

SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS
RENÉE AND HENRY SEGERSTROM CONCERT HALL



presents

2016-17 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 | **OLGA KERN** • PIANO

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

Carnival Overture, Op. 92

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43

Olga Kern

INTERMISSION

Conrad Tao (b. 1994)

I got a wiggle that I just can't shake (WORLD PREMIERE)

I got a wiggle
that I just can't shake

Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936)

Pines of Rome, P. 141

I pini di Villa Borghese (The Pines of the
Villa Borghese)

Pini presso una catacomba (Pines Near
a Catacomb)

I pini del Gianicolo (The Pines of the Janiculum)

I pini della Via Appia (The Pines of the
Appian Way)

Opening weekend concerts are generously sponsored by **South Coast Plaza**.

The 2016-17 Piano Soloists are sponsored by **The Michelle F. Rohé Distinguished Pianists' Fund**.

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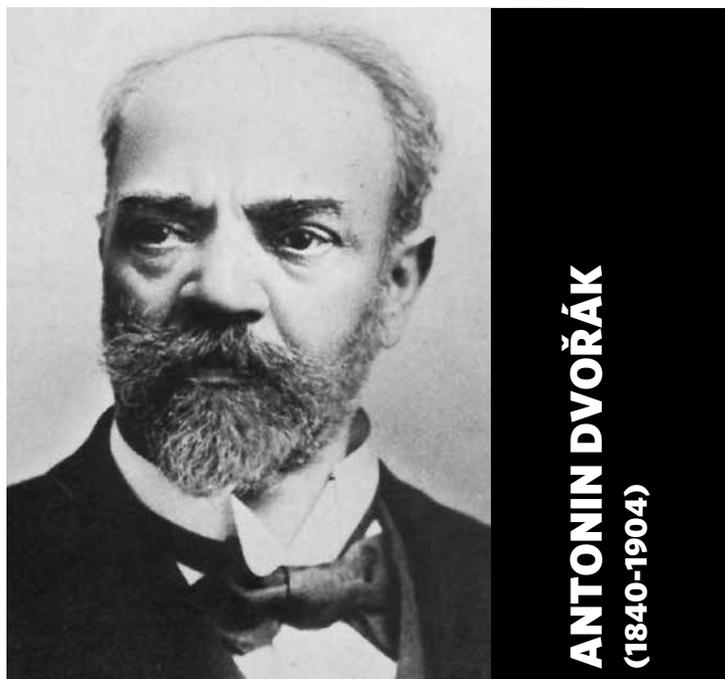
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Official Classical Radio Station



The Saturday, Sept. 24, concert is being recorded for broadcast on Sunday, Feb. 5, 2017, at 7 p.m. on Classical KUSC.



ANTONIN DVOŘÁK
(1840-1904)

Carnival Overture

ANTONIN DVOŘÁK (1840-1904)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, 3 percussion, harp, strings
Performance time: 10 minutes

Background

Nationalist movements in Western classical music owe much to Antonin Dvořák, who believed passionately in composers' use of indigenous sources for their compositions. In his own music, native Czech sources account for the distinctive, echoing melodies and an ever-present sense of "swing." By 1891, when Dvořák began composing the *Carnival Overture*, his advocacy of this approach was well established; he stipulated that his German music publisher include Czech titles for his compositions, and as an esteemed faculty member of the Prague Conservatory of Music, he taught students how to integrate folk themes into classical forms.

Having recently completed his eighth symphony, Dvořák turned to shorter orchestral forms such as tone poems, overtures and dance suites. His *Carnival Overture* formed the centerpiece of a triptych of overtures he composed on themes of nature, life and love: first "In Nature's Realm"; then the *Carnival Overture*; and finally his overture to *Othello*, representing a particularly dark view of love. He conducted all three overtures as a group in Prague in April of 1892, but since their premiere they have proved highly divisible, and the *Carnival Overture* has established itself as the most popular and colorful of the three works.

