



2025-26
SEASON

MARCH



Lang Lang Plays Beethoven
Monday, March 23 @ 8 p.m.

IPACIFIC SYMPHONY

Pacific Symphony is the largest orchestra formed in the United States in the past 50 years and is ranked among the top orchestras in the U.S. by the League of American Orchestras. In 2024, Alexander Shelley was appointed to become Pacific Symphony's third artistic leader, taking the title of Artistic and Music Director, beginning in the 2026-27 season. He is serving as Artistic and Music Director Designate during the 2025-26 season, which marks Pacific Symphony's 47th season. Founded in 1978, the Symphony was led for 35 years by Carl St.Clair, who is honored with the title of Music Director Laureate starting in the 2025-26 season.

With a purpose to lift the human spirit through the power of music, the Symphony is a cornerstone of the cultural landscape of Southern California, enriching lives and bringing communities together through creative and diverse programming. As the resident orchestra of the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, the Symphony presents more than 100 concerts and events each year and a rich array of education and community engagement programs, reaching more than 300,000 residents of all ages.

Pacific Symphony features an expansive range of programming through the Classical Series, the beloved Pops Series led by Principal Pops Conductor Enrico Lopez-Yañez, SummerFest at the Great Park Live Amphitheater in Irvine, and engaging Family Musical Mornings concerts for young children and their families. Signature cultural concerts for Lunar New Year and Nowruz are joyful musical celebrations that promote understanding and appreciation of the arts from around the world—a priority for Pacific Symphony, which is dedicated to the power of music to unite and inspire. The Symphony in the Cities program brings free outdoor concerts and interactive musical activities to cities across Orange County, making live symphonic music accessible to all.

In its 47-year history, Pacific Symphony has gained national and international recognition, with recent highlights including a 2018

Carnegie Hall debut in celebration of composer Philip Glass; a five-city tour of China; and a PBS *Great Performances* broadcast of Peter Boyer's *Ellis Island: The Dream of America*. In 2024, Pacific Symphony released the world-premiere recording of *Fiat Lux*, a stirring new commission by composer Sir James MacMillan performed with long-time artistic partner Pacific Chorale. The Symphony has been recognized with multiple ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming and included among the country's five most innovative orchestras by the League of American Orchestras.

Pacific Symphony's education and community engagement programs have been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, expanding access to orchestral music and fostering a lifelong connection to the arts. Musicians partner with elementary schools to enhance music education programs through the Frieda Belinfante Class Act program. Arts-X-press is a summer arts immersion program for middle school students, and Heartstrings provides free tickets to the Symphony, music instruction, and customized music and wellness programs in partnership with local schools, nonprofits, and social service agencies.

Pacific Symphony also nurtures the next generation of musicians through its renowned youth ensembles, including Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra, Youth Wind Ensemble, Santiago Strings, and Youth Concert Band. These groups have toured internationally, earned prestigious awards, and provided young artists with opportunities to excel.

By combining artistic excellence with a commitment to education and accessibility, Pacific Symphony continues to enrich lives, foster new talent, and create meaningful connections throughout Southern California. Its innovative programs ensure music remains a vital part of the community's cultural fabric.



LANG LANG PLAYS BEETHOVEN

Monday, Mar. 23, 2026 @ 8 p.m.

Carl St.Clair, conductor
Lang Lang, piano
Pacific Symphony

DVOŘÁK Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95
"From the New World"
Adagio - Allegro molto
Largo
Molto vivace
Allegro con fuoco

—INTERMISSION—

BEETHOVEN Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37
Allegro con brio
Largo
Rondo: Allegro
Lang Lang, piano

This evening's concert is generously sponsored by
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Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts
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ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

Carl St.Clair, Music Director Laureate



For more than 35 years, Carl St.Clair led Pacific Symphony, making him the longest-tenured American-born conductor of a major American orchestra. He was honored with the lifetime role of Music Director Laureate in December 2025 during the orchestra's 47th season, as well as inducted into

the Orange County Hall of Fame by the Orange County Board of Supervisors. Under his leadership, Pacific Symphony has grown into the largest-budgeted orchestra founded in the past half-century, recognized nationally for its artistic, innovative programming, and community impact. St.Clair also helped catalyze the vision to build a 2,000-seat Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in 2006, the Symphony's permanent home and one of the nation's finest concert venues.

