ORANGE COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER  
SAMUELI THEATER  
Sunday, October 31, 2010, at 3:00 p.m.

PACIFIC SYMPHONY  
CARL ST. CLAIR | MUSIC DIRECTOR  
PRESENTS

CHOPIN AND SCHUMANN:  
A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION  
RAYMOND KOBLER, VIOLIN  •  TIMOTHY LANDAUER, CELLO  
JESSICA PEARLMAN, OBOE  •  ORLI SHAHAM, PIANO

CHOPIN  
(1810–1849)  

Barcarolle, Op. 60  
Orli Shaham

Nocturne in D-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 2  
Orli Shaham

Nocturne in C-sharp Minor for Violin and Piano  
Raymond Kobler  
Orli Shaham

Polonaise in A-flat Major, Op. 53  
Orli Shaham

Introduction and Polonaise Brillante in C Major, Op. 3  
Timothy Landauer  
Orli Shaham

— INTERMISSION —

SCHUMANN  
(1810–1856)  

Three Romances for Oboe and Piano, Op. 94  
Nicht schnell  
Einfach, innig  
Nicht schnell  
Jessica Pearlman  
Orli Shaham

Piano Trio No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 63  
Mit Energie und Leidenschaft  
Lebhaft, doch nicht zu rasch  
Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung  
Mit Feuer  
Raymond Kobler  
Timothy Landauer  
Orli Shaham

This performance is generously sponsored by  
Sam B. Ersan
Chopin & Schumann: A Birthday Celebration

Under the heading “Chopin meets Liszt,” our friendly neighborhood music critic Tim Mangan — who writes about all things classical for The Orange County Register and has covered Pacific Symphony extensively — blogs about the dubious 1944 Hollywood biopic about Chopin, A Song to Remember. “I laughed out loud the first time I saw this, many years ago,” writes Mangan. View the September 12 entry of his “Classical Life” blog and you’ll see why.

Mangan includes a clip from the film depicting a wildly improbable encounter between Chopin and Liszt in which the two legendary composer-pianists spontaneously collaborate on a two-piano version of the Chopin Polonaise that Orli Shaham plays for us tonight. With Chopin’s teacher Joseph Eisner and the composer-impresario-piano manufacturer Ignatz Pleyel looking on, they introduce themselves and shake hands without taking their eyes off their instruments or missing a beat. Chopin, who in real life was homely and frail, is played with the dash of an action hero by the handsome matinee idol Cornel Wilde.

Today we regard these quaint period pieces with ironic detachment and forgive their inaccuracies. But oddly, A Song to Remember captures something elusive about romantic composers including Chopin and Schumann: yes, they were musical giants who carried forward a great musical tradition, but in life they were also practitioners of a small, quirky cottage industry who knew of each other as neighbors might, as if the historic sweep of musical genius in Western Europe were localized in a small town of the mind. In this context the invented handshake between Liszt and Chopin takes on a strange metaphorical aptness. But it might have been more appropriate to force it upon Chopin and Schumann. Both were born in 1810 and died tragically young, while Liszt, a lion of the piano, and Schumann, who wrote authoritatively about music as well as composing it, was an early champion of Chopin’s work (though Chopin did not equally esteem Schumann’s). A true intellectual who had been educated for the law as well as for music, Schumann was a founder of the influential Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, or Journal for New Music, writing with a historical perspective that gave him a statesmanlike position among romantic composers — not unlike Pisarro’s among Impressionist painters.

Schumann’s early praise for Chopin is all the more remarkable considering Schumann’s appreciation of formal rigor in composition and his disdain for virtuosic display. The formalities of large-scale musical exposition and development apply only loosely to Chopin’s music, which is usually smaller in scale and was understood even in his lifetime to lack the structural complexity of some composers; it thrilled with its new, strange kind of expressiveness and its dizzying technical demands. For us, listening to these works is very different; we grow up with Chopin’s distinctive musical voice in the back of our minds. Even those of us who come to classical music relatively late in life can’t escape the “Minute Waltz,” the funeral march from his Piano Sonata No. 2, or the Fantaisie-Impromptu that became the pop song “I’m Always Chasing Rainbows.”