The three overtures were composed between March 1891 and January 1892 in Prague and at Dvořák's country home, with the *Carnival Overture* taking shape over the summer; it is saturated with the warmth and energy of long summer days. He completed the *Overture* on September 12, 1891. It was during this period of composition that Dvořák accepted Jeanette Thurber's invitation to become the director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York City; he conducted the overtures' premiere performance in Prague in April 1892, and the second performance at Carnegie Hall

the following October during his residency in the U.S.—a period that should have been far more influential in the development of American classical music than it turned out to be.

What to Listen For

For the Prague premiere of the overtures—a concert that turned out to be a kind of farewell performance for the departing Dvořák—he wrote his own program notes. Regarding the *Carnival Overture*, he commented that it was intended to evoke "a lonely, contemplative wanderer reaching at twilight a city where a festival is in full swing. On every side is heard the clangor of instruments, mingled with shouts of joy and the unrestrained hilarity of the people giving vent to their feelings in songs and dances."

Through much of the *Overture*, but especially in its brilliant opening, its vibrancy and color outweigh the "lonely, contemplative" side of the wanderer's feelings. The rapid tempos deploy all the sections of the orchestra in whirling, colorful array. Ringing percussive accents convey the impression of celebratory dance. The *Overture* is structured in basic sonata plan. But at the beginning of its development, Dvořák embedded a melancholy passage voiced by the English horn—a melody that represents, in the composer's words, "a pair of straying lovers." This romantic interlude gives the overture a sense of narrative completion when the overture's carnival atmosphere resumes. An energetic coda concludes the overture.

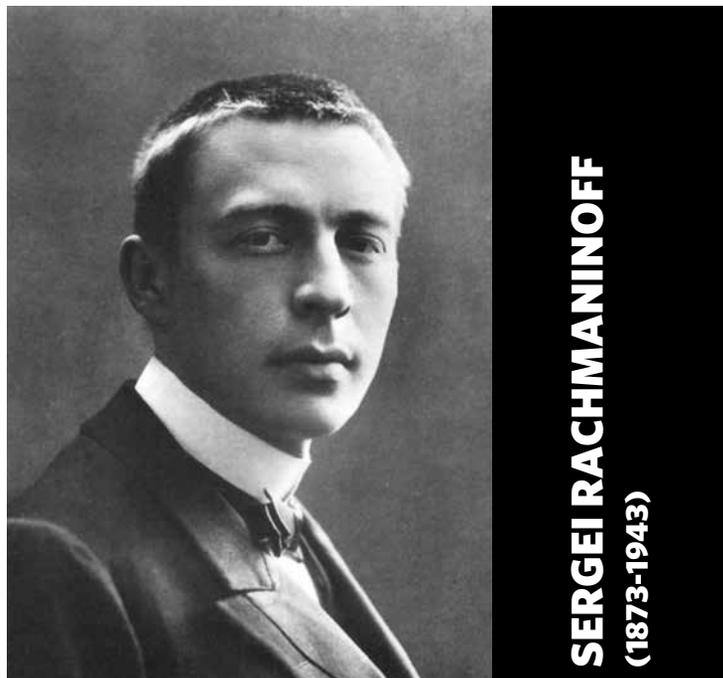
Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873-1943)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, 4 percussion, harp, strings, solo piano
Performance time: 22 minutes

Background

Was Rachmaninoff the greatest pianist who ever lived? We will never know. But this unanswerable question is the subject of renewed interest among music historians and keyboard fanciers.



SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
(1873-1943)

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Not so long ago, the thrilling power and sheer dazzle of Rachmaninoff's piano works, along with their gloriously lush, unrestrained romanticism, began to encounter resistance from some piano purists. But listeners who cherish great pianism have joined with scholars who have rediscovered lost Rachmaninoff piano rolls, reconsidered his recordings and reevaluated contemporary accounts of his concerts. These reveal not just the pianist of legend with tremendous hands capable of thundering power and speed, but also a poetic, aristocratic interpreter whose subtleties in performance matched the dense layering and structural ingenuity of his compositions.

