MAY 10, 11, 12

SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
Concert begins at 8 p.m.; Preview talk with Alan Chapman at 7 p.m.

Pacific Symphony
CARL ST. CLAIR | MUSIC DIRECTOR
presents

2011-2012 HAL & JEANETTE SEGERSTROM FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICAL SERIES

CARL ST. CLAIR • CONDUCTOR
ANDREW VON OEYEN • PIANO

NARONG PRANGCHAROEN
(b. 1973)
Sattha for Strings, Piano and Percussion

FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809-1847)
Concerto No. 1 in G Minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 25
Molto allegro con fuoco
Andante
Presto – Molto allegro e vivace
Andrew von Oeyen

INTERMISSION

FRANZ SCHUBERT
(1797-1828)
Symphony in C Major, D. 944 (“The Great C Major”)
Andante – Allegro; ma non troppo
Andante con moto
Scherzo: Allegro vivace
Allegro vivace

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Sattha for Strings, Piano and Percussion

*Instrumentation: timpani, 2 percussion, piano, strings*
*Performance time: 11 minutes*

In most concert programs and innumerable Google entries, you’ll find the name of eminent Thai composer Narong Prangcharoen listed with an emphasis on Prangcharoen. But if you have the privilege of meeting this dynamic composer — for example, at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, a major center of scholarship for expatriate Asian musicians where he earned his doctorate and now teaches — you’ll hear colleagues and students address him respectfully by his first name, Narong, rather than his family name, in accord with Thai tradition.

Apply the same degree of East-meets-West flexibility in listening to Narong Prangcharoen’s music and you’ll find it enormously compelling. Written as a musical meditation on the tsunami that devastated his homeland at the close of 2004, *Sattha*, like all of his compositions, seems both to combine and to transcend the musical traditions of Asia, Europe and the Americas with its driving energy, notation-defying elastic rhythms, foregrounded percussion and eclectic, slithering harmonies.

Although Prangcharoen is still in his early 30s, his compositions are frequently programmed throughout the world, and he has received many international prizes. These include the Alexander Zemlinsky International Composition Prize and the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award, which honors Takemitsu’s principles of prayer, hope and peace through music. Like Prangcharoen, Takemitsu was a composer known for creatively combining Asian and Western musical traditions. In 2011 Prangcharoen received the Annual Underwood Commission by the American Composers Orchestra.

*Sattha* received its world premiere performance by Pacific Symphony with Carl St.Clair conducting on Nov. 30, 2005. It was commissioned to honor Prangcharoen as winner of the Symphony’s American Composers Competition.

Concerto No. 1 in G Minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 25

*Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings*
*Performance time: 21 minutes*

Mendelssohn was also a brilliant pianist. He was born in 1810, just in time to take full advantage of the technical advances that brought together the characteristics we recognize in today’s “concert grand:” auditorium-filling amplitude and resonance; quick, sensitive action; and the extra treble notes that add sparkle to the sound and provide extended range for extravagantly ascending phrases and fast, fancy finger-work in the soloist’s right hand.

When he composed his Piano Concerto No. 1 at age 20, the superbly educated Mendelssohn was already writing mature works and had a firm grasp on the great intellectual issues of his time, and as this concerto demonstrates, he was already confident in his compositional style. For him, stylistic exploration had come earlier, with the string symphonies that test the techniques of past masters. As the magisterial authority Richard Taruskin tells us, by his late teens, Mendelssohn was writing in the manner exemplified in this concerto... a manner that would not really change for the rest of his life.

What we hear in his Piano Concerto No. 1 are Mendelssohn’s characteristically beautiful, lyrical melodies; his distinctive care in crafting the transitions between movements, with thematic materials carried forward in a way that creates a sense of unity and resolution; and brilliance with an odd touch of reticence. Mendelssohn was happy to indulge his contemporary audiences’ appetite for virtuosic playing, and provided an abundance of rapid passagework and opportunities for spectacular cadenzas. (Hugh Macdonald refers to his “superbly fluent fingers.”) But he did not approve of pyrotechnics that seemed to emphasize showmanship rather than musical ideas; when it came to the most spectacular piano virtuoso of his day, Franz Liszt, Mendelssohn admired his abilities, but felt his compositions were showy and vulgar.

