



2025-26 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom  
Family Foundation Classical Series

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## BOCCHERINI & RACHMANINOFF

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

Thursday, June 11, 2026 @ 8 p.m.  
Friday, June 12, 2026 @ 8 p.m.  
Saturday, June 13, 2026 @ 8 p.m.

Valentina Peleggi, conductor  
Zlatomir Fung, cello  
Pacific Symphony

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|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>ROSSINI</b>            | Overture to <i>William Tell</i>             |
| <b>BOCCHERINI</b>         | Cello Concerto in B-flat Major, G. 482      |
| Ed. Friedrich Grützmacher | <i>Allegro moderato</i>                     |
|                           | <i>Adagio</i>                               |
|                           | <i>Rondo: Allegro</i>                       |
|                           | Zlatomir Fung, cello                        |
| —INTERMISSION—            |                                             |
| <b>MASCAGNI</b>           | Intermezzo from <i>Cavalleria rusticana</i> |
| <b>RACHMANINOFF</b>       | Symphony No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 27           |
|                           | <i>Largo - Allegro moderato</i>             |
|                           | <i>Allegro molto</i>                        |
|                           | <i>Adagio</i>                               |
|                           | <i>Allegro vivace</i>                       |

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The Friday, June 12 concert is dedicated to the  
memory of David Chonette. See page 9.

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

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# ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

Valentina Peleggi, guest conductor



In 2025-26, Valentina Peleggi returns to Pacific Symphony and makes her Australasian debut with the Tasmanian Symphony and New Zealand Symphony, championing works by Puccini, Verdi, and Rossini. Peleggi's past guest appearances in North America have included the Chicago, Dallas, Baltimore, New World, Kansas City, Indianapolis, Colorado, and Vancouver symphonies and at the Grant Park Music Festival. In Europe, she has previously conducted the London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ulster Orchestra, Brussels Philharmonic, Liege Philharmonic, Antwerp Symphony, Nuremberg Symphoniker, Gulbenkian Orchestra, Norrköping Symphony, Orchestra della Toscana, Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano and Arena di Verona orchestras; she has also conducted at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires.

Opera (especially bel canto) is vital part of Peleggi's activity. In May 2025 she debuted at Opera de Rouen and in Paris at the Theatre des Champs-Élysées with Rossini's *Semiramide*, and in 2026, she will return to Opera North to lead the production of *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Opera North. She has previously conducted *Le Comte Ory* with the Philharmonia Orchestra at Garsington Opera and *Rigoletto* at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste, and made her Opéra de Lyon debut with Piazzola's *Maria de Buenos Aires*. Whilst a Mackerras Fellow at English National Opera in 2018 and 2019 she conducted a wide range of repertoire including *Carmen* and *La Bohème*.

2021 saw the release of her first CD, featuring acappella works by Villa Lobos in a new critical edition for Naxos guest edited by Peleggi and performed by the São Paulo Symphony Chorus, where she returned in 2023 to conduct an acappella concert. While acting Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Chorus, she was concurrently Resident Conductor of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra and Music Director (responsible for Italian repertoire) of the Theatro São Pedro in São Paulo.

The first Italian woman to enter the conducting programme at the Royal Academy of Music of London, she graduated with Distinction and was awarded the DipRAM for an outstanding final concert, as well as numerous other prizes, and was recently honoured with the title of Associate. She furthered her studies with David Zinman and Daniele Gatti at the Zurich Tonhalle and at the Royal Concertgebouw masterclasses. She won the 2014 Conducting Prize at the Festival International de Inverno Campos do Jordão, was awarded a Bruno Walter Foundation Scholarship at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California, and received the Taki Concordia Conducting Fellowship 2015-2017 under Marin Alsop.