Which is not to gainsay the appeal of Rachmaninoff's technical brilliance. In his *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* we have a perfect convergence of all the elements of instrumental virtuosity: a melodic subject drawn from a violin caprice by Nicolo Paganini, the violinist who helped invent the very idea of the classical virtuoso superstar; an extraordinary set of 24 variations designed to showcase both compositional and performance skills; a heroic expansion of the original melody's scale and dynamic range; and special attention to Rachmaninoff's particular gifts as a pianist—the blazing speed and thundering power that thrilled his audiences.

Rachmaninoff was essentially a figure of the 20th century, the last of the Russian romantics. But his sound was rooted in the 1800s and in the Russian nationalist tradition dating back to Glinka and Tchaikovsky. He trained as a performer and composer in Moscow and St. Petersburg, focusing on the piano in both disciplines. But all expectations for his future life, including his life in music, were shattered by the Russian revolution of 1917, when Rachmaninoff's aristocratic family lost their long-held estate with its traditional way of life. He became a citizen of the United States and died here while touring as a concert pianist, just three days before his 70th birthday.

Rachmaninoff composed the *Rhapsody* in 1934, when he had already written four full-length concertos, and despite his frequent bouts of self-doubt, he had every reason to be confident of its success and formal excellence. Not just a collection of variations on a theme, the *Rhapsody* is a concertante that is formally constructed, with the 24 variations dividing themselves into three movements in which most of the variations, like Paganini's original theme, are stated and developed in A minor. The result closely resembles a concerto with traditional fast, slow and faster movements.

What to Listen For

Listeners who cannot quite place the formal title of the *Rhapsody* will immediately recognize Paganini's familiar main subject, which is the best-known and -loved of his set of 24 violin caprices. It's built upon a pair of peppery A-minor phrases that sound vaguely demonic, especially on the violin. The melody starts with an emphatic A, and then, after a quick four-note figure, jumps up to E—then drops an octave to a lower E, repeats the four-note figure starting on E rather than A to arrive back where it began. This basic progression—start on the tonic, jump up a fifth, drop an octave and jump up a fourth to the tonic again—it often called “circular,” and it could be repeated in an endless loop if a counterbalancing phrase didn't intervene... eventually resolving it on the same tonic note.

In Rachmaninoff's treatment of this theme, the first ten variations form an opening movement, with another theme—a quotation of the *Dies irae* theme of the Latin mass—arising in variations 7, 10, 22 and 24. Variation 11 consists of a slow, poetic transition that leads us into a slow movement that moves gradually from D minor to

D-flat minor, culminating in the most famous musical interlude in the entire *Rhapsody*, variation 18. You'll be lost in the beauties of Rachmaninoff's lush romanticism when this variation, vernal and ecstatic, soars forth, literally turning the original theme on its head—a direct inversion of Paganini's original A-minor subject. Understanding its potential popularity, Rachmaninoff is reported to have quipped “this [variation] is for my agent.” It is often played as a stand-alone work.

But the entire composition, as well, has been popular since its premiere in Baltimore in 1934. When Bruno Walter led the New York Philharmonic in the *Rhapsody*'s first New York performance, Rachmaninoff was at the keyboard and writer Robert A. Simon commented in *The New Yorker* that “The Rachmaninoff variations, written with all the composer's skill, turned out to be the most successful novelty that the Philharmonic Symphony has had since Mr. Toscanini overwhelmed the subscribers with Ravel's *Bolero*.”



CONRAD TAO
(b. 1994)

I got a wiggle that I just can't shake WORLD PREMIERE CONRAD TAO (B. 1994)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (second doubling on piccolo), 3 oboes, 3 clarinets (third doubling on bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, piano, organ, strings
Performance time: TK

Notes by Conrad Tao

The starting point for *I got a wiggle that I just can't shake* was the Pacific Symphony's year-round home, the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall. The hall is alluring and sinuous, and I found myself attracted to the wavy sense of line that pervades the building. I wanted to write a piece about those wavy lines. I imagined them colliding gleefully into one another in three-dimensional sonic space before settling down into a more ordered fashion.

