



Carlos Miguel Prieto

2023-24 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom
Family Foundation Classical Series

MAHLER'S FIFTH

Thursday, Mar. 14, 2024 @ 8 p.m.

Friday, Mar. 15, 2024 @ 8 p.m.

Saturday, Mar. 16, 2024 @ 8 p.m.

Carlos Miguel Prieto, guest conductor
Sterling Elliott, cello
Pacific Symphony



**This concert is being recorded for broadcast on
July 14, 2024 on Classical California KUSC.**

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

PROGRAM

GABRIELA ORTIZ *Kauyumari*

HAYDN
Cello Concerto in C Major
Moderato
Adagio
Allegro molto
Sterling Elliott

-INTERMISSION-

MAHLER
Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp minor
Trauermarsch
Stürmisch bewegt
Scherzo: Kräftig, nicht zu schnell
Adagietto
Rondo-Finale



PROGRAM NOTES

Gabriela Ortiz

Kauyumari

Born: 1964 in Mexico City

Composed: 2021

Premiered: October 9, 2021 at Walt Disney Concert Hall with Gustavo Dudamel conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra

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

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

Approximate duration: 7 minutes



The esteemed composer Gabriela Ortiz has written music for dance, theater, and cinema, and has actively collaborated with poets, playwrights, and historians. Although she is based in Mexico, her music is commissioned and performed all over the world, including by prestigious ensembles including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, The National Orchestra of Bretagne, The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Gustavo Dudamel and Esa Pekka Salonen, Louis Langrée, Paolo Bartolomeoli, Maria Dueñas, Zoltan Kocsis, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Kroumata and Amadinda Percussion Ensembles, Kronos Quartet, and Dawn Upshaw.

Ortiz's orchestral works explore compelling themes in startling ways. Her music follows ideas wherever they lead—often into the natural world—rather than following a formal compositional architecture of statement, development and recapitulation. For example, the sounds of healthy and dying underwater life inspired her 2020 composition *Arrecife* for chamber orchestra, inviting listeners to think about ecocide and environmental conservation as part of the esthetic experience. In *Kauyumari*, she invites us on a journey of the imagination in the company of a spiritual guide. She notes:

Among the Huichol people of Mexico, *Kauyumari* means "blue deer." The blue deer represents a spiritual guide, one that is transformed through an extended pilgrimage into a hallucinogenic cactus called peyote. It allows the Huichol to communicate with their ancestors, do their bidding, and take on their role as guardians of the planet. Each year, these Native Mexicans embark on a symbolic journey to "hunt" the blue deer, making offerings in gratitude for having been granted access to the invisible world, through which they also are able to heal the wounds of the soul.

When I received the commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic to compose a piece that would reflect on our return to the stage following the pandemic, I immediately thought of the blue deer and its power to

enter the world of the intangible as akin to a celebration of the reopening of live music. Specifically, I thought of a Huichol melody sung by the De La Cruz family—dedicated to recording ancestral folklore—that I used for the final movement of my piece, *Altar de Muertos* (Altar of the Dead), commissioned by the Kronos String Quartet in 1997. I used this material within the orchestral context and elaborated on the construction and progressive development of the melody and its accompaniment in such a way that it would symbolize the blue deer...

While composing this piece, I noted once again how music has the power to grant us access to the intangible; healing our wounds and binding us to what can only be expressed through sound. Although life is filled with interruptions, *Kauyumari* is a comprehension and celebration of the fact that each of these rifts is also a new beginning.

Franz Joseph Haydn

Cello Concerto No. 1 in C Major

Born: Mar. 31, 1732 in Rohrau, Austria

Died: May 31, 1809 in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1761 - 1765

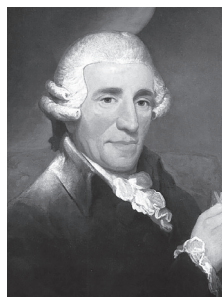
Premiered: Unknown; the manuscript was lost until 1961.

