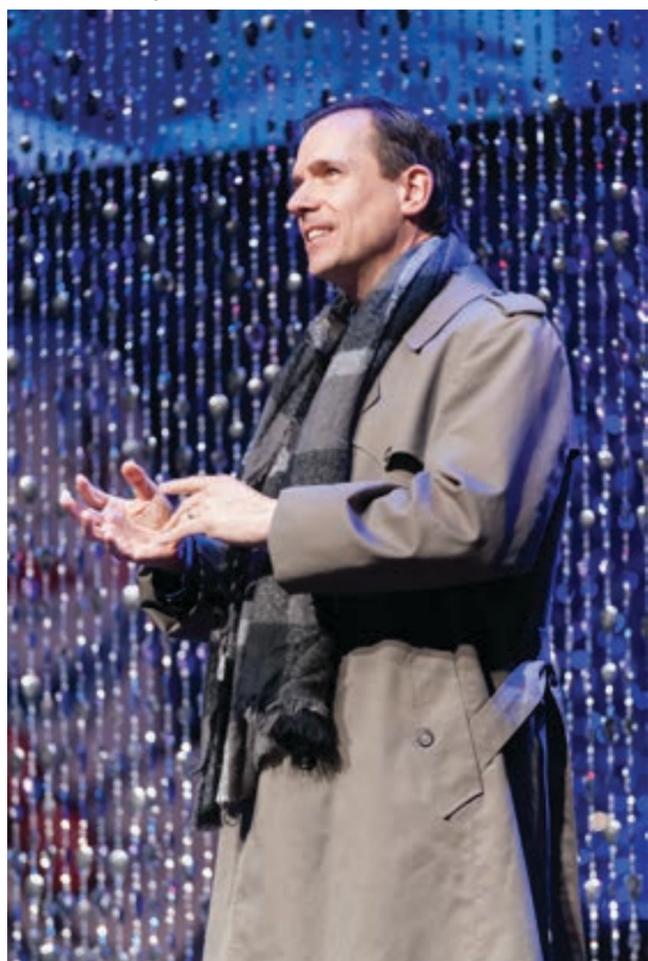


# Town Hall's 'Angels in America' wins Best Director, Best Actor awards

Submitted by Linda Drucker



Jeff Draper performs a monologue from Angels at the Shellies award ceremony. Photo provided

Town Hall Theatre of Lafayette was honored with two Shellie Awards for its 2016 production of Tony Kushner's cutting-edge drama "Angels in America: Perestroika." Town Hall's former artistic director Joel Roster received the Best Director award for his role in directing the Angels in America production and Jeffrey Draper received the Best Actor award for his role as the leading actor in the epic drama.

"Perestroika" is the second part of Tony Kushner's epic Pulitzer-winning masterpiece about the unfolding of the AIDS epidemic in America. In 2016, Town Hall previously won four Shellie awards for its production of the first part of the Angels series: "Angels in America: Millennium Approaches."

In accepting his award, Roster noted the unusual nature of the "Angels in America" production, which required a large ensemble cast of actors to commit to remain together for two separate productions over the course of two seasons. "I want to thank everyone associated with Town Hall Theatre, which was my artistic home for 14 years, for making this possible," he said.

In accepting his award, Draper commended Town Hall's achievement of producing such an ambi-

tious work in a community theater. "It takes a lot of guts to put on an epic production in a tiny theater with a tiny budget," said Draper. He added that the "Angels" series was proof of the fact that "you can challenge your audience" and still create successful local theater.

"I'm thrilled that Town Hall was recognized with two such important awards — Best Director and Best Actor," said the President of Town Hall's Board Lauren Rosi. "I'm excited about the next two shows in our 2016-2017 season which continue with Town Hall's tradition of excellence."

The awards were bestowed at a lavish black-tie ceremony at the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek on the evening of Saturday, Jan. 14. The ceremony was attended by numerous local government dignitaries including Lafayette Mayor Mike Anderson, along with the mayors of Walnut Creek, Concord, Brentwood, and the vice mayor of Clayton. The awards ceremony was a glitzy affair with men in tuxedos and women in full-length gowns and was followed by a sumptuous wine and dessert reception for the honorees.

One of the highlights of the evening occurred when the various theater companies performed scenes from their nominated productions.

In addition to Draper's reprise of a monologue from his role in Angels, a company of 10 Town Hall actors and singers, led by Managing Director Dennis Markham, performed the song "There You Are," from Town Hall's production of the musical "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" in September 2015.

In addition to the two awards won by Town Hall, Walnut Creek actress Lynda Divito — who just joined the Town Hall Board of Directors — was honored as Best Actress in a Musical award for her role as Rose in Contra Costa Musical Theatre's production of "Gypsy."

Patterned after the Tony awards, the Shellies have honored outstanding achievement in the performing arts for the last 38 years in Contra Costa County. Town Hall, which has continuously operated as a theater for 73 years, proudly displays many of the Shellies it has won over the years in a showcase in the theater's lobby at 3535 School Street in Lafayette.

Town Hall's next production "Smokey Joe's Café," a musical revue featuring the songs of Jerry Stoller and Mike Lieber, begins previews March 2 and opens March 4. Tickets, which cost \$25 to \$32, can be purchased online at [www.townhalltheatre.com](http://www.townhalltheatre.com) or by calling the box office at (925) 283-1557.

## Pacific Chamber Orchestra presents its latest concert, Winter Gems

By Sophie Braccini



Maestro Lawrence Kohl with L.A. Composer Christopher Caliendo. Photo Provided

The Pacific Chamber Orchestra is inviting all true fans of musical discovery to a voyage through space, time and form for its winter concert.