The work uses as its primary musical material a series of short, rapid melodic “wiggles” introduced at the outset. In the first section, “I got

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a wiggle..." these figures are expounded upon and plied with as they ricochet about the orchestra. The structure here mimics a wiggly line, shifting haphazardly between registers.

The second section, "...that I just can't shake," is a rumination on the wiggles from before; it is calmer in nature but has an undercurrent of obsessiveness throughout. Quick gestures from the first section become lyrical passages that never quite resolve; much of the music's texture is skittish. Layers of sound build on one another and finally unfold into a plush climax (indicated in the score to be played "with love!") reinforced by the organ, and the piece ends with a contented sigh.

I got a wiggle that I just can't shake gets its title from the central montage of *Vacation!*, a 2010 film by Zach Clark.

The Pines of Rome

OTTORINO RESPIGHI (1879-1936)

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (third doubling on piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 7 trumpets, 4 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, 5 percussion, harp, celesta, piano, organ, strings
Performance time: 23 minutes

Background

Born in 1879, the Bolognese master Ottorino Respighi lived most of his life in the 20th century (he died in 1936). But in the charm and tonal elegance of his music we can hear 19th- and 20th-century aesthetics colored by his infatuation with earlier days: music of the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods, from the 16th through the 18th centuries. Respighi's music is graceful, courtly and opulent; it often seems to iridesce with shifting colors. The rhythms are whirling or stately. The sound beguiles us like an antique music box.

Respighi began his career as a violinist and violist, studying first with his father and then at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna, but historical and composition studies were also included in his curriculum. After graduating in 1899, he became principal violist in the orchestra of the Russian Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg. There he studied composition with Rimsky-Korsakov, one of the great masters of orchestral color, whose influence can be heard in all of Respighi's most popular works. Returning to Italy, he became first violinist in the Mugellini Quintet, but devoted himself mainly to composing from 1909 onward.

What to Listen For

The Pines of Rome is the second of Respighi's three most popular orchestral suites, which also include *The Fountains of Rome* and *Roman Festivals*. All three showcase his gift for creating music that seems vividly and specifically visual, a goal sought by many of the baroque composers he so admired. In the first movement of *The Pines*, we are treated to a view of the sumptuous Villa Borghese, where rambunctious children are playing and soldiers are marching amid the pines. Next we are transported to a subterranean catacomb in Campagna, with its eerie vaults and priestly chanting deftly evoked by low orchestral voicing, organ and trombones. In the third movement, the nocturnal feeling is accented by the sound of a nightingale among the pines of Janiculum Hill.

As Respighi's Roman travelogue progresses, we realize that not only has he transported us through the city of Rome, but through a day as



OTTORINO RESPIGHI
(1879-1936)

well: starting with children at play on a sunlit afternoon, through the night, and finally to the Via Appia, where *The Pines of Rome* ends in the brilliance of a Roman sunrise.

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.

NEXT MONTH!

Tchaikovsky's Fourth

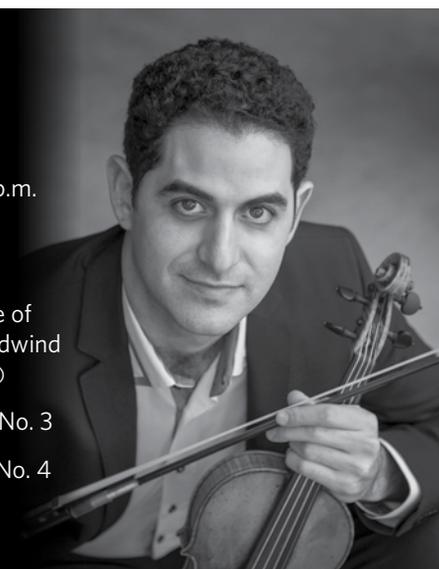
Oct. 20-22, 2016, 8 p.m.
Preview talk begins at 7 p.m.

