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CALIFORNIA POPS ORCHESTRA PRESENTS “POPS’ RADIO MUSIC HALL” MARCH 25, 2018

Guest Performers Include Pianist Frederick Hodges,
Vocalists Carly Honfi and Matthew Hall, Jazz Harmonicist Tom Stryker

(FEBRUARY 24, 2018, Palo Alto, CA) – California Pops Orchestra, the country’s only all-request pops orchestra, performs favorite song and dance numbers, radio adventure and drama, presented in live radio show format! “Pops’ Radio Music Hall” performs one time only on Sunday, **March 25, 2018, at 3 p.m.** at the Flint Center in Cupertino. For tickets (\$20-\$55, standard ticket service fees apply), the public can visit www.ticketmaster.com or call **(650) 856-8432**.

The California Pops brings back the thrill of being in the studio audience of a 1930’s-40’s live radio show like the Kraft Music Hall. With singers **Carly Honfi** and **Matthew Hall**, Jazz

Harmonica artist **Tom Stryker**, radio actors, sound effects, vintage commercials and a big 65-piece orchestra, Flint Center for the Performing Arts is transformed into that staple of coast-to-coast network radio, the live musical variety show.

Maestro Venaas has been producing and presenting Radio format shows both with the Pops and with his Big Band for 35 years and has a deep love for the genre. He explains, “These radio shows were fast paced, scripted (or not!) at the last minute because you had to deliver great material on a blistering broadcast schedule. So it was often flying a bit by the seat of your pants! Great fun!” In addition to great music by Gershwin, Porter, Berlin and more, “**Pops' Radio Music Hall**” will include a segment of “Jack Hammer: Private Eye,” comedy news breaks and helpful household hints all sponsored by Pops’ perennial favorite ‘company’ Whizzo.

This concert also features audience favorite and piano phenomenon, **Frederick Hodges**, called “a gifted pianist in the Gershwinian mold, and also one of the great ragtime players of our time,” by Counter-Punch's David Yearsley. A native of California who earned a doctorate in history from Oxford in 2001, Hodges has had a steady career playing solo piano for society parties and holding regular engagements at San Francisco establishments such as L'Etoile in the Huntington Hotel, Masons in the Fairmont Hotel, and the Ritz Carlton Hotel. In addition to regular appearances with the California Pops, Hodges is a member of Maestro Venaas’ 19-piece big band, the Black Tie Jazz Orchestra.

Venaas describes a typical engagement with Hodges as “an opportunity to experience musical perfection – from impeccable authenticity in Frederick’s arrangements to stunning technical mastery, all aimed at delighting his audience.” Venaas says he reserves time in each show for Hodges to do anything he wants. “And it’s always amazing and surprising. So I can’t tell you what exactly Frederick will play during those solo spots. I’ll find out when you find out. During these times I just go sit with the audience and enjoy!”

Guest singer **Carly Honfi**, a Pops audience favorite since 2013, will also lend her talents to the performance. She's been seen locally with South Bay Musical Theatre in “Jerry's Girls”

and as the lead character of Fanny Brice in “Funny Girl,” as well as singing in their annual musical showcase, Broadway by the Decade, for the past several years. Honfi’s on-stage wit and warmth enhance each song and are part of the reason she is the biggest audience request the Pops receives. Maestro Venaas says, “Carly is multi-faceted: rich and gorgeous vocals, stagecraft honed from years of performing in theater, and a completely honest and guileless presence that immediately captures your heart.”

Joining Carly Honfi and the Pops will be tenor **Matthew Hall** who enchanted Pops’ audiences at both this season’s Christmas and Broadway shows. Hall was seen as Jinx in “Forever Plaid” with South Bay Musical Theatre as well as in “The Drowsy Chaperone” with Sunnyvale Community Players. He will also be seen in February at this year’s Broadway by the Decade (1920’s). Venaas describes Hall as “very, very talented and fearless, up for any idea I throw at him.” This will be evident in this Radio Show as Hall sings, does comedy, drama, heroic adventure, and wacky commercials.

Also on the bill is returning favorite, jazz harmonicist **Tom Stryker**. Venaas says, “Each time we have Tom on the show the audience is transported to that time when harmonica was king. Everybody had one in their pocket. Everyone played them. Every movie featured them. And Tom is the best.” Venaas and Stryker go back 35 years as musical colleagues. Stryker has been a world touring performer from throughout Asia to performances all over Europe. But his dedication to the “mouth organ” doesn’t stop there. He has been a sponsored artist for harmonica manufacturers and for many years Stryker was the President of SPAH, the Society for the Preservation and Advancement of the Harmonica, a international organization of all things harmonica.

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:** **California Pops Orchestra**, the country's only all-request pops orchestra, performs your favorite, requested song and dance numbers, radio adventure and drama, presented in live radio show format! This concert features perennial audience favorite and piano phenomenon, Frederick Hodges, as well as guest singers Carly Honfi and Matthew Hall, and jazz harmonicist Tom Stryker.
- WHEN:** Sunday, **March 25, 2018** at 3:00pm
- WHERE:** Flint Center at De Anza College, 21250 Stevens Creek Blvd in Cupertino
- TICKETS:** To purchase tickets the public can visit <http://www.ticketmaster.com> or call (650) 856-8432.

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