Peleggi holds a Master in Conducting with Honours from the Conservatorio Santa Cecilia in Rome, and in 2013 she received the Accademia Chigiana's highest award, going on to assist Bruno Campanella and Gianluigi Gelmetti at Teatro Regio di Torino, Opera Bastille Paris, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro Regio di Parma and Teatro San Carlo. She also assisted on a live worldwide broadcast and DVD production of Rossini's *Cenerentola* with the Orchestra Nazionale della RAI. From 2005

to 2015 she was the Principal Conductor and Music Director of the University Choir in Florence and remains their Honorary Conductor, receiving a special award from the Government in 2011 in recognition of her work there. Peleggi is passionate about the arts and holds a Master in Comparative Literature.

# ABOUT THE ARTIST

Zlatomir Fung, cello



Cellist Zlatomir Fung burst onto the scene as the first American in four decades (and youngest musician ever) to win First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition Cello Division. He has since garnered accolades, critical acclaim, and standing ovations at performances around the world,

becoming recognized as one of the preeminent cellists of our time. Astounding audiences with his boundless virtuosity and exquisite sensitivity, the 26-year-old has already proven himself a star among the next generation of world-class musicians.

Highlights of the 2025-26 season include a recital at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in March and a return to the Aspen, Ravinia and La Jolla Music Society Festivals. He appears with the Fort Worth Symphony under conductor Peter Oundjian and with the Nashville, Albany, Knoxville and Pacific Symphonies, Sacramento and Reno Philharmonics and Sarasota Orchestra. Appearances outside the U.S. include the Pohang International Music Festival in Korea and Guiyang Symphony Orchestra in China; Belgrade Philharmonic in Serbia; Melbourne Symphony; and a recital at Wigmore Hall in London.

In April 2025, Signum Records released Fung's debut album, *Fantasies*, a collection of opera fantasies and transcriptions for cello and piano to enthusiastic reviews.

Fung served as artist in residence with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in the 2023-24 season, appearing in four London performances. Other recent debuts include the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lille, and BBC Philharmonic, as well as the Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, Seattle, Milwaukee, Utah, Rochester, and Kansas City Symphonies. He has performed at major festivals, including Ravinia, Blossom, Aspen, Bravo Vail and Grant Park in the U.S. and Verbier, Dresden, Leoš Janáček International and Tsinandali Festivals, and the Cello Biennale Amsterdam in Europe.

In addition to demonstrating a mastery of the canon with his impeccable technique, Fung brings exceptional insight into contemporary repertoire, championing composers such as Unsuk Chin, Katherine Balch, and Anna Clyne. In 2023, under the baton of Gemma New and with the Dallas Symphony, Fung gave the world premiere of Katherine Balch's whisper concerto to great acclaim as the dedicatee of the work; he gave its UK premiere in February 2024 with the BBC Philharmonic, conducted by Joshua Weilerstein.

Fung has received many distinguished prizes and awards, including the 2017 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship in 2022. As a participant in WXQR's Artist Propulsion Lab, he wrote *The Elves and the Cello Maker*, a radio play in which he also performed. Fung has been featured on NPR's *Performance Today* and appeared six times on NPR's *From the Top*. Fung joined the faculty of his alma

# IN MEMORIAM: DAVID CHONETTE

THE FRIDAY, JUNE 12 CONCERT  
IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF DAVID CHONETTE.



For many years, David and Suzanne Chonette have been treasured members of the Pacific Symphony family. As longtime patrons whose generosity has helped catalyze the development of the Symphony, their support has always been about much more than music. It has reflected a deep-seated belief in the importance of arts and culture as essential parts of every community.

In recognition of David's extraordinary life, friendship, and enduring commitment to Pacific Symphony, we dedicate the June 12 concert to his memory. David passed away on St. Patrick's Day, and with him we mourn the loss of a remarkable human being whose life was defined by a love of community, dedication to family, and outstanding leadership that will long be remembered.

David was part of a generation that instinctively understood the intrinsic value of the arts and civic engagement. Anyone lucky enough to know David cherished his kindness, curiosity, and quiet sophistication. His eyes would betray a mischievous sense of humor, and one could hear his laugh from a great distance, marking his arrival at the concert hall.

David and his wife of 69 years, Suzanne, a Life Director of Pacific Symphony, cared deeply about ensuring Pacific Symphony's artistic vitality, its commitment to educating youth, and its role in building Orange County's thriving cultural community.