Carl St.Clair, *conductor*
Arnaud Sussmann, *violin*

PRANGCHAROEN: "Absence of Time" Concerto for Woodwind Quartet (WORLD PREMIERE)

MOZART: Violin Concerto No. 3

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 4



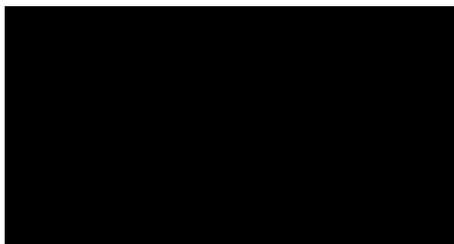
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Michelle Rohé is one of the great patrons of the arts in Orange County. She has invested in Pacific Symphony's artistic excellence and has a particular love of great pianists. Her kind spirit and willingness to support the arts make much of what we do possible. We are grateful to The Michelle Rohé Distinguished Pianists Fund for sponsoring our piano soloists this season.



OLGA KERN
PIANO



Russian-American pianist Olga Kern is now recognized as one of her generation's great artists. With her vivid stage presence, passionately confident musicianship and extraordinary technique, the striking pianist continues to captivate fans and critics alike. Kern was born into a family of musicians with direct links to Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff and began studying piano at the age of 5. She jumpstarted her U.S. career with her historic Gold Medal at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in Fort Worth, Texas as the first woman to do so in more than 30 years.

Steinway Artist and First Prize Winner of the Rachmaninoff International Piano Competition at the age of 17, Kern is a laureate of many international competitions and tours throughout Russia, Europe, The United States, Japan, South Africa and South Korea. The first Olga Kern International Piano Competition is announced to take place in Albuquerque, N.M. in autumn, 2016, where Kern will serve as artistic director and jury chair. Kern is a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Division of the Arts, as well as jury chairman of the 17th Cliburn International Amateur Piano Competition in June 2016.

In the 2016-17 season, Kern will premiere her first American concerto, the Barber Piano Concerto, with the Saint Louis Symphony and Leonard Slatkin. She will also appear with the Colorado Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Stuttgarter Philharmoniker and Copenhagen Philharmonic. Recital appearances include the Herbst Theatre in San Francisco, Scottsdale Center for the Arts, Virginia Arts Festival, Milan and Glasgow.

Kern opened the Baltimore Symphony's 2015-16 centennial season with Marin Alsop. Other season highlights included returns to the Royal Philharmonic with Pinchas Zukerman, Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice with Giancarlo Guerrero, Rochester Philharmonic and San Antonio Symphony, a month-long tour of South Africa for concerts with the Cape and KwaZulu Natal philharmonics, an Israeli tour with the Israel Symphony, solo recitals at Sarasota's Van Wezel Hall, New York's 92nd Street Y and the University of Kansas' Lied Center, and recitals with Renée Fleming in Carnegie Hall and Berkeley.

In recent seasons, Kern has performed with Tokyo's NHK Symphony, Orchestre National De Lyon, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, the symphonies of Detroit for Tchaikovsky Piano Concertos Nos. 1, 2 and 3, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Nashville, Colorado, Madison and Austin, and gave recitals in New York, San Francisco, Seattle and Louisville, and alongside Renée Fleming and Kathleen Battle. Kern's performance career has brought her to many of the world's most important venues, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, Salzburger Festspielhaus, La Scala in Milan, Tonhalle in Zurich and the Châtelet in Paris.

