

Enrique Arturo Diemecke Music Director  
Michael Krajewski Principal Pops Conductor



Randy Mizer President  
Jack A. Fishman Executive Director

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LONG BEACH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Long Beach Symphony Orchestra today is viewed as an American arts success story and draws loyal audiences from the greater Long Beach region to its six Classics, four Symphony POPS! (known as Southern California's greatest musical indoor picnics) and two Holiday Celebration concerts each season. The professional 83-member orchestra is far different from the recreational orchestra of volunteer musicians that organized and first performed in 1935.

In 1966 the Symphony's season expanded from four to 23 concerts with the addition of pops and children's programs and opera performances. Seven years later the popular summer Starlight Serenades were introduced and instantly drew crowds of up to 5,000 people.

Under the leadership of Maestro Alberto Bolet from 1968 to 1978, the LBSO matured from community to professional orchestra status. Season subscriptions grew, and youth concerts and out-of-town appearances were added. The major highlight of this period was the opening of the city's new concert hall, the Terrace Theater, which gave the Orchestra a world-class venue in which to perform. In 1978 legendary concert pianist Van Cliburn christened the merger of the Symphony and its new home.

An exciting era for the Symphony began in 1980 with the arrival of Music Director Murry Sidlin. Maestro Sidlin completely restructured the orchestra, auditioning the entire ensemble and recruiting talented, professional musicians from Los Angeles's rich reservoir of talent. The artistic successes that followed unfortunately were not matched by growth in financial support.

In November 1984, following the opening concert of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra was silenced by mounting debts. A task force appointed by the mayor of Long Beach called for reorganization through new leadership, restructuring, repayment of the debt, and strict financial controls. Within two years the debt was eliminated.

JoAnn Falletta became music director in 1989, and the Symphony immediately experienced the first of three consecutive sold-out Classics seasons. The Long Beach Symphony Orchestra received its first American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music in 1996. In October 1998 Music Director JoAnn Falletta and the Orchestra released the Symphony's inaugural compact disc, *Impressions of the Sea*. The repertoire for this CD was chosen to celebrate the June 1998 opening of the Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific. In June 2000 Maestro Falletta and the Orchestra released a second compact disc, *Pictures*. This CD was done through the Music and Art for the Millennium project, which was a collaboration between the Symphony, the Long Beach Museum of Art and the Long Beach Unified School District.

-more-

## *Long Beach Symphony Orchestra history/page 2 of 2*

The Long Beach Symphony Orchestra's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary season (1994-95) marked another exciting chapter in the history of the orchestra with the appointment of the Symphony's first principal pops conductor, Michael Krajewski. Upon his arrival the audience voted on a theme song for Maestro Krajewski—the theme from *Rocky*. For 11 seasons, thousands cheered at the start of every Symphony POPS! concert when they heard the opening chords to his theme—they knew they were in for a great musical party—led by their witty and engaging Maestro Krajewski. With the departure of Michael Krajewski as principal pops conductor at the end of the 2004–2005 season, it was decided to invite five nationally-acclaimed conductors: Randall Craig Fleischer, Mark Mandarano, Richard Kaufman, Timothy Muffitt, and Michael Krajewski (returning as guest conductor) to take the podium for the 2005–2006 Symphony POPS! season.

In 2001, the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra named Enrique Arturo Diemecke to be its new music director. Since then Maestro Diemecke has won the hearts of the audience, musicians, press and the community. As an example, last June the *Press-Telegram* stated: "When Enrique Arturo Diemecke chose Mahler's ninth to conclude the 2003-04 Long Beach Symphony season (his second as the orchestra's music director), it offered a chance to see just how far the ensemble has come under its young, charismatic Mexican-born leader. The bottom line is very far indeed."

The 2003-04 season signaled another landmark for the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra with the inauguration of the Holiday Celebration concert. This two-performance concert, in the Terrace Theater, expanded the Symphony POPS! series from four to five concerts. After the successful launch, the *Press-Telegram* remarked: "This is a concert that deserves to become a tradition."

The 2004–2005 season saw Maestro Diemecke conduct the world premiere of his composition *Concierto a Celedonia*, composed at the request of the legendary Pepe Romero, who performed the work at its premiere. The season closed with the U.S. premiere of a multi-media composition, *Das Visiones*, a unique collaboration between the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, the Museum of Latin American Art, the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, and the American Composers Forum.

In the 2005–06 season Maestro Diemecke will conduct all six Classics concerts and the six Boeing Concerts for Young People. With the departure of Michael Krajewski as principal pops conductor at the end of the 2004–2005 season, it was decided to invite five nationally-acclaimed conductors: Randall Craig Fleischer, Mark Mandarano, Richard Kaufman, Timothy Muffitt, and Michael Krajewski (returning as guest conductor), to take the podium for the 2005–2006 Symphony POPS! season.

For more information about the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, please visit [www.lbso.org](http://www.lbso.org) or call (562) 436-3203, ext. 233.

---

June 2005

---