



2022-23 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom
Family Foundation Classical Series

TAO PLAYS MOZART

Preview Talk with Alan Chapman @ 7 p.m.

Thursday, Mar. 16 @ 8 p.m.

Friday, Mar. 17 @ 8 p.m.

Saturday, Mar. 18 @ 8 p.m.

Michał Nesterowicz, conductor

Conrad Tao, piano

Pacific Symphony

This concert is generously sponsored by
Board of Counselors

Concert in Memory of **Vina Williams**

The 2022-23 season piano soloists are generously
sponsored by **The Michelle F. Rohé Fund**

OFFICIAL
TV STATION



OFFICIAL
HOTEL

AVENUE OF THE ARTS
COSTA MESA
—
TRIBUTE PORTFOLIO

OFFICIAL
RADIO STATION



**This concert is being recorded for broadcast on
July 16, 2023 on Classical KUSC.**

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

PROGRAM

KILAR

Orawa

Pacific Symphony Premiere

MOZART

**Piano Concerto No. 24
in C minor, K. 491**

Allegro

Larghetto

Allegretto

Conrad Tao, piano

-INTERMISSION-

MENDELSSOHN

**Symphony No. 3 in A Minor,
Op. 56 (Scottish)**

Andante con moto -

Allegro un poco agitato

Vivace non troppo

Adagio

Allegro vivacissimo -

Allegro maestoso assai

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Conrad Tao has appeared worldwide as a pianist and composer and has been dubbed “the kind of musician who is shaping the future of classical music” by *New York Magazine*, and an artist of “probing intellect and open-hearted vision” by *The*

New York Times. Tao has performed as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and Boston Symphony. As a composer, his work has been performed by orchestras throughout the world; his first large scale orchestral work, *Everything Must Go*, received its world premiere with the New York Philharmonic, and its European premiere with the Antwerp Symphony, and he was the recipient of a 2019 New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Award, for Outstanding Sound Design/Music Composition, for his work on *More Forever*, in collaboration with dancer and choreographer Caleb Teicher. He is the recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant and was named a Gilmore Young Artist—an honor awarded every two years highlighting the most promising American pianists of the new generation.

In the 2022-23 season, Tao returns to perform Mozart with the New York Philharmonic, for whom he will also curate a program for their Artist Spotlight series, featuring collaborations with vocalist, Charmaine Lee, and wind

ensemble, *The Westerlies*. He will also return to the San Francisco Symphony both as a soloist in Gershwin's Concerto in F major at Davies Symphony Hall, and as a curator for their Soundbox series. In Washington, D.C., he will make his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra performing Shostakovich with Dalia Staveska, and, following Atlanta Symphony's premiere of his Violin Concerto with Stefan Jackiw in 2021, he will appear as soloist with the orchestra performing Ravel with Ryan Bancroft. After their successful collaboration with the Finnish Radio Symphony, Tao will further re-unite with Hannu Lintu to perform Tchaikovsky with the Naples Philharmonic, as well as return to Finland to open the season with the Tampere Philharmonic and Santtu-Matias Rouvali.

In his first collaboration with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra this Fall, Tao will curate and lead a program of music by Ruth Crawford Seeger, Gesualdo, CPE Bach, Feldman, and Mozart. Other upcoming collaborations include ongoing performances of *Counterpoint* with dancer Caleb Teicher, and performances of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with Orchestra of St Luke's, as part of Paul Taylor Dance Company's season at Lincoln Center. The season will also include a multi-city tour with the Junction Trio, which includes the group's Celebrity Series of Boston debut, alongside performances in New York City, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and more.

