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# CALIFORNIA POPS ORCHESTRA CLOSES SEASON WITH “BEST OF THE POPS!” MAY 21, 2017

## Featuring guest artist Frederick Hodges; “Fantastic Beasts” and “Hamilton” Premieres

(APRIL 13, 2017, Palo Alto, CA) - After a season of all-request performances, the California Pops Orchestra presents their season finale, “Best of the Pops!,” featuring guest artist and pianist Frederick Hodges. Presented with the Pops' signature fun-loving charm, “Best of the Pops!” features audience favorites from 28 fun-loving seasons as well as new surprises destined to become favorites. “Best of the Pops!” performs one time only at Cupertino's Flint Center on Sunday, May 21, 2017, at 3 p.m. For tickets (\$20-\$55, standard ticket service fees apply), the public can visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or call (650) 856-8432.

“Frederick Hodges is that rare combination of entertainer, musical scholar, technical master, and sly wit in one amazing package,” says Pops Conductor and emcee Kim Venaas.

“Our audiences have become such fans of his that they will follow him from one performance to the next throughout the country.”

Hodges will join the 75-piece entertainment symphony to play piano for the Gershwin musical, “Oh, Kay!,” as well as for special original arrangements from the 1920s and 30s. Called “a gifted pianist in the Gershwinian mold, and also one of the great ragtime players of our time,” by Counter-Punch's David Yearsley, Hodges was also credited with “robust technique, tremendous finesse and passion.” A native of California who earned a doctorate in history from Oxford in 2001, Hodges has had a steady career playing solo piano for society parties and holding regular engagements at San Francisco establishments such as L'Etoile in the Huntington Hotel, Masons in the Fairmont Hotel, and the Ritz Carlton Hotel. In addition to regular appearances with the California Pops, Hodges is a member of Maestro Venaas' 19-piece big band, the Black Tie Jazz Orchestra.

A tradition when Hodges appears with the Pops is for Venaas to set aside 10-15 minutes in the show for Hodges to improvise, create on the fly, do whatever he wants. Venaas explains, “I step off the stage, sit out with the audience; and it's always phenomenal what happens next!” During “**Best of the Pops!**,” audiences can expect a marvelous improvisation on a classic mid-1920s musical.

“Best of the Pops” will also feature exciting new music for adventurous audiences – including the Pops' premiere of 2016's “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them,” by film composer James Newton Howard (composer for “Pretty Woman,” “The Fugitive,” “Sixth Sense,” “Batman Begins,” “The Dark Knight,” “The Bourne Legacy,” and “Hunger Games.”) Also premiering will be the new symphony arrangement of the music from Broadway's smash musical hit “Hamilton.”

Rounding out the concert will be the Big Band hit “Leap Frog” (the theme song for the Les Brown Band of Renown), “Mambo” from Leonard Bernstein's musical “West Side Story,” Henry Mancini's movie themes to “Charade” and “Mr. Lucky,” the opening credits music to the movie epic “How the West Was Won,” Michel Legrand's achingly romantic theme to

“The Summer of ‘42,” the title song from the movie “Dirty Dancing,” and “Holiday for Strings” by David Rose, the hugely popular theme song for the Red Skelton Show. And finally, showcasing the Pops' love for unusual instruments, Maestro Kim Venaas will perform Leroy Anderson’s “The Typewriter,” playing a vintage machine which might be entirely unfamiliar to members of the computer generation.

This season has been a big one for California Pops Orchestra – after many seasons of turning away patrons at the door due to small performance spaces, the Pops moved to the Flint Center in Cupertino. The enormous house and the phenomenal acoustics have allowed Pops fans and newcomers alike the opportunity to enjoy the fun-loving Orchestra in all its splendor. Not resting on its laurels, California Pops Orchestra management and board are already hard at work planning next season.

**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 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 loves 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.calpops.org](http://www.calpops.org).

**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

- WHAT:** After a season of all-request performances, the **California Pops Orchestra** presents their season finale, “**Best of the Pops!**,” featuring guest artist and pianist **Frederick Hodges**. A native of California who earned a doctorate in history from Oxford in 2001, Hodges is renowned for his ragtime piano skills, and his deep love and knowledge of music from the 1920s and 1930s. Presented with the Pops' signature fun-loving charm, “**Best of the Pops!**” features audience favorites from 28 fun-loving seasons as well as new surprises destined to become favorites, including the Pops' premieres of music from Broadway's “Hamilton” and the movie “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them,” and Maestro Kim Venaas performing on a vintage typewriter.
- WHEN:** Sunday, May 21, 2017 at 3:00pm
- WHERE:** Flint Center at De Anza College, 21250 Stevens Creek Blvd in Cupertino
- TICKETS:** For tickets (\$20-55, standard ticket service fees apply), visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or call (650) 856-8432.

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