St.Clair has guided the Symphony through many landmark achievements. In 2018, he led its sold-out Carnegie Hall debut celebrating Philip Glass's 80th birthday, which *The New York Times* praised as proof that Pacific Symphony is "a major ensemble!" That same year, he conducted the orchestra's first tour of China. Earlier, in 2006, he led the Symphony on its European debut, performing in nine cities across three countries, including Vienna, Munich, Cologne, and Lucerne, to capacity audiences and widespread acclaim. He also conducted the orchestra's national PBS debut on *Great Performances* with Peter Boyer's *Ellis Island: The Dream of America*. His artistic initiatives include the long-running American Composers Festival and Symphonic Voices, the orchestra's acclaimed opera-in-concert series.

A champion of new music, St.Clair has commissioned and premiered dozens of works. Recent highlights include the 2024–25 premieres of Viet Cuong's *Marine Layer* and Adolphus Hailstork's Piano Concerto No. 3 ("The Way Things Are"). In 2024, Pacific Symphony released the world-premiere recording of Sir James MacMillan's *Fiat Lux*. Other notable commissions include works by Philip Glass, Michael Daugherty, William Bolcom, Richard Danielpour, John Wineglass, and Elliot Goldenthal. His discography also includes collaborations with Yo-Yo Ma, Lukas Foss, and others.

Internationally, he was appointed Music Director of the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra in 2025 and holds honorary posts with the National Symphony of Costa Rica and Germany's Sinfonieorchester Wuppertal. Earlier positions include General Music Director of Berlin's Komische Oper and of the German National Theater and Staatskapelle in Weimar.

Equally committed to education, St.Clair has overseen the development of one of the country's most comprehensive orchestra-based education networks, reaching more than 50,000 participants annually. Pacific Symphony's award-winning Class Act program, arts-X-press, Youth Ensembles, Heartstrings, and *Symphony on the Go!* bring music to schools and communities across Southern California. He has also taught at Chapman University, the University of Texas, Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, and the USC Thornton School of Music, where he has served for more than three decades as Artistic Leader and Principal Conductor of orchestral programs.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Lang Lang, piano



Lang Lang is a leading figure in classical music today—as a pianist, educator, and philanthropist, he has become one of the world's most influential and committed ambassadors for the arts in the 21st century. Equally happy playing for billions of viewers at the 2008 Olympic

Opening Ceremony in Beijing, the 2020 Dubai EXPO Opening Ceremony, the 2024 Reopening of Notre Dame in Paris, or just for a few hundred children in public schools, he is a master of communicating through music.

Heralded by the *New York Times* as "the hottest artist on the classical music planet," Lang Lang plays sold-out concerts all over the world. He has formed ongoing collaborations with conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Gustavo Dudamel, Daniel Barenboim, and Christoph Eschenbach, and performs with all the world's top orchestras. Lang Lang is known for thinking outside the box and frequently steps into different musical worlds. Millions of viewers watched his performances at the GRAMMY® Awards with Metallica, Pharrell Williams, and jazz legend Herbie Hancock.

Lang Lang's passion for innovation has led him to exciting collaborations beyond classical music. He has worked with global pop icons such as Ed Sheeran, John Legend, Rose from BLACKPINK, J Balvin, and Jay Chou bringing classical music to new and diverse audiences. He also collaborated with Disney, blending his classical artistry with the magic of Disney, further expanding his reach.

For about a decade, Lang Lang has contributed to musical education worldwide. In 2008, he founded the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, aimed at cultivating tomorrow's top pianists, championing music education at the forefront of technology, and building a young audience through live music experiences. In 2013, Lang Lang was designated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as a Messenger of Peace, focusing on global education.

Lang Lang's influence extends into the luxury world, where he is a Global Ambassador for Allianz, Dior, Hublot, and Hennessy, and has partnered with Alicia Keys for a high-profile campaign with Hennessy. His unique blend of artistry and creativity also led him to design his limited-edition Steinway Black Diamond piano, debut the Steinway Spirio Cast to the world, create his Hublot limited-edition watch, and design the interior of a Bugatti car, etc. These ventures showcase his diverse talents beyond music.

