



Ludovic Morlot

2023-24 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom
Family Foundation Classical Series

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023 @ 8 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 17, 2023 @ 8 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023 @ 8 p.m.

Ludovic Morlot, conductor
Vadym Kholodenko, piano
Pacific Symphony

The 2023-24 season piano soloists are generously
sponsored by **The Michelle F. Rohé Fund**

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**This concert is being recorded for broadcast on
Feb 18, 2024 on Classical California KUSC.**

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall & Lobby

PROGRAM

ADAM SCHOENBERG *Canto*

RACHMANINOFF *Piano Concerto No.4 in G Minor, Op. 40*
Allegro vivace
Largo
Allegro vivace
Vadym Kholodenko

-INTERMISSION-

GABRIELLA SMITH *Bioluminescence Chaconne*

DEBUSSY *La mer*
De l'aube à midi sur la mer
[From Dawn to Noon on the Sea]
Jeux des vagues
[Play of the Waves]
Dialogue du vent et de la mer
[Dialogue of Wind and Sea]



PROGRAM NOTES

Adam Schoenberg

Canto

Born: 1980 in New Salem, Massachusetts

Premiered: Commissioned and premiered by the Lexington Philharmonic on Apr. 11, 2014 with Scott Terrell conducting

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: This is a Pacific Symphony premiere

Instrumentation: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, percussion, piano, and strings



Emmy Award-winning and GRAMMY®-nominated Adam Schoenberg has twice been named among the top 10 most performed living composers by orchestras in the United States. His works have received performances and premieres at the Library of Congress, Kennedy Center, New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and Hollywood Bowl. He has received commissions from major American orchestras including the Atlanta Symphony (*UP!* and *La Luna Azul*), Kansas City Symphony (*American Symphony* and *Picture Studies*), Los Angeles Philharmonic, Aspen Music Festival and School (*Bounce*), San Francisco Symphony (*Losing Earth*), and Louisville Orchestra (*Automation*).

Schoenberg took the opportunity of a commission from the Lexington Philharmonic to compose *Canto* as a tribute to his newborn son. Scored for piano, percussion, and strings, it teems with eclecticism and energy. On his website, the composer writes movingly about the genesis of this rhapsodic, single-movement work:

On August 11, 2013, my son Luca was born, and in that single moment, my life changed forever. The past six months have brought the greatest joys I've ever known, and I can no longer imagine life without him....I knew that this would be a very different work for me. My son embodies many different cultures and religions (e.g., Judaism from me, Catholicism from my wife, and Chinese, Peruvian, and Iranian blood).... Knowing that [he] is part of so many different cultures, I wanted the spirit of this new work to embody the spirit of others. *Canto* can mean singing, chant, or song....*Canto* is about family and love, and it's dedicated to my wife Janine, and son Luca.

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Piano Concerto No.4 in G Minor, Op. 40

Born: Apr. 1, 1873 in Starorussky Uyezd

Died: Mar. 28, 1943 in Beverly Hills, California

Composed: 1926 (original), with revisions through 1941

Premiered: March 18, 1927 by the Philadelphia Orchestra with the composer as soloist and Leopold Stokowski conducting

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: This is a Pacific Symphony premiere

Instrumentation: three flutes including piccolo, three oboes including English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings and solo piano



It was a long time between concertos for moody, mercurial Sergei Rachmaninoff. Bouts of depression almost scuttled his career as a composer, and though he overcame his famous “composer’s block” with the help of friends’ intervention and a physician’s therapy, he remained troubled by insecurities and melancholia. Despite the rapturous reception for his second piano concerto and his standing as a virtuoso, he made the world wait for eight years—until 1909—for his third, and it was not until 1917 that he began the earliest sketches for his Piano Concerto No. 4. His initial ideas for the concerto would not be fully developed until 1941, when he introduced the work under the baton of Leopold Stokowski during another commercial tour of the U.S. By then he had moved to California at the urging of his compatriot Igor Stravinsky.

