PACIFIC SYMPHONY’S SUMMERFEST 2018
AT PACIFIC AMPHITHEATRE
OC FAIR & EVENT CENTER

presents

Tchaikovsky Spectacular

The concert begins at 8 p.m.

CARL ST.CLAIR • CONDUCTOR
VADYM KOLODENKO • PIANO

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)
Festive Overture, Op. 96

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)
Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23
Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso
Andantino semplice
Allegro con fuoco
Vadym Kholodenko

INTERMISSION

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)
“Procession of the Nobles” from Mlada
Russian Easter Overture, Op. 36

Alexander Borodin (1833–1887)
“Polovtsian Dances” from Prince Igor

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
1812 Overture, Op. 49

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**Festive Overture, Op. 96**  
**Dmitri Shostakovich** (1906–1975)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon; 4 French horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba; timpani, percussion; strings  
Performance time: 7 minutes

Shostakovich’s aptly titled Festive Overture recalls another popular work composed a century earlier: the overture to Glinka’s opera *Ruslan and Ludmilla*. And that’s hardly surprising: Shostakovich took inspiration from Glinka’s influential *Ruslan* overture, though in their opening bars the two overtures sound quite different. Glinka bolts from the starting gate with a fusillade of shots from the timpani and a rolling lick string theme that starts fast and gets faster, while Shostakovich greets us with a fanfare of deceptive solemnity voiced by two trumpets. This brassy announcement eventually delineates the overture’s first presto theme. Only when this theme is finally taken up by the winds does the *Ruslan*-like fun begin: a sense of rushing momentum, with the orchestra’s choirs chasing each other at a breakneck pace.

The overture combines a fun-loving spirit with a formal sense of classical structure. The rollicking presto eventually resolves into a stately theme in the horns and cellos. But behind this courtliness, a driving beat is still at play, and when the two themes are played in counterpoint, boisterous energy wins out: the fanfare theme returns in the brasses, giving rise to an exuberant coda. Shostakovich’s friend Lev Lebedinsky describes him writing the overture at astonishing speed, laughing and talking as he worked. Within two or three days, composition was complete. If the process sounds like a madcap scramble, so does the music—in Lebedinsky’s words, “like uncorked champagne.”

**Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23**  
**Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840–1893)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons; 4 French horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones; timpani; strings; solo piano  
Performance time: 32 minutes

Trained as a pianist as well as a composer, Tchaikovsky was born into the great age of virtuosic concerto composition—the Romantic era of classical music—and his spectacular Concerto No. 1 for Piano and Orchestra is one of the staples of the genre. Concertos had been written for centuries, but Beethoven (born 1770) had raised the stakes; by 1875, when Tchaikovsky was 35 and was composing his Piano Concerto No. 1, pianos and piano concertos had grown in size. Composers followed Beethoven’s lead, relishing the chance to create large-scaled, serious concertos of spectacular difficulty. More than just popular hits, they also expressed a basic principle of the Romantic age: the individual’s struggle against opposition, the one versus the many. But they were also vehicles for sheer spectacle and elevated the soloist to a sort of cult-virtuoso status. Often seemingly unplayable, they helped make Paganini and Liszt into musical superstars.

Ordly, “unplayable” turns out to be a fateful word in the performance history of Tchaikovsky’s concertos. His Piano Concerto No. 1 and the Violin Concerto in D both suffered this characterization, and both are now among the most beloved concertos in the standard repertory. When it came to the violin, Tchaikovsky was on less-than-familiar ground. But he was a respected pianist, and created a concerto in which towering grandeur and poetic utterance are abundant and unmistakable—earmarks of a hit concerto. The melodies are gorgeously lyrical and take advantage of the instrument’s expressive capabilities. So why did Tchaikovsky’s friend and intended dedicatee for the score, the great pianist Nikolai Rubinstein, dis it as artistically crude and, yes, unplayable? Whatever the reason, Rubinstein eventually changed his mind and praised it effusively.

