

2024-25 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom
Family Foundation Classical Series

FOUR SEASONS & STRAUSS

Preview Talk at 7 p.m.

KUSC midday host Alan Chapman

Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025 @ 8 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 10, 2025 @ 8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025 @ 8 p.m.

Carl St.Clair, conductor

Dennis Kim, violin and leader

Tobias Melle, graphic artist

Pacific Symphony

VIVALDI

The Four Seasons, Op. 8

La primavera (Spring), RV 269

L'estate (Summer), RV 315

L'autunno (Autumn) RV 293

L'inverno (Winter), RV 297

Dennis Kim, violin

—INTERMISSION—

STRAUSS

Alpine Symphony, Op. 64

Nacht (Night)

Sonnenufng (Sunrise)

Der Anstieg (The Ascent)

Eintritt in den Wald (Entering the Forest)

Wanderung neben dem Bache

(Wandering near the Stream)

Am Wasserfall (At the Waterfall)

Erscheinung (Apparition)

Auf blumige Wiesen (On Blooming Meadows)

Durch Dickicht und Gestrüpp auf Irrwegen

(Going Astray in Thicket and Underbrush)

Auf dem Gletscher (On the Glacier)

Gefahrvolle Augenblicke (Dangerous Moments)

Auf dem Gipfel (At the Summit)

Vision (View)

Nebel steigen auf (Fog Arises)

Die Sonne verdüstert sich allmählich

(The Sun Gradually Darkens)

Elegie (Elegy)

Stille vor dem Sturm (Calm Before the Storm)

Gewitter und Sturm (Thunder and Storm)

Sonnenuntergang (Sunset)

Ausklang (Vanishing Sound)

Nacht (Night)

Visuals by Tobias Melle



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dennis Kim, concertmaster



A citizen of the world, Dennis Kim was born in Korea, raised in Canada and educated in the United States. He has spent more than a decade leading orchestras in the United States, Europe and Asia. He was first appointed concertmaster of the

Tucson Symphony at the age of 22. He then served as the youngest concertmaster in the history of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, before going on to lead the Seoul Philharmonic and the Tampere Philharmonic in Finland. Most recently, he was concertmaster of the Buffalo Philharmonic in New York. As guest concertmaster, Kim has performed on four continents, leading the BBC Symphony, London Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Qatar Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lille, KBS Symphony, Montpellier Symphony, Malaysian Philharmonic, Western Australia Symphony, and Symphony Orchestra of Navarra.

After making his solo debut at the age of 14 with the Toronto Philharmonic, Kim has gone on to perform as a soloist with all of the most important orchestras in Asia. Recent highlights include performing Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival and presenting the first concert featuring the music of John Williams in Havana, Cuba with the National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba. During his tenure as concertmaster with the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Tampere Philharmonic, he was featured annually as a soloist. Over the last few seasons, he was a guest soloist with the Lebanon Philharmonic and the Orchestra NOW, with repertoire ranging from Mozart and Haydn to Glass and Penderecki.

A dedicated teacher, Kim serves on the faculty of the University of California, Irvine and the Orange County School of the Arts. This summer, Kim joins the faculty of the Brevard Music Center. Previously, he was on the faculty of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Korean National University of the Arts, Yonsei

University, Tampere Conservatory, and the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. In the summers, Kim has taught and performed at the Interlochen Center for the Arts as Valade Concertmaster in the World Youth Symphony Orchestra summer program, Bowdoin International Music Festival, and the Atlantic Music Festival. His students have been accepted to the Curtis Institute of Music, Colburn School, Juilliard School, Peabody Conservatory, and the Queen Elizabeth College of Music. Former students play in orchestras around the world including the Seoul Philharmonic, KBS Symphony, Monte-Carlo Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lille, and Pacific Symphony.

An active chamber musician, Dennis Kim can be heard regularly at the Café Ludwig series and is the violinist of Trio Barclay, the first Ensemble-in-Residence of the Irvine Barclay Theatre. Additionally, he can be heard on the soundtracks of movies such as *Star Wars: Episode IX – The Rise of Skywalker*, *Jumanji II*, *The Lego Movie 2*, and *It Chapter Two*.

