



2026-27 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom
Family Foundation Classical Series

SHELLEY CONDUCTS MAHLER 2: RESURRECTION

Preview Talk at 7 p.m.
Classical California midday host
Alan Chapman

Thursday, Oct. 1, 2026 @ 8 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 2, 2026 @ 8 p.m.
Saturday, Oct. 3, 2026 @ 8 p.m.

Alexander Shelley, conductor
Miah Persson, soprano
Dame Sarah Connolly, mezzo-soprano
Pacific Chorale—Robert Istad, artistic director
Pacific Symphony

MAHLER

Symphony No. 2 in C Minor
(*Resurrection*)

Allegro maestoso
Andante moderato
In ruhig fließender Bewegung
Urlicht (Primeval Light)
Im Tempo des Scherzo
Miah Persson, soprano
Sarah Connolly, mezzo-soprano
Pacific Chorale

**THIS CONCERT IS PERFORMED
WITHOUT INTERMISSION**

This concert is part of the
Ahmanson Faith & Transcendence Series.

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



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Miah Persson, soprano



Since making her operatic debut as Susanna in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1998, Swedish soprano Miah Persson has distinguished herself as one of the world's leading interpreters of Mozart, celebrated for such roles as Zerlina and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Fiordiligi in

Così fan tutte, and the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro*. She has also "cemented her place as one of the most intelligent Strauss sopranos of our time" (*Bachtrack*), following notable role debuts as the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* and the Countess in *Capriccio*.

Persson has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera; the Royal Ballet and Opera, Covent Garden; Teatro alla Scala; the Vienna State Opera; the Paris Opera; the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona; the Bavarian State Opera; the Hamburg State Opera; the Semperoper Dresden; the Netherlands Opera; the New National Theatre, Tokyo; and the Dallas Opera. On the concert platform, she has performed with major international orchestras and conductors, including Zubin Mehta, Bernard Labadie, Simone Young, and Vladimir Jurowski.

Her recital appearances include London's Wigmore Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Pierre Boulez Saal, Spivey Hall, the Schubert Club in St. Paul, Cal Performances in Berkeley, Vancouver Playhouse, and New York's Carnegie Hall.

Persson's 2025–26 season opened with performances as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with the Budapest Festival Orchestra under Iván Fischer at Műpa Budapest and on tour at Vicenza's Teatro Olimpico and the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden. Other season highlights included Mahler's *Das klagende Lied* with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra under Ryan Bancroft, a program of Haydn and Berlioz with the Gävle Symphony Orchestra under Magnus Fryk, Mozart's Mass in C Minor with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra under Matthew Halls, and Mahler's Symphony No. 2 under Alexander Shelley with both the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra in Florida and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa.

In addition, she gave a New Year's concert with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra under Andreas Hansson, performed Strauss's orchestrated songs with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra under Ramón Tébar, and sang Mahler's Symphony No. 4 in Bochum and at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam with the Bochum Symphony Orchestra under Tung-Chieh Chuang. She appeared in recital at the Leeds Lieder Festival and London's Wigmore Hall with pianist Joseph Middleton and for San Francisco Performances with pianist Magnus Svensson.

In 2011, Persson was appointed Hovsångerska (court singer) by His Majesty the King of Sweden.

Miah Persson is represented by Intermusica.

Dame Sarah Connolly, mezzo-soprano



Sarah Connolly was made a DBE in the 2017 Birthday Honours, having previously been awarded a CBE in the 2010 New Year Honours. In 2020, she was made an honorary member of the Royal Philharmonic Society in recognition of her outstanding service to music.

In 2023, she received the King's Medal for Music, awarded annually to an outstanding individual or group of musicians who has had a major influence on the musical life of the nation.

She has appeared at the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Lucerne, Salzburg, and Tanglewood festivals and at the BBC Proms, where she was a soloist at the Last Night in 2009. Her opera engagements have taken her around the world, from the Metropolitan Opera and the Royal Opera House to the Paris Opera, La Scala in Milan, the Vienna and Munich state operas, and the Bayreuth, Glyndebourne, and Aix-en-Provence festivals.

Highlights of her 2025–26 season included Jocasta in *Oedipus Rex* for the Norwegian Opera & Ballet and Mrs. Patrick De Rocher in *Dead Man Walking* for English National Opera.

On the concert platform, she sings Handel's *Messiah* with the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra under Christophe Rousset; Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* with the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra under Matthew Halls; Mahler's Symphony No. 2 with the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra under Alexander Shelley and the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra under Joshua Weilerstein; Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra under Joel Sandelson; and Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*.



