

# BEETHOVEN'S SEVENTH

2019-20 HAL & JEANETTE SEGERSTROM FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICAL SERIES

Carl St. Clair, conductor  
Vadym Kholodenko, piano



The Friday, Dec. 6 concert will be a part of our partnership series with Classical KUSC, "Classical KUSC @ Pacific Symphony." That performance will be hosted by KUSC radio personality John Van Driel and is followed by an after-party with Symphony musicians.

Preview talk with Rich Capparella @ 7 p.m.

**Thursday, December 5, 2019 @ 8 p.m.**

**Friday, December 6, 2019 @ 8 p.m.**

**Saturday, December 7, 2019 @ 8 p.m.**

Segerstrom Center for the Arts  
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

Goldenthal **OCTOBER LIGHT, ADAGIO FOR ORCHESTRA (WORLD PREMIERE)**

Prokofiev **PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3 IN C MAJOR, OP. 26**  
*Andante - Allegro*  
*Andantino*  
*Allegro ma non troppo*  
Vadym Kholodenko

Intermission

Beethoven **SYMPHONY NO. 7 IN A MAJOR, OP. 92**  
*Poco sostenuto - Vivace*  
*Allegretto*  
*Presto*  
*Allegro con brio*

The Thursday night concert is generously sponsored by  
**Symphony 100.**

The Piano Soloists for the 2019-20 Season are generously sponsored by the  
**Michelle F. Rohé Distinguished Pianists Fund.**

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This concert is being recorded for broadcast on Sunday, Feb. 23, 2020, at 7 p.m. on Classical KUSC.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Composer Elliot Goldenthal's Note: **October Light, Adagio for Orchestra (World Premiere)**



In 1995, Carl St.Clair and Pacific Symphony commissioned my *Fire Water Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio*, a commemorative work reflecting upon the 20th year of cessation

of the Vietnam conflict. In 2014, Pacific Symphony premiered my Symphony No. 1 under the baton of Carl St.Clair. For this I will be forever grateful. In this work *October Light, Adagio for Orchestra*, instead of fanfare and brio, I looked inward to dedicate. Although the work is not programmatic, it casts an autumnal shadow. When I got a message that I was commissioned to honor Carl, it was the same week that I got the news that Tim Landauer, the principal cellist of Pacific Symphony had passed after a long illness. He was the cello soloist under the baton of Carl St.Clair at the premiere of *Fire Water Paper*. With that backdrop, my commission took on a bittersweet assignment.

*October Light* is a title from a John Gardner novel, where there is a phrase that referred to "the pull of the earth" that stuck with me as well as October's long shadows and the crystalline, sometimes blinding autumnal light in the northern hemisphere.

Beyond the minutiae of analysis, the motivic component the listener can

recognize is the expansion of a repeated single tone followed by an intervallic whole step up. This simple motive is heard throughout the work with its treatment of juxtaposition of registration with cello and the harmonics of the first and second violins and higher woodwinds. The other element is the present, circular repetitions in the solo violin and woodwinds. The circular motion, the dichotomy of low and high registers find themselves inexorably reaching and pulling for a blinding light that can coexist with the "pull of the earth."

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## Sergei Prokofiev: **Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major**



Prokofiev, like Beethoven—and like his famous contemporaries Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich—was a pianist, and like Beethoven, he produced five piano concertos.

Together, these five works comprise one of the most remarkable groups of concertos since Beethoven, and probably the greatest grouping of concertos for a single instrument written in the last century. Composed between 1911 and 1932, their style is often described as "muscular," "powerful" or "percussive." Though Prokofiev's music incorporates sweeping, lyrical phrases, his writing for the piano is more precise and astringent than that of Rachmaninoff, who was far more popular as a piano soloist in the U.S. than Prokofiev was.

Always more cosmopolitan and more of a world traveler than Shostakovich, Prokofiev

was living on the coast of Brittany in 1921, when he composed most of his Piano Concerto No. 3. His work on the concerto was a time of retrenchment and renewal; a tour of the U.S. had not gone well and proved a setback for his career, but things had begun to improve with the success of his ballet *The Tale of the Buffoon* in Paris in May of that year. In framing the concerto he went back to sketches he had produced while still in conservatory as early as 1913, framing them in a grandly virtuosic concerto that demands furious power and speed. Watching the soloist in this concerto has been called "frightening" by more than one critic. It is the longest and most powerful of Prokofiev's five piano concertos, and remains his most popular.