From examples such as these we gain an almost subliminal familiarity with Chopin’s way of working with his thematic materials: short, richly expressive melodies declared in four-measure phrases, repeated in pairs. We will hear this pattern again and again tonight. But we will also hear musical innovation: for example, his sophisticated use of harmony, with thickly layered, highly chromatic chords that are metamorphic and moody. His voice, distinctive and identifiable, has many moods, but seems especially suited to express the inexpressible yearning and sweet ache we associate with the romantic spirit.

Chopin’s intimate salon concerts, which were the rage of Paris, demonstrated expressive possibilities in the piano that listeners and soloists had never before dreamed of; he wrote for and played the instrument as if it were an extension of himself, combining virtuosic dexterity and speed with mercurial fluidity. The dreamy Barcarolle is an apt example. Named for the song of the
Venetian gondoliers, it establishes a boat’s rocking motion in the left hand that remains vivid throughout, even as the harmonies meander and the Venetian canal-scape becomes more intricate.

Their name suggests darkness, but the two nocturnes that comprise Chopin’s Op. 27 are suffused with luminosity. The Nocturne in D-flat major builds slowly and softly, with the warmth of a summer twilight that breaks into a colorful sunset before ebbing. Its complex, cumulative harmonies are balanced by a singing legato in the right hand, simple and languorous. In an arrangement of the Nocturne in C-sharp minor for Violin and Piano the mood is far more melancholy, with the songful melody taken by the violin.

We hear a very different kind of energy as well as pyrotechnic virtuosity in the Polonaise for solo piano and in the Introduction and Polonaise Brillante for Cello and Piano. The Chopin of A Song to Remember calls the polonaise “the soul of Poland,” and there is no question that his polonaises are passionate expressions of Polish nationalism. The proud strains of the polonaise for solo piano have a sound that is more martial than danceable; the charming Polonaise Brillante, by contrast, is rhythmically less emphatic and more highly ornamented, with fleet runs and arpeggios throughout. It was reportedly written to impress a beautiful young cello student and her pianist-father when Chopin was only 19.

Written in 1849, Schumann’s three Romances for Oboe and Piano quickly earned their place among the most beloved chamber pieces for oboe in the classical repertoire, and their enduring popularity has given rise to versions in which a violin, clarinet, or even a cello takes the oboe part. But with the participation of an oboist, they have a plangent, expressive quality unequalled in other arrangements. Though the romances are individual pieces rather than related movements in a suite, they do work well together — moving in an arc from tranquility to occasional, mild agitation to vigor. The melodic statements in each piece are simple and heartfelt, requiring emotional commitment rather than virtuosic show from the pianist and oboist.

Schumann is sometimes called the spirit of the romantic age, and his chamber music — most notably the Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, the most popular of his three piano trios — makes a good case for this claim. It broods and swells with an intensity that belies its trio format, often rising to symphonic intensity. Its restless, expansive opening movement springs from a highly chromatic theme that is developed through complex, canonic imitation until it is nudged aside by a second theme, equally complex in its development. As the exposition proceeds and the initial theme returns, we have a sense of that most romantic of narratives taking shape: the wanderer leaving home on a quest of the spirit.

In a central scherzo that is deceptively simple, the journey seems to continue with strings and piano chasing each other up and down scales. But it is in the third movement, slow and grave in utterance, that a more internal journey takes rise, as the violin and cello seem to pose questions and answers in long, aching phrases and moments of brightness that alternate with laments. This is Schumann marshalling his joy in creativity to confront his inner demons — most of all the specter of depression, the mental illness that tormented him throughout his life and ultimately killed him. And though we know his unhappy ending, the tragedy of his personal story cannot diminish the expression of triumph that ends this trio. It moves from the desolate lamentation and lack of resolution in its third movement to a bold affirmation of the power of art in its finale, with all the thematic elements we heard earlier crafted into an expression of joy in the glory of music.
A consummate musician recognized for her grace, subtlety and vitality, pianist Orli Shaham has established an impressive international reputation as one of today’s most gifted pianists. Shaham has performed with the Boston, Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras, the Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, St. Louis and San Francisco Symphonies, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Stockholm Philharmonic, Bilbao Symphony, Orchestra della Toscana, Orchestre National de Lyon, Taiwan Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Malaysian Philharmonic. A frequent guest at summer festivals, she has performed at Ravinia, Verbier, Mostly Mozart, Aspen, Caramoor, Spoleto and Music Academy of the West. Shaham has given recitals in North America, Europe and Asia at renowned concert halls such as Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, Frankfurt’s Alte Oper, and the Herkulessaal in Munich.