David and Suzanne's support of Pacific Symphony was personal in many ways. Together, they created an endowed chair for Pacific Symphony's principal oboe. Suzanne played the oboe when she was younger and, together with David, cherished their relationship with Pacific Symphony Principal Oboist Jessica Pearlman.

David was born in Ventura, California, and was a fourth-generation Californian. As a youngster, he was already demonstrating the academic excellence and focused curiosity that would lead to great success in college and in his professional life. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,

David met the love of his life, Suzanne. He went on to enjoy a distinguished career as an engineer, first in the aerospace industry and later in biomedical technology. During his career, David worked on technologies that improved and prolonged life for countless people.

When he joined Edwards Lifesciences, David would eventually become president of the company in the 1970s. At that time, he led Edwards through its evolution into a public company. Former employees will remember David's analytical mind and visionary leadership, as well as his calmness, integrity, and ability to instill confidence in those around him. After his career with Edwards, David put his knowledge of the medical field to work for another 20 years as a venture capitalist, helping to develop new medical technologies.

David was a humble man. Throughout his life, he considered music, education, helping others, and family to be of the utmost importance. In addition to Pacific Symphony, David and Suzanne supported countless organizations, including the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, Laguna College of Art and Design, South Coast Repertory, and many others.

David will be remembered by those who knew him through his caring spirit and the wonderful conversations he shared with them. His quick wit and thoughtful replies were always met with a smile. He was not one to seek recognition or accolades. It made him happy to see the organizations and people he loved succeed, and he cherished time spent laughing with family and friends.

Family was everything to David. With Suzanne by his side, he raised five children and welcomed grandchildren—and even great-grandchildren—to brighten his golden years.

Our deepest condolences go out to Suzanne and the entire Chonette family. We are grateful to have had David as a friend, supporter, and believer in what music can do. He will be remembered with pride and appreciation, but most of all with great respect and affection.

mater, The Juilliard School, in 2024 as one of the youngest members of the faculty. Fung performs on a circa 1735 cello by Domenico Montagnana, on loan from a generous benefactor, and the 1696 "Lord Aylesford" Strad, on loan from the Sasakawa Music Foundation (formerly the Nippon Music Foundation).

Of Bulgarian and Chinese heritage, Zlatomir Fung was born into a family of mathematicians and began playing cello at age three. Fung studied at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Richard Aaron and Timothy Eddy, where he was a recipient of the Kovner Fellowship. Outside of music, his interests include chess, cinema, and creative writing.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Gioachino Rossini

**Born:** Feb. 29, 1792 in Pesaro, Italy

**Died:** Nov. 13, 1868 in Paris, France

### Overture to *William Tell*



**Composed:** 1829

**Premiered:** Aug. 3, 1829 at the Salle Le Peletier in Paris by the Paris Opéra conducted by François-Antoine Habeneck.

**Most recent Pacific Symphony performance:** Aug. 22, 2021, at Chapman University with Carl St.Clair conducting.

**Instrumentation:** Two flutes including piccolo, two oboes including English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, percussion, and strings.

**Approximate duration:** 12 minutes.

With his compatriots Bellini and Donizetti, all born within seven years of each other, Rossini co-created the age of bel canto opera in Italy. All were prolific and achieved prominence; Rossini was probably the most famous composer in the world when he retired from opera to live a life of social prominence in Paris. If his popular comic operas hadn't earned him immortality, their evergreen overtures alone would have been enough.

The golden-age television show *The Lone Ranger* confirmed Rossini's overture to *William Tell* as an essential staple in the concert hall—one that never fails to stir listeners with memorable passages ranging from the serenity of a sunrise to mounted soldiers galloping to save the day. Though his comic works are more popular on the stage, *William Tell* is actually serious historical epic, a genre that Rossini valued above his comedies.

