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(Continued on page 24)

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Guest Artist

Anne Akiko Meyers

Anne Akiko Meyers is a GRAMMY® Award winning violinist and one of the world’s most esteemed and celebrated musicians. With nearly four decades of performing experience, she has become a powerful force in contemporary music, serving as both a muse and a passionate advocate for today’s leading composers. Throughout her career, she has commissioned, premiered, and recorded a remarkable array of groundbreaking violin works. *The Strad* hails her as “the Wonder Woman of commissioning,” a title earned through her close collaborations with visionary composers such as Arvo Pärt, Einojuhani Rautavaara, John Corigliano, Arturo Márquez, Philip Glass, Michael Daugherty, Mason Bates, Adam Schoenberg, Billy Childs, Jakub Ciupinski, Ola Gjeilo, Morten Lauridsen, Wynton Marsalis, Somei Satoh, and Eric Whitacre.

In 2025-2026 season Meyers premieres Eric Whitacre’s *The Pacific Has No Memory* with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Colorado Music Festival, and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, releases four new world premiere recordings, and performs in recitals and with leading orchestras around the world. The new releases include *Blue Electra*, a violin concerto by Michael Daugherty with David Alan Miller and the Albany Symphony; *Beloved*, including Billy Childs’s requiem *In The Arms of the Beloved*, and selections by Ola Gjeilo and Eric Whitacre, with Grant Gershon and the Los Angeles Master Chorale; Philip Glass’s *New Chaconne* and Violin Concerto No. 1, with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and Adam Schoenberg’s *Orchard in Fog*, with Gemma New and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Meyers has appeared on *The Tonight Show*, *Tiny Desk*, *Evening at Pops*, and *Great Performances*, and has made more than 40 critically acclaimed recordings. She has appeared multiple times on the cover of leading industry magazines, including *Gramophone*, *Strings* and *The Strad*.

In 2024, her recording of Arturo Márquez’s *Fandango*, with Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Philharmonic, received two Latin GRAMMY® Awards: Best Classical Album and Best Contemporary Composition. *Fandango* was



premiered in 2021 at The Hollywood Bowl, and has been performed more than 40 times with 16 different orchestras around the world, including the LA Phil’s triumphant first Carnegie Hall after 32 years. Meyers will return to the Hollywood Bowl this September to reprise *Fandango* with the LA Philharmonic under Giancarlo Guerrero.

Anne has been selected to perform at numerous distinguished events, including the Bicentennial Celebration of Australia, the opening of the Arvo Pärt Centre in Estonia, the Grammy Salute to Music Legends celebrating John Williams and the Museumplein Concerts with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, honoring Queen Máxima of the Netherlands. Her recording of Somei Satoh’s *Birds in Warped Time II* was part of the winning presentation for the architectural design of the World Trade Center Memorial in New York.

Meyers is the recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Distinguished Alumna Award and an Honorary Doctorate from The Colburn School, and is a member of the Asian Hall of Fame. She serves on the Board of Trustees of The Juilliard School and The Dudamel Foundation. She performs on Larsen Strings with the legendary *Ex-Vieuxtemps* Guarneri del Gesù violin, dated 1741—considered one of the finest-sounding violins in existence. anneakikomeyers.com

Anne Akiko Meyers is represented by Colbert Artists Management, Inc., 212-757-0782, www.colbertartists.com

FROM THE

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TO THE HEART OF

BOURBON COUNTRY

Saturday, February 7, 2026

The Palladium | Waco, Texas

Tickets: \$250 per person

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Join us for a new fundrasier organized by the Waco Symphony Council.

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More information coming soon.

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Opening Notes Pre-Concert Talks

6:40 p.m.-7:10 p.m.

Before each Season Concert

Learn intersting insights about the music you'll hear at Opening Notes, a **free pre-concert talk led by Maestro Lawrence Loh**. Featured soloists and special guests often make an appearance. Location is in Recital Hall II within Waco Hall, except November 6 at Armstrong Browning Library's Treasure Room.

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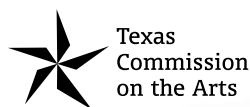
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Program

Sixty-Third Season
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Made in America

Thursday, October 2, 2025
Waco Hall, 7:30 p.m.

LAWRENCE LOH, MUSIC DIRECTOR

The Star-Spangled Banner John Stafford Smith, composer
(1750-1836)
Francis Scott Key, lyrics
(1779-1843)

Glenn Beals, vocals

Carnival Overture, Op. 92 Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

Violin Concerto, Op. 14 Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

I. Allegro
II. Andante

III. Presto in moto perpetuo

Anne Akiko Meyers, violin

INTERMISSION

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45 Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

I. Non allegro - Lento [original title “Noon”]
II. Andante con moto [original title “Twilight”]
III. Lento assai - Allegro vivace [original title “Midnight”]

Special thanks to the staff of Waco Hall for their help and to Seventh & James Baptist Church for the use of their parking lots during Waco Symphony concerts.

