

NOV. 9-11

classical series

SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS
RENÉE AND HENRY SEGERSTROM CONCERT HALL



presents

2017-18 HAL & JEANETTE SEGERSTROM FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICAL SERIES

Performance begins at 8 p.m.; Preview talk with Alan Chapman begins at 7 p.m.

CARL ST. CLAIR • CONDUCTOR
NORBERTINE FATHERS OF ST. MICHAEL'S ABBEY
CHRISTOPH BULL • ORGAN | NICK AND CLEMENS PROKOP • VIDEO ARTISTS

Cathedrals of Sound

An Introduction to Bruckner's Symphony No. 8

Norbertine Fathers of St. Michael's Abbey
with a Gregorian chant
Christoph Bull, organ

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

Symphony No. 8 in C Minor

Allegro moderato
Scherzo: Allegro moderato
Adagio: Solemn and slow, but not dragging
Finale: Solemn, not fast

Concept and design for *Cathedrals of Sound* are made possible by **Suzanne and David Chonette.**

PACIFIC SYMPHONY PROUDLY RECOGNIZES ITS OFFICIAL PARTNERS

Official Hotel

THE WESTIN
SOUTH COAST PLAZA
COSTA MESA

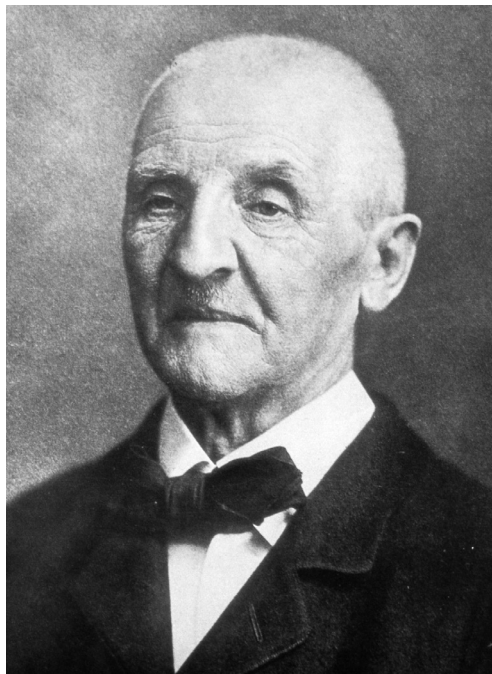
Official Television Station

**PBS
SOCAL**

Official Classical Radio Station

KUSC
CLASSICAL | *fm 91.5*

The Saturday, November 11 concert is being recorded for broadcast
on Sunday, February 11, at 7 p.m. on Classical KUSC.



ANTON BRUCKNER
(1824-1896)

Symphony No. 8 in C Minor

ANTON BRUCKNER (1824-1896)

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon; 8 French horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, Wagner tuba; timpani, percussion, 2 harps; strings
Performance time: 85 minutes

Background

We're fortunate to live in a time when laissez-faire eclecticism is the rule in classical composition. Anton Bruckner, who was born three years before Beethoven died and lived almost to the turn of the 20th century, was not so lucky. As a dedicated symphonist during the late Romantic era, Bruckner was in the eye of the stylistic storms that raged in Europe during his career, nowhere more violently than in his native Austria. Yet despite the monumentality and passionate commitment that characterize his symphonies, he lived and worked with self-effacing modesty, not so much shunning controversy as calmly letting it pass him by. His Symphony No. 8 is the last one he completed, though he had drafted much of his ninth when he died in 1896 at the age of 72.