In the 2021-22 season, Tao opened Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart with Louis Langree at Damrosch Park performing Mozart, Gershwin, and William Grant Still. He also returned to perform with Jaap van Zweden and the New York Philharmonic at the Bravo! Vail Festival and appeared with the Chicago Symphony performing Ravel at the Ravinia Festival. Further orchestral engagements included Ravel with Cincinnati Symphony; Rachmaninov's Concerto No. 4 with the Kansas City Symphony; and Tao's own composition, *Spoonfuls*, with the New Jersey Symphony. In the same season, Tao also made solo recital debuts at London's Wigmore Hall, Seattle's Meany Center, and Celebrity Series of Boston, and also gave recitals in New York, Washington, and other cities throughout North America. Tao's violin concerto, written for Stefan Jackiw, was premiered by the Atlanta Symphony under Robert Spano, and the Baltimore Symphony under Kirill Karabits. His recent performances also include multi-concert residencies with the Finnish Radio Symphony and the Swedish Radio Orchestra, and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Santa Caecilia Orchestra and Antonio Pappano.

A Warner Classics recording artist, Tao's debut disc *Voyages* was 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". His next album, *Pictures*, with works by David Lang, Toru Takemitsu, Elliott Carter, Mussorgsky, and Tao himself, was hailed by *The New York Times* as "a fascinating album [by] a thoughtful artist and dynamic performer...played with enormous imagination, color and command." His

third album, *American Rage*, featuring works by Julia Wolfe, Frederic Rzewski, and Aaron Copland, was released in the fall of 2019. In 2021, Tao and brass quartet *The Westerlies* released *Bricolage*, an album of improvisations and experiments recorded in a small cabin in rural New Hampshire in June 2019. Tao was born in Urbana, Illinois in 1994. He has studied piano with Emilio del Rosario in Chicago and Yoheved Kaplinsky in New York, and composition with Christopher Theofanidis.

ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR



Michał Nesterowicz is highly regarded for his dynamic performances and eloquent interpretations of symphonic repertoire, with debuts in recent seasons including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Konzerthausorchester

Berlin, hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, and the Tonkünstlerorchester. Nesterowicz opens the 2021-22 season with Oulu Symphony Orchestra, followed by performances with Gävle Symphony Orchestra, Haydn Orchestra Bolzano and Silesian Philharmonic with a Polish-themed programme including works by Fitelberg and Karłowicz. Other highlights of upcoming season are engagements with Musikalische Akademie Mannheim, Warsaw Philharmonic as well as Malmö Symphony Orchestra, Malmö Opera, Orquesta Sinfonica de la Region de Murcia, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, and his Japanese debut with Kyoto Symphony Orchestra.

In 2020-21 season, Nesterowicz continued his relationship as Principal Guest Conductor with The Arthur Rubenstein Philharmonic Łódź, along with returning to conduct NDR Elbphilharmonieorchester, Szczecin Philharmonic Orchestra, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, and Orquesta Ciudad de Granada. Other highlights of this season include performances with Het Gelders Orkest, Orchestre National de Lille, and Polska Filharmonia Bałtycka Gdańsk.

Nesterowicz has appeared on multiple occasions with the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Münchner Philharmoniker, Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice, Natinoal Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. He has also worked with the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Gulbenkian Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Copenhagen Phil, Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, and Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana.

Michał Nesterowicz was the winner of the Cadaqués Orchestra European Conducting Competition in 2008 and among the prizewinners of the 6th Grzegorz Fitelborg International Conducting Competition in Katowice.

PROGRAM NOTES

Wojciech Kilar

Orawa

Born: July 17, 1932 in Lviv, Ukraine

Died: December 29, 2013,

Katowice, Poland

Composed: 1986

Most recent Pacific Symphony

performance: This is a Pacific Symphony premiere

Instrumentation: String orchestra

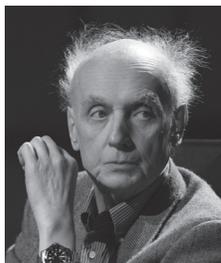
Estimated duration:

Approximately 10 minutes

Orchestras and concertgoers in California share a special affinity for composers who bridge the classical and movie worlds. But Wojciech Kilar, though he won high honors in both genres, is atypical of this group. Born later than composers who fled Europe for Hollywood before World War II, Kilar was seven years old when Germany invaded his native Poland. He remained a citizen of Poland until his death at the age of 81, settling in the city of Katowice with his wife, a concert pianist.

