SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Samueli Theater
Concert begins at 3 p.m.

2012–2013 CAFÉ LUDWIG CHAMBER SERIES

ORLI SHAHAM • PIANO AND HOST
RAYMOND KOBLER • VIOLIN | PAUL MANASTER • VIOLIN | BRIDGET DOLKAS • VIOLIN
ROBERT BECKER • VIOLA | TIMOTHY LANDAUER • CELLO
JESSICA PEARLMAN • OBOE | ROSE CORRIGAN • BASSOON

FRANCIS POULENC
(1899-1963)
Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano
Presto
Andante
Rondo
  Jessica Pearlman
  Rose Corrigan
  Orli Shaham

MAURICE RAVEL
(1875-1937)
String Quartet in F Major
Allegro moderato. Très doux
Assez vif. Très rythmé
Très lent
Vif et agité
  Paul Manaster
  Bridget Dolkas
  Robert Becker
  Timothy Landauer

INTERMISSION

ERNEST CHAUSSON
(1855-1899)
Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Quartet in D Major, Op. 21
Décidé
Sicilienne - Pas vite
Grave
Très animé
  Raymond Kobler
  Paul Manaster
  Bridget Dolkas
  Robert Becker
  Timothy Landauer
  Orli Shaham
**Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano**

**Background**

The French classical repertory has always had a mystique all its own. Refined and exquisitely crafted, it projects vividly colorful effects despite the elegant restraint found nowhere else. Still, as the 19th century ended and the 20th century began, French classical composers faced the same critical challenge dividing their counterparts in Germany and Austria: how to carry their musical traditions beyond composers who came before them, represented in France by the supremely competent orthodoxy of Gounod and Saint-Saëns and the unfulfilled promise of Bizet.

Francis Poulenc, who was born in Paris in the first week of 1899 and found his musical voice amid musical turmoil early in the 20th century, was perhaps the most prominent member of the French composers known as Les Six — a group of six composer-friends who considered the composer Erik Satie as their “spiritual leader” and whose shared philosophy of music was almost a rejoinder to the prevailing musical experiments in Paris and Vienna. In contrast with their Impressionist compatriots Debussy and Ravel, who were exploring new scales and unconventional rhythms, members of Les Six sought sophistication through simple, traditional means. Their music is witty and light, with movements that are typically brief — accessible, yet not without substance.

**What to listen for**

In Poulenc’s popular Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon, we hear the “secret weapon” that accounts for so much of his appeal: the gift for melody that made him a master of the French art song. (He wrote 130 of them!) But the Trio also reminds us that Poulenc’s voice, for all its appeal, is not without complexity. He was a master who worked across a very broad range of forms — orchestral, chamber, ballet and even film scores — and whose *Dialogues of the Carmelites* is celebrated as a landmark of 20th-century opera. His firm grip on chamber styles enabled him to give the Trio the feeling of an 18th-century divertissement, all buoyancy and grace. His sly juxtaposition of the plaintive oboe and plangent bassoon with the piano’s bright, percussive sound is as bracingly delicious as the morning’s first coffee.

The Trio’s inspirational sources seem quite traditional, according to Poulenc himself, who composed the work at age 27. “To those who believe me careless of form,” he wrote, “I would not hesitate to reveal my secrets here: the first movement follows the plan of a Haydn allegro, and the final rondo is in the shape of the scherzo of Saint-Saëns’s Second Piano Concerto.” While the opening movement sparkles, the interior movement embraces us gently with its mellowness and soft contours, which Poulenc described as “sweet and melancholic.” As for that rondo, many listeners hear not only Saint-Saëns’s structural template but also a theme by Beethoven in it. Still, the result is entirely Poulenc. “I am rather fond of [the Trio],” he noted, “because it has a transparent sound and is well balanced.” Listening, we can only concur.

