



The GRAMMY-winning

PACIFIC BOYCHOIR ACADEMY

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Oakland Boys Meet Unique Challenges to Sing Elvish with SF Symphony

*Pacific Boychoir Academy returns to Middle-Earth for “The Two Towers”
with San Francisco Symphony, May 8–10, 2025.*

Pacific Boychoir Academy (PBA) joins SF Symphony for *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* at Davies Symphony Hall. As the acclaimed Peter Jackson film plays, Howard Shore's iconic score calls for unique skills from Oakland's GRAMMY-winning boy choristers — both performing *from behind* the symphony's giant projection screen and also singing in Tolkien's fictitious languages.

This marks the second LOTR collaboration for PBA and SF Symphony, following last year's sold-out performances of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, also conducted by Maestro Ludwig Wicki.

Reflecting on their previous experience, the boys know they're expected to stay tightly in sync with a conductor they can barely see. Thirteen year-old Mac McNeil explains:

"In a typical performance, if you fall out of tempo, a human conductor can help you adjust. We have to use our ears to watch."

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While learning the languages of Middle-Earth may seem like a hurdle, the boys' real test is executing long, fluid Elvish phrases that demand for control, precision and teamwork.

Eight-year-old Emmet Stout – the youngest PBA chorister to sing with PBA on the symphony stage – describes the challenge of singing in Elvish:

"Elvish phrases are long, like 'ee-too-aw ee mah ke-e stahl dah – rawn mow-ree nye kwar,' demonstrates Emmet. "So we have to stagger our breathing."

Zach Salsburg-Frank, Music Director of Pacific Boychoir Academy, sees opportunities like singing with SF Symphony as central to the youth choir's mission:

"Pacific Boychoir Academy is for anyone who loves music — not just the 'naturally talented.' We can teach anyone to sing! With hard work and support, our choristers grow into impressive musicians and perform at incredible places like the San Francisco Symphony."

During their summer vacations, the boys' choir will tour both domestically and internationally, with June 2025 performances scheduled in Seattle, Washington and Seoul, Korea.

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers will be screened with live symphony accompaniment May 8 & 9 at 7:30 PM and May 10 at 2:00 PM at Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco. For more about PBA, visit pacificboychoir.org.

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About Pacific Boychoir Academy

Established in Oakland in 1998, the Pacific Boychoir Academy (PBA) is a GRAMMY-winning choral program for boys grades K-12. PBA offers music education that grows boys' musicianship, self-esteem and teamwork. In addition to after-school choirs, PBA also boasts an academic Day School for Boys Grades 2-8 – the only boys' choir school in the Western United States – where boys sing daily for 2 hours and receive PBA's premier opportunities for performance and travel. The *L.A. Times* calls the choir's sound quality "astonishing," while the *New York Times* hails PBA's ability to perform music "far beyond the reach of most children's choirs."

FYI: Parental Media Releases on file for 100% of PBA choristers.

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