Surprisingly, Rossini retired when he was about 40, at the height of his creative powers. But he had another vocational passion to fall back on: gastronomy. His combination of mad cooking skills and A-list cachet would have qualified him as a celebrity chef in today's foodie culture, but he was more interested in gourmandizing than in cooking. His arrival at a fashionable French restaurant could supposedly strike terror into the kitchen; the dish "Tournedos Rossini" is said to have been named when Rossini demanded that his concoction of filet mignon and foie gras on toast be prepared at tableside while he watched—prompting the frightened cook to turn his back, or "tourner le dos," to avoid the composer's stern gaze.

### Luigi Boccherini (Ed. Friedrich Grützmacher)

**Born:** Feb. 18, 1743 in Lucca, Republic of Lucca (Italy)

**Died:** May 28, 1805 in Madrid, Spain

### Cello Concerto in B-flat Major, G. 482



**Composed:** Late 1760s–early 1770s; Friedrich Grützmacher's arrangement dates from 1895.

**Premiered:** Premiere date unknown.

**Most recent Pacific Symphony performance:** This is a Pacific Symphony premiere.

**Instrumentation:** Two oboes, two horns, strings, and solo cello.

**Approximate duration:** 22 minutes.

It's easy to locate the Italian composer Luigi Boccherini in the chronology of Classical music. His dates neatly bracket Mozart's—born 13 years earlier, died 14 years later. Stylistically, too, he was centered in the Classical era; his music is characterized by elegance and grace, like fine lace. Like his father, he was an accomplished cellist (they worked together for years as court musicians in Vienna). Today, Boccherini is best known for the stately minuet from his String Quartet No. 5 and his Cello Concerto in B-flat Major (No. 9), a foundational work in the cello literature. In its familiar form, this concerto is a reconstruction by the German cellist Friedrich Grützmacher, who adapted it using elements from other Boccherini compositions to fit the conventions of Romantic virtuoso concertos. This familiar performing edition is far different from Boccherini's original.

Grützmacher abridged the outer movements of Boccherini's version and replaced the central movement with that of Boccherini's seventh concerto. He also interpolated elements of Boccherini's Concertos Nos. 4 and 5. Though he based all his alterations on sources by Boccherini, he did add his own cadenzas. The result is a concerto that has earned its place in the concert repertoire and has extended Boccherini's stylistic reach into the Romantic era. This concerto's foundational status in cello instruction is credited to its creative use of the cello's entire range in small, "creeping" intervals rather than wide jumps.

### Pietro Mascagni

**Born:** Dec. 7, 1863 in Livorno, Italy

**Died:** Aug. 2, 1945 in Rome, Italy

### Intermezzo from *Cavalleria rusticana*



**Composed:** 1888

**Premiered:** May 17, 1890 in the Teatro Costanzi in Rome, conducted by Leopoldo Mugnone.

**Most recent Pacific Symphony performance:** Apr. 23, 2022 in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall with Jacob Sustaita conducting.

**Instrumentation:** Two flutes, one oboe, two clarinets, two bassoons, one horn, harp, and strings.

**Approximate duration:** 3 minutes.

Like his colleagues and rivals Ruggiero Leoncavallo and Giacomo Puccini, Mascagni worked in the shadow of Giuseppe Verdi, whose final operas came just as the three younger composers were beginning their careers. After Verdi's last opera, *Falstaff*, enthusiasts around the world wondered: What next for Italian culture and for opera, its signature art form? The answer was in the hands of Puccini, Mascagni and Leoncavallo.

Ambitious for their own careers and for the future of opera, the three young composers entered a competition for new operas. Mascagni's victory meant that despite being unknown and untested, his opera would receive a major production. He was barely 27 when his hasty winning entry, *Cavalleria rusticana*—"rustic chivalry"—stunned Italian operagoers, ushering in a new era in opera: *Verismo* (literally "realism"). The libretto was based on an 1880 story of the same name by Giovanni Verga, one of the Italian writers who broke through the veneer of Tuscan elegance to introduce *Verismo* into Italian literature, as Verdi had long sought to do in his operas.