**String Quartet in F Major**

**Background**

The purity and discipline of chamber music often leads composers back to the quartet form later in their careers. But Maurice Ravel, one of the towering figures of French music, wrote only one string quartet, and because he was theoretically still a conservatory student when he composed it, the quartet is sometimes mischaracterized as a youthful work. Hardly. It is a remarkable musical statement, daring and confident, with nothing “formative” about it. The Quartet dates from 1903, when Ravel was already 28 years old and his talent was gaining recognition outside the conservatory, and is clearly the work of a mature yet questing musical mind — probably Ravel’s first masterpiece. It has become one of the most frequently programmed quartets in the repertory, popular with listeners and an enduring challenge for players.
When he composed the Quartet, Ravel had already earned favorable comment from Claude Debussy, and his status at the Paris Conservatory was beyond that of a student, more like what we might call a post-doctoral fellow today. In fact, before Ravel was in a position to teach, he exerted a great influence at the Conservatory; he was widely expected to win Prix de Rome, an annual arts prize that became France’s most prestigious award for rising composers. When the jurors failed to award him the prize four times in five years (from 1901 to 1905), their decision was widely viewed as embarrassingly political, reflecting the aesthetic conservatism of director Théodore Dubois. The gesture was viewed with dismay, and before long, Ravel’s main influence and stylistic mentor at the Conservatory — Gabriel Fauré — became its director.

What to listen for

The Quartet, which was part of Ravel’s application for the 1903 Prix de Rome, was dedicated to Fauré and certainly reveals the influence of his poetic, charming style, but it is constructed with a rigor and precision that thrilled Debussy. (“In the name of the gods of music, and in mine,” Debussy told Ravel, “do not touch a single note of what you have written in your quartet.”) Analysts unfailingly describe it as melodic, and it is — but rich in melodies that are more to be enjoyed through immersion and flow as they occur and develop, rather than singable phrases for the listener to hold in mind like song subjects. “Organic as the wind” is how one critic described the effect; this quartet takes the listener along for the ride.

Propelling this sense of natural beauty is a first movement marked allegro moderato, developed in strict sonata form. In the second movement, marked in French — assez vif — we hear some of the most celebrated extended pizzicato passages in the chamber repertory, with opposing pairs of instruments plucking complex rhythms in counterpoint... a good example of what critics mean when they speak of Ravel’s “precision.” In the gentler, much slower third movement (with the French marking très lent), themes from the first movement are reprised with a richer, more sonorous sound. The agitated, energetic fourth movement is noteworthy in part for its inclusion of a true 5/8 time signature — another example of Ravelian precision.

**Background for Violin, Piano and String Quartet**

On paper, the circumstances of composer Ernest Chausson’s life could have been invented for a film script: his family’s resistance to his musical career, his Hamlet-like indecision, and his oft-quoted premonition of early death that tragically came true. But these facts belie a musical mind that was anything but cliché. As his unusually scored violin concerto proves, Chausson was an original thinker who went his own way in music.

Born to a prosperous family in 1855 (his father, a builder, worked with Baron Haussmann on the reconstruction of Paris), Chausson took a degree in law and originally seemed destined for a career in that field. In fact, music was not his sole interest outside the legal profession, as his exposure to architecture and the fine arts revealed his talents in drawing and painting. But Chausson was deeply affected by a series of Wagner performances in Munich in 1879, then the epicenter of the Wagner revolution in music. Immediately afterward, he returned to Paris and took a degree in law and originally seemed destined for a career in that field. In fact, music was not his sole interest outside the legal profession, as his exposure to architecture and the fine arts revealed his talents in drawing and painting. But Chausson was deeply affected by a series of Wagner performances in Munich in 1879, then the epicenter of the Wagner revolution in music. Immediately afterward, he returned to Paris and took a degree in law.