The concerto bursts upon us with a brassy orchestral fanfare introducing thunderous piano chords grouped in threes. They are played in unison with both hands as they move in bold, multi-octave leaps up the keyboard. Even if you had never heard this concerto before, this off-quoted opening would be instantly recognizable. But listen again and notice Tchaikovsky’s remarkable musical calculation: the piano soloist grabs the primary role, even entering alone. But once the orchestra enters, it has the melody. Those chords, so full of life and confidence, actually accompany the orchestra’s statement. Once it has been introduced, the piano takes up the melody in a manner that is vigorous but more moderated and less tumultuous, setting up a pattern of alternating grandeur and lyricism that prevails throughout this concerto.

**“Procession of the Nobles” from Mlada**  
**Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844–1908)

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon; 4 French horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba; timpani, percussion, harp; strings  
Performance time: 5 minutes

Rimsky-Korsakov’s flair for medieval times and faraway cultures was fueled in childhood by letters from his seafaring brother Voin, and when he finally earned his own naval commission, he devoured the experience of foreign travel with a passion that remained with him and pervades his music. The hugely ambitious *Mlada*, couched in ancient history and mysticism, is often called “Wagnerian” in scope. And opera fans can readily hear a connection between the vivid *Mlada* and pervades his music. The hugely ambitious *Mlada*, couched in ancient history and mysticism, is often called “Wagnerian” in scope. And opera fans can readily hear a connection between the vivid “Procession of the Nobles,” which opens the second act of *Mlada* and the Russian Easter Overture we can hear why. His compositions are brilliantly atmospheric, with remarkable mastery of orchestral texture, glistening harmonies and exotic color.

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Though American listeners have staked out the 1812 Overture and made it their own, the year 1812 in its title has nothing to do with our own War of 1812; it actually references Napoleon’s catastrophic march toward Moscow and Russia’s successful defense at the Battle of Borodino. As the overture opens, a plaintive choir of cellos and violas represents the people of Russia in their homes and churches as the invasion and their suffering escalate. Those brass-borne strains of the French national anthem, “La Marseillaise”? Those are the bad guys. They are countered by louder strains of the Russian anthem “God Save the Czar.” And, of course, by the Imperial Army and its cannons—16 shots in all.

After the battling and the cannon fire, the initial hymn tune returns to the whole orchestra and triumphant church bells ring out. They remind us that it is not the army or the czar but the Russian people who are the hero of the 1812 Overture—as they are in Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 7 depicting the siege of Leningrad, and in Mussorgsky’s populist opera of czars and political intrigue, Boris Godunov. The common people as hero: now, there’s a democratic value that any patriotic American music lover can appreciate.

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.

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The 2018-19 season marks Music Director Carl St.Clair’s 29th 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 led Pacific Symphony in its Carnegie Hall debut, as the finale to the Hall’s yearlong celebration of pre-eminent composer Philip Glass’ 80th birthday. He led Pacific Symphony on its first tour to China in May 2018, the orchestra’s first international tour since touring Europe in 2006. The orchestra made its national PBS debut in June 2018 on Great Performances with Peter Boyer’s “Ellis Island: The Dream of America,” conducted by St.Clair. 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 eighth season in 2018-19 with Puccini’s Madame Butterfly, following the concert-opera productions of The Magic Flute, 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.
Vadym Kholodenko is fast building a reputation as one of the most musically dynamic, technically gifted performers of the new generation of pianists, praised by the Philadelphia Enquirer in his performance of Tchaikovsky with the Philadelphia Orchestra for “his absorbing melodic shading [and] glittering passage work.” Winner of the 2013 gold medal at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Kholodenko has begun to forge an international career throughout Europe, Asia and North America to great critical acclaim. Previous awards include first prize at the 2011 Schubert Piano Competition in Dortmund, first prize at the 2010 Sendai Piano Competition in Japan and the Grand Prix at the Maria Callas Competition in Athens.

Highlights of the 2017-18 season include concerto engagements with the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine and Paul Daniel, Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and a tour of the U.S. with the Staatskapelle Weimar and Kirill Karabits. He also performs concertos and recitals at the Festival de Mayo in Mexico. Recital tours take him regularly back to the U.S., whilst other highlights include appearances in Paris, Budapest, Beirut and Moscow. He continues as artist-in-residence at the Fribourg International Piano Series with both solo and chamber music programs.

Kholodenko has collaborated with distinguished conductors including Valery Gergiev, Leonard Slatkin, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Yuri Bashmet, Vladimir Spivakov, Kazuki Yamada and Carl St.Clair. In North America he has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic and San Diego Symphony orchestras, and given recitals throughout the country including in Boston and at the Aspen Music Festival.

