MAY 19-21

SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS
RENÉE AND HENRY SEGERSTROM CONCERT HALL

PACIFIC SYMPHONY PRESENTS

2015-16 HAL & JEANETTE SEGERSTROM FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICAL SERIES

Performance begins at 8 p.m.; Preview talk with Assistant Conductor Roger Kalia begins at 7 p.m.

CARL ST.CLAIR • CONDUCTOR | PHILIPPE QUINT • VIOLIN & LEADER

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)
The Four Seasons, Op. 8
- La primavera (Spring), RV 269
- L’estate (Summer), RV 315
- L’autunno (Autumn), RV 293
- L’inverno (Winter), RV 297

Philippe Quint

INTERMISESSION

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)
An Alpine Symphony, TrV 233, Op. 64
- Nacht (Night)
- Sonnenaufgang (Sunrise)
- Der Anstieg (The Ascent)
- Eintritt in den Wald (Entering the Forest)
- Wanderung neben dem Bache (Wandering near the Stream)
- Am Wasserfall (At the Waterfall)
- Erscheinung (Apparition)
- Auf blumige Wiesen (On Blooming Meadows)
- Auf der Alm (On the Alpine Pasture)
- Durch Dickicht und Gestrüpp auf Irrwegen (Going Astray in Thicket and Underbrush)

Auf dem Gletscher (On the Glacier)
Gefahrvolle Augenblicke (Dangerous Moments)
Auf dem Gipfel (At the Summit)
Vision (View)
Nebel steigen auf (Fog Arises)
Die Sonne verdüstert sich allmählich (The Sun Gradually Darkens)
Elegie (Elegy)
Stille vor dem Sturm (Calm Before the Storm)
Gewitter und Sturm (Thunder and Storm)
Sonnenuntergang (Sunset)
Ausklang (Vanishing Sound)
Nacht (Night)

Special thanks to Gregory MacGillivray for allowing use of his photos of the National Parks on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the National Parks Service.

Image magnification and video editing provided by Jeffery Sells, Center Stage Multimedia.

The Thursday, May 19, concert is generously sponsored by Catherine and James Emmi.
The Friday, May 20, concert is generously sponsored by Margaret Gates
The Four Seasons
ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678-1741)

Instrumentation: harpsichord, strings, solo violin
Performance time: 37 minutes

Background

Vivaldi’s The Four Seasons, actually a series of four violin concertos, is among the most popular suites in the entire classical catalog, and no wonder: Nowhere is Vivaldi’s gift for vibrant melody, vivid scene-painting and rhythmic vigor more evident. The inspiration unfolds at a breakneck pace, with tone-painting that presents a graphically detailed picture of the natural world and the weather that modulates our lives and excites our sense of beauty. Rapid passagework in the solo violin and in all the strings reveal color and texture as they showcase the virtuosic capabilities of instrument and player.

Vivaldi actually considered himself primarily a composer of operas and claimed to have written 90 of them (about 40 have been lost), but today his reputation rests on the hundreds of concertos he wrote. They embody his best qualities in seemingly endless abundance, and The Four Seasons remains by far his most popular work. With three movements in each concerto, the suite traverses a year of weather, behavior and seasonal moods in 12 natural divisions. They represent not so much individual months as the natural turns of events that the annual cycle brings us—sunshine, storms, celebrations, harvests, hibernation, renewal—depicted in tonal “paintings” of extraordinary vividness and beauty.

Vivaldi’s remarkable productivity as a composer of concertos can be traced to the year 1703, when he was both ordained to the priesthood and appointed as Maestro di Violino (chief violin teacher) at the Ospedale della Pieta, a charitable school in Venice. It was one of four such institutions where he would remain with few interruptions for the better part of 40 years. His red hair was not the only reason why he came to be known as The Red Priest (il Prete Rosso); he was a dazzling violinist with a fiery playing style, as well as a demanding teacher who got results. Under his tutelage, the students who lived at the Ospedale—young women from good families that, for reasons usually left unsaid, wanted them raised elsewhere—became some of the best instrumental players in Europe. To hone and then showcase their skills, Vivaldi wrote literally hundreds of concertos. They heavily favored the violin, of course. But Vivaldi made sure that they could readily be transcribed for other solo instruments.