Scan for Digital
Program Book

PACIFIC CHORALE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Robert Istad, conductor/artistic director



A GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor who “fashions fluent and sumptuous readings” (*Voice of OC*) with his “phenomenal” artistry (*Los Angeles Times*), Istad was appointed Pacific Chorale’s Artistic Director in 2017.

The 2026–27 season celebrates 10 years under his leadership,

continuing to expand the choir’s reputation for excellence in delivering fresh, thought-provoking interpretations of beloved masterworks, rarely performed gems, and newly commissioned pieces.

His artistic impact can be heard on two recent recordings featuring Pacific Chorale, including the 2022 GRAMMY® Award-winning *Mahler’s Eighth Symphony* with the LA Phil conducted by Gustavo Dudamel on Deutsche Grammophon (2021), for which he prepared the chorus.

Additionally, Istad conducted the Pacific Chorale’s recording *All Things Common: The Music of Tarik O’Regan* released on Yarlung Records (2020). He regularly conducts and collaborates with Pacific Symphony, Berkshire Choral International, and Yarlung Records.

His extensive credits also include recording for Sony Classical and guest conducting Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, Bach Collegium San Diego, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, Bath Philharmonia, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Tesseræ Baroque, and Freies Landesorchester Bayern.

An esteemed educator, Istad is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at California State University, Fullerton, where he was recognized as CSUF’s 2016 Outstanding Professor of the Year.

Istad, who is on the Executive Board of Directors of Chorus America and serves as Dean of Chorus America’s Conducting Academy, is in demand as guest conductor, lecturer, and clinician.

ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE

The GRAMMY® Award-winning Pacific Chorale is an Orange County “treasure” with a “fresh viewpoint” that “can sing anything you put in front of it with polish, poise and tonal splendor” (*Orange County Register*).

Founded in 1968, the resident choir at Segerstrom Center for the Arts is celebrated for artistic innovation and expanding the choral repertoire, having given more than 40 world, U.S., and West Coast premieres—including commissions by leading composers such as John Adams, Jocelyn Hagen, Jake Heggie, David Lang, Morten Lauridsen, Tarik O’Regan, Frank Ticheli, and Eric Whitacre.

Led by Artistic Director Robert Istad, Pacific Chorale presents its own concert series and enjoys long-standing partnerships with Pacific Symphony and the LA Phil, with

which it won the 2022 GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance for *Mahler: Symphony No. 8* conducted by Gustavo Dudamel.

The ensemble tours internationally, maintains a discography of 14 self-produced recordings, and offers extensive free digital programming. Its choral-theatrical film *To the Hands* was featured as an Official Selection at the Newport Beach Film Festival and won Best Experimental Feature Film at the Culver City Film Festival.

Education programs include after-school vocal instruction for elementary students, a high school summer camp, and an annual community-wide singing event.

www.pacificchorale.org



I ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE

Robert Istad / Artistic Director and Conductor
Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons Artistic Director Chair
Kibsaim Escárcega / Assistant Conductor
Ron Rudderow Legacy Chair

Rhett M. Del Campo / President & CEO
Alex Nelson / VP, Artistic Production & Operations
David Clemensen, DMA / Collaborative Pianist

SOPRANO

Rebecca Hasquet
Section Leader
Amy Bandy
Ammy Beltran
Cristen Antal Bornancini 10
Andria Nuñez Cabrera
Ariana Celeste
Chelsea Chaves
Sophia Do
Stephanie Garcia Cochran
Karla Verónica Gil
Adrien Gonzalez
Jenna Hansen
Erika Jackson 10
Saousan Jarjour
Corinne Larsen Linza
Kathryn Lillich
Susan M. Lindley
Sarah Lonsert 10
Anne McClintic 10
Shannon A. Miller
Amber Napoli
Kimberly Nason
Maria Cristina Navarro
Mia Noriega Searight
Deborah Pasarow 20
Laura Pluth
Sarah Schaffner-Pepe
Linda Wells Sholik
Olivia Siri
Sarah L. Sweerman
Amelia H. Thompson 10
Haven Watts
Anne Williams
Victoria Wu

ALTO

Jane Hyun-Jung Shim
Section Leader
Emily Border
Mary Clark
Kathryn Cobb-Woll
Denean R. Dyson
Ivanna Evans
Benny Fisher
Emma Ginzel
Erin Girard
Kathleen Thomsen Gremillion
Sandy Grim
Brandon Harris
Meadow Jones
Stacey Y. Kikkawa
Kristen Kleinhans
Bekka Knauer
Nellie Kwang
Micaela Macaraeg
Makenna Malkin
Logan Mintz-Hernandez
Michele M. Mulidor
Carla Neeld
Pat Newton 50
Kyrstin Ohta
Kathleen Preston
Bonnie Pridonoff
Ashley Riopka
Laurel Sanders
Tiffani Santiago
Amelia Saunders
Lauren Shafer
Stephanie Shepson
Rachel Steinke
Abby Tyree
Marijke van Niekerk