Kilar's musical training in Poland and Paris with Nadia Boulanger placed him in the forefront of 20th-Century Polish composers. His film work encompassed not only movies by major Polish directors, but also Hollywood features by Roman Polanski, Francis Ford Coppola, and Jane Campion. Steven Spielberg chose Kilar's epic *Exodus* for the trailer of *Schindler's List*. But Kilar's later works are far simpler and more intimately scaled; his career can be viewed as a journey from complex, spiky atonality to simplicity.

Kilar composed *Orawa* when he was in his early fifties (premiere 1986). The title refers to a ruggedly mountainous region near the Polish-Slovak border, and is the final work in a series of compositions for string orchestra that beg comparison to the Czechoslovak composer Bedrich Smetana's *Má vlast* ("My Homeland"); as with Smetana's *The Moldau*, *Orawa* is by far the most popular movement in a larger, geographically descriptive suite. Audiences have enjoyed arrangements of *Orawa* for accordion trio, twelve saxophones, eight cellos, and string quartet. While the music references a craggy, picturesque landscape, as in Mendelssohn's "Scottish" symphony, the style, with its driving rhythmic patterns and brusque harmonies, could not be more different.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Concerto No. 24 in C minor for Piano and Orchestra, K. 491

Born: January 27, 1756 in

Salzburg, Austria

Died: December 5, 1791 in

Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1786

Premiered: April 1786 at the

Burgtheater in Vienna

Most recent Pacific Symphony

performance: March 8, 2001

in Segerstrom Hall, with pianist Andreas Haefliger and

conductor Michael Stern

Instrumentation: one flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings, and solo piano

Estimated duration: Approximately 31 minutes

Mozart, with his seemingly effortless mastery of form and endless flow of melodic inspiration, brought the Classical concerto to previously unimagined heights. Beethoven's five piano concertos, especially the fourth and fifth, used Classical conventions as a take-off point for something grander in scale and more challenging in spirit. It does not minimize the sublimity of Mozart's concertos to say they are ingratiating and tuneful; nor does it minimize the beauty of Beethoven's concertos to point out that the Romantic struggle we hear in the development of his melodies transcends the melodies themselves.

If there is one point of overlap between these two giants of the concerto form, it is Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24. If his other concertos were composed to flatter the ear and gladden the heart of the listener, this one is different: darker, more challenging, more experimental. This is the Mozart concerto that Beethoven's most partisan admirers concede is a work of greatness. Hearing it, Beethoven famously lamented to his friend and publisher John Cramer, "Oh my dear Cramer, we shall never get any idea like this!" Beethoven's own great piano concertos were still two decades in the offing.

Mozart composed this concerto in 1786, toward the end of a span of two and one-half years when he wrote a dozen piano concertos, including many of his greatest. It was one of three he wrote in that year, when he was also hard at work on *The Marriage of Figaro*—a fact that may contribute to the operatic, singing quality in some of the concertos. According to musicologist John N. Burke, "If Mozart could be said ever to have ignored his public in a concerto and followed completely his own inner promptings, it was here." Burke calls the work Mozart's "ultimate venture, his furthest exploration of the piano concerto..." He characterizes Mozart's three later concertos as "a further refinement of what he had done."



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*.

PROGRAM NOTES

When we listen to this concerto, its dramatic intensity is inarguable from the start. Its orchestra is the largest Mozart specified in any of his concertos, and it is symphonic in scope, challenging us with a beautiful but somber musical landscape that the Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein calls “an explosion of the dark, tragic, passionate emotions.” Remarkably, its fierce opening theme includes all 12 notes of the chromatic scale as it unfolds. The second movement, a *larghetto* in the key of E-flat, offers a serene contrast. The concluding *allegretto* is in theme-and-variations form; as is so often the case with Mozart, musicologists and critics are at pains to describe its beauty as simultaneously simple and profound. “Of the variations,” writes Donald Tovey, “Some...are pathetic, some childlike...and some majestic... But, as with Greek art, the subtle sublimity is a function of the simplicity and clearness of the surface; until at last the whole pathos of Mozart’s work is summed up in the last variation, in 6/8 time.”

