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Audio sample (Trio fanfare and Audience Mail): <http://goo.gl/SFuh9F>

# CALIFORNIA POPS ORCHESTRA PRESENTS “TRIBUTE TO THE BIG BANDS” September 17, 2017 at 3pm

(4 AUGUST 2017, Palo Alto, CA) - California Pops Orchestra, the country's only all-request pops orchestra, joins forces with the Black Tie Jazz Band for its blockbuster season opener, “Tribute to the Big Bands.” A perennial audience favorite, this concert includes masters of yesteryear such as Louis Prima and Duke Ellington, as well as pieces from newer composers and musicians in the Big Band sound. “Tribute to the Big Bands” performs on Sunday, **September 17, 2017 at 3pm**. For subscriptions (\$111-312) and individual tickets (on sale mid-August, \$20-55, standard ticket service fees apply), the public can visit <http://www.ticketmaster.com> or call (650) 856-8432.

Musical theatre and cabaret songstress **Carly Honfi** joins the Pops and the Black Tie Jazz Band to bring to life toe-tapping tunes from famous Big Band composers and band leaders such as Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Harry James and Louis Prima; then adding hits from more recent bands such

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as Doc Severinsen's Tonight Show Band. **Honfi** first performed with California Pops Orchestra in 2013, and has been a favorite of Pops audiences since then. She's also 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. She was also seen in "Snoopy, the Musical" at Sunnyside Theatre and in "Three Little Words" at San Pedro Square.

The 65-piece California Pops Orchestra will be joined for this two-hour show by the **Black Tie Jazz Band**, which has delighted big band audiences throughout the Bay Area. From the grand hotel ballrooms of San Francisco to the stage at Davies Symphony Hall, the Black Tie Jazz Band has brought the Big Band Era to life with sparkling arrangements of the American music that kept a nation energized in the 30's, 40's, and beyond. This is the band San Francisco icon Herb Caen called "that great swingin' band."

Seen on the big screen in the movie "Swing," the Black Tie Jazz Band includes violins and cello in its usual ranks, just like the Glenn Miller Army Air Corps band when they recorded the morale-boosting V-disks for our fighting forces. This band makeup allows them to perform not only the original big band charts but also the vast number of Broadway, Hollywood, and vocal arrangements that sound best with a lush compliment of strings. Conductor and emcee Kim Venaas leads both Black Tie and the California Pops in their separate endeavors but revels in the opportunity to bring them together, just once each year, in a show of special arrangements that Venaas calls "the biggest big band in the country."

And capitalizing on the unique configuration of symphony orchestra plus big band gives the California Pops the enviable opportunity to bring special arrangements, originally created for live radio broadcast, to be heard and enjoyed for the first time in 70-80 years. These arrangements are a key part of the Pops' ability to delight their audiences and bring those heady, swinging years to life.

Like so many other forms of American music, big band was born out of jazz - organized

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around rhythms and accents which could change within a single musical piece, shifting in relation to one another, open to improvisation, influenced by the musicians and even the audience themselves. As the popularity of jazz grew, many bands began expanding their size, adding more and more musicians until they were considered orchestras. New and different instruments were added - trumpets, trombones, saxophones, drums (according to at least one historian, a result of military bands at the end of the Spanish-American war having many instruments to sell), guitars, pianos, and more. These “big” bands began creating a sound which was a combination of jazz, blues, ragtime, black spirituals, European music, and the very popular hotel dance bands of the day. Unlike jazz, which was often small groups of musicians playing 'off the cuff,' these larger groups required more structure. The arrangers became key partners in creating music where each section had its place, but still left ample room for individual improvised solos.

As the country entered the Depression, bands toured less and less, and turned more and more to the relatively new and very affordable phenomenon of radio, which allowed large bands to play and be heard coast to coast; and when bands did play live, fans who had enjoyed their music by radio were more likely to spend their limited cash to attend. Big band, although existing as a sound as early as the 1920s, really took off in the United States in 1935 with Benny Goodman, who became known as the “King of Swing,” who began playing arrangements by Fletcher Henderson and other talented artists with his new band on the radio. He was soon followed by Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Duke Ellington and others; and a new style of dancing - swing dance - followed fast on their heels.

To this day, Big Band has remained a popular sound with American audiences, and a modern resurgence with Michael Buble, Harry Connick, Jr and Gordon Goodwin is gaining a following among younger audiences, performing new compositions as well as big band arrangements of popular music by Beyonce and others.

**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

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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 love 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.californiapops.org](http://www.californiapops.org).

#### FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

- WHAT:** California Pops Orchestra, the country's only all-request pops orchestra, joins forces with the Black Tie Jazz Band for its blockbuster season opener, "Tribute to the Big Bands." A perennial audience favorite, this concert includes masters of yesteryear such as Louis Prima and Duke Ellington, as well as pieces from newer composers and musicians in the Big Band sound. Musical theatre and cabaret songstress **Carly Honfi** adds her vocals to the mix.
- WHEN:** Sunday, September 17, 2017 at 3:00pm
- WHERE:** Flint Center at De Anza College, 21250 Stevens Creek Blvd in Cupertino, 95014
- TICKETS:** For subscriptions (\$111-312) or individual tickets (on sale mid-August, \$20-55, standard ticket service fees apply) the public can visit <http://www.ticketmaster.com> or call (650) 856-8432.

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