Like Bach, who was born seven years later, Vivaldi stuns us with the sheer abundance of his compositions, both in number and in the degree of their creativity. If you look at the statistics on working hours and vacation days, Americans are among the hardest-working people in the world, but Vivaldi’s musical output can make the hardest-working among us seem like slackers. His concertos, which number more than 500, established many of the qualities that inform concertos composed later and through the present day, both in structure and in sound: the familiar sequence of three movements in fast-slow-fast order, a conversational interplay between soloist and ensemble, and the showcasing of musical virtuosity by both soloist and composer.

The Four Seasons was published in 1725, when Vivaldi was in his early 40s, as part of a group of 12 compositions that comprised his Op. 8—all concertos. In that era, even successful music by major composers had a relatively short life expectancy; works that were more than 25 years old were sometimes labeled “ancient,” to be rediscovered or entirely forgotten. This is why the transcription of Vivaldi’s The Four Seasons for flute by the Swiss composer Jean-Jacques Rousseau is so sure a sign of the suite’s noteworthy success; the transcription came about 50 years after the original’s publication. Revolutionary in its day, The Four Seasons was revived at the time of another revolution—in 1776.

What to Listen For

To understand what made The Four Seasons revolutionary, we must consider vocabulary that is hard to pin down—terms such as “descriptive” and “programmatic” music. Listeners in the Baroque era were well accustomed to music that described tableaus or actions, and knew to take note of cues such as “soggetto cavato.” Originally associated just with sol-fa syllables, this technique enabled listeners to associate the sound of a melody with the idea it was depicting, based on the spelling of vowel sounds assembled from the tones of the scale.

By the time Vivaldi was composing his galaxy of concertos, soggetto cavato had been in common use for more than a century, and had given rise to a kind of descriptive writing that was much more accessible to the untrained ear: “imitative” writing that would denote, for example, the ascent of an angel with an ascending scale or arpeggio, or high winds with careening glissandos. Such effects, which we now take for granted, were startling and even sensational when Vivaldi began exploring their possibilities.

Programmatic music follows a “program”—that is, a story line—with varying degrees of specificity. Tchaikovsky’s fantasy overture Romeo and Juliet is programmatic, but it sets the mood of a universally known story of tragic love and leaves the rest to the listener’s imagination. Richard Strauss’ many tone poems are usually programmatic, typically inspired by a literary work; in some, such as his Don Quixote, we can identify major themes and get a sense of the source’s episodes without envisioning the finer points of the action, but in others, such as his autobiographical Ein Heldenleben (A Hero’s Life) or Sinfonia Domestica (Domestic Symphony), the dramatic elements of the program’s storyline are spelled out for us.
For composers of the Romantic era and beyond, programmatic music was one way to expand the expressiveness of composition and escape the confines of form. But Vivaldi was far ahead of his time in seeking to find drama in wordless compositions such as concertos. In grouping the four concertos of The Four Seasons into a single suite, he founded the modern idea of programmatic music—not by telling a story, but by finding the natural dramatic arc in the course of a year. Beginning with the spring, the time of beginnings and of renewal, he provides all the elements of a well-structured drama, taking us from youth through development to maturity to the dark severity of winter, always with a sense of the driving energy that is characteristic of the Baroque, and ultimately with the affirmative sense that spring will come again.

The specificity of Vivaldi’s tone-painting ability allowed him to describe his musical intentions with annotations that have the character of stage directions—“the barking dog” in the second movement of Concerto No. 1; “langor caused by the heat” in the first movement of Concerto No. 2; “the drunkards have fallen asleep” in the second movement of Concerto No. 3; and so on. Other equally picturesque passages—note, for example, the gorgeous yet excruciatingly accurate evocation of wind-driven ice and snow in the winter concerto—need no verbal cues.