Kholodenko’s recordings for Harmonia Mundi include the Grieg Piano Concerto and Saint-Saëns Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra and Harth-Bedoya, which was released in August 2015 to critical acclaim and awarded “Editor’s Choice” in Gramophone. His latest release for the label—the first installment of his Prokofiev Concerto Cycle (Nos. 2 & 5) —was praised by Gramophone for its “forthright, lithe and virile performances.” Future releases include the second disc of Prokofiev concertos and solo works by Scriabin.
Pacific Symphony, led by Music Director Carl St.Clair for the last 29 years, has been the resident orchestra of the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall for over a decade.

Currently in its 40th season, the Symphony is the largest orchestra formed in the U.S. in the last 50 years and is recognized as an outstanding ensemble making strides on both the national and international scene, as well as in its own community of Orange County. In April 2018, Pacific Symphony made its debut at Carnegie Hall as one of two orchestras invited to perform during a yearlong celebration of composer Philip Glass’ 80th birthday, and the following month the orchestra toured China. The orchestra made its national PBS debut in June 2018 on Great Performances with Peter Boyer’s “Ellis Island: The Dream of America,” conducted by St.Clair. Presenting more than 100 concerts and events a year and a rich array of education and community engagement programs, the Symphony reaches more than 300,000 residents—from school children to senior citizens.

The Symphony offers repertoire ranging from the great orchestral masterworks to music from today’s most prominent composers. Eight seasons ago, the Symphony launched the highly successful opera initiative, “Symphonic Voices,” which continues in February 2019 with Puccini’s Madame Butterfly. It also offers a popular Pops season, enhanced by state-of-the-art video and sound, led by Principal Pops Conductor Richard Kaufman. Each Symphony season also includes Café Ludwig, a chamber music series; an educational Family Musical Mornings series; and Sunday Casual Connections, an orchestral matinee series offering rich explorations of selected works led by St.Clair.

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 Pacific Chamber Orchestra, under the baton of then-CSUF orchestra conductor Keith Clark. Two seasons later, the Symphony expanded its size and changed its name to Pacific Symphony Orchestra. Then in 1981-82, the orchestra moved to Knott’s Berry Farm for one year. The subsequent four seasons, led by Clark, took place 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, and from 1987-2016, the orchestra additionally presented a Summer Festival at Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre. In 2006, the Symphony moved into the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, with striking architecture by Cesar Pelli and acoustics by Russell Johnson—and in 2008, inaugurated the Hall’s critically acclaimed 4,322-pipe William J. Gillespie Concert Organ. The orchestra embarked on its first European tour in 2006, performing in nine cities in three countries.

The 2016-17 season continued St.Clair’s commitment to new music with commissions by pianist/composer Conrad Tao and former composer-in-residence Narong Prangcharoen. Recordings commissioned and performed by the Symphony include the release of William Bolcom’s Songs of Lorca and Prometheus in 2015-16, Richard Danielpour’s Toward a Season of Peace and Philip Glass’ The Passion of Ramakrishna in 2013-14; and Michael Daugherty’s Mount Rushmore and The Gospel According to Sister Aimee in 2012-13. In 2014-15, Elliot Goldenthal released a recording of his Symphony in G-sharp Minor, written for and performed by the Symphony. The Symphony has also commissioned and recorded An American Requiem by Danielpour and Fire Water Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio by Goldenthal featuring Yo-Yo Ma. Other recordings have included collaborations with such composers as Lukas Foss and Toru Takemitsu. Other leading composers commissioned by the Symphony include Paul Chihara, Daniel Catán, James Newton Howard, William Kraft, Ana Lara, Tobias Picker, Christopher Theofanidis, Frank Ticheli and Chen Yi.

In both 2005 and 2010, the Symphony received the prestigious ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. Also 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 Symphony’s award-winning education and community engagement programs benefit from the vision of St.Clair and are designed to integrate the orchestra and its music into the community in ways that stimulate all ages. The Symphony’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. The Symphony also spreads the joy of music through arts-X-press, Class Act, Heartstrings, OC Can You Play With Us?, Santa Ana Strings, Strings for Generations and Symphony in the Cities.
MEET the orchestra

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