Later, he joined his circle. Chausson’s varied interests did not include opera. Accounts of the successful French opera composer Jules Massenet’s early encounters with Chausson show that Massenet recognized in Chausson something even rarer than sheer musical talent — a kind of philosophical and aesthetic authenticity that extended to all the arts and to life itself. Excited over Chausson’s gifts, he pressed the young man to become his protege and to apply for the prestigious Prix de Rome. But this encouragement may have been premature; Chausson soon abandoned not only his pursuit of the Rome scholarship, but also Massenet’s composition class, gravitating toward Cesar Franck and joining his circle. Chausson’s varied interests did not include opera.

What to listen for

Hearing the Chausson violin concerto for the first time can come as a bit of a shock. Here was a composer influenced by Wagner and Franck composing a concerto in 1889, when the prevailing notions of the concerto involved bigness, virtuosic display and dramatic gestures — a brilliant soloist pitted against a large orchestra in dramatic interplay. This concerto is something completely different and closer to the Baroque model of the concerto grosso: a soloist engaged in an elegant musical exchange with a small ensemble, in this case piano and string quartet. It is intimate and lapidary in its beauty.

In the first movement, a three-note motif is played twice with dramatic emphasis. This provides the basis for a calmer development that leads to the solo violin’s statement. Interestingly, the solo violin line, following the intensity of the movement’s opening, does not push the rest of the ensemble into a subordinate role.

The concerto’s Baroque feeling is further emphasized in the second movement, composed as a Sicilienne — a dance popular in the 18th century with a lilting dotted rhythm that gives the movement an antique patina. This is followed by a movement with the French marking grave (roughly “serious”), which opens and closes with stately dignity. A vibrant finale (“très animé”) brings the concerto to a close.
A consummate musician recognized for her grace, subtlety and vitality, Orli Shaham has established an impressive international reputation as one of today's most gifted pianists. Hailed by critics on four continents, Shaham is in demand for her prodigious skills and admired for her interpretations of both standard and modern repertoire. The Chicago Tribune recently referred to her as “a first-rate Mozartean” and London’s Guardian said Shaham’s playing was “perfection” during her recent Proms debut with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Shaham has performed with the Boston, Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras, the Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, St. Louis, San Francisco, Seattle, San Diego and Utah symphonies, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, 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 Tanglewood, Ravinia, Verbier, Mostly Mozart, Aspen, Caramoor, Spoleto, Bravo Vail, Music Academy of the West, Orcas Island, Amelia Island and Peninsula music festivals.

Shaham has given recitals in North America, Europe and Asia at such renowned concert halls as Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, Frankfurt’s Alte Oper and the Herkulessaal in Munich, and has worked with many eminent conductors including Sir Neville Marriner, Sir Roger Norrington, Christopher Hogwood, David Robertson, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Leonard Slatkin, Robert Spano and Gerard Schwarz, among others.

A highlight of Shaham’s international performance schedule in 2012-13 is the East and West Coast premieres of a piano concerto written for her by the acclaimed American composer Steven Mackey, with the New Jersey Symphony conducted by Jacques Lacombe and the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by David Robertson. Shaham continues her role as curator and performer in Pacific Symphony’s chamber music series, as well as her role as host of the public radio series America’s Music Festivals, a two-hour weekly program broadcast on more than 100 stations.

Shaham’s highly acclaimed classical concert series for young children, Baby Got Bach, is in its third season, now presented by the 92nd Street Y in New York City, and has expanded to venues in St. Louis and Aspen. Designed for preschoolers, Baby Got Bach provides hands-on activities with musical instruments and concepts and concert performances that promote good listening skills.

Shaham’s recordings released in 2012 include a CD of Hebrew Melodies (Canary Classics), recorded with her brother, the violinist Gil Shaham (to be released in late fall); a recording of the Brahms Horn Trio and Schubert’s lied Auf dem Strom (Albany) featuring the acclaimed principal French hornist of the Cleveland Orchestra, Richard King; and Saint-Saëns’ Carnival of the Animals with pianist Jon Kimura Parker and the San Diego Symphony (San Diego Symphony).