The modern premiere was on May 19, 1962 with cellist Miloš Sádlo and the Czechoslovak Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: March 25, 2008, with Carl St.Clair conducting, and Xian Zhang as soloist

Instrumentation: two oboes, two horns, strings, and solo cello

Approximate duration: 24 minutes



Prolific and long-lived, Haydn demonstrated a master's understanding that extended to every sector of the orchestra, and his concertos were valued by the foremost instrumentalists of his day. His cello concerto in C Major was written between 1761 and 1765 for his longtime friend Joseph Franz Weigl, an esteemed musician who was principal cellist in the Esterházy Orchestra during the reign of Prince Nicolaus. But the errant manuscript was not rediscovered until 1961, making Haydn's other cello concerto, a D Major work, far more familiar to earlier generations of audiences and players even though it was written perhaps 20 years later.

The C Major concerto is a relatively early work, composed around the same time as Haydn's symphonies 6, 7, and 8. Like Haydn's violin concertos (and *unlike* the later cello concerto), the Cello Concerto in C Major hews to strict sonata allegro form, with a formal introduction in the first movement, a serene middle movement, and an up-tempo finale. The concerto quickly demonstrates Haydn's

PROGRAM NOTES

knowledge of the cello, opening with full chords played on all four strings and moving on to virtuosic passagework of rapidly repeated notes. The central movement showcases the human, singing qualities of the cello voice, providing the soloist with a dramatic entrance on a single long note while the rest of the orchestra's string choir reprises the movement's opening theme. As in the first movement, Haydn allows for a cadenza as the movement closes. The finale, like the central movement, unveils the cello with a single extended note after a long orchestral introduction—but the tempo is brisk and spirited.

Gustav Mahler

Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp minor

Born: July 7, 1860 in Kaliště, Austro-Hungarian Empire

Died: May 18, 1911 in Vienna

Composed: 1901–1902; revised in 1904 and 1911

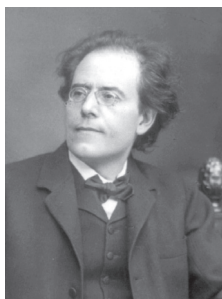
Premiered: October 18, 1904 in Cologne, Germany, with the composer conducting the Gürzenich Orchestra Köln

Most recent Pacific Symphony

performance: March 23, 2013, with Carl St.Clair conducting

Instrumentation: four flutes including piccolo and alto flute, three oboes including English horn, three clarinets including bass clarinet and e-flat clarinet, three bassoons including contrabassoon, six horns, four trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings

Approximate duration: 68 minutes



Mahler's Fifth Symphony was his first purely instrumental work in this form. It progresses from an opening funeral march to a triumphant fifth movement—a finale that is his most emphatic affirmation of life.

Is the ghost of Beethoven's Leonore, the heroine of *Fidelio*, lurking in this symphony? We know that Mahler esteemed this opera above all others and that he was working on it as director of the Vienna Court Opera throughout the symphony's composition. Leonore's faithfulness to her imprisoned husband Florestan delivers him from false imprisonment, vanquishes a tyrant, and strikes a blow for human freedom; identifying with her story, Mahler produced a work of music-theater that transformed the way we see *Fidelio*. And his biographer Henry-Louis de La Grange reveals that in 1904, when Mahler was working on this opera and his Symphony No. 5, was a period of joyful closeness between Mahler and his wife, whom he idolized—the formidable, captivating Alma.

Mahler's Symphony No. 5 makes a breathtaking transition during its five movements. Its opening funeral march captures us with an arresting trumpet call and a fanfare of trumpets expressed in quick, urgent

triplets. The textures are brilliant, but the mood is one of frightening portent that gives way to despair as the brass-heavy march subsides into elegiac contemplation dominated by strings. Mahler's expansive development, with each element repeated, leads the movement to a mysterious close that suggests something different is coming—as indeed it is.