A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and Yale School of Music, Kim's teachers include Jaime Laredo, Aaron Rosand, Peter Oundjian, Paul Kantor, Victor Danchenko, and Yumi Ninomiya Scott. He plays the 1701 ex-Dushkin Stradivarius, on permanent loan from a generous donor.

The Thursday, January 9 *The Four Seasons* & Strauss concert will be dedicated to Ellie Gordon and performed in her honor. See page 8 for In Memoriam.

This concert is being recorded for broadcast on Mar. 2, 2025 on Classical California KUSC.

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



PROGRAM NOTES

Antonio Vivaldi

The Four Seasons, Op.8, Nos.1-4

Born: Mar. 4, 1678 in Venice, Italy

Died: Jul. 28, 1741 in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1718-20 in Mantua, Italy

Premiered: Unknown; first published in Amsterdam, 1725

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: May 21, 2016, in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall with Philippe Quint as soloist

Instrumentation: continuo, strings, and solo violin

Approximate duration: 37 minutes



Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, actually a series of four violin concertos, is among the most popular suites in the entire classical catalog, and no wonder: Though Vivaldi actually considered himself primarily a composer of operas and claimed to have written 90 of them (about 40 have been lost), today his

reputation rests on the hundreds of concertos he wrote.

The Four Seasons was published in 1725, when Vivaldi was in his early 40s, as part of a group of 12 compositions that comprised his Op. 8—all concertos. In that era, even successful music by major composers had a relatively short life expectancy; works that were more than 25 years old were sometimes labeled "ancient," to be rediscovered or entirely forgotten. This is why the transcription of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* for flute by the Swiss composer Jean-Jacques Rousseau is so sure a sign of the suite's noteworthy success: The transcription came about 50 years after the original's publication. Revolutionary in its day, *The Four Seasons* was revived at the time of another revolution—in 1776.

Grouping the four concertos of *The Four Seasons* into a single suite fits the modern idea of programmatic music—not by telling a story, but by tracing the natural dramatic arc of a calendar year. Beginning with the spring, the time of beginnings and of renewal, Vivaldi provides all the elements of a well-structured drama, taking us from youth through development to maturity to the dark severity of winter, always with a sense of the driving energy that is characteristic of the Baroque, and ultimately with the affirmative sense that spring will come again.

The specificity of Vivaldi's tone-painting ability allowed him to describe his musical intentions with annotations that have the character of stage directions—"the barking dog" in the second movement of Concerto No. 1; "languor caused by the heat" in the first movement of Concerto No. 2; "the drunkards have fallen asleep" in the second movement of Concerto No. 3; and so on. Other equally picturesque passages—note, for example, the gorgeous yet excruciatingly accurate evocation of wind-driven ice and snow in the winter concerto—need no verbal cues.

In describing the suite's first movement, we could equally well be describing Beethoven's *Pastoral* symphony. It opens at an *allegro* marking, greeting us with unfolding energy and the affirmative songs of birds that take shape in the form of a rondo. Pleasantly exhausted with the onrush of spring, we next hear a sultry *largo* in which Vivaldi depicts "A sleeping goatherd—Rustling of foliage—The dog barks—the goatherd and his faithful dog." Vivaldi's deft use of the violin as the featured voice provides us with a point of view as we envision the scene, which—as in Beethoven—culminates in a rustic dance.

The Four Seasons is very nearly a musical aviary, and in the summer section, depicting "Languor caused by the heat," we hear birds more enervated than energetic: the cuckoo, the turtledove, the goldfinch. Breezes blow, but calm prevails amid gentle zephyrs, "various winds," the north wind. A drowsy *adagio* brings us "flies and bluebottles." But then the threat of storm trespasses on the peaceful scene, and a storm gathers as an exhausted harvester dozes, oblivious. When the summer storm arrives, it seems to drench us with wind-driven rain.