Such scruples did not prevent this concerto from winning cheers wherever Mendelssohn played it. Rather than teasing the ear and building drama with hints of themes to come in a typically long orchestral introduction, Mendelssohn brings in the piano after...
Perhahs great genius is always unique and often wayward, but Schubert’s genius has tended to separate him from other mavericks in the pantheon of “greatest” classical composers. Like Mozart, he displayed prodigious musical gifts in early childhood and composed at an incredibly prolific rate, leaving a legacy of masterpieces in most major musical genres and dying in his 30s (in Schubert’s case, only 31). But with Mozart’s example, aficionados tend to agree on the hallmarks of greatness. Ask two fans about Schubert and they might well describe two seemingly different composers.

Perhaps shaking their heads over the Schubert operas that might have been, devotees of vocal music will point to his more than 600 songs, which set an unequalled standard for art songs of incredible melodic abundance and expressiveness. They may be completely unaware of his symphonies’ place in the canon, or that many experts on the form consider his “Great” C Major symphony to be the first towering masterpiece to follow Beethoven’s Ninth, proving that great symphonies could still be written. (It’s known as the “Great” to differentiate it from his No. 6, a smaller-scaled symphony also labeled as the “little” C Major — especially important since the Great C Major has also been listed as No. 7 and is not always identified by a number in modern performances.)

This symphony’s link to Beethoven is more than just a matter of music history. The German Beethoven, who forever changed the scope of symphonic expression, was at the height of his creative powers when Schubert was born in Vienna in 1797. His music and reputation loomed large throughout Europe. When the very precocious Schubert was acquiring his musical tastes during his pre-teen years, Beethoven became a chief and enduring influence.

We can hear this influence immediately in the architectural framework that Schubert establishes for the Great C Major. This is not the Schubert of achingly beautiful, singing melodies that capture the essence of Romantic verse in song, but rather the Schubert who perhaps Schubert’s thematic materials for Beethoven’s, we sense what Schubert learned from Beethoven’s imaginative thoroughness in carrying a symphonic movement forward through a long-sustained arc.

Both composers were influenced by the great Enlightenment thinkers who came to view the universe as subject to laws of science and thus available to human understanding through scientific inquiry — in a sense, a giant clockwork. This line of thought was the digital revolution of its day. It made automata and robotic devices all the rage in Beethoven’s and Schubert’s era. And it is reflected in their symphonic movements, which combine thoroughness and precision with the gleam of ingenuity and innovation. Schubert’s Great C Major goes far beyond the conventions of Classical symphonies, giving us musical worlds to experience through his disassembly, observation and reassembly of thematic materials. By the time we’re
done listening, we have a different perspective on God’s creation — a perspective informed by the symphonist’s inspired creativity.

Of course, none of this can happen in a hurry or without technical challenges, and these obstacles are the subject of much mythology surrounding the Great C Major. It is expansive, with performance times usually running about 50 minutes, though recent interpretations on the leaner, brisker side sometimes cut this down a bit. Even so, the sound is stately, with an undeniable sense of its own grandeur. Robert Schumann, who received the manuscript from Schubert’s brother and called it the greatest instrumental work since the death of Beethoven, described it as of “heavenly length,” a phrase that has proved as durable as the symphony itself.

The objections of overtaxed musicians, some of whom complained it made their arms tired, are cited as the main reason why The Great C Major did not receive its premiere until 1839, more than a decade after Schubert’s death, in a performance conducted by Felix Mendelssohn. An oft-told tale claims that a hornist turned to a colleague late in a rehearsal of the first movement to ask if he had managed to hear a tune yet. His balkiness seems especially unlikely given the symphony’s innovative use of non-string players. It provided just what they wanted: more interesting parts that did not just double or repeat lines in the strings. This is the symphony that alerted later composers to the gravity and portent that could be added through bolder use of the brasses, especially trombones — one area in which Schubert departed radically from his idol Beethoven.