The calm, controlled opening of the Concerto No. 3 does not prepare us for the tumult that develops later on. It begins with a lyrical clarinet solo that gradually gathers momentum in the orchestra. But the stakes rise as the strings join in an accelerating allegro. With the entry of the piano's solo voice, it becomes clear that the music will proceed with a high level of energy and will include a lively discourse between soloist and orchestra. With the introduction of a second theme, the tonality of the concerto becomes more adventurous. Scales swooping through the orchestra and the keyboard give us a sense of almost explosive energy.

The second movement is marked *tema con variazioni*, a theme with (five) variations—a form traditionally employed to demonstrate what both composer and soloist can do. In this case, the movement showcases Prokofiev's wit and inventiveness, with a range of moods and tempos that range from a lilting gavotte to jazzy syncopations and propulsive passagework. The moods range from seeming sarcasm to outright jubilation.

### Elliot Goldenthal

**Born:** 1954. Brooklyn, N.Y.

#### **October Light, Adagio for Orchestra (World Premiere)**

**Composed:** 2019

**World premiere:** Dec. 5, 2019, with Carl St.Clair conducting

**First Pacific Symphony performance:** Dec. 5, 2019

**Instrumentation:** 3 flutes including piccolo and alto flute, 2 oboes including English horn, 3 clarinets including bass clarinet, 2 bassoons including contrabassoon; 3 horns, 2 trumpets; harp; strings

**Estimated duration:** 8 minutes

### Sergei Prokofiev

**Born:** 1891. Sontsivka, Ukraine

**Died:** 1953. Moscow, Russia

#### **Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Major**

**Composed:** 1921

**World premiere:** Dec. 16, 1921, with Prokofiev as soloist

**Most recent Pacific Symphony performance:** Dec. 5, 2015, with Carl St.Clair conducting

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes including piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons; 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones; timpani; percussion; strings; solo piano

**Estimated duration:** 27 minutes

Astonishingly, the final movement surpasses everything that has preceded it for sheer virtuosity, consolidating a controlled interplay between piano and orchestra as the tempo and momentum build. Listen for the famous double-note arpeggios as the concerto draws to its spectacular close—considered one of the most difficult passages in the concerto repertory.

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## Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 7 in A Major



Four years elapsed between the pastoral lyricism of his Symphony No. 6 and the completion of Beethoven's seventh symphony in 1812, a longer interval than between any of his other consecutively numbered

symphonies. During that time, he suffered setbacks including the end of his engagement to Countess Theresa Brunswick. But if his romantic life was in stasis, his music was progressing during this period. It saw the composition of many important works, including his string quartets in E-flat (Op. 74) and F Minor (Op. 95); theatrically inspired music for *Egmont*, *King Stephen* and *The Ruins of Athens*; the Choral Fantasy; two piano sonatas, the F-sharp Minor and "Les Adieux"; the trios in E-flat and D (Op. 70), and in B-flat (Op. 97); and more.

The symphony received its first public performance in 1813 at a concert in Vienna, produced to benefit soldiers wounded at the battle of Hanau, where Austrian and Bavarian troops attempted to cut off

Napoleon's army as it retreated from Leipzig. Though Beethoven had once viewed Napoleon as a champion of human values, he was by this time openly hostile to the emperor, and his anti-Napoleonic "Wellington's Victory" was also on the program. The benefit performance brought together many of the most renowned musicians of the time, including the eminent composers Louis Spohr, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Johann Nepomuk Hummel and Ignaz Moscheles. Even Beethoven's teacher (and Mozart's storied rival) Salieri was there. The sense of occasion and the buoyancy of the music produced a hugely enthusiastic response. At the premiere and for decades afterward, audiences demanded that the second movement be encored.

This symphony's bold, peppery repetitions, which took some of Beethoven's contemporaries by surprise, begin in its first movement. An expansive introduction is marked *Poco sostenuto*, with long, ascending scales. It then gives rise to a lively *Vivace* that begins the symphony's dancing rhythms (with no fewer than 61 repetitions of the note E along the way). Sudden shifts in dynamics and jagged modulations intensify the feeling of unceasing spark and pulse.

To many listeners, the second movement's use of repetition is the most remarkably modern aspect of Beethoven's Seventh. In most symphonies, a movement marked *Allegretto* might seem relatively quick; in Beethoven's Seventh, it is the second and slowest of the four movements. But it is the movement's use of repetition that belies its date. The impression of melody and energy is built on repetition rather than tune, looking forward to the more modern ideas of motivic and gestural development rather than a traditional, hummable theme. The development begins in the violas and cellos

and moves to the violins as the violas and cellos transition to a second theme. This rotation continues with the original melody moving to the winds while the second melody moves to the first violin. This movement, with its fluid interplay of themes throughout the orchestra, has retained its popularity and has often been encored in performance.