In a good year, the kind depicted in *The Four Seasons*, the farmer's autumn is a time of joyful fatigue and fecundity. It begins innocently enough, but soon gives way to signs of drink-fueled merriment and its aftermath, such as "The Sleeping Drunkard" of the second movement. With the successful harvest a memory, the third concerto ends with an account of a hunt, with quarry fleeing while huntsmen and their dogs give chase.

In the climactic winter movement, the most familiar and frequently quoted of the four concertos, the suite's virtuosic demands reach their peak. "Dreadful storm—Running and foot stamping because of the cold—winds—chattering of teeth" is the inscription for the opening of this section. But we need hardly read the words, because it is all there in the music, depicted in devilishly quick passagework. Relief comes with yet another storm, this time rain, but this time enjoyed in the sheltered warmth of a hearth. But in the concluding *allegro* we are outside again, "Crossing the ice—Moving carefully and and anxiously—Falling to the ground—Striding boldly on..."

PROGRAM NOTES

Richard Strauss

***Alpine Symphony*, Trv 233, Op.64**

Born: Jun. 11, 1864 in Munich, Kingdom of Bavaria

Died: Sep. 8, 1949 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bavaria, West Germany

Composed: Nov. 1, 1914 – Feb. 8, 1915

Premiered: Oct. 28, 1915 with the composer conducting the Dresden Hofkapelle in Berlin

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: May 21, 2016, in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall with Carl St.Clair conducting

Instrumentation: four flutes including piccolo, four oboes including English horn, four clarinets including bass clarinet and e-flat clarinet, four bassoons including contrabassoon, twelve horns, four trumpets, six trombones, two tubas, two timpani, percussion, two harps, celesta, organ, and strings

Approximate duration: 47 minutes



Born in 1864, at the end of Western classical music's Romantic era, Strauss had a long, productive life that began during America's Civil War and ended after World War II. Though he lived more than 50 years after Wagner and was at first prevented by his musician-father from hearing Wagner's music, he

later became obsessed by it. Many Strauss contemporaries thought Wagner's revolutionary ideas had been exhausted before Strauss came on the music scene, but Strauss found new life in them: By adding iridescent layers and unexpected modulations, he expanded old chords to make them do things no one thought they could do. His glittering compositions matched the emotional immediacy of Expressionist painters, but not their abstraction; that was the realm of atonal composers such as Schoenberg and Berg.

In his 20s, Strauss established himself as a dazzling musical technician with superb keyboard technique. His mastery of complex, inventive harmonies gave hope to listeners in the post-Brahmsian, post-Wagnerian world that there were still musical frontiers to explore without abandoning tonality altogether, as the Second Viennese School was doing under the leadership of Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg. Though *An Alpine Symphony* is not one of his earlier works, it has much in common with those he wrote when first making his reputation as a composer with lushly entertaining, highly programmatic tone poems. To many music historians and critics, *An Alpine Symphony* belongs in this category, rather than with other symphonies of its time, such as those of Strauss' friend Mahler.

Meditative ideas are given voice and mountain scenery comes to life as we listen to this "symphony"; in it we can sense memories of human experience and hear Strauss' innate theatricality. Strauss' best-known tone poems are indispensable concert staples today—*Don Quixote*, *Til Eulenspiegel*, *Don Juan*, and *Ein Heldenleben*, to name the most familiar. Strauss began *An Alpine Symphony* during this period, in 1899, but abandoned it for a while, though other equally ambitious tone poems were begun and finished. Also *sprach Zarathustra*, for example, is everywhere now, thanks to the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Strauss was in his 30s and still pigeonholed as a "promising young composer" when he wrote these works, and was recognized as a pianist, conductor, and technical wizard of harmony. By the time he completed *An Alpine Symphony*, in 1915, he was an international celebrity and an acclaimed opera composer. *An Alpine Symphony* would prove to be the largest-scale non-vocal composition Strauss would create before his death.