Felix Mendelssohn

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Scottish

Born: February 3, 1809, Hamburg, Germany

Died: November 4, 1847, Leipzig, Germany

Composed: 1829 - 1842

Premiered: March 3, 1842 in the Leipzig Gewandhaus

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: February 4, 2017

in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall with David Danzmayr conducting

Instrumentation: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings

Estimated duration: Approximately 40 minutes

How can a symphony describe a place? Some musicologists and composers—among them the imperiously judgmental Igor Stravinsky—write that music is unalterably abstract, that it cannot suggest anything visual...that it can mean nothing but itself. On the other hand, we are also told that certain composers excel at musical depictions of places and even of people. Thus, the American composers Virgil Thomson and Charles Ives gave us, respectively, orchestral portraits of Thomson’s friends and Ives’s musical postcards from *Three Places in New England*, as well as fond musical souvenirs of Ives’s native Danbury, Connecticut. Among compositions like these, Felix Mendelssohn’s *Scottish* and *Italian* symphonies stand out and are frequently cited as among the greatest and most vividly picturable of all descriptive classical compositions. Are these claims valid? It’s up to us listeners to judge for ourselves.

Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg in 1809, eighteen years after the death of Mozart. Like Mozart’s,

Mendelssohn’s genius was evident from earliest childhood. Both had musically talented sisters and parents who were ambitious for their success. But as the scion of a wealthy Jewish family and the grandson of the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, the young Felix was not viewed as someone whose talents were to be exploited for financial gain, as Leopold Mozart sought to do with Amadeus. Instead, Felix’s father Abraham moved his family to Berlin and made their residence there a salon that attracted the most prominent intellectuals of the day. Music and stimulating conversation were constants. Though Abraham and his wife Lea renounced Judaism and were themselves baptized along with their four children as Reformed Christians, the Mendelssohn name and heritage were well known in Europe, and the family never sought to conceal their ethnicity in cultivating their place in European cultural life.

Some of Mendelssohn’s most brilliant musical inspirations came from his travels, as we can readily hear in the landscapes evoked in his compositions, and in their nicknames—the *Italian* Symphony, the *Hebrides* Overture and the *Scottish* Symphony, to name three. When touring, Mendelssohn used staff paper like a sketchbook, recording his visual impressions in musical notation; by his own account, he conceived the *Scottish* Symphony after his first visit to Great Britain in 1829. Following a successful series of performances in London, he embarked on a walking tour of Scotland with his friend Karl Klingemann and was particularly moved by the picturesque, evocative ruins of the chapel at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh. In a letter describing this experience, he included a sketch of the symphony’s opening theme.

Despite the deep impression that this visit made and a quick start on the opening movement, Mendelssohn struggled with the symphony’s development. After a series of initial sketches, he laid the work aside in 1831. This interruption, apparently, was just what was needed; after resuming work in 1841, he was able to complete the symphony in the first weeks of the year 1841—the fifth and final symphony he composed, though the third to be published. The premiere was played in March, 1841 in the Leipzig Gewandhaus.

To most listeners Mendelssohn’s “travel music” including the *Scottish* Symphony, really does suggest the landscapes and cultures that inspired it. The symphony’s first movement is grand and joyful, with a briskness and energy that seem true to Scotland. This effect is even more marked in the lively second movement, which evokes the tunes and rhythms of Scottish folk music without directly quoting from Scottish sources. The contemplative third movement gives way to an energetic finale that draws from the rhythms of Scottish folk dances. In an elevated, German-style coda, Mendelssohn seems to conclude the symphony with a Scottish-German alliance of his own invention.

