



2025-26 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom
Family Foundation Classical Series

SHELLEY CONDUCTS CARMEN AND DAPHNIS AND CHLOE

Preview Talk at 7 p.m.
KUSC midday host Alan Chapman

Thursday, November 20, 2025 @ 8 p.m.
Friday, November 21, 2025 @ 8 p.m.
Saturday, November 22, 2025 @ 8 p.m.

Alexander Shelley, conductor
Gabriela Montero, piano
Pacific Chorale—Robert Istad, Artistic Director
Pacific Symphony

- BIZET** Suite No.1 from *Carmen*
Prélude & Aragonaise
Intermezzo
Seguedille
Les Dragons d'Alcala
Les Toréadors
- GABRIELA MONTERO** Piano Concerto No. 1 "Latin Concerto"
Mambo
Andante Moderato
Allegro Venezolano
Gabriela Montero, piano

—INTERMISSION—

- RAVEL** *Daphnis et Chloé*
Pacific Chorale

This concert is being recorded for broadcast
on July 12, 2026 on Classical California KUSC.

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

The 2025-26 season piano soloists are generously
sponsored by The Michelle F. Rohé Fund



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Gabriela Montero, piano/composer



Gabriela Montero's visionary interpretations and unique compositional gifts have garnered her critical acclaim and a devoted following on the world stage. Anthony Tommasini remarked in *The New York Times* that "Montero's playing had everything: crackling rhythmic

brío, subtle shadings, steely power...soulful lyricism... unsentimental expressivity."

The 2025-26 season sees Montero as Artist-in-Residence at London's acclaimed Barbican Centre, which will feature the UK premiere of her piano quintet *Canaima* with the Calidore String Quartet, her debut with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and a new solo recital programme, *Iberia*, showcasing Spain's rich influence on the piano repertoire through works by Albéniz, Granados, Alicia de Larrocha, Scarlatti, and others. This follows previous residencies with the Sao Paulo Symphony, Prague Radio Symphony, Bournemouth Symphony, Basel Symphony, and at the Rheingau Festival.

Montero's other recent and forthcoming highlights include debuts with Amsterdam's Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, and Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin; extensive tours with the City of Birmingham and Prague symphonies; duo performances with Martha Argerich at Munich's Isarphilharmonie and Lisbon's Calouste Gulbenkian Museum; and performances of her own "Latin Concerto" with the San Francisco and Dallas symphonies (Marin Alsop), New World Symphony (Stéphane Denève), Vienna and Polish National radio symphonies (Marin Alsop), BBC Scottish and Antwerp symphonies (Elim Chan), Swedish Radio Symphony (Marta Gardolińska), and National Arts Centre Orchestra (Alexander Shelley), where she concludes a four-year Creative Partnership in 2025. In the same year, Montero was commissioned as a jury member by the 17th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition to compose a new work for all 30 competitors, entitled *Rachtime*, a piece that pays tribute to Van Cliburn's golden pianism and enduring place in the American cultural pantheon.

Montero has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras, among them the New York and Boston Philharmonics, the Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Houston, Atlanta, Toronto, and Baltimore symphonies, and the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras in North America; in Europe, with the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, NDR Sinfonieorchester Hamburg, NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, and Zurich Chamber Orchestra—plus the Royal Liverpool, Rotterdam, Dresden, and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic orchestras, and the Lucerne, Barcelona, and Vienna symphonies; and in Asia and Australasia with the Yomiuri Nippon, Sydney, and New Zealand symphonies.

A graduate and Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in London, Montero is also a frequent recitalist, having given concerts at such distinguished venues worldwide as the Wigmore Hall, Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Vienna Konzerthaus, Berlin Philharmonie, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Cologne Philharmonie,

Leipzig Gewandhaus, Sydney Opera House, New York's 92nd Street Y, Paris' Philharmonie and La Seine Musicale, Seoul's LG Arts Centre, Hong Kong City Hall, the National Concert Hall in Taipei; and at leading festivals in Edinburgh, Salzburg, Milan, Lucerne, Chicago (Ravinia), Gstaad, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, and Ruhr. In June 2025, Montero was invited, as one of a handful of the world's most celebrated pianists, to perform at the "Harmonies of Hope" concert at the Piazza Pio XII in Vatican City, which included a private audience with Pope Leo XIV. Montero also maintains an ongoing artist residency and international concert series at the Prager Family Center for the Arts in the historic coastal town of Easton, Maryland.