This concerto displays Rachmaninoff’s new willingness to experiment. In it we can hear contemporary influences such as composer George Gershwin and jazz pianist Art Tatum, an openness to drama and new colors, and less dependence on the sweeping Romantic contours of his earlier works. The slow movement sounds almost like blues; critics cite that as evidence that Rachmaninoff paid close attention to Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*. Was this unexpected choice, among others, one reason why Rachmaninoff’s fourth piano concerto was received with less enthusiasm than those that came earlier? Today we appreciate this work not only for Rachmaninoff’s customary brilliance as a composer of virtuosic piano music, but as our best indication of how a “modern” Rachmaninoff style might have sounded.

Gabriella Smith

Bioluminescence Chaconne

Born: 1991 in Berkeley, California

Composed: 2019

Premiered: Commissioned and premiered by Oregon Symphony on Feb. 7, 2020

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: This is a Pacific Symphony premiere

Instrumentation: three flutes including piccolo, three oboes, three clarinets, three bassoons including contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings



Composer Gabriella Smith grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area playing and writing music, hiking, backpacking, and volunteering on a songbird research project. Described as “the coolest, most exciting, most inventive new voice I’ve heard in ages” (*Musical America*) and an “outright sensation” (*Los Angeles Times*), Smith draws inspiration from her love of play, exploring new sounds on instruments, building compelling musical arcs, and connecting listeners with the natural world in an invitation to find joy in climate action.

Recent highlights include the premiere of her organ concerto, *Breathing Forests*, written for James McVinnie and LA Phil, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen; performances of *Tumblebird Contrails* by San Francisco Symphony and Esa-Pekka Salonen, both at home and on their European tour; and the release of her first full-length album, *Lost Coast*, recorded in Iceland with cellist Gabriel Cabezas.

Smith’s lifelong interest in the natural environment is reflected in the titles of many of her works, including her *Bioluminescence Chaconne*, which expresses her wonder at the mysterious, glowing phenomenon emitted mainly by marine fauna and flora. She uses the natural world as a recurring metaphor, and her specific sound world, drawn from minimalism and aleatoric music, uses extended instrumental techniques to propel familiar musical imagery in completely novel ways. In the Chaconne, we can hear the mysteries of bioluminescence dramatically expressed in her use of augmented percussion, including a temple bowl, kick drum, tomtoms, crotales, and five “varied metal objects.”

Claude Debussy

La mer

Born: Aug. 22, 1862 in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

Died: Mar. 25, 1918 in Paris, France

Composed: 1903-1905

Premiered: Oct. 15, 1905 by the Orchestre Lamoureux in Paris, conducted by Camille Chevillard

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Dec. 8, 2012, with Alexander Shelley conducting

Instrumentation: three flutes including piccolo, three oboes including English horn, two clarinets, four bassoons including contrabassoon, four horns, five trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, two harps, and strings



Debussy returned to the sea again and again in songs and descriptive works for orchestra. “I love the sea and I have listened to it passionately,” he wrote to his friend and fellow-composer André Messager. “You may not have known that I was destined for a sailor’s life...I have always felt a passionate love for the sea.” But it turns out that Debussy’s feelings for the sea were a triumph of imagination over reality; the composer’s experience of life on the water was limited to “two [English] Channel crossings and some seaside holidays,” musicologist Richard Freed informs us. Debussy took one of those seaside holidays at the English Channel town of Eastbourne in 1905, two years after he began sketching *La mer*, specifically to complete the work at the seaside.

Though Debussy never completed a symphony, *La mer* challenges every section of the orchestra and is certainly symphonic in its scope. And, as with a symphony, its three movements are intended to be performed together—a single sequence representing a day on the water. By the time of its composition, a year after his operatic masterpiece *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the 20th century was young and Debussy was elevating his music to new heights. Their breadth intensified his trademark style, with its sensuous, modal scales, ambiguous rhythms, and—most of all—those gliding, unresolved harmonies that keep on rolling and never arrive.

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and has written numerous articles for magazines and newspapers in the U.S. and U.K. and hundreds of program notes for orchestras and opera companies. Operahound.com

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR



Ludovic Morlot is Music Director of the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and Conductor Emeritus of Seattle Symphony in addition to being Associate Artist, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. Morlot's élan, elegance and intensity on stage have endeared him to audiences and orchestras worldwide, from

the Berlin Philharmonic to the Boston Symphony. During his eight years as Music Director of the Seattle Symphony he pushed the boundaries of traditional concert programming, winning several GRAMMYS®.

