SCHOOLTIME
PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MEET THE ORCHESTRA

This activity addresses PA Academic Standards 9.2.5.L and National Core Arts Standards MU:Re8.1.2a, MU:Re9.1.2a



Composer Spotlight: Gabriela Lena Frank

Who is Gabriela Lena Frank?

Gabriela Lena Frank is a composer and pianist. She writes music for orchestras and choirs. She also writes music for solo instruments and small groups. She has even written an opera!

Gabriela grew up in Berkeley, California. Her family includes many different cultures and traditions. Her mom shared her Peruvian and Chinese heritage with Gabriela. Her dad shared his Lithuanian and Jewish heritage. Gabriela loves to share her multicultural heritage through music.

Gabriela has won many awards, including a Latin Grammy. In 2026, she won the Pulitzer Prize in Music!

What inspires Gabriela?



Gabriela gets musical ideas from many places.

She has traveled throughout South America and learned about its folklore and Indigenous music. Sometimes she brings these ideas into the music she writes.

Gabriela also likes to tell stories through music. Sometimes the story she is telling needs an instrument she does not have. In that case, she combines other instruments to mimic its sound.



What is important to Gabriela?

Gabriela believes musicians can do more than perform music. They can also use music to help their communities. She calls this idea **arts citizenship**.

Gabriela practices arts citizenship by working with schools, hospitals, and prisons. She also helps other composers through the Creative Academy of Music.

What music by Gabriela is part of Schooltime: Meet the Orchestra?

You will hear Gabriela's piece "The Mestizo Waltz" from *Three Latin American Dances* at Schooltime: Meet the Orchestra.

The word **mestizo** can describe someone with mixed ancestry, like Gabriela. In "The Mestizo Waltz," Gabriela combines musical ideas from indigenous Indian cultures, African slave cultures, and Western brass bands. It is a joyful dance that celebrates different traditions coming together.