In describing the suite’s first movement, we could equally well be describing Beethoven’s Pastoral symphony. It opens at an allegro marking, greeting us with unfolding energy and the affirmative songs of birds that take shape in the form of a rondo. Pleasantly exhausted with the onrush of spring, we next hear a sultry largo in which Vivaldi depicts “A sleeping goatherd—Rustling of foliage—The dog barks—the goatherd and his faithful dog.” Vivaldi’s deft use of the violin as the featured voice provides us with a point of view as we envision the scene, which—as in Beethoven—culminates in a rustic dance.

The Four Seasons is very nearly a musical aviary, and in the summer section, depicting “Langor caused by the heat,” we hear birds more enervated than energetic: the cuckoo, the turtle dove, the goldfinch. Breezes blow, but calm prevails amid gentle zephyrs, “various winds,” the north wind. A drowsy adagio brings us “flies and bluebottles.” But then the threat of storm trespasses on the peaceful scene, and a storm gathers as an exhausted harvester dozes, oblivious. When the summer storm arrives, it seems to drench us with wind-driven rain.

In a good year, the kind depicted in The Four Seasons, the farmer’s autumn is a time of joyful fatigue and fecundity. It begins innocently enough, but soon gives way to signs of drink-fueled merriment and its aftermath, such as “The Sleeping Drunkard” of the second movement. With the successful harvest a memory, the third concerto ends with an account of a hunt, with quarry fleeing while huntsmen and their dogs give chase.

A sense of the passage of time is very much with us as we listen to The Four Seasons; but that doesn’t mean that the musicians who perform it are allowed to grow tired and slow down. In the climactic winter movement, the most familiar and frequently quoted of the four concertos comprising the suite, its virtuosic demands reach their peak. “Dreadful storm—Running and foot stamping because of the cold—chattering of teeth” is the inscription for the opening of this section. But we need hardly read the words, because it is all there in the music, depicted in devilishly quick passagework. Relief comes with yet another storm, this time rain, but this time enjoyed in the sheltered warmth of a hearth. But in the concluding allegro we are outside again, “Crossing the ice—Moving carefully and anxiously—Falling to the ground—Striding boldly on….”

Perhaps Vivaldi had secretly visited Minnesota in February? We can only guess whether he would have been surprised at the way in which this gorgeously wintry concerto has been put to expressive use in countless films and television commercials. For further proof of the staying power of The Four Seasons, glance up at the listing of movements in any concert program that includes a concerto; the fast-slow-fast sequence of the four concertos in this suite was destined to become an almost universal template. Contrasting tempos and dynamics, exciting finales, sumptuous melodies… Vivaldi’s successors knew a good thing when they heard it, and they followed his lead. Today he is credited as a father of the modern concerto.

An Alpine Symphony

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)

Instrumentation: 4 flutes (third and fourth doubling on piccolo), 3 oboes (third doubling on English horn), hecklephone, 3 clarinets (third doubling on bass clarinet), E-flat clarinet, 4 bassoons (fourth doubling on contrabassoon), 12 horns (fourth-eighth doubling on Wagner tubas), 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 2 bass trombones, 2 tubas, 2 timpani, 3 percussion, 2 harps, celesta, organ, strings

Performance time: 47 minutes

Background

Strauss, with his supreme mastery of orchestral color and post-Wagnerian harmonics, pushed the limits of tonality without crossing over into atonality. Was he old-fashioned, or modern? Both, actually.

Born in 1864, at the end of Western classical music’s Romantic era, Strauss had a long, productive life that began before America’s Civil War and ended after World War II. Though he lived more than 50 years after Wagner and was prevented by his musician-father from hearing Wagner’s music, he later became obsessed by it. Many Strauss contemporaries thought Wagner’s revolutionary ideas had been exhausted before Strauss came on the music scene, but Strauss found new life in them: By adding iridescent layers and unexpected modulations, he expanded old chords to make them do things we never thought they could do. His glittering compositions
matched the emotional immediacy of Expressionist painters, but not their abstraction; that was the realm of atonal composers such as Schoenberg and Berg.