Lang Lang started playing the piano at age three and gave his first public recital before the age of five. At age nine, he entered Beijing's Central Music Conservatory and won First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians at 13. He subsequently went to Philadelphia to study with legendary pianist Gary Graffman at the Curtis Institute of Music. He was 17 when his big break came, substituting for André Watts at the Gala of the Century, playing Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Christoph Eschenbach: he became an overnight sensation, and the invitations started to pour in.

Lang Lang's boundless drive to attract new audiences to classical music has brought him tremendous recognition: he was presented with the 2010 Crystal Award in Davos and was picked as one of the 250 Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum. He is also the recipient of honorary doctorates from the Royal College of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and New York University. In December 2011, he was honored with the highest prize awarded by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China and received the highest civilian honors in Germany (Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany) and France (Medal of the Order of Arts and Letters). In 2016, Lang Lang was invited to the Vatican to perform for Pope Francis. He has also performed for numerous other international dignitaries, including four U.S. presidents and monarchs from many nations.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Antonin Dvořák

Born: Sep. 8, 1841 in Nelahozeves, Austrian Empire (now in the Czech Republic)

Died: May 1, 1904 in Prague, Austria-Hungary (now in the Czech Republic)

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, "From the New World"



Composed: 1893

Premiered: Dec. 16, 1893 at Carnegie Hall in New York City conducted by Anton Seidl

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Feb. 10, 2024 in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall 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, one tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

Approximate duration: 40 minutes.

Dvořák came to New York at the invitation of Jeannette Thurber to serve as director of the National Conservatory of Music. Hearing the richness of what we now call "roots music," he was baffled by the American intelligentsia's dismissal of folk music as primitive. In interviews he insisted that the future of American music should be founded on what were called "Negro melodies," a classification that also included American Indian tunes. "These can be the foundation of a serious and original school of composition, to be developed in the United States," he told an interviewer in the *New York Herald*. "These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are the folk songs of America and your composers must turn to them."

Listeners everywhere recognize the distinctively American sound in "From the New World" as soon as they hear it. The symphony opens with a portentous adagio that gives way to a quick allegro, with a minor key that seems to communicate the excitement of discovery and unknown frontiers. The first of its melodies, a solo theme for flute in the first movement,

suggests the spiritual "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" to some listeners; the largo in the second movement has gained acceptance as the song "Goin' Home." Whether it existed in song form before the symphony was written has not been settled beyond doubt; we do know that in gaining knowledge of the African American legacy of folk song in America—including the deeply moving "sorrow songs" combining the themes of death, loss, and physical return to the Creator—Dvořák worked with a remarkable African American named Harry Burleigh, who knew this music firsthand and whose blind grandfather was a former slave.

The sadness and the transcendent quality of "Goin' Home" were perfectly suited to another of Dvořák's primary sources for the Symphony No. 9, Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha." In the symphony's second movement, a quiet largo, this sad theme provides context for the dramatically poignant death of Minnehaha as it unfolds within her father Nokomis' wigwam with Nokomis on watch and Hiawatha separated from her in the forest. The musicologist Joseph Horowitz has persuasively related the second movement largo to the dance of Pau-Puk-Keewis at Hiawatha's wedding, and Hiawatha's pursuit through the forest.

The final movement is an allegro that moves from the scherzo's E minor into a triumphant E major, the first sustained major section in the symphony. Here Dvořák seems to shift his gaze upward from a single, poignant tale to a distant horizon, presenting us with a nation's destiny. There is a fateful quality to the clarion brassy and thundering percussion as the symphony draws to a close; in it, contemporary listeners heard a musical portrait of a young country that was youthful but vigorous and bold, ready for a place of leadership in the community of nations. It took more than a century, but Dvořák's conception of an intrinsically American compositional style has finally prevailed not only in our great jazz composers, but also in the unclassifiable works by musicians such as Mark O'Connor and Bela Fleck, whose creations can quote Bach and Bluegrass in a single bar.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 16, 1770 in Bonn, Germany

Died: March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria

Overture to *Egmont*



Composed: Oct. 1809–June 1810

Premiered: June 15, 1810 in Vienna.

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Jun. 9, 2022 in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall with Carl St.Clair conducting.

Instrumentation: Two flutes including piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns,

two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Approximate duration: 8 minutes.

In 1809, when Beethoven received the commission to compose a complete suite of incidental music for historical play *Egmont*, he was drawn into correspondence with the play's author, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The subject was a natural for Beethoven, who was passionate in his concerns