TENOR

Nicholas Preston
Section Leader
Roger W. Johnson Memorial Chair
Jephte Acosta
Mike Andrews 15
Tyler Berg
Nate Brown 10
Christopher Brush
Chris Butters
Abraham Cervantes
Saunder Choi
Michael Elson
Marius Evangelista
David Evered
Abraham Fabella
Alan Garcia
José Gil Férrez
Johnny G. Gonzales
Richard Greenwood
Vincent Hans
Steven M. Hoffman
Craig S. Kistler
Jeremy Lee
Christopher Lindley
Greg Long
David López Alemán
Gerald McMillan
David Melendez
Andy Ngo
Lance Padilla
Jared Pugh
Bryce Rivera
Joshua Tan Tessler
Frank Watnick
Christiaan Westerkamp

BASS

Ryan Thomas Antal
Section Leader,
Ron Gray Legacy Chair
Aram Barsamian
Mac Bright
Adam Daruvala
Michael Fagerstedt
Larry Gates
Randall Gremillion
Peter Hahn
Brian Hamer
Mark Hamilton 15
Tom Henley
Jared Hughes
Jens Hurty
Matthew Kellaway
Jonathan Krauss
Emilio Lopez Felix
Justin McDaniel
Tom Mena
John Middlebrooks
Ryan Miller
Martin Minnich 40
Kenneth Moore
Ryan Morris
Aaron Murphy
Zachary T. Nelson
Michael Ortiz
Jason Pano 10
Seth Peelle
Raphael Poon
Adrian Rangel-Sanchez
Ryan Ratcliff 15
Ben Reyes
Miles Rojo
Ian Schipper
Joshua P. Stansfield
Sean TenBrook

Celebrating milestone years
with Pacific Chorale this season.

10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

PROGRAM NOTES

Gustav Mahler

Born: Jul. 7, 1860 in Kalischt, Bohemia

Died: May 18, 1911 in Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 2 in C Minor (Resurrection)



Composed: 1888-1894

Premiered: Dec. 13, 1895 in Berlin, with Mahler conducting the Berlin Philharmonic.

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Jun. 11, 2017, with Carl St.Clair conducting.

Instrumentation: Four flutes including piccolo, four oboes

including English horn, five clarinets including bass clarinet and e-flat clarinet, four bassoons including contrabassoon, ten horns, eight trumpets, four trombones, one tuba, two timpani, percussion, two harps, organ, strings, soprano and alto soloists, and chorus.

Approximate duration: 80 minutes.

We owe the great legacy of Mahler's symphonies to three obsessions that preoccupied him throughout his career: first, his veneration of Beethoven—which shaped not only his symphonies, but also his work in conducting and directing opera (Mahler's revolutionary ideas about Beethoven's *Fidelio*, which he called "the opera of all operas," remain influential today). Second, his exploration and development of symphonic form—which was ceaseless and painstaking. With the specter of Beethoven goading and inspiring him, Mahler reserved the symphony for his deepest expressions of human feeling and belief. Like Beethoven's *Pastoral* symphony, Mahler's second has an unusual five-movement form; more importantly, like Beethoven's monumental Ninth, it is also a choral symphony with vocal solos that express ideas that go beyond words, exploring Mahler's third obsession: the fate of the human soul. What happens after we die? The question might seem to be edged in grave solemnity, but in his Symphony No. 2, aptly nicknamed "Resurrection," the beauty of Mahler's music gives us a glorious affirmation of purpose in our lives on earth and of immortal life after bodily death.

In the years since his death, Mahler has come to be celebrated as perhaps the greatest symphonist since Beethoven. But the recognition was long in coming. During his lifetime, Mahler had greater success as a conductor than as a composer, and even that was mitigated by problems in Vienna and New York City, where he became Principal Conductor of the Metropolitan Opera in 1907 and led the New York Philharmonic. Though his performances earned tremendous acclaim, his conflicts with the trustees of both organizations broke his spirit and damaged his health. In 1911 he returned to Vienna, where he died of pneumonia that same year. The magisterial eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published in 1911, was known to provide authoritative explanations of anything worth explaining; its compilers did not see fit to include an article on Mahler. The highly respected New York paper the *Herald Tribune*, in noting

Mahler's passing, was respectful of his achievements as a conductor, but noted "We cannot see how any of his music can long survive him."