In his 20s, Strauss established himself as a dazzling musical technician with superb keyboard technique. His mastery of complex, inventive harmonies gave hope to listeners in the post-Brahmsian, post-Wagnerian world that there were still musical frontiers to explore without abandoning tonality altogether, as the Second Viennese School was doing under the leadership of Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg. And as your annotator has noted, Strauss lived and composed “with the regularity of a dentist.” Though An Alpine Symphony is not one of his earlier works, it has much in common with those he wrote when first making his reputation as a composer with lushly entertaining, vaguely programmatic tone poems. To many music historians and critics, An Alpine Symphony belongs in this category, rather than with other symphonies of its time, such as those of Strauss’ friend Mahler.

What to Listen For

Meditative ideas are given voice and mountain scenery comes to life as we listen to this symphony; in it we can sense memories of human experience and hear Strauss’ innate theatricality. These are the qualities that would lead Strauss to write 17 operas, assuming leadership among post-Wagnerian composers of Germanic operas. Dating from the decade before his international breakthrough hit Salome (1906), Strauss’ best-known tone poems are indispensable concert staples today—Don Quixote, Til Eulenspiegel, Don Juan and Ein Heldenleben, to name the most familiar. Strauss began An Alpine Symphony during this period, in 1899, but abandoned it for a while, though other equally ambitious tone poems were begun and finished. Also sprach Zarathustra, for example, is everywhere now, thanks to the movie 2001: A Space Odyssey. Strauss was in his 30s and still pigeonholed as a “promising young composer” when he wrote these works, and was recognized as a pianist, conductor and technical wizard of harmony.

By the time he completed An Alpine Symphony, in 1915, Strauss was an international celebrity and an acclaimed opera composer. His global prestige gave him the freedom to compose in the forms of his choosing and to exercise his gift for dramatic expressiveness in a purely orchestral form, returning to a genre that had engrossed him two decades earlier. But his major impetus to finish it was the death of his friend Gustav Mahler, who was the greatest symphonist of his generation. An Alpine Symphony would prove to be the largest-scale non-vocal composition Strauss would create before his death, 34 years later. Musicologists sometimes analyze a symphony in terms of how a composer “gets out of” each movement, and though Strauss and Mahler had opposite strategies for symphonic construction, both were innovators. As Strauss leads us through exotic modulations, at least half the fun is marveling at how he gets where he’s going, leading us back to his tonic key.

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and Louisiana Philharmonic, and editor-in-chief for The Santa Fe Opera.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONCERT SPONSORS

Catherine and James Emmi (Thursday)

Thursday night’s concert is sponsored by longtime Symphony supporters Jim and Catherine Emmi. The Emmis are among the Symphony’s most generous supporters. Jim has been Pacific Symphony’s longest-serving board member, serving for close to 30 years. Through much of that time, his wife, Catherine, has been equally active as a Symphony volunteer leader and supporter; we are now happy to have Catherine join the Pacific Symphony Board of Directors. Catherine and Jim are enthusiastic ambassadors for the Symphony and have introduced many new patrons to the orchestra. The Emmis’ financial support includes the endowment of the Principal Viola Chair, held by Robert Becker; and recently, they have also endowed the Symphony’s Principal Cello Chair, held by Timothy Landauer. Pacific Symphony is deeply indebted to Catherine and Jim Emmi for their lifelong support of Pacific Symphony.

Margaret Gates (Friday)

We would like to honor Margaret Gates for her many years of very generous support of Pacific Symphony. Margaret has been an outstanding volunteer leader and a major supporter of Pacific Symphony. As one of the founders and original education volunteers for Class Act, we are indebted to her for her seminal work in establishing this program that is now a cornerstone of Pacific Symphony’s education programs. The success of Class Act and the impact it is making in our Orange County schools is a tribute to Margaret’s contributions to Pacific Symphony. We are deeply grateful for her advocacy and friendship. Thank you!
In 2015-16, Music Director Carl St.Clair celebrates his 26th season with Pacific Symphony. He is one of the longest tenured conductors of the major American orchestras. St.Clair’s lengthy history solidifies the strong relationship he has forged with the musicians and the community. His continuing role also lends stability to the organization and continuity to his vision for the Symphony’s future. Few orchestras can claim such rapid artistic development as Pacific Symphony—the largest orchestra formed in the United States in the last 50 years—due in large part to St.Clair’s leadership.