Montero made her formal debut as a composer with *Ex Patria*, a tone poem designed to illustrate and protest Venezuela's descent into lawlessness, corruption, and violence. The piece was premiered in 2011 by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Montero's first full-length composition, Piano Concerto No. 1, the "Latin Concerto", was first performed in 2016 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus with the MDR Sinfonieorchester and has since been performed over 50 times on five continents.

An award-winning and bestselling recording artist, her most recent album, released in autumn 2019 on the Orchid Classics label, features her "Latin Concerto" and Ravel's Piano Concerto in G Major, recorded with the Orchestra of the Americas. Her previous recording on Orchid Classics features Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 and her first orchestral composition, *Ex Patria*, which won Montero her first Latin GRAMMY® for Best Classical Album. Other recordings include *Bach and Beyond*, which held the top spot on the *Billboard* Classical Charts for several months and garnered her two Echo Klassik Awards: the 2006 Keyboard Instrumentalist of the Year and 2007 Award for Classical Music without Borders. In 2008, she also received a GRAMMY® nomination for her album *Baroque*, and in 2010 she released *Solatino*, a recording inspired by her Venezuelan homeland and devoted to works by Latin American composers.

Winner of the 4th International Beethoven Award, Montero is a committed human rights advocate whose voice regularly reaches beyond the concert platform. In 2024, she was named a recipient of the Václav Havel International Prize for Creative Dissent by the Oslo Freedom Forum. She was also named an Honorary Consul by Amnesty International in 2015 and recognised with Outstanding Work in the Field of Human Rights by the Human Rights Foundation for her ongoing commitment to human rights advocacy in Venezuela. In January 2020, she was invited to give the Dean's Lecture at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute and has spoken and performed twice at the World Economic Forum in Davos. She was also awarded the 2012 Rockefeller Award for her contribution to the arts and was a featured performer at Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential Inauguration.

Born in Venezuela, Montero started her piano studies at age four, making her concerto debut at age eight in her hometown of Caracas. This led to a scholarship from the government to study privately in the USA and then at the Royal Academy of Music in London with Hamish Milne. From September 2024, Montero is the Jonathan and Linn Epstein Artist in Residence, and piano faculty member, at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

I ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE

The GRAMMY® Award-winning Pacific Chorale, 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*), has “risen to national prominence” (*Los Angeles Times*) since its inception in 1968. Hailed for delivering “thrilling entertainment” (*Voice of OC*), the resident choir at Segerstrom Center for the Arts is noted for its artistic innovation and commitment to expanding the choral repertoire.

It has given world, U.S., and West Coast premieres of more than 40 works, including numerous commissions, by such lauded composers as John Adams, Jake Heggie, James Hopkins, David Lang, Morten Lauridsen, Tarik O'Regan, Karen Thomas, Frank Ticheli, András Gábor Virág, and Eric Whitacre.

In addition to presenting its own concert series each season, Pacific Chorale, led by Artistic Director Robert Istad, enjoys a long-standing partnership with Pacific Symphony, with which the choir made its highly anticipated Carnegie Hall debut in 2018. The chorus also regularly appears with the LA Phil, with which it won the 2022 GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance for its contribution to the live recording of “Mahler: Symphony No. 8, ‘Symphony of A Thousand,’” conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, featuring LA Phil, Los Angeles Children’s Chorus, Los Angeles Master Chorale, National Children’s Chorus, and Pacific Chorale. The choir has performed with such leading orchestras as the Boston Symphony, National Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and Musica Angelica, among others. In addition to receiving national accolades, Pacific Chorale has garnered tremendous international acclaim.

In July 2023, the chorus completed its first international tour in seven years with appearances in Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom in collaboration with Bath Philharmonia, Free State Orchestra of Bavaria, and Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Orchestra. Previous tours have taken the choir to 19 countries in Europe, South America, and Asia, including engagements with the London Symphony, Munich Symphony, L’Orchestre Lamoureux and L’Orchestre de St-Louis-en-Île of Paris, National Orchestra of Belgium, China National Symphony, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Estonian National Symphony, and Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional of Argentina, among others. Deeply committed to making choral music accessible to everyone, the organization has a discography of 14 self-produced recordings and an extensive collection of free digital offerings.

Recently, Pacific Chorale’s one hour choral-theatrical film *To the Hands* was featured as an Official Selection at the Newport Beach Film Festival. Pacific Chorale also places significant emphasis on choral music education, providing after-school vocal programs for elementary school students, a choral summer camp for high school students, and an annual community-wide singing event at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. www.pacificchorale.org

Robert Istad, artistic director



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

for excellence for delivering fresh, thought-provoking interpretations of beloved masterworks, rarely performed gems, and newly commissioned pieces.