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The Waco Symphony is a member of the League of American Orchestras.

Program Notes By Peter J. Rabinowitz

“Made in America”: On the surface, the title of tonight’s concert is a bit misleading. Only one of the composers was an American at the time he wrote the piece being performed, and half of the music on the program was composed in Europe. Yet, on reflection, that incongruity turns out to be illuminating, since it points to the international nature of “American music.” The term, after all, encompasses music not only by United States composers, but also by composers from across two continents (Argentinian Alberto Ginastera will be featured on the Waco Symphony’s next concert, November 6) and by immigrants to the Americas who have enriched our musical life immeasurably. At the same time, many American composers traveled abroad to refine their craft.

Samuel Barber (1910–1981) was one of those peripatetic composers, and he wrote most of his *Violin Concerto* in 1939 while in Switzerland. Before finishing it, though, he was forced by the outbreak of the war to move back to the United States. Things soon began to go awry. The work had been commissioned for violinist Iso Briselli, who initially admired the first two movements. Unfortunately, Briselli’s violin coach Albert Meiff intervened, grouching that they were not sufficiently “gratifying for a violinist to perform” and arrogantly insisting that he be allowed to perform a “surgical operation” to cure the music of its supposed faults (presumably to add some showy virtuosity).

Barber, not surprisingly, took Meiff’s suggestions badly and refused to revise. However, he wrote the third, a perpetual-motion finale, in a radically different style. Was this meant to appease Briselli’s camp with extra fireworks? Was it Barber’s response to the changing international political environment? It’s hard to say—but Meiff dismissed the finale as “tiresome,” and Briselli abandoned the piece. The Concerto was premiered, as Barber conceived it, by Albert Spalding in 1941. An unfortunate turn for Briselli: he was, by all

accounts, a fine violinist. But to the extent that he is remembered today, it’s as a musician who missed out on the chance to premiere what has become for tonight’s soloist, Anne Akiko Meyers, “the core of American violin repertoire.” She’s hardly alone in that view—it is, in fact, arguably the Great American Violin Concerto.

Part of its stature comes from the individuality of its voice. While it’s generally considered “conservative” (especially when compared to contemporary violin concertos like Schoenberg’s), it is actually strikingly original. It avoids the standard Romantic concerto model of the nineteenth century; and it also marks a departure from Barber’s earlier music, especially the tough and concentrated First Essay promoted by Toscanini.

The Concerto begins, distinctively, with two movements that are surprisingly reflective, justifying Anne’s claim that it’s “a beacon of sonority” marked by “poetic beauty.” That introspective mood is captured from the very beginning—unusually, violin and orchestra start together—which must be one of the most exquisite openings in the instrument’s repertoire. “When I start,” says Anne, “I feel like an ice skater.” As for the radically different finale that so baffled Meiff and Briselli: “It’s a marathon to the end,” says Anne. “It’s rhythmically and technically challenging for everyone involved, especially the soloist. Suddenly, you are praying that you’re going to end up together.” Is she nervous when she plays it? “Every time I perform it, I’m just like, ‘Holy cow, this is scary.’ You’re running as fast as you can to the edge of a cliff. And then holding yourself back. It takes a lot of power.”

It’s impossible to overstate Anne’s love for this piece. She has performed this work over a thousand times (!); but whenever she plays it, she feels as if she’s coming home.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943) was one of America’s many immigrant composers, leaving Russia after the start of the Revolution and eventually settling in the United States, where

Program Notes

he became a citizen in 1943. His *Symphonic Dances*—composed in 1940—is his last major work, and the only one to have been composed entirely in the United States. It took a while for this piece to catch on—but it’s conductor Larry Loh’s favorite orchestral work by Rachmaninoff, and it’s increasingly admired by audiences. If you don’t know the work already, you’ll come to understand its popularity in the course of the concert.

In terms of its technique, the *Symphonic Dances* stands out in Rachmaninoff’s catalog. It’s his most concentrated major work—and despite some disorienting metrical shifts, especially in the finale, it’s his most rhythmically driving. It’s his most brilliantly colored as well, calling for a rich orchestra (including alto saxophone, harp, piano, and a huge battery of percussion) that he uses both subtly and spectacularly.