As a conductor, on the other hand, Mahler was a giant of his day, with a reputation that made him perhaps the first modern celebrity-conductor. As a conductor of opera he was a penetrating musical analyst with a tremendous sense of theater. His sense of drama in music is an essential complement to his ability to explore large ideas in a way that suspends time. Mahler surrounds us with sound that is magisterial yet sensuous—tense, languorous, and triumphant by turns. The lack of popular enthusiasm that greeted his first symphony surprised and worried him as a possible signal that his broader ambitions for the symphonic form might not be understood by his audiences. Though music historians tell us that he composed that work between late 1887 and the spring of 1888, it was really the culmination of an effort of years, incorporating music that Mahler had composed for early compositions. His belief in his own abilities as a composer remained unshaken, but not his confidence in his place in the music world. He worked on his Symphony No. 2 from 1888 to 1894 and saw it become his most successful and popular work with the exception of his eighth.

Fate intervened to give impetus to its composition. He initially framed its first movement as a stand-alone symphonic poem called *Totenfeier* ("Funeral Rites"), then became unsure of whether to keep it in that form or to make it the opening movement of a symphony. Mahler turned to a senior colleague he greatly admired, the eminent conductor and composer Hans von Bülow, for advice on the composition, and the session during which Mahler played it through on the piano for Bülow—reportedly, the bewildered and unaccepting Bülow kept his hands over his ears the entire time—has passed into music legend. It may have been a bitter pill for Mahler, but he and Bülow retained their mutual respect, and Mahler often served as substitute conductor for Bülow as the older man's health declined.

In 1893, Mahler launched into the second and third movements, and a symphony began to take shape. But lacking a finale, its overall form was still unclear. Then, in 1894, Bülow died, and Mahler heard a setting of Klopstock's *Resurrection Hymn* at the memorial service. "It struck me like lightning, this thing," Mahler wrote to the German writer and dramatist Arthur Seidl, "and everything was revealed to my soul clear and plain." Combining the first two stanzas of Klopstock's hymn with additional verses of his own, Mahler gives us a choral testament on the themes of final judgment and resurrection in the symphony's finale.

The symphony gives us a radiant musical account of life triumphant. After the stormy "funeral rites" opening movement, the second offers idyllic, dancing themes. (Mahler called for a long pause between these two very different sections.) In the third movement, enthusiasts will recognize music borrowed from his beautiful song cycle *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* ("the child's magic horn") crafted into a leisurely scherzo.

As we transition to the fourth movement, with its mezzo-soprano soloist, the music's focus seems to shift from the pleasures of temporal life to the splendors of the eternal. Again, we hear a charming melody from the *Wunderhorn*, and

the orchestration seems to shift to textures that are intimate yet celestial, accompanying the sung text with clarinets, glockenspiel, harp, and solo violin. This smaller scale vocal offering prepares us for the monumentality of the chorale in the symphony's fifth and final movement. "It struck me like lightning," he wrote, "and everything was revealed to my soul clear and plain." Combining the first two stanzas of Klopstock's hymn with additional verses of his own, Mahler gives us a choral testament on the themes of final judgment and resurrection in the symphony's finale.

Mahler's life was marked by tragedy and triumph, and his legacy has inspired an unusually rich body of literary and scholarly

work. It ranges from Thomas Mann's 1912 novella *Death in Venice* to Henri-Louis de La Grange's monumental four-volume biography.

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and has written numerous articles for magazines and newspapers in the U.S. and U.K. and hundreds of program notes for orchestras and opera companies. Operahound.com

Urlicht

O Röschen rot!
Der Mensch liegt in grösster Not!
Der Mensch liegt in grösster Pein!
Je lieber möcht' ich im Himmel sein!

Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg;
Da kam ein Engelein und wollt' mich abweisen.
Ach nein! Ich liess mich nicht abweisen!
Ich bin von Gott und will wieder zu Gott!
Der liebe Gott wird mir ein Lichtchen geben,
Wird leuchten mir bis in das ewig selig Leben!

Primal Light

O little red rose!
Humankind lies in greatest need!
Humankind lies in greatest pain!
Much rather would I be in Heaven!

Then I came onto a broad path;
And an angel came and wanted to turn me away.
But no, I would not be turned away!
I am from God and would return to God!
The dear God will give me a little light,
Will light me to eternal, blissful life.

A THRILLING NEW ERA BEGINS THIS FALL



Join Pacific Symphony at Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall as Alexander Shelley begins his inaugural season as Artistic & Music Director.

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