

## Pacific Symphony: Volunteer Challenge #35

---

From: Abby Edmunds (aedmunds@pacifichsymphony.org)

To: aedmunds@pacifichsymphony.org

Date: Monday, August 24, 2020, 12:20 PM PDT

---

### Hello, Pacific Symphony Volunteers!

Well, it's official! We are in a heatwave! It reminds me of the old Linda Ronstadt song, but her "Heatwave" wasn't about an abnormally prolonged period of hot weather! Instead, her heatwave referred to an unbridled and sweltering passion!

To me, the waltz is a dance of uniformly rhythmic passion. Graciously predictable, not unbridled, yet passionate all the same!

Johann Baptist Strauss II is known as a master of the waltz and is often referred to as "The Waltz King." He came from a family of musicians, his father (Johann Strauss I) being considered the patriarch of a Viennese musical dynasty. Strauss, known as The Younger, surpassed his father's musical productivity and popularity and composed more than 500 pieces in his lifetime! Compositions such as The Blue Danube helped Strauss earn a place in music history.

This piece is the most famous waltz ever written and is not actually one waltz, but rather a chain of five interlinked waltz themes. It is also Austria's second national anthem. In 1865, Johann Herbeck, choirmaster of the Vienna Men's Choral Society, commissioned Strauss to write a choral work, but due to the composer's other commitments, the piece was not even started. The following year, Austria was defeated by Prussia in the Seven Weeks' War. Viennese morale was low due to this defeat and the following economic depression. Strauss was encouraged by Herbeck to revisit his commission and write a joyful waltz in an attempt to lift the country's spirits.

As he began the project, Strauss recalled a poem written by Karl Isidor Beck. Each stanza ends with the line: 'By the Danube, beautiful blue Danube'. It gave him the inspiration and the title for this new work. The choral society's "poet" Josef Weyl added humorous lyrics ridiculing the lost war and the bankrupt city, "Viennese be happy! Oho! But why?"

The premiere of the waltz took place, but was only mildly successful. This may have been due to the fact that both the choir and the audience hated the words! Later that year, however, Strauss introduced the waltz as an orchestral piece in Paris at the World Exhibition, and it created a musical sensation!

Please enjoy The Blue Danube here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_CTYymbbEL4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CTYymbbEL4) Think of the lovely, cool water and be refreshed!



hope you have a wonderful day! Until we see you again, please stay well. Stay safe. Know how much we miss you.

Warm regards,

Abby

**Abby Edmunds**

Director of Volunteer Services | Pacific Symphony

**t:** (714) 876-2353 | **m:** (949) 933-4842 | **e:** [aedmunds@PacificSymphony.org](mailto:aedmunds@PacificSymphony.org)

Charlie and Ling Zhang Center for Musical Arts and Education

17620 Fitch, Suite 100 | Irvine, CA 92614

**Reception:** (714) 755-5788 | **Tickets:** (714) 755-5799

[PacificSymphony.org](http://PacificSymphony.org) | [facebook](#) | [instagram](#) | [twitter](#) | [youtube](#)