With hindsight, it's not surprising that the impact of *Cavalleria rusticana* was explosive. For most of the history of opera, its serious, morally elevated plotlines focused on characters who were gods and goddesses from classical times, or historical figures, or aristocrats. During Verdi's career, things began to change, but only slightly—much to his frustration. His important steps toward Realism in the 1850s met resistance from producers and censors. By 1890, Italian opera was an art form waiting for *Verismo* to happen.

Though *Cavalleria* is often presented as half of a double-bill, its two acts, abundant with incident and lush melody, can also stand on their own. Played between the two acts, the poignant intermezzo provides a break in the intensity—a chance to reflect on the action. An eminent critic has praised it as some of the most beautifully sad music ever written in a major key.

## Sergei Rachmaninoff

**Born:** Apr. 1, 1873 in Semyonovo, Russia

**Died:** A Mar. 28, 1943 in Beverly Hills, CA

## Symphony No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 27



**Composed:** 1906–07

**Premiered:** Jan. 26, 1908 at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia, with the house orchestra conducted by the composer.

**Most recent Pacific Symphony**

**performance:** Oct. 21, 2017, in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall with Rune Bergmann conducting.

**Instrumentation:** Three flutes including piccolo, three oboes including English horn, three clarinets including bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

**Approximate duration:** 60 minutes.

Rachmaninoff was painfully vulnerable to his own doubts and those of the critics. A harsh judgment in print or less-than-enthusiastic audience reaction was enough to plunge him into a despairing creative paralysis so crippling that we must now count ourselves fortunate to have the relative handful of compositions that survived his depression.

The Symphony No. 2 may be the unlikelyest of these survivors. The young Rachmaninoff's potential as a conductor and pianist was not in question, but he was committed to composition above all, and a symphony was a critically important milestone for his career. He first approached the form when he was 22, fashioning an ambitious work in the tradition of forebears he admired, including Tchaikovsky and Borodin. It was ardent, poetic, and a disaster, thanks to a dismal premiere performance that destroyed the core of his identity—belief in his calling as a composer. Initial sketches for another symphony and an opera based on *Dante* were shelved. Every attempt at new work brought blank aridity, and it seemed Rachmaninoff might never compose again—least of all a symphony.

Rachmaninoff's creative stasis lasted about three years, ending with what we might now call an intervention: A group of concerned individuals confronted him in 1900, persuading him to consult the physician Nikolai Dahl, who specialized in treating alcoholic patients via hypnotherapy. Dahl treated Rachmaninoff for three years with repetitive hypnotic affirmations. "You will work with great facility," Dahl insisted, and it's hard to deny that he effected a cure: Rachmaninoff not only resumed composing, but produced his Piano Concerto No. 2, his most popular work. He dedicated it to Dr. Dahl.

The Symphony No. 2 may represent an even greater triumph. Not only does it stand with the second concerto as one of Rachmaninoff's most successful works, but it demonstrates the composer's courage in confronting the form that originally traumatized him. By the time he composed it, in 1906 and 1907, his success in his native Russia was such that he sought privacy with his family in the music-friendly city of Dresden. He returned to the scene of his initial disaster for the second symphony's premiere, this time conducting it himself to critical and public acclaim.

The symphony begins with a substantial first movement that introduces fragments of melody that first stand on their own, then combine into longer and more layered statements. The second movement's initial expansiveness is shouldered out by the energy and intensity of a sparkling scherzo. A reprise of the scherzo theme also brings us the familiar sound of the *Dies irae*, an eerie plainchant motif that fascinated Rachmaninoff and many other composers. The movement ends with a resounding fortissimo coda in E minor.

No one composed more satisfyingly lingering adagios than Rachmaninoff, who in this symphony's third movement seems to offer enough materials for three or four adagios. It begins with silken violins that give way to a long clarinet statement, eventually merging into a contrapuntal discourse. The symphony treats us to a joyful final movement that seems to belie Rachmaninoff's prevailing melancholy mood. An energetic invitation sweeps through the orchestra, subsiding into a protracted development section that introduces vigorous dance rhythms into the mix. The finale rewards us with one of Rachmaninoff's most convincingly triumphant extended melodies.

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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 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](http://Operahound.com)*