Schumann describes the supreme expressiveness of one such groundbreaking section in the symphony’s opening: “There is in it a passage where a horn, as though calling from afar, seems to come from another world. The instruments stop to listen, a heavenly spirit is passing through the orchestra.” The popular music historian Alfred Einstein cites the transition from the symphony’s introduction (actually the two lengthy introductory movements) to the third and fourth movements in exciting terms: “...[T]he theme which first expresses itself in such mystical language on the trombone... how simple and direct it all is — the transition to the second subject, the quiet passage leading to the recapitulation, the contrast between thematic and ‘lyrical’ treatment in the Scherzo and the Trio, the sauntering gait and the daemonic flight of the Finale! Scherzo and Finale are clearly linked by the four-note figure which later achieves its apotheosis in the Finale, where it transforms the sauntering gait into a grandioso climax.”

For all its depth and innovation, the Great C Major follows the standard four-movement symphonic form of the day, opening with an Andante of stately pace that leads to a brisker tempo marked Allegro ma non troppo (but not too much). From the outset, unusual elements are brought together here, with the opening theme stated in the horns. The second movement is an Andante con moto (with motion, i.e. with a sense of pace); it is cited by the esteemed musicologist Maurice J. E. Brown as Schubert’s “loveliest slow movement: in the duet for the cellos and oboe, after the big climax; in the soft, repeated notes of the horn... which lead to the recapitulation; in the varied string accompaniments to the melody of the A-major section: all these have poetry and imagination which he never surpassed and never more ardently expressed.”

Yet in a symphony marked by such poetry and ardor, Brown asserts that the dominant aesthetic characteristic of the Great C Major — and of its greatness — is its “tremendous rhythmic vitality.” Evident throughout the symphony, this quality is ascendant in the symphony’s final two movements: a Scherzo leading to an Allegro vivace trio in the third, and the Finale marked Allegro vivace. “The Scherzo and Finale, the former in full sonata form, have a lively rhythmic energy which sweeps all before it,” says Brown — the moment when Einstein’s “sauntering gait” metamorphoses into a thrillingly emphatic resolution.

The final movement also offers further evidence of the Schubert-Beethoven connection: a suggestion of the “Ode to Joy” melody. It is brief but definite, occurring just as the movement’s development section opens. As I listened and talked with my brother Dave about all these musical riches, he called the Great C Major’s dramatically truncated climax perhaps the most satisfying of any symphony, a finale that sums up a huge symphonic statement with astonishing brevity. Another great listener’s opinion.

Michael Clive is editor-in-chief of the Santa Fe Opera and blogs as The Operahound for Classical TV.com.
In 2011-12, Music Director Carl St.Clair celebrates his 22nd season with Pacific Symphony. 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. St.Clair’s lengthy history with the Symphony 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 40 years — due in large part to St.Clair’s leadership.

The 2011-12 season features the inauguration of a three-year vocal initiative, “Symphonic Voices,” with productions of La Bohème and a Family series production of Hansel and Gretel, as well as two world premieres and three “Music Unwound” concerts highlighted by multimedia elements and innovative formats, including the 12th annual American Composers Festival, celebrating the traditional Persian New Year known as Nowruz.

In 2008-09, St.Clair celebrated the milestone 30th anniversary of Pacific Symphony. In 2006-07, he 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.

From 2008 to 2010, St.Clair was general music director of the Komische Oper in Berlin, where he led successful new productions such as La Traviata (directed by Hans Neuenfels), the world premiere of Christian Jost’s Hamlet and a new production — well-received by press and public alike and highly acclaimed by the composer — of Reimann’s Lear (also 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 recently led Wagner’s “Ring” Cycle to great critical acclaim. St.Clair 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 orchestras in Europe.