During the 2009–2010 season, Shaham made her debut with the Seattle Symphony led by Gerard Schwarz, performing Mozart’s Concerto for Two Pianos with the pianist Jon Kimura Parker. Other engagements included the Piano Concerto K. 466 with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the K. 488 Concerto with the Rochester Philharmonic; and conducting from the keyboard, Mozart’s K. 414 Concerto on a tour of the East Coast with the International Sejong Soloists, and K. 488 in performance with the Sydney Symphony in Australia. In addition, Shaham’s 2009-10 season included a first-time appearance under the baton of Jaime Laredo playing the Saint-Saëns Concerto No. 2 in Fort Wayne.

Shaham’s recent highlights include her Proms debut with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at Royal Albert Hall featuring Bernstein’s Symphony No. 2, “The Age of Anxiety,” her debut with the Malaysian Philharmonic led by Claus Petr Flor and a special appearance at New York’s Carnegie Hall where she performed Brahms F minor piano sonata and the F-A-E Sonata with violinist Gil Shaham. Other U.S. performances included appearances with the St. Louis, San Antonio and Akron Symphonies and recitals in Cincinnati and St. Louis.

Driven by a passion to bring classical music to new audiences, Shaham maintains an active parallel career as a respected broadcaster, music writer and lecturer. In 2005, she began a collaboration with Classical Public Radio Network as the host of “Dial-a-Musician,” a feature she created especially for the radio network. The concept of the program was to enhance listeners’ experiences of music and musicians. During the feature she directed listeners’ questions about classical music to fellow musicians—by literally dialing them up for the correct answer. Her program hosted over 60 guests including composer John Adams, pianists Emanuel Ax and Yefim Bronfman and sopranos Natalie Dessay and Christine Brewer. Shaham has taught music literature at Columbia University, and contributed articles to Piano Today, Symphony, and Playbill magazines. Shaham has served as artist in residence on National Public Radio’s Performance Today.

Shaham and her older brother Gil have collaborated on several recordings including a Deutsche Grammophon recording entitled Dvořák for Two, and an all-Prokofiev disc, The Prokofiev Album, on Canary Classics. Their most recent recording, Mozart in Paris, features Mozart Violin Sonatas, Opus 1 and is available on CD from Canary Classics and as a Euroarts DVD.

Shaham was recognized early for her prodigious talents. She received her first scholarship for musical study from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation at age five to study with Luisa Yoffe at the Rubin Academy of Music in Jerusalem. By age 7, she traveled to New York with her family to begin study with Nancy Stessin, and became a scholarship student of Herbert Stessin at The Juilliard School a year later. She has also won the Gilmore Young Artist Award and the Avery Fisher Career Grant, two prestigious prizes given to further the development of outstanding talent.
RAYMOND KOBLER

Violinist Raymond Kobler was appointed concertmaster of Pacific Symphony in 1999. During his illustrious career he has appeared as soloist on numerous occasions with the Cleveland Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, Zurich Chamber Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony. In this capacity, he has collaborated with such conductors as André Previn, Lorin Maazel, Sir Neville Marriner, Leonard Slatkin, Christoph Eschenbach, Neemi Järvi, and Herbert Blomstedt. At the festivities surrounding the opening of Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco in 1980, he performed the Bach Double Concerto with Yehudi Menuhin.

From 1974 to 1980, Kobler served as associate concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra, and from 1980 to 1998, he served as concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony. In 2002, Kobler was nominated for a Grammy Award as a member of the chamber group AN DIE MUSIK.