During his tenure, St.Clair has become widely recognized for his musically distinguished performances, his commitment to building outstanding educational programs and his innovative approaches to programming. Among his creative endeavors are: the vocal initiative, “Symphonic Voices,” which continues for the fifth season in 2015-16 with Puccini’s Turandot, following the concert-opera productions of La Bohème, Tosca, La Traviata and Carmen in previous seasons; the creation six years ago of a series of multimedia concerts featuring inventive formats called “Music Unwound”; and the highly acclaimed American Composers Festival, which highlights the splendor of the William J. Gillespie Concert Organ in 2015-16 with music by Stephen Paulus, Wayne Oquin and Morten Lauridsen.

St.Clair’s commitment to the development and performance of new works by composers is evident in the wealth of commissions and recordings by the Symphony. The 2015-16 season continues a slate of recordings of works commissioned and performed by the Symphony in recent years with the release of William Bolcom’s Songs of Lorca and Prometheus. These join Elliot Goldenthal’s Symphony in G-sharp Minor, released in 2014-15; Richard Danielpour’s Toward a Season of Peace, released in 2013-14; Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna, and Michael Daugherty’s Mount Rushmore and The Gospel According to Sister Aimee, both released in 2012-13. St.Clair has led the orchestra in other critically acclaimed albums including two piano concertos of Lukas Foss; Danielpour’s An American Requiem and Goldenthal’s Fire Water Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio with cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Other commissioned composers include James Newton Howard, Zhou Long, Tobias Picker, Frank Ticheli and Chen Yi, Curt Cacioppo, Stephen Scott, Jim Self (Pacific Symphony’s principal tubist) and Christopher Theofanidis.

In 2006-07, St.Clair led the orchestra’s historic move into its home in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. The move came on the heels of the landmark 2005-06 season that included St.Clair leading the Symphony on its first European tour—nine cities in three countries playing before capacity houses and receiving extraordinary responses and reviews.

From 2008-10, St.Clair was general music director for the Komische Oper in Berlin, where he led successful new productions such as La Traviata (directed by Hans Neuenfels). He also served as general music director and chief conductor of the German National Theater and Staatskapelle (GNTS) in Weimar, Germany, where he led Wagner’s Ring Cycle to critical acclaim. He was the first non-European to hold his position at the GNTS; the role also gave him the distinction of simultaneously leading one of the newest orchestras in America and one of the oldest in Europe.

In 2014, St.Clair became the music director of the National Symphony Orchestra in Costa Rica. His international career also has him conducting abroad several months a year, and he has appeared with orchestras throughout the world. He was the principal guest conductor of the Radio Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart from 1998-2004, where he completed a three-year recording project of the Villa–Lobos symphonies. He has also appeared with orchestras in Israel, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South America, and summer festivals worldwide.

In North America, St.Clair has led the Boston Symphony Orchestra (where he served as assistant conductor for several years), New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco, Seattle, Detroit, Atlanta, Houston, Indianapolis, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver symphonies, among many.

A strong advocate of music education for all ages, St.Clair has been essential to the creation and implementation of the Symphony’s education and community engagement programs including Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles, Heartstrings, Sunday Casual Connections, OC Can You Play With Us?, arts-X-press and Class Act.
Lauded by *Daily Telegraph* (U.K.) for his “searingly poetic lyricism,” violinist Philippe Quint is carving an unconventional path with his impassioned musical desire for reimagining traditional works, rediscovering neglected repertoire and commissioning works by contemporary composers. Whether with his tango band, the Quint Quintet, or a most recent journey with a jazz trio; his dedication to exploring different styles and genres with an award-winning discography has solidified him as one of the foremost violinists of today.

