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Pacific Chamber Symphony Plays in Lafayette

By Andrea A. Firth



Lawrence Kohl, Music Director and Conductor of the Pacific Chamber Symphony. Photo provided

Over the past year, the Pacific Chamber Symphony (PCS) has added the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church to the list of Bay Area venues where the symphony regularly performs. "We are very pleased to play in Lafayette. It's wonderful space," says Lawrence Kohl, PCS' Music Director and Conductor.

Kohl, a clarinetist, founded the Pacific Chamber Symphony 22 years ago. "PCS is made up of the finest musicians in the Bay Area," says Kohl, who speaks proudly of the group, referring to their style as 'intimate grandeur.' "You get that personal, intimate experience when you go to a chamber concert," says Kohl. PCS has 12 to 30 musicians playing in a concert depending on the music to be performed, as compared to a symphony orchestra that will use from 60 to 100 musicians, explains Kohl. "With a chamber symphony, you feel like you are part of the music which makes the experience meaningful and moving," says the conductor.

With PCS' structure, the organization also has the flexibility to perform in a variety of venues in more than one community explains Kohl. PCS was launched in Livermore, where it continues to play at the city's performing arts center, and over the years has branched out to perform regularly in Napa and occasionally in San Francisco and Antioch. Adding Lamorinda to the orchestra's circuit made perfect sense for Kohl, who now resides in Moraga and previously

lived in Orinda.

"We really encourage students to come to our concerts too," adds Kohl noting that he and his colleagues conduct school assemblies to teach students about various music elements, give music clinics for middle and high school students, and have formed a youth orchestra in the Livermore area. Much of PCS' youth outreach has been done in Livermore where the organization has a strong infrastructure with a board of community members and many volunteers. Kohl would like to bring these educational opportunities to Lamorinda and set up a similar support system.

The Pacific Chamber Symphony's next Lamorinda concert will be held on Sunday, May 22nd at 2 p.m. at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Avenue in Lafayette. For more information about PCS or the upcoming concert go to www.pacificchambersymphony.org or email info@pacificchambersymphony.org.

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