Alternately described as a simpleton and a savant, Bruckner continues to confound biographers more than 120 years after his death. The events of his life tell us little about his music, and the music even less about his life. We know he was born to a family of modest means but honorable reputation in the Austrian town of Ansfelden, where his father, a local official, was responsible for civic duties that included teaching music in the local school. From early childhood, Anton was possessed of a profound humility that seemed bizarre and monkish, especially in one so young. He carried self-effacement to a degree that seemed to obliterate ego and self-interest. Today, researchers of the mind and human creativity such as Robert Coles and Howard Gardner have documented this kind of moral/religious precocity as a talent on a level with other kinds of intelligence. But during Bruckner's childhood, his accomplishments as a music prodigy were at odds with his avoidance of any kind of praise or recognition. In his music studies he showed the abilities of the best pupil and the sheepishness of the worst, progressing rapidly nonetheless, and mastering the complexities of the church organ at a young age.

When his father died, Bruckner was sent at age 13 to the Augustinian monastery in the town of Sankt Florian, where he took violin and organ lessons in addition to choir training. One can only surmise that monastic life held few surprises for him, and his excellent grades led to a position at Windhaag when he was 17. There he assisted the teacher Franz Fuchs for two years under conditions of vile abusiveness—without complaint, of course. He was not yet 20 years old when a prelate from Sankt Florian intervened to secure him an assistantship in the town of Kronstorf an der Enns, where conditions were far better and he dared to put his hand to serious composition while teaching and studying. The year was 1843. From this time forward it seems clear that Bruckner was on a path of lifelong dedication to music and to God, pursuing each through the other. He would also continue as a church organist and music educator, despite questioning his own presumption in doing so.

Separated by temperament and circumstance from the politics of music, Bruckner developed as a composer at a time when European classical music was mired in controversy. Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) represented opposite factions in what amounted to a civil war over the future of music, with Brahms representing the continuation of traditional principles of composition that Wagner rejected in favor of his own revolutionary techniques. Today's sports fans rarely argue with the vehemence or urgency of, say, Austrian music partisans in the 1860s, when the simple question "Brahms oder Wagner?" could send fists and dishes flying in a Viennese cafe. But the argument of old-versus-new was only the half of it; enthusiasts also debated the future of the symphony in the post-Beethoven era. Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, the "Choral," seemed to bring symphonic form to the edge of a precipice. In the wake of this massive and profound work, what was left for symphonists to accomplish? The listening public waited impatiently for Brahms' answer to this question, anticipating his first symphony as "Beethoven's tenth." He was 43 when he finally unveiled it after 21 years of fretful work. But Beethoven's true heirs among symphonists in the Germanic tradition are arguably Bruckner and his friend Gustav Mahler, whose symphonies share striking similarities: monumentality of artistic scope; a seeming suspension of time; meandering, liquid harmonic progressions that bring serene resolution to startling dissonances; and the use of symphonic form to peer into the depths of eternity. Though both composers excelled in other forms, they reserved the symphony for their principal statements in music. We can fairly call Mahler "death-obsessed" and Bruckner "God-obsessed."

Bruckner composed in isolation, without ambition or agenda. But once he accepted a post at the Vienna Conservatory (in 1868) and Vienna University (in 1875), it was perhaps inevitable that his music would attract increasing attention. His Lyrical Symphony No. 7 triumphed at its premiere in 1884, performed by Arthur Nikisch and the Gewandhaus Orchestra, and remains his most popular symphony. (The eighth premiered eight years later.) And equally inevitably, this growing acceptance forced his work into the maelstrom of Viennese musical politics: Having openly admired the music of Richard Wagner, Bruckner incurred the animus of the traditionalist Eduard Hanslick, Vienna's most influential critic. Hanslick took a polemicist's pleasure in discrediting Bruckner. Since the second half of the 20th century, Bruckner's symphonies have been embraced as if they were myths discovered as real, like a musical equivalent of the lost continent of Atlantis.

What to Listen For

One irony of Bruckner's symphonic oeuvre is—despite its remarkable breadth of conception—a conformance to a sort of symphonic template. The breadth of expression he achieves within this aesthetic pattern reminds your intrepid annotator of Buddhist monks transcribing the varied names of God. Bruckner's symphonies typically begin with subdued dynamics in opening movements that unfurl in formal sonata allegro structure. In this case, he exposes and then develops three themes rather than the traditional two, leading us to a second movement that is built with even more deliberation: an adagio that, after our first-movement initiation, draws us into a slow and emotionally searching development that takes a half-hour to reveal itself, gathering itself into a dramatic, large-scale climax.