In July 2023, he led Pacific Chorale’s first international tour in seven years, conducting performances at leading venues in Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom. 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 Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Gustavo Dudamel on Deutsche Grammophon (2021), for which he prepared the chorus. It won Best Choral Performance and also garnered a GRAMMY® nomination for Best Engineered Album, Classical. 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.

Istad has prepared choruses for such renowned conductors as Esa-Pekka Salonen, John Williams, John Mauceri, Keith Lockhart, Nicholas McGegan, Vasily Sinaisky, Sir Andrew Davis, Bramwell Tovey, Carl St.Clair, Eugene Kohn, Giancarlo Guerrero, Marin Alsop, George Fenton, and Robert Moody. 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.

He conducts the University Singers and manages a large graduate conducting program, in addition to teaching courses on conducting and performance practice. 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.

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
Alexandria Burdick
Andria Nuñez Cabrera
Ariana Celeste
Chelsea Chaves
Jessica Dalley
Rita Major Memorial Chair
Stephanie Garcia Cochran
Karla Verónica Gil
Saousan Jarjour
Corinne Larsen Linza
Susan Hsia Lew
Susan M. Lindley
Anne McClintic
Shannon A. Miller
Hien Nguyen
Mia Noriega Searight
Olivia Siri
Sarah L. Sweerman
Amelia H. Thompson
Haven Watts
Anne Williams 20
Victoria Wu
Yewon Yoon

ALTO

Jane Hyun-Jung Shim
Section Leader
Hannah Black
Emily Border
Kathryn Cobb-Woll
Denean R. Dyson 15
Ivanna Evans
I-Chin Betty Feinblatt
Benny Fisher
Emma Ginzal
Erin Girard
Meadow Jones
Stacey Y. Kikkawa
Kristen Kleinhans
Bekka Knauer
Micaela Macaraeg
Logan Mintz-Hernandez
Audrey Monfreda
Michele M. Mulidor 30
Elizabeth Provencio
Lauren Shafer
Stephanie Shepson
Rachel Steinke
Abby Tyree
Bonnie Yoon

TENOR

Alan Garcia
Acting Section Leader
Jephte Acosta
Mike Andrews
Christopher Brush 10
Chris Buttars
Abraham Cervantes
Craig Davis 25
Michael Elson
Marius Evangelista
Jason Francisco
José Gil Férez
Chris Gomez
Johnny Gonzales
Vincent Hans
Steven M. Hoffman
Craig S. Kistler
Jeremy Lee
Christopher Lindley
Zachary Lindquist
Greg Long
Gerald McMillan
Michael Morales
Andy Ngo
Bryce Rivera
Sammy Salvador
Ron Gray Legacy Chair
Lissandra Tong

BASS

Ryan Thomas Antal
Section Leader,
Ron Gray Legacy Chair
Mac Bright
Adam Daruvala
Michael Fagerstedt
Randall Gremillion
Jared Hughes
Jonathan Krauss
Dylan Leisure
Aaron Leppke
Elliot Z. Levine
John Middlebrooks
Martin Minnich
Emmanuel Miranda
Kenneth Moore
Ryan Morris
Seth Peelle
Raphael Poon
Ben Reyes
Malek Sammour
Ian Schipper
Joshua P. Stansfield

Celebrating milestone years
with Pacific Chorale this season.

10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

PROGRAM NOTES

Georges Bizet

Born: Oct. 25, 1838, in Paris

Died: Jun. 3, 1875, in Bougival, France

Suite No. 1 from *Carmen*



Composed: 1873-75

Premiered: Mar. 3, 1875 at the Opéra-Comique in Paris with its orchestra conducted by Adolphe Deloffre

Most recent Pacific Symphony

performance: Nov. 17, 2012, in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall with Richard Kaufman conducting

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

Approximate duration: 12 minutes.

Carmen is often called the world's most popular opera even though, in the numbers race for productions and performances, it seems to lag slightly behind a few other hits such as Puccini's *La Bohème*. Statistics notwithstanding, there is something about this opera that puts it ahead of all others in its familiarity and fascination; it's the opera we've all grown up with, the one whose melodies we're most likely to hear in the schoolyard or as elevator music. Its arias have the best joke lyrics ("Toreador-o, don't spit on the floor-o..."). Most of all there is *Carmen* herself, the essential femme fatale, alluring and dangerous. Small wonder that following Bizet's death just months after *Carmen*'s premiere, his friend Ernest Guiraud compiled two orchestral suites incorporating the opera's melodies in a form suitable for the concert hall.