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. Her program hosted over 60 guests including composer John Adams, pianist Emanuel Ax and soprano Christine Brewer. Shaham has taught music literature at Columbia University, and contributed articles to Piano Today, Symphony and Playbill magazines and NPR’s Deceptive Cadence blog. Shaham has served as artist in residence on National Public Radio’s Performance Today.

Shaham was recognized early for her prodigious talents. She received her first scholarship for musical study from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation at age 5 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. In addition to her musical education, Shaham holds a degree in history from Columbia University. Shaham lives in New York and St. Louis with her husband, conductor David Robertson, stepsons Peter and Jonathan, and kindergartner twins Nathan and Alex.
Violinist Raymond Kobler was appointed concertmaster of Pacific Symphony in 1999, and currently occupies the Eleanor and Michael Gordon Chair. 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 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. In 2002, Kobler was nominated for a Grammy Award as a member of the chamber group AN DIE MUSIK. The Outstanding Individual Artist Award of 2002 was presented to Kobler by Arts Orange County.

Paul Manaster has been the associate concertmaster of Pacific Symphony since 1998. He is almost a native Californian, having grown up in San Diego from a young age. Manaster has performed with a variety of groups in the Southern California area, including the San Diego Symphony and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has performed as concertmaster of the Riverside Philharmonic and the San Diego Chamber Orchestra.

Prior to his move to Orange County, Manaster lived in Texas for eight years, playing with the San Antonio Symphony. He received a bachelor of music degree from Northwestern University. In addition to performing, Manaster teaches violin privately and has served on the faculty of Trinity University and other institutions. Paul lives in Irvine with his actress/oboist wife Dianne, their daughter Stephanie and three cats.

Bridget Dolkas, principal second violin of Pacific Symphony, is a passionate and vibrant member of the Southern California musical community. As first violinist and founding member of the California Quartet, she co-founded the Connections Chamber Music Series (connectionsmusic.com), of which Tim Mangan of The Orange County Register wrote, “a worthy series.” Since the year 2000, the California Quartet has performed in Europe and the United States to great acclaim.

Dolkas has performed worldwide since the age of 10. In recent years, she has performed as soloist with South Coast Chamber Orchestra and Poway Symphony. She performed for eight years in the San Diego Symphony and the San Diego Opera Orchestra. Studying chamber music under such masters as Joseph Silverstein, Kim Kashkashian, Fred Sherry, Toby Appel, as well as the Juilliard, Alexander and Miro Quartets, has made a tremendous musical impact on Dolkas.
Principal viola of Pacific Symphony since 1982, Robert Becker was recently appointed to the position of full-time director of string studies at Chapman University’s Conservatory of Music. Internationally known as a pedagogue of the viola and chamber music and founder of the Viola Workout in Crested Butte, Colo., he is dedicated to the training of young violists and string players for a future career in performing, teaching, chamber music and orchestral playing.

Continuing his tenure as principal viola of Pacific Symphony, he served as principal and solo viola for American Ballet Theatre’s West Coast performances at Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and Segerstrom Center for the Arts in 2009-10. Becker occupies the Catherine and James Emmi Chair.

ROBERT BECKER
CELLO

Pacific Symphony principal cellist 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.

TIMOTHY LANDAUER
CELLO

Jessica Pearlman currently holds the position of principal oboe for Pacific Symphony. Pearlman moved to Orange County after completing her master of music 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 and working in the summer under such conductors as Valery Gergiev and Kurt Masur. 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 2005-06 season.

JESSICA PEARLMAN
OBOE

Rose Corrigan enjoys a varied career in orchestras, chamber music and recording studios, in addition to her teaching and solo performances. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California where she studied with Michael O’Donovan and currently holds a position on the faculty. Corrigan is the principal bassoonist in Pacific Symphony and the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and a former member of the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. She can be heard on numerous movie soundtracks, television scores, records and commercials including the popular documentary March of the Penguins, and the films Enchanted and The Spiderwick Chronicles.

ROSE CORRIGAN
BASSOON