Receiving several Grammy nominations for his two albums *Korngold* and *William Schuman Concertos*, Quint is in constant demand worldwide appearing with major orchestras at venues ranging from the Gewandhaus in Leipzig to Carnegie Hall in New York. He is also the first classical musician to land a leading role in a major independent feature film, *Downtown Express*, which was released in 2010.

Highlights of the 2015-16 season include debuts with Colorado Symphony with Andrew Litton, North Carolina Symphony with Grant Llewellyn in performances and recording of Brahms’ Double and Beethoven’s Triple concertos with cellist Zuill Bailey and pianist Awadagian Pratt, Teatro Real in Madrid with Kynan Johns and Santa Cecilia Orquesta, and at the Lucerne Symphony’s “Russian Festival” with pianist Marc-Andre Hamelin, among others. At the invitation of Maestro Vladimir Spivakov, Quint makes appearances at the opening of the Colmar Festival in France with Tugan Sokhiev and the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse in a performance of Korngold’s Violin Concerto as well as the opening of the Mary B. Galvin’s new hall in Chicago alongside soprano Renée Fleming.

Quint is winner of the “Ambassador of Arts” award in 2014 presented by Brownstone and Gateway Organizations at the United Nations. His 2014-15 season highlights included debuts with Seattle Symphony with Ludovic Morlot, Milwaukee Symphony with Edo de Waart, Kansas Symphony with Michael Stern, Vancouver Symphony with James Gaffigan, and returns to San Diego Symphony with Jahja Ling and Indianapolis Symphony with Krzysztof Urbanski.

The upcoming season also sees two new exciting releases: original arrangements of Bach’s music by composer/pianist Matt Herskowitz titled “Bach XXI,” which debuted at Lincoln Center in February of 2016 and a recording of both Glazunov and Khachaturian violin concertos with Bochumer Sinfoniker and Steven Sloane conducting for AvantiClassic label.

Constantly in demand worldwide, Quint’s most recent appearances include performances with the orchestras of London, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, New Jersey, Minnesota, Bournemouth, Houston, Weimar Staatskapelle, Royal Liverpool, China National, Orpheus and Berlin Komische Oper. He has performed under the batons of Marin Alsop, Carl St.Claire, Daniel Hege, Andrew Litton, Cristian Macelaru, Kurt Masur, Jorge Mester, Edo de Waart, Jahja Ling, Krzysztof Urbanski, Ludovic Morlot, Marco Parisotto, Martin Panteleev, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Klauspeter Seibel, Christopher Seaman, Kenneth Schermerhorn, Steven Sloane, Michael Stern, Bramwell Tovey and Martin Yates, among many others.

Quint’s live performances and interviews have been broadcast on television by CBS, CNN, ABC, BBC World News, NBC, Reuters, Bloomberg TV, as well as by radio stations nationwide including NPR, WNYC and WQXR. His recordings have received multiple “Editor’s Choice” selections in *Gramophone, The Strad, Strings* and the *Daily Telegraph*. His remarkable degree of lyricism, poetry and impeccable virtuosity has gripped the eyes and ears of audiences in Asia, Australia, Latin America, Africa, Europe and the U.S. with what *The Times* (London) describes as his “bravura technique, and unflagging energy.”

Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, Quint studied at Moscow’s Special Music School for the Gifted with the famed Russian violinist Andrei Korsakov, and made his orchestral debut at the age of 9, performing Wieniawski’s Concerto No. 2. After moving to the United States, he earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees from The Juilliard School. His distinguished pedagogues and mentors included Dorothy Delay, Cho-Liang Lin, Masao Kawasaki, Isaac Stern, Itzhak Perlman, Arnold Steinhardt and Felix Galimir.

*The Chicago Tribune* proclaimed, “Here is a fiddle virtuoso whose many awards are fully justified by the brilliance of his playing.” Among his many honors, Quint was the winner of the Juilliard Competition and Career Grant Recipient of Salon de Virtuosi, Bagby and Clarisse Kampel Foundations.