A lifelong nature enthusiast who especially loved mountain climbing, Strauss was inspired to write *An Alpine Symphony* by a boyhood experience during which he and a group of friends became lost and got caught in a storm when returning from a mountain hike. He had originally envisioned an even larger-scale work that would eulogize Mahler as well as memorialize his childhood mountain adventure, but in the end created the single-movement *Alpine Symphony*. "Cinematic" is a word often used to describe it; the richness of Strauss' sonic tapestry suggests both the intensity of his boyhood experience and the monumentality of Alpine grandeur.

Though the *Alpine Symphony* is not written in true symphonic form, Strauss' skill with narrative was such that the music forms a perfect arc, starting and ending with night on the mountain. In between, Strauss gives us 20 additional melodic sections—he named them but did not number them—that make us feel we are right there on the mountain (the Heimgarten in southern Bavaria) with him. They range from sunrise, ascent, entry into the forest, wandering by the brook, at the waterfall, apparition, in flowering meadows, in a pasture, lost among thickets, on a glacier, a dangerous moment, at the summit, a vision, rising mists, the sun clouds over, elegy, calm before storm, a tempest, sunset, and evening calm.

IN MEMORIAM

Ellie Gordon, A Woman of Valor Devoted to the Arts and Family



Eleanor "Ellie" Gordon's life was a beautiful symphony, profoundly impacting those around her. Alongside her husband Mike, she passionately supported the arts, particularly classical music, shaping Orange County's cultural landscape through their endowment of the Concertmaster Chair at Pacific Symphony. Dennis Kim, the current Concertmaster, remarked, "Ellie was always the brightest spirit in the room. I lost my biggest fan. The concert hall will never be the same."

Her generosity knew no bounds; she chaired six Pacific Symphony galas and supported numerous organizations, inspiring countless donations that left a lasting legacy. John Forsyte, President and CEO of Pacific Symphony, noted, "Ellie believed in the transformative power of the arts. Her commitment will enrich our community for generations."



L-R: Music Director Carl St.Clair, Ellie Gordon, Mike Gordon, pianist André Watts

Those who knew Ellie remember her as upbeat, bubbly, and full of life. Music Director Carl St.Clair captured her essence: “Ellie had a beautiful soul. She brought light and joy everywhere she went. Her life was like a symphony—each movement reflecting her love of family, her passion for music, and her unwavering commitment to this community.” He likened her life to a grand composition, with a strong foundation and joyful harmony, creating an inspiring legacy that continues beyond her passing.

Her personal connections with artists, including renowned pianist André Watts, showcased her warmth and generosity. Ellie and Mike’s 64-year marriage was filled with adventure—from exploring the Caribbean to summers on Cape Cod—anchored by their shared love for music and family. Ellie was devoted to Mike, a loving mother to David and the late Susan, and a cherished grandmother, always putting others first and making everyone feel valued.

At Pacific Symphony, we honor Ellie’s memory by continuing her passionate support for the arts. **The Thursday, January 9 Four Seasons and Strauss concert, conducted by Carl St.Clair and**

featuring Dennis Kim, will be dedicated to Ellie and performed in her honor. Friends wishing to honor her legacy can make a gift in her name by scanning the QR code below. These gifts in Ellie’s memory ensure that her spirit of generosity and love for the arts continues to resonate in the community she cherished.



L-R: Composer John Wineglass, President & CEO John Forsythe, Ellie Gordon, Mike Gordon, and Concertmaster Dennis Kim | Pacific Symphony – Tchaikovsky & Strauss, with the world premiere of *Joshua Tree: Scenes from the Mojave*; concerto for violin and orchestra. Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall | February 23, 2023.



L-R: Doug Freeman, Jane Yada, Lynn Freeman, Diana Martin, Pacific Symphony Chairman of the Board Arthur Ong, Ellie Gordon, and Mike Gordon | Pacific Symphony 2023 Gala – “A Night In Chicago” at the Waldorf Astoria Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point, California | April 29, 2023.