Kobler presented San Francisco premieres of chamber works by Elliot Carter, Witold Lutoslawski, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich and others. He gave the first San Francisco performances of Haydn’s Violin Concerto No. 1, Frank Martin’s Polyphtique in 1993, and the violin concertos of Korngold in 1994 and Rozsa in 1996.

In 1977, he was soloist in the Tippett Fantasia, under the composer’s direction in a special performance before Britain’s Prince Charles.

After earning a bachelor of music degree from Indiana University, Kobler joined the United States Marine White House String Quartet, concurrently earning a master of music degree at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Upon leaving the service, he became concertmaster of the National Ballet Orchestra. He then joined the National Symphony under Antal Dorati. Two years later, he was appointed assistant concertmaster of the Baltimore Symphony.

In 1995, Kobler was appointed by Sir Georg Solti to be concertmaster of the World Orchestra for Peace, an ensemble comprised of concertmasters and principal musicians from major orchestras around the globe. The orchestra was created for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The Outstanding Individual Artist Award of 2002 was presented to Kobler by Arts Orange County.

TIMOTHY LANDAUER

Cells Timothy Landauer was hailed “a cellist of extraordinary gifts” by The New York Times when he won the coveted Concert Artists Guild International Award in 1983 in New York. Landauer is the winner of numerous prestigious prizes and awards, among them the Young Musicians Foundation’s National Gregor Piatigorsky Memorial Cello Award, the Samuel Applebaum Grand Prize of the National Solo Competition of the American String Teacher’s Association and the 1984 Hammer-Rostropovich Scholarship Award.

Landauer’s extensive engagements include his highly acclaimed recitals at Carnegie Recital Hall, the Ambassador Auditorium in Los Angeles, the Orford Arts Center in Montreal, the City Hall Theater in Hong Kong and in Hanover, Germany. He has performed as a soloist with orchestras across three continents. They include the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Taiwan National Symphony, the
Beijing Symphony and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. In the United States, he has appeared with Pacific Symphony, the Maryland Symphony and the Grand Teton Festival Orchestra.

Landauer was born in Shanghai, the son of musician parents. He first studied with his father and later attended the Shanghai Conservatory Middle School, a pupil of Ying-Rong Lin. He continued his studies in the United States with Eleonore Schoenfeld at the University of Southern California where he, upon receiving his master’s degree, was immediately invited to join the faculty as a lecturer and assistant to Piatigorsky Chair Professor Lynn Harrell. Landauer was the recipient of “The Outstanding Individual Artist Award 2004” presented by Arts Orange County.

Jessica Pearlman is principal oboe of Pacific Symphony. Pearlman moved to Orange County after completing her master of music degree in 2009 at The Juilliard School as a student of Elaine Douvas, Nathan Hughes and Pedro Diaz, all of the Metropolitan Opera. While in New York, she performed and toured with some of the city’s most esteemed ensembles, including the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the New York City Ballet and the Metropolitan Opera. She has been a member of the Verbier (Switzerland) Festival Orchestra since 2007, participating in two international tours led by Charles Dutoit and Ludovic Morlot. As a soloist, Pearlman has been featured with the Pacific Chamber Symphony, San Jose Chamber Symphony, Colorado College Summer Music Festival and the Mansfield (OH) Symphony Orchestra, where she also served as principal oboe during the 2005–2006 season.

Pearlman hails from Half Moon Bay, CA, where she studied oboe and violin and performed in the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra and with her local community orchestra. Her continued study of music and science brought her to Oberlin College and Conservatory, where she earned a B.M. under the tutelage of the late James Caldwell as well as a B.A. in neuroscience, as a pre-med student. Her summer research in brain tumor models conducted at Johns Hopkins University was presented at the 2006 conference of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. Among Pearlman’s other talents, she is a dedicated and passionate teacher. She served as a secondary oboe teacher to undergraduate students while at Oberlin College and Yale University (where she spent the first year of graduate school), and in 2006 served as woodwind professor for the Asociación Nacional de Conciertos youth music festival in Panamá. She currently resides in Newport Beach with her rescue dog, Nadia.