As Maestro Lawrence Kohl explains it, Global Gem is a chance at traveling to different countries — Russia, Austria, Italy, Latin America and United States — and at different times from the 18th century to very contemporary music. The program has also been composed as a way to experience very different approaches to musical composition: music creation through form, or through personal expression of feelings and reflections.

"The term 'global' refers to two perspectives presented side by side in this concert," says Kohl, "music by form — where music is built on a formal structure, and Mozart's beloved Eine Kleine Nachtmusik in that category. The other perspective is music looked through a personal lens, and Shostakovich's String Quartet #8 where the form evolves out of the composer's personal reflection provides that second angle."

When the personal inspiration is leading the composition, Kohl says that the listener is going on a journey and entering in the musician's universe, as opposed to looking from the outside to a beautiful work of art, what classical music exemplifies. He adds that for the Shostakovich's mid-20th century piece, people are looking at a psychological piece and the listener is actually entering the musician's psyche. When it was created that quartet was dedicated "to the victims of fascism and the war," and it is believed to be one of the composer's most personal statement at a time that was very difficult for him. Kohl calls the Quartet #8 a fascinating piece.

The quartet will be followed by a Tango suite with works by Argentinian Astor Piazzolla and Jeremy Cohen, a Bay Area violinist and composer. Kohl says that the tango is marked by its rhythm, not by form, and that it is also an expression of the composer's psyche. Cohen wrote Tango Toscana during a trip to the Tuscany region of Italy. He said that the beauty and seren-

ity of the Italian countryside surely inspired this Tango, and that he also wanted to incorporate tango techniques he had acquired during his nearly two years playing with an all Argentine Tango band in "Forever Tango" in the mid-1990s.

The concert will conclude with the Movement Symphony for Strings (a world premiere) by Los Angeles composer Christopher Caliendo. Kohl says that Caliendo's music is very expressive like a tango, and uses a classical structure, fusing both perspectives.

The southern California composer met with Kohl when he was doing his doctoral work there. Kohl's orchestra has premiered half a dozen of his pieces. Caliendo is also a film and prime time TV composer and he will be present at the Lafayette's concert. "We will have a reception after the concert where people can meet the composer and the musicians," said Kohl.

Global Gems will be presented at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center on Saturday, Feb. 25 at 7:30 p.m. More information and tickets at [www.pacificchamberorchestra.org](http://www.pacificchamberorchestra.org).

### Lynn's Top Five

## After the November election, filling time while waiting for Godot

By Lynn Ballou

Many of us are joined together holding our collective breath, waiting to see what exactly comes out of Washington over the next months, how those actions will frame our own planning, and what we'll do next. It's tempting to just sit by and wait --- you know, fritter the time away while waiting for Godot. That would be a shame though because there is so much we can each do that's meaningful and local and doesn't depend on Washington. Let's explore a few ideas as they pertain to your long term financial planning needs and goals.

**1) Support the charitable organizations that matter most to you:** No matter your political affiliation, I think all sides of the aisle can agree that now more than ever it's time to roll up our sleeves and support the causes we treasure. Whether you have time or money, even pennies or half hours can be profound. If we learned nothing else this past November, it's the importance of even just one person doing just one thing.

**2) Financial literacy for families:** When they run out of money in Washington because of overspending, do they just print more? Well we can't. We need to teach our children that money doesn't just come out of an ATM for no reason. Set aside even a few hours weekly to teach our children some basic financial skills such as: budgeting, how to open a bank account and save money, how to balance a check book, how to plan for future and larger expenses, how to read bank and even investment statements. It's not possible to start too young. A 2-year-old can buy an apple, hand a dollar or two to a vendor, receive change and put that in a piggy bank. Teach your older children about career choices and earning power. These future adults need our time now to become fiscally savvy future citizens and leaders, maybe even in Sacramento and Washington.

**3) Understand your tax return:** Whether or not you prepare your own tax returns and complete

the forms, you should understand what's on them. Work with your advisor or research and read on your own. Either way, that knowledge can help you craft a more intelligent and well managed fiscal life and guide you toward making better financial decisions. As new tax laws are created, you'll be ahead of the curve and have the ability to plan appropriate tax moves.

**4) Is it time for a career change?** An uncertain political and fiscal environment can be a nerve wracking time to decide to toss it all to the wind and change course. However, it's a great time to start looking into other opportunities and what you might find more rewarding. Set up informational interviews with those in careers you feel you might prefer. Look into the education and experience you'll need to have in place. Think about the financial reserves needed to make change financially viable. Discuss the possible risks and rewards with your family and listen to their input. Work with your

team of advisors for objective clarity before you make final decisions.

**5) Read your property and casualty insurance policies and schedule a phone or in-house check up with your agent(s):** It's tempting to toss the annual paperwork that our property and casualty insurance companies send us in a drawer with barely a glance. We're busy and the pages upon pages are overwhelming. So, call your agent! Or send an email and ask them for a review. My favorite questions to ask are: What's changed since last year that I should know about; what would you do differently than I am if our situations were the same; and what have other clients with situations similar to mine experienced in the event of a claim? While building financial security, take time to check out these key components of your fiscal foundation.

Best motto for today's world? Be a curious, proactive citizen and don't become paralyzed by the current uncertainty in the air. Even if big ideas in your life (such as

whether or not to sell a large property) might be on hold awaiting possible tax law changes, there is still so much you can tend to. Time may be our most precious commodity and you don't want to waste a single drop of yours.



Lynn Ballou is a Certified Financial Planner. The review, assessment, and/or opinions expressed in this column are limited to and in association with general financial planning subjects. They are intended to introduce the reader to a general financial planning topics. This column should serve as a tool that should assist readers in the development of subsequent discussions with a financial planning professional. Always consult an accountant and/or attorney to assess your individual situation prior to implementing any financial planning strategy, including any strategy directly or indirectly referenced in this column.

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