The third movement is usually a scherzo (though not in this case) incorporating dance rhythms that suggest the contrast between the human and the divine. Finally, the scherzo leads us to a fourth movement structured in sonata allegro form that unites the earthy humanity of dance with the divine formality of the traditional formalism that is expressive of Divine creation. (Mahler, too, explored the tension between the divine and the worldly.) A triumphant, highly elaborated coda is often the movement's finale.

According to a vivid article published by the Manchester [U.K.] *Guardian* in 2013, "if you're not prepared to encounter its expressive demons, or to be shocked and awed by the places Bruckner's imagination takes you, then you're missing out on the essential experience of [his eighth] symphony." It begins in dark tones that wind through a succession of chromatic shards that surround the symphony's home key of C minor without settling down, eventually leading us to a stormy central passage.

Bruckner positions his scherzo as the second movement of this symphony. In correspondence he described the movement as a portrait of the "German Michael," a rustic figure in the German pastoral tradition, depicted while dreaming. In the heavenly somnolence of shimmering harp accents, the devout Bruckner was also surely referencing the archangel Michael, who led Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, much as Bruckner serves as our musical escort here. The finale brings us a fiery evocation of a death march inspired by Russian Cossacks who had recently called on the Austrian emperor.

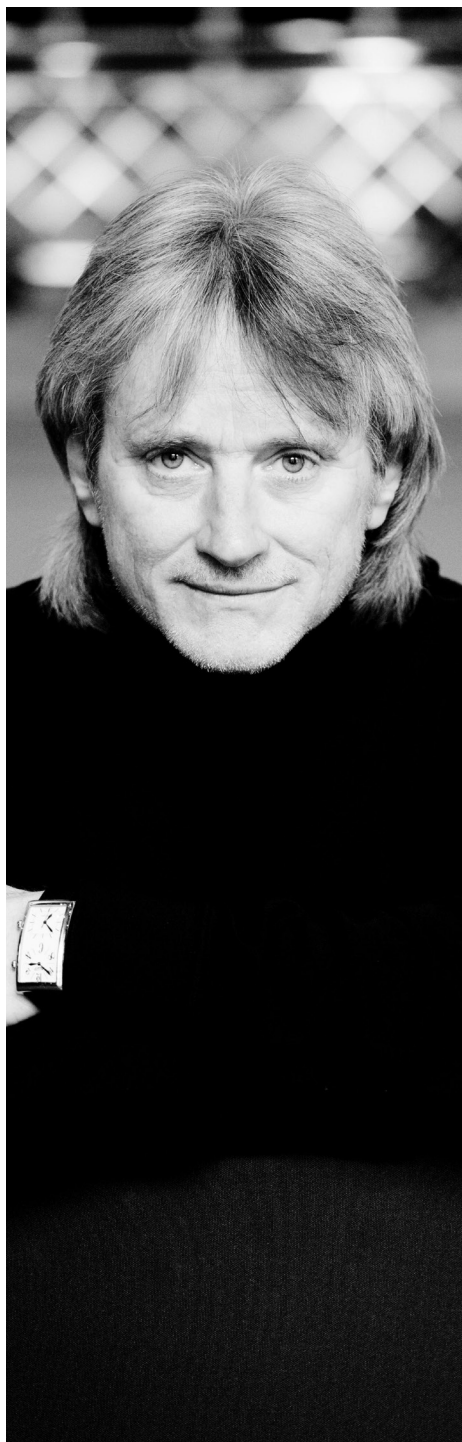
Even fleeting descriptions of any Bruckner symphony can seem tawdry and trivializing. Should we instead consider how its expansive, brass-heavy orchestration seems to echo through eternity? Perhaps the most appropriate description of its sound is the simplest: a struggle between the worldly and the divine that reflects Bruckner's search for God, and ours.