St.Clair’s international career has him conducting abroad numerous 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 successfully 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 in summer festivals worldwide. St.Clair’s commitment to the development and performance of new works by American composers is evident in the wealth of commissions and recordings by Pacific Symphony. St.Clair has led the orchestra in numerous critically acclaimed albums including two piano concertos of Lukas Foss on the harmonia mundi label. Under his guidance, the orchestra has commissioned works which later became recordings, including Richard Danielpour’s An American Requiem on Reference Recordings and Elliot Goldenthal’s Fire Water Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio on Sony Classical with cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Other composers commissioned by St.Clair and Pacific Symphony include William Bolcom, Philip Glass, Zhou Long, Tobias Picker, Frank Ticheli, Chen Yi, Curt Cacioppo, Stephen Scott, Jim Self (the Symphony’s principal tubist), Christopher Theofanidis and James Newton Howard.

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 education programs including Classical Connections, arts-Xpress and Class Act.
Andrew von Oeyen has already established himself as one of the most captivating pianists of his generation. Since his debut at age 16 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Esa-Pekka Salonen, von Oeyen has performed to critical acclaim in recital and orchestral appearances around the world.

Commanding an extensive and diverse repertoire, von Oeyen has performed the major concertos of the keyboard literature — Bartók, Barber, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Gershwin, Grieg, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Schumann, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky — with such ensembles as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Berlin Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony, Grant Park Orchestra, Ravinia Festival Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Slovenian Philharmonic and Slovak Philharmonic. As both soloist and conductor he has led concertos and orchestral works by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Ravel and Kurt Weill at Spoleto Festival USA. On July 4, 2009, von Oeyen performed at the U.S. Capitol with the National Symphony in "A Capitol Fourth," reaching millions worldwide in the multi-award-winning PBS live telecast.

Von Oeyen has appeared in recital at Wigmore Hall and Barbican Hall in London, Lincoln Center in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington, Boston’s Symphony Hall, Zürich’s Tonhalle, Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow, Bolshoi Zal in St. Petersburg, Dublin’s National Concert Hall, Royce Hall in Los Angeles, the Herbst Theater in San Francisco, Sala São Paulo, Teatro Olimpico in Rome, in Bucharest, Vietnam, Macau and in every major concert hall of Japan and South Korea. During the 2009-10 season, he toured Japan twice, performing Beethoven and Rachmaninoff concertos with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra and later that season in recital. He also appeared in recital with violinist Sarah Chang throughout Europe, North America and Asia, which culminated in a recording for EMI Classics, in addition to regular guest appearances with orchestras worldwide and appearances at the Aspen and Saratoga music festivals. The year 2011 saw the release of an award-winning album of Liszt works under the Delos label, including the Sonata in B Minor, Vallée d’Obermann and Wagner and Verdi opera transcriptions. The 2011-12 season includes appearances with the Prague Philharmonia, Detroit Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille, Berlin Symphony Orchestra, Pacific Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, North Carolina Symphony, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Omaha Symphony, Slovak Philharmonic, a tour with the Slovenian Philharmonic and recitals in the U.S., Austria, France, Italy, Spain and Japan.

In recent seasons, von Oeyen has appeared at the festivals of Aspen, Ravinia, Saratoga, Spoleto, Schubertlände, Festival del Sole, Grant Park, Grand Teton, Mainly Mozart, Bellingham and Gilmore. He won the prestigious Gilmore Young Artist Award in 1999 and also took First Prize in the Leni Fe Bland Foundation National Piano Competition in 2001.

Born in the United States in 1979, von Oeyen began his piano studies at age 5 and made his solo orchestral debut at age 10. An alumnus of Columbia University and graduate of The Juilliard School, where his principal teachers were Herbert Stessin and Jerome Lowenthal, he has also worked with Alfred Brendel and Leon Fleisher. Von Oeyen lives in New York and Paris.
Pacific Symphony, celebrating its 33rd season in 2011-12, is led by Music Director Carl St.Clair, who marks his 22nd season with the orchestra. The largest orchestra formed in the U.S. in the last 40 years, the Symphony is recognized as an outstanding ensemble making strides on both the national and international scene, as well as in its own burgeoning community of Orange County. Presenting more than 100 concerts a year and a rich array of education and community programs, the Symphony reaches more than 275,000 residents—from school children to senior citizens.