But the work’s emotional content is even more arresting. Igor Stravinsky famously described Rachmaninoff as a “six-and-a-half-foot scowl”—and although Rachmaninoff was not uniformly gloomy, his music does generally have a melancholy cast. One characteristic tendency adds to the sense of doom: his nearly obsessive use, throughout his career, of the Dies Irae, the plain-chant setting of the “day of wrath” from the Latin Requiem Mass. There was good reason for his unhappiness. The premiere of his First Symphony in 1897 had been a disaster (largely the fault of

the conductor, Glazunov). Crushed by the experience, Rachmaninoff stopped writing music; and even after therapy allowed him to compose again, he lacked self-confidence. Then, too, he never really recovered from his emigration and considered himself a displaced Russian to the end.

The *Symphonic Dances*, however, can be heard as a victory over despair. It includes references to the First Symphony (private allusions at the time, since the work had only been performed once and was presumed lost until after the composer’s death) and multiple appearances of the Dies Irae theme. But in the last movement here, the Dies Irae takes on an upbeat demeanor (there’s even a touch of jazziness)—and it runs up against recollections of Rachmaninoff’s setting of the Russian Orthodox chant *Blagosloven yesi, Gospodi* (Blessed be the Lord) from his *All-Night Vigil*. Whatever the darkness earlier in the piece (and what would Rachmaninoff sound like without the shadows?), the work ends in dazzling optimism.

It’s no wonder, then, that this is Larry’s “dream piece” to play with the Waco Symphony. This “exciting group of musicians loves to dig in,” he says, and this is the “perfect piece to showcase their finesse and fire.”

As the concert opener, we have the 1891 *Carnival Overture* by Czech composer **Antonín Dvořák** (1841–1904). Dvořák was not an American composer, nor was he an immigrant,



Concerto Circle for Young Professionals

Concerto Circle (age 20-40) gather for special social events prior to the Waco Symphony Season Concerts, enjoy cocktails and hors d’oeuvres at **DiamondBack’s**.

Membership includes pre-event socials, performance ticket, and a parking pass. Individual performance add-on tickets are available for \$25 per person or two for \$45.

For more information about joining Concerto Circle, call **254.754.0851**.

Program Notes

nor in fact was this piece written in America. But he did have a profound impact on American music. Toward the end of the 19th century, American classical composers were increasingly relying on European models. Dismayed by this tendency, the president of the National Conservatory of Music in New York, Jeannette Thurber, chose Dvořák as the school's artistic director.

Why choose a European to help Americanize local music? Dvořák was a nationalist famous for writing classical music inspired by the vernacular music of his own country. Thurber hoped that he would encourage US composers to follow suit—and in the wake of his American works, in particular his Ninth Symphony (the “New World” Symphony),

many did so. This Overture is the centerpiece of a trilogy originally titled *Nature, Life, and Love*, which featured on the last concert he conducted before coming to the States. It describes, according to the composer, a “lonely, contemplative wanderer” who “reaches the city at nightfall, where a carnival is in full swing.” The wanderer is caught up in the festivities—just as Dvořák joined in (and ultimately influenced) the musical life of America. The Overture thus serves as another reminder of just how cosmopolitan American music is.

Peter J. Rabinowitz

Have any comments or questions? Please write to me at notes@wacosymphony.com

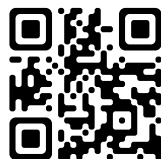
Seeking Support for WSO Fellows

You can join forces with us to keep the WSO strong by sponsoring a student in the WSO Fellows program who is paid to play in the orchestra. Sponsorship opportunities start at \$300.

WSO Fellows are college or graduate students in music who audition for this performance opportunity with the Waco Symphony, where they are mentored by Waco Symphony musicians and Music Director Lawrence Loh. This program provides experiential learning and prepares students for professional music careers; it is unique in the orchestra world.

“The opportunity to play in the Waco Symphony, learn musicality and proper playing techniques under the tutelage of professional musicians, and to perform amazing orchestral pieces under both Maestro Larry Loh and former Maestro Stephen Heyde has been absolutely vital to my growth as an orchestral player. One of my favorite memories was when Time for Three performed Contact by Kevin Puts with us. It was such a treat to both interact and play with them as an ensemble!”
—Katie Cox, violin fellow (2023-2026)

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, scan the QR code or contact WSA Executive Director Carolyn Bess at 254-754-1035.



See page 27 for a list of WSO Musicians and Fellows.

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These generous patrons have made donations and purchased season tickets; this list includes commitments made through September 5, 2025. Purchases made after that date will be noted in future concert programs. If you prefer your name to be listed differently, please email info@wacosymphony.com by Tuesday, October 7, 2025.

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(Continued on page 34)

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Amanda and Jason Milam
Grayson Palmer
Ryan and Andy Pattillo

Ashleigh and John Prothro
Andrea Racoti