The second movement expresses rebellion against the portentous announcements of the first. Larger in scale and marked *stürmisch*, or turbulent, it conveys defiance through its steady layering of sound, rapid string figures, and angry, complex chords (particularly diminished sevenths). Astonishingly, the contending forces in this movement—do they represent our struggle against the dictates of fate that we heard in movement one?—culminate in a chorale. Keyed in D major, an ascent from the C-sharp minor that prevails earlier in the movement, it suggests the possibility of eventual triumph.

Scherzos are not unusual in symphonies, but the scherzo that comprises the third movement of Mahler's Fifth stands alone. It is the symphony's longest movement, and one of the longest Mahler ever composed. Sometimes called the "hinge" of this symphony, it is the turning point in a work that was itself a turning point for its composer. Continuing in the earlier chorale's key of D Major, this movement seems more rooted in the everyday world than those preceding it; it is built in seven sections rooted in the rustic *Ländler* dances that Mahler loved and that he often associated with happy memories. Mystery and resolution seem to alternate as he layers and develops these themes, but the movement ends on a note of perplexity. Is resolution really possible?

We know from contemporary reports by Alma herself and by Mahler's good friend Willem Mengelberg, the brilliant Dutch conductor, that the symphony's fourth movement—the achingly lovely adagietto—was a very personal message to Alma, delivered wordlessly to her as a gift. While Leonard Bernstein cemented the tradition of playing it as an elegy, first in tribute to his mentor Serge Koussevitzky and later at a memorial for Robert F. Kennedy, it was likely an expression of Mahler's undying love for his wife. When you listen to the adagietto, what will you hear? A dirge, or a love letter? Heard as an expression of love, the adagietto makes the ultimate triumph of the final movement possible, moving with a quality of ecstatic timelessness until it diminishes to a single, poetic note—an "A"—in the horn. The final movement unfolds from this note without a pause and leads to one of the most tumultuous expressions of triumph in music: a deliriously energetic rondo that eventually fulfills the promise of the chorale

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 ARTIST

Acclaimed for his stellar stage presence and joyous musicianship, cellist Sterling Elliott is a 2021 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient and the winner of the Senior Division of the 2019 National Sphinx Competition.

Already in his young career, he has appeared with major orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, and Dallas Symphony, with noted conductors Yannick Nezet-Seguin, Thomas Wilkins, Jeffrey Kahane, Mei Ann Chen, and others.

This season, Elliott debuts with the Minnesota Orchestra, Grand Rapids Symphony, Charlotte Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, and New Jersey Symphony. He also performs the world premiere of a new orchestral version of John Corigliano's *Phantasmagoria*, commissioned for him by a consortium of orchestras including the Orlando Philharmonic and music director Eric Jacobsen. He makes his UK recital debut at Wigmore Hall in February. Fast becoming a favorite on the summer festival circuit, Sterling has appeared at Music@Menlo, Chamberfest in Cleveland and Chamberfest Northwest in Calgary, Music at Angel Fire, and the La Jolla Music Society. In Summer 2023, he made his orchestral debut with the San Francisco Symphony; performed chamber music with Nicola Benedetti, Stefan Jackiw, and others at the Edinburgh Festival; and made a return appearance at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Elliott participates in several programs alongside exceptionally talented young artists. In April 2023, he was selected by The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for its Bowers Program, a three-year residency. As a Bowers Program artist, he will perform in CMS tours nationally, and play subscription concerts at Alice Tully Hall. In June 2023, the London-based Young Classical Artists Trust named him their YCAT-Music Masters Robey Artist, a two-year program during which YCAT will provide UK booking and management and Sterling will fulfill an ambassadorial role, leading workshops and engaging with young learners in schools across London to inspire and enhance their musical education. In Spring 2022, Sterling participated in Performance Today's Young Artist Residency, which featured educational events, interviews and a feature on the nationally syndicated radio program.