Morlot has conducted the Berliner Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, Czech Philharmonic, Dresden Staatskapelle, London Philharmonic, and Budapest Festival orchestras, and many of the leading North American orchestras, notably the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago, and Boston Symphony Orchestras. Morlot has a particularly strong connection with Boston, having been the Seiji Ozawa Fellowship Conductor at Tanglewood and subsequently appointed Assistant Conductor for the Boston Symphony. Since then, he has conducted the orchestra in subscription concerts in Boston, at Tanglewood, and on a tour to the west coast of the United States. He has also appeared extensively in Asia and Australasia, notably with the Seoul Philharmonic, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony, and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras. Festival appearances have included the BBC Proms, Wien Modern, Edinburgh, and Aspen festivals.

His tenure in Seattle formed a hugely significant period in the musical journey of the orchestra. His innovative programming encompassed not only his choice of repertoire, but theatrical productions and performances outside the traditional concert hall space. There were numerous collaborations with musicians from different genres, commissions and world premieres. Some of these projects, including John Luther Adams' *Become Ocean*, Aaron Jay Kernis' *Violin Concerto* performed by James Ehnes and an exploration of Dutilleux's music, have earned the orchestra five GRAMMYS®, as well as the distinction of being named Gramophone's 2018 Orchestra of the Year. Morlot has released 19 recordings with the Seattle Symphony Media label which was launched in 2014.

Morlot opened last season with a concertante performance of *Die Walküre* at Seattle Opera, invited back for *Samson et Dalila* in Jan. 2023 and for a fully-staged *Rheingold* in Aug. 2023. In recent months he has conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco, Seattle, Utah and Sao Paulo symphonies. Guesting in Europe included the Netherlands Philharmonic, Copenhagen Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lille, Bergen Philharmonic, City of Birmingham

Symphony, Orquesta Castilla y Leon and of course Barcelona Symphony. He has a strong commitment to supporting emerging talent and regularly conducts students at the Colburn Conservatory. In 2021 he sat on the jury of the Leeds International Piano Competition and conducted students at the Royal Academy (London), New England Conservatory (Boston), and made his annual visit to the Aspen Festival.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Vadym Kholodenko has emerged as one of the most musically dynamic and technically gifted performers of his generation, heralded for interpretations that are "impeccable, tasteful, and vibrant, and also something more: imaginative" (Cleveland Plain Dealer). Winner of the coveted gold medal and all special

prizes at the 14th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2013, he is forging an international career throughout Europe, Asia, and North America to great acclaim.

Kholodenko has collaborated with distinguished conductors including Leonard Slatkin, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Yuri Bashmet, Carl St.Clair, Vladimir Spivakov, Valdimir Fedoseyev, and Cristian Mecalaru. In North America, he has appeared with the Atlanta, Indianapolis, Philadelphia, and San Diego Symphony Orchestras, among others, and traveled extensively across the United States for solo recitals. Internationally, he has performed with the orchestras of BBC Scottish, Kristiansand, Malmö, Madrid RTVE, Qatar, Norwegian Radio, and Sydney, and made recital debuts in Paris, Lucerne, Singapore, Budapest, Porto, and appeared throughout Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Japan. In 2013, he held a residency at the Mariinsky Concert Hall where he was named artist of the month by Valery Gergiev. Festival appearances include the Aspen Summer Music, Brevard Music Center, Flâneries Musicales de Reims, Pharos Chamber Music, Stars of the White Nights, and Festival del Sole.

A committed chamber musician, Kholodenko took home the 2013 Cliburn prize for best performance of a piano quintet with the Brentano Quartet. He has also collaborated with the Enso Quartet, violinists Vadim Repin and Alena Baeva, and cellist Alexander Buzlov. Also interested in composing, he performed a stunning cadenza in Mozart's Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467 during the Cliburn Competition's Final Round—which he composed himself on the plane from Moscow to the Competition in Fort Worth. Born in Kiev, Kholodenko is the first musician in his family.