The Symphony offers moving musical experiences with repertoire ranging from the great orchestral masterworks to music from today’s most prominent composers, highlighted by the annual American Composers Festival and a new series of multi-media concerts called "Music Unwound."

The Symphony also offers a popular Pops season led by Principal Pops Conductor Richard Kaufman, who celebrates 21 years with the orchestra in 2011-12. The Pops series stars some of the world’s leading entertainers and is enhanced by state-of-the-art video and sound. Each Pacific Symphony season also includes Café Ludwig, a three-concert chamber music series, and Classical Connections, an orchestral series on Sunday afternoons offering rich explorations of selected works led by St.Clair. Assistant Conductor Maxim Eshkenazy brings a passionate commitment to building the next generation of audience and performer through his leadership of the Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra as well as the highly regarded Family Musical Mornings series.

Since 2006-07, the Symphony has performed in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, with striking architecture by Cesar Pelli and acoustics by the late Russell Johnson. In September 2008, the Symphony debuted the hall’s critically acclaimed 4,322-pipe William J. Gillespie Concert Organ. In March 2006, the Symphony embarked on its first European tour, performing in nine cities in three countries.

Founded in 1978, as a collaboration between California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) and North Orange County community leaders led by Marcy Mulville, the Symphony performed its first concerts at Fullerton's Plummer Auditorium as the Fullerton Chamber Orchestra under the baton of then-CSUF orchestra conductor Keith Clark. The following season the Symphony expanded its size, changed its name to Pacific Symphony Orchestra and moved to Knott’s Berry Farm. The subsequent six seasons led by Keith Clark were at Santa Ana High School auditorium where the Symphony also made its first six acclaimed recordings. In September 1986, the Symphony moved to the new Orange County Performing Arts Center, where Clark served as music director until 1990.

The Symphony received the prestigious ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming in 2005 and 2010. In 2010, a study by the League of American Orchestras, “Fearless Journeys,” included the Symphony as one of the country’s five most innovative orchestras. The orchestra has commissioned such leading composers as Michael Daugherty, James Newton Howard, Paul Chihara, Philip Glass, William Bolcom, Daniel Catán, William Kraft, Tobias Picker, Frank Ticheli and Chen Yi, who composed a cello concerto in 2004 for Yo-Yo Ma. In March 2012, the Symphony is premiering Danielpour’s Toward a Season of Peace. The Symphony has also commissioned and recorded An American Requiem, by Richard Danielpour, and Elliot Goldenthal’s Fire Water Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio with Yo-Yo Ma.

The Symphony’s award-winning education programs benefit from the vision of St.Clair and are designed to integrate the Symphony and its music into the community in ways that stimulate all ages. The orchestra’s Class Act program has been honored as one of nine exemplary orchestra education programs by the National Endowment for the Arts and the League of American Orchestras. The list of instrumental training initiatives includes Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra, Pacific Symphony Youth Wind Ensemble and Pacific Symphony Santiago Strings.

In addition to its winter home, the Symphony presents a summer outdoor series at Irvine’s Verizon Wireless Amphitheater, the organization’s summer residence since 1987.
CARL ST.CLAIR • MUSIC DIRECTOR  
William J. Gillespie Music Director Chair

RICHARD KAUFMAN • PRINCIPAL POPS CONDUCTOR  
Hal and Jeanette Segerstrom Family Foundation Principal Pops Conductor Chair

MAXIM ESHKENAZY • ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR  
Mary E. Moore Family Assistant Conductor Chair

The musicians of Pacific Symphony are members of the American Federation of Musicians, Local 7.