Kern's discography includes Harmonia Mundi recordings of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and Christopher Seaman (2003), her Grammy-nominated recording of Rachmaninoff's *Corelli Variations* and other transcriptions (2004), a recital disk with works by Rachmaninoff and Balakirev (2005), Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Warsaw Philharmonic and Antoni Wit (2006), Brahms Variations (2007) and a 2010 release of Chopin Piano Sonatas No. 2 and 3 (2010). Most recently, SONY released their recording of Kern performing the Rachmaninoff Sonata for Cello and Piano with cellist Sol Gabetta. She was also featured in the award-winning documentary about the 2001 Cliburn Competition, *Playing on the Edge*, as well as *Olga's Journey, Musical Odyssey* in St. Petersburg and in *They Came to Play*. In 2012, Kern and her brother, conductor and composer, Vladimir Kern, co-founded the "Aspiration" foundation whose objective is to provide financial and artistic assistance to musicians throughout the world.

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Conrad Tao has appeared worldwide as a pianist and composer, and has been dubbed a musician of “probing intellect and open-hearted vision” by *The New York Times*, a “thoughtful and mature composer” by NPR and “ferociously talented” by *TimeOut New York*. In June of 2011, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars and the Department of Education named Tao a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, and the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts awarded him a YoungArts gold medal in music. Later that year, Tao was named a Gilmore Young Artist, an honor awarded every two years highlighting the most promising American pianists of the new generation. In May of 2012, he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant.

During the 2015-16 season, Tao performed piano with the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic, Pacific Symphony, Brazilian Symphony and Calgary Philharmonic, among others; he also performs recitals in Europe and throughout the United States with repertoire ranging from Bach to Frederic Rzewski to Rachmaninoff to Julia Wolfe. Past notable symphonic engagements have included the San Francisco Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Toronto Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Detroit Symphony, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony and Nashville Symphony. Tao maintains a close relationship with the Aspen Music Festival, and has appeared at the Sun Valley Summer Symphony, Brevard Music Center, Ravinia Festival and Mostly Mozart Festival.

In June of 2013, Tao kicked off the inaugural UNPLAY Festival at the powerHouse Arena in Brooklyn, which he curated and produced. The festival, designated a “critics’ pick” by *TimeOut New York* and hailed by *The New York Times* for its “clever organization” and “endlessly engaging” performances, featured Tao with guest artists performing a wide variety of new works. Across three nights encompassing electroacoustic music, performance art, youth ensembles and much more, UNPLAY explored the fleeting ephemera of the Internet, the possibility of a 21st-century canon and music’s role in social activism and critique. That month, Tao, a Warner Classics recording artist, also released *Voyages*, his first full-length for the label, declared a “spiky debut” by *The New Yorker’s* Alex Ross. Of the album, NPR wrote: “Tao proves himself to be a musician of deep intellectual and emotional means—as the thoughtful programming on this album... proclaims.” His next album, *Pictures*, which slots works by David Lang, Toru Takemitsu, Elliott Carter, and Tao himself alongside Mussorgsky’s familiar and beloved *Pictures at an Exhibition*, was released in October, 2015; *The New York Times’* Anthony Tommasini called it “a fascinating album [by] a thoughtful artist and dynamic performer...played with enormous imagination, color and command.”

Tao’s career as composer has garnered eight consecutive ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards and the Carlos Surinach Prize from BMI. In the 2013-14 season, while serving as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra’s artist-in-residence, Tao premiered his orchestral composition, *The world is very different now*. Commissioned in observance of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the work was described by *The New York Times* as “shapely and powerful.” In 2016, Tao closes his residency in Dallas with a new work for the orchestra, *Alice*, to be premiered in June. Most recently, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia commissioned a new work for piano, orchestra and electronics, “An Adjustment,” which received its premiere in September 2015 with Tao at the piano. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* declared the piece abundant in “compositional magic,” a “most imaginative [integration of] spiritual post-Romanticism and ‘90s club music.”

Tao was born in Urbana, Ill., in 1994. He has studied piano with Emilio del Rosario in Chicago and Yoheved Kaplinsky in New York, and composition with Christopher Theofanidis.

CONRAD TAO

COMPOSER