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.

VIDEO ARTISTS



Nick and Clemens Prokop were born into a family of artists in Rosenheim, Germany. Since 2004, their particular interest has been the interaction between classical music and modern technology. For Kent Nagano and the London Symphony Orchestra, they created an interactive visualization of Igor Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*. For the music film *Vineta*, they designed virtual worlds. Using members of the Vienna Philharmonic, "zeitperlen virtostage" was created as part of a permanent collection in the House of Music museum (Vienna and Mexico). With the Cologne Philharmonie they visualized music from György Ligeti, and for the Munich-based Tollwood Festival, they turned the entire Olympic hill into an interactive anniversary installation. Following invitations by Royal Academy of Music in London, the Gasteig Cultural Center in Munich and the Verbier Festival in Switzerland, Nick and Clemens Prokop conduct education projects and workshops with young artists.

**CARL ST.CLAIR**

WILLIAM J. GILLESPIE
MUSIC DIRECTOR CHAIR

The 2017-18 season marks Music Director Carl St.Clair's 28th year leading 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. In April 2018, St.Clair will lead Pacific Symphony in its Carnegie Hall debut, as the finale to the Hall's yearlong celebration of pre-eminent composer Philip Glass' 80th birthday. Among St.Clair's many creative endeavors are the highly acclaimed American Composers Festival, which began in 2010; and the opera initiative, "Symphonic Voices," which continues for the seventh season in 2017-18 with Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, following the concert-opera productions of *Aida*, *Turandot*, *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *Tosca* and *La Bohème* in previous seasons.

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 2016-17 season featured commissions by pianist/composer Conrad Tao and composer-in-residence Narong Prangcharoen, a follow-up to the recent slate of recordings of works commissioned and performed by the Symphony in recent years. These include William Bolcom's *Songs of Lorca* and *Prometheus* (2015-16), Elliot Goldenthal's *Symphony in G-sharp Minor* (2014-15), Richard Danielpour's *Toward a Season of Peace* (2013-14), Philip Glass' *The Passion of Ramakrishna* (2012-13), and Michael Daugherty's *Mount Rushmore* and *The Gospel According to Sister Aimee* (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, 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.



St. Michael's Abbey is a community of Norbertine priests and seminarians in Silverado, Calif. The community numbers almost 70 members—priests and young men studying for the priesthood. The Norbertine order (Praemonstratensians) was founded by St. Norbert of Xanten (1080–1134) in 1121 as a reform of the canons regular of the 12th century. The order was an essential element of the great 12th-century reform of the clergy and religious orders that reinvigorated monastic life in the West.

Norbertines of St. Michael's Abbey

Norbertine life involves the daily singing of the choir office and Mass of the Roman Catholic Church coupled with any kind of work that does not conflict with common life and the choir office. St. Michael's was founded from the abbey of St. Michael in Csorna, Hungary. Many of the abbeys in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire had education as their chief apostolate, and St. Michael's in California followed in this tradition—opening its doors for the first time in August 1961.

The abbey started out with seven Hungarian expatriates who had escaped the communists in 1950, and now numbers 70 confreres, with a median age of 41. Candidates for the abbey come from all walks of life, and a music background is not a pre-requisite. The new member is taught to sing by his daily participation in the choir office (which takes nearly three hours on an average day, proportionately more on feasts and solemn holy days) and daily 30-minute chant classes for the first years of formation.

The schola of singers sent to sing for this evening's program consists of both priests and young men studying for the priesthood. Partially due to its emphasis on the classic elements of religious life (use of Latin in the liturgy; the wearing of traditional religious garb—the habit and ascetical practices), St. Michael's Abbey has had a steady increase of vocations over the years and has not experienced any drop in numbers common elsewhere.

The daily schedule at the abbey begins with Matins at 5:45 a.m. and finishes at 9:15 p.m. after Compline and Benediction. All the daily prayers at the abbey are open to the public.