The third movement is comprised of a scherzo in F Major paired with a trio in D Major; the trio is based on a stirring Austrian pilgrims' hymn, and incorporates a typically thorough development section—not just "A-B-A," but "A-B-A-B-A," a pattern we also encounter in Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 and in the second string quartet from his Op. 59.

If the Seventh Symphony shocked some of Beethoven's contemporaries, it is probably because of the lasting impression of its final movement, which is explosive in its energy; the musicologist Donald Tovey references its "Bacchic fury," a phrase connoting a sense of abandon that is almost frightening. Dynamically, it is dominated by a triple-f marking that is extremely rare in Beethoven's scores; in terms of sheer, sustained loudness, it's hard to imagine going beyond this movement without resorting to cannon fire. The main melody, with its vivid impressions of whirling and stamping movement, is derived from Beethoven's arrangement of an Irish folk song, "Save Me From the Grave and Wise" (one of 12 such songs he arranged). Today, of course, the emotions conveyed by this movement are not shock and surprise so much as ecstasy and triumph.

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*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.*

### Ludwig van Beethoven

**Born:** 1770. Bonn, Germany

**Died:** 1827. Vienna, Austria

### Symphony No. 7 in A Major

**Composed:** 1811-12

**World premiere:** Dec. 8, 1813, with Beethoven conducting

**Most recent Pacific Symphony performance:** Oct. 2, 2017, with Carl St.Clair conducting

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons; 2 horns, 2 trumpets; timpani; strings

**Estimated duration:** 38 minutes



## VADYM KHOLODENKO

Vadym Kholodenko is quickly building a reputation as one of the most musically dynamic, technically gifted performers of the new generation of pianists, praised by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* 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. Following the Cliburn Competition, Kholodenko was appointed the first ever “Artist in Partnership” with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra. This three-year collaboration included performances of the complete Prokofiev piano concertos which were recorded for release on Harmonia Mundi in addition to chamber music projects and international touring. Artistic partnerships form an integral part of Kholodenko’s musical drive. A committed chamber musician he has collaborated with Vadim Repin, Alena Baeva and cellist Alexander Buzlov.

Kholodenko has collaborated with distinguished conductors including Valery Gergiev, Leonard Slatkin, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Kirill Karabits, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Yuri Bashmet, Vladimir Spivakov

and Kazuki Yamada. In North America he has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic and the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, and given recitals throughout the country including in Boston and at the Aspen Music Festival.

In Europe he has recently worked with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg, Orquestra Sinfónica Do Porto Casa Da Música, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Prague Symphony Orchestra, RTVE Symphony Orchestra in Madrid and Orquesta Nacional de España, and has given recitals at LSO St Lukes in London, Radio France in Paris, Liszt Academy Budapest, Lucerne, Moscow Conservatoire and at the SWR Schwetzingen Festspiele. He’s performed extensively in Japan including with the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and regularly returns for recital tours. In 2013 he held a residency at the Mariinsky Concert Hall where he was named artist of the month by Valery Gergiev, who has since requested him for concerto performances in Paris, Luxembourg and Moscow.

Kholodenko’s recordings for Harmonia Mundi include the Grieg Piano Concerto and Saint-Saëns’ Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra/ Harth-Bedoya, which was released in August 2015 to critical acclaim and awarded “Editor’s Choice” in *Gramophone* as “a truly outstanding recording.” 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.

Kholodenko was born in 1986 in Kiev, Ukraine. At the age of 13 he gave his first concerts in the United States, China, Hungary and Croatia, and in 2004 he was awarded the Russian Youth National Prize, “Triumph.” In 2005, he moved to Moscow to study at the Moscow State Conservatory under the tutelage of the honored artist of the USSR, Professor Vera Gornostaeva.

### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS: SYMPHONY 100

Symphony 100 is an exclusive women’s membership group that offers members adult music education opportunities, lunches with artists and several unique events or field trips annually. Membership is limited to 100 women, who support special projects of the Symphony through an annual contribution of \$1,000.

### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS: THE MICHELLE F. ROHÉ DISTINGUISHED PIANO FUND

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 F. Rohé Distinguished Pianist Fund for sponsoring our piano soloists this concert season.