Elliott has a long history with the Sphinx Organization where he won the 2014 Junior Division Competition, becoming the first alumnus from the Sphinx Performance Academy to win the Sphinx Competition. The following year he went on to tour with the Sphinx Virtuosi before being awarded the Organization's Isaac Stern Award in 2016. This season, Elliott will receive a Sphinx Medal of Excellence, the highest honor bestowed by the Sphinx Organization, awarded to artists who, early in their career, demonstrate artistic excellence, outstanding work ethic, a spirit of determination, and an ongoing commitment to leadership and their communities.

Born into a musical household, Sterling initially wanted to play the violin like his older brother and sister. After a bit of encouragement, he completed The Elliott Family String Quartet, an ensemble that enjoyed personalized arrangements of genres such as bluegrass, gospel, and funk music.

Elliott is pursuing an Artist Diploma at the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Joel Krosnick and Clara Kim, following completion of his Master of Music and undergraduate degrees at Juilliard. He is an ambassador of the Young Strings of America, a string sponsorship operated by Shar Music. He performs on a 1741 Gennaro Gagliano cello on loan through the Robert F. Smith Fine String Patron Program, in partnership with the Sphinx Organization.

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

Known for his charisma and expressive interpretations, Mexican conductor Carlos Miguel Prieto has established himself not just as a major figure in the orchestra world but also as an influential cultural leader, educator, and a champion of new music. In a significant career development, he began his tenure as Music Director of the North Carolina Symphony at the beginning of the 2023-24 season.



From 2007-22, he was the Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, the country's leading ensemble, and significantly raised the caliber of the orchestra. He was Music Director of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra since 2006, where he helped lead the cultural renewal of New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina and stepped down at the end of the 2022-23 season. In 2008, he was appointed Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería, a hand-picked orchestra that performs a two-month series of summer programs in Mexico City.

Recent highlights include engagements with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, NDR Elbphilharmonie, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, the Hallé, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Spanish National Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Strasbourg Philharmonic, and Auckland Philharmonia. Prieto is in demand as a guest conductor with many of the top North American orchestras, including Cleveland, Dallas, Toronto, Minnesota, Washington, New World, and Houston Symphony, and has enjoyed a particularly successful relationship with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the North Carolina Symphony. Prieto made his BBC Proms debut at Royal Albert Hall on August 5, 2023 with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

Since 2002, alongside Gustavo Dudamel, Prieto has conducted the Orchestra of the Americas, which draws young musicians from the entire American continent. A staunch proponent of music education, Prieto served as Principal Conductor of the YOA from its inception until 2011 when he was appointed Music Director. In 2018 he conducted the orchestra on a tour of European summer festivals, which included performances at the Rheingau and Edinburgh festivals, as well as Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie. He has also worked regularly with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the NYO2 in New York.

Prieto is renowned for championing Latin American music, as well as his dedication to new music. He has conducted over 100 world premieres of works by Mexican and American composers, many of which were commissioned by him. Prieto places equal importance on championing works by Black and African American composers such as Florence Price, Margaret Bonds, and Courtney Bryan, among others.

Prieto has an extensive discography that includes the Naxos and Sony labels. Recent Naxos recordings include Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.2 & *Études tableaux Op.33*, with Boris Giltburg and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra RSN0, which won a 2018 Opus Klassik award and was listed as a Gramophone's Critics' Choice; and his 2017 recording of Korngold's Violin Concerto with violinist Philippe Quint and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería received two GRAMMY® nominations. His recording of the Elgar and Finzi Violin Concertos with Ning Feng was released on Channel Classics in November 2018.

Prieto was recognized by *Musical America* as the "2019 Conductor of the Year." A graduate of Princeton and Harvard universities, Prieto studied conducting with Jorge Mester, Enrique Diemecke, Charles Bruck, and Michael Jinbo.