – California Pops Orchestra, the country’s only all-request pops orchestra, returns with its beloved “Pops’ Family Christmas” at Cupertino’s Flint Center. Chock full of Yule logs and eggnogs, “Pops’ Family Christmas” performs one time only on Sunday, December 3, 2017, at 3 p.m. For tickets (\$20-\$55, standard ticket service fees apply), the public can visit www.ticketmaster.com or call (650) 856-8432.

“We started putting together the 2017 Christmas show the day after the 2016 show – that’s when folks call, email, and write in what they liked best, what their kids sang along to the loudest,” says conductor Kim Venaas. “We get plenty of requests because that’s what we do – we’re an all-request symphony orchestra! The biggest challenge isn’t deciding what to put

in, it's deciding what to leave out. There is so much great Christmas music from both the traditional and the pops sides of the street, that planning usually starts with a list of over 500 pieces, maybe 35 hours of great music that I need to winnow down to just two delightful hours.”

Pops' Family Christmas has 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 often 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! Vocalists **Matthew Hall** and **Carly Honfi** add their lyrical singing to the holiday mix.

Honfi will especially shine in a kids' favorite, “’Twas the Night Before Christmas” – done in a sparkling musical setting with the orchestra sounding out the reindeer hoof-stamping, chimney-descending, pipe smoke-curling action of the heartwarming tale. Children will be welcome to join Honfi on stage as the veteran actress paints the scene in her trademark vocal style.

The well-known holiday song “Sleigh Ride” was composed by Leroy Anderson, who had the original idea for the piece during a heat wave in July 1946 and finished the work in February 1948. It was originally an instrumental piece; the lyrics, about someone asking another to join them for a ride in a sleigh, were written by Mitchell Parish in 1950. The orchestral version was first recorded in 1949 by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra. The song is noted for the sound of the horses' clip-clopping, as well as the sound of the whips used to get the horses moving. Toward the end of the piece, the sound of a horse whinnying is usually represented by a trumpet.

“Little Drummer Boy” (originally known as “Carol of the Drum”) written by an American classical music composer and teacher, Katherine Kennicott Davis, in 1941. Davis asserted she based the song upon a traditional Czech carol, but which carol has never been

identified. Davis's interest was in producing material for amateur and girls' choirs: her manuscript is set as a chorale, in which the tune is in the soprano melody with alto harmony, tenor and bass parts producing the "drum rhythm" and a keyboard accompaniment "for rehearsal only." It was first recorded in 1951 by the Trapp Family Singers, one of the last songs the family ever recorded. In 1958 the song was re-released in a very popular recording by the Harry Simeone Chorale, and this version tends to be the one most often heard today. Little Drummer Boy has, however, been recorded dozens of times: by everyone from Marlene Dietrich to Josh Groban to the Brady Bunch to Johnny Cash to Justin Bieber.

A lesser known, but nonetheless stunning piece, is "Merry Christmas Darling." The lyrics were written in 1946 by Frank Pooler, but it wasn't until twenty years later that Pooler asked two of his California State University Long Beach choir members – Karen and Richard Carpenter – to compose music for it. The song, released in 1970, was number one on Billboard's Christmas singles chart that year, as well as the following year and 1973. This was the Carpenters' first attempt at Christmas music and eventually inspired their 1978 album, Christmas Portrait, which contained a remix of the original song with newly recorded vocals by Karen Carpenter.

These songs, plus many other holiday favorites, will delight audience members of all ages.

California Pops Orchestra has spent nearly three decades proving that orchestral performances by highly trained and talented musicians do not have to be stuffy affairs! The Pops includes many of the Bay Area's leading musicians with training from very distinguished conservatories including Oberlin, Julliard, and the Eastman School of Music. The Pops also draws from talented musicians who also happen to be scientists, educators, engineers, marketers, technology leaders, and other highly creative individuals. This diversity in background plus a single-minded purpose makes the Pops a delight to play with and a never-ending source of ideas, inspiration, and humor. California Pops Orchestra's musicians and featured guests bring fun, family-friendly shows to the live stage with selections from the full range of the popular music repertoire. Every one of the Pops

performers loves the music of Broadway musicals, television, Hollywood movies, jazz, pop, comic novelties, and big band. This popular music is often scored for a unique set of instruments found in movie and recording studios but not in classical symphony orchestras: so concerts often include flugelhorns, a saxophone section, harmonicas, congas, whips, theramins, accordions, and other colorful instruments. For more information, visit www.calpops.org.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: It's Yule logs and eggnogs with **Pops' Family Christmas** – get into a warm and toasty holiday mood with the annual Christmas show full of sleigh bells, musical memories, toy trumpets, and good cheer, featuring holiday hits from Broadway, TV, Big Band, and Hollywood, as well as traditional Christmas favorites and a carol-sing-along. Children are often delighted to be included in the Pops fun, especially during the holidays. The warm and friendly feeling that's present in every Pops concert makes the holiday show feel like spending time with the great big extended Pops family. Matthew Hall and Carly Honfi add their lyrical singing to the holiday mix.

WHEN: Sunday, **December 3, 2017** at 3:00pm

WHERE: Flint Center at De Anza College, 21250 Stevens Creek Blvd in Cupertino

TICKETS: Season subscriptions currently available; individual tickets on sale starting August 14.
To purchase subscriptions and tickets the public can visit <http://www.ticketmaster.com> or call (650) 856-8432.

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