Bizet composed *Carmen* in 1875, when he was 37 and had a decent reputation as a composer, but was not classed as one of the most important in France; in fact, considering the high expectations of him in musical circles, his career so far had been something of a disappointment. He was one of the youngest pupils ever admitted to the famously rigorous Paris Conservatoire and, as one critic wrote, quickly learned everything the professors could teach. He also won most of the prizes available to be won, including the fabled Prix de Rome—the Conservatoire's highest award for composition—at age 19. And though his early operas did not hint at the boldness of inspiration in *Carmen*, they did reveal the freshness of his melodic inspiration and his gift for evoking the vividly detailed, richly textured scenes in music.

In 1875, the year *Carmen* was first produced, such characters were simply not seen on the operatic stage. Controversy erupted even before the first rehearsals began. By the time of its premiere at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on March 3, 1875, arguments over the scandalous plot were raging in cafés and in the theater itself. Bizet was also criticized for producing it at the Opéra-Comique, which was considered a venue where middle-class families could count on wholesome entertainment... "A place where a man can take his wife and daughters." The first performance of the opera brought the critics out in force, with some attacking the composer for imitating Wagner's leitmotif technique. Others claimed that he, like Verdi and Wagner, was ruining singers' voices by drowning them out with "dissonant" and "heavy" orchestral sound. But there were dissenters, including the writer Blaze de Bury, who praised Bizet and said he had "no doubt" about the composer's future. Another critic praised the "huge talent in this musical score."

The supposedly calamitous first-season failure of *Carmen* has entered the canon of music lore. Are the stories true? Probably not. The opera was performed 37 times at the Comique during its first run (though often to a half-empty house), and successfully revived during the next season. A real fiasco would have closed after just one performance, as Verdi's *Un giorno di regno* and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* did. Or, in the worst possible scenario, the audience would have forced the curtain down in the middle of the show and made the impresario refund the ticket money, as sometimes happened in Paris.

When Bizet died, three months after the premiere of his wildly revolutionary opera, he knew it would survive. But could he have dreamed that it would become one of the most popular and influential works in the history of the theater, setting the parameters for a new structure and style in opera? Public and critical enthusiasm for *Carmen* only grows with time. Perhaps the first "daughter" of *Carmen* was Jules Massenet's *Manon* (1884), whose amoral heroine seduces a young seminarian just as he is about to become a priest. From there, the raw brutality of Italian verismo was already within reach. Today, *Carmen*'s irresistibly passionate music and stark drama have transcended style and geography, and are embraced throughout the world.

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

Gabriela Montero

Born: 1970 in Caracas, Venezuela

Piano Concerto No. 1 ("Latin Concerto")



Composed: 2016

Premiered: 2016 in Leipzig, Germany with the MDR Sinfonieorchester conducted by Kristjan Järvi and the composer as piano soloist.

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

Instrumentation: Two flutes including piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani, percussion, harp, strings, and solo piano.

Approximate duration: 35 minutes.

Gabriela Montero's visionary interpretations and unique compositional gifts have garnered her critical acclaim and a devoted following on the world stage. Born in Venezuela, Montero started her piano studies at age four, making her concerto debut at age eight in her hometown of Caracas. This led to a scholarship from the government to study privately in the USA and then at the Royal Academy of Music in London with the late Hamish Milne. In 2024, she was appointed the Jonathan and Linn Epstein Artist-in-Residence and Piano Faculty Member at the distinguished Cleveland Institute of Music.

Montero is celebrated for her exceptional musicality and ability to improvise. In *The New York Times*, Anthony Tommasini noted that "Montero's playing had everything: crackling rhythmic brio, subtle shadings, steely power... soulful lyricism...unsentimental expressivity." She has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras. Her Piano Concerto No. 1, the "Latin Concerto," was first performed in 2016 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus with the MDR Sinfonieorchester and Kristjan Järvi, and subsequently recorded and filmed with the Orchestra of the Americas for the ARTE Konzert channel.

Winner of the 4th International Beethoven Award, Montero is a committed advocate for human rights, whose voice regularly reaches beyond the concert hall. She was named an Honorary Consul by Amnesty International in 2015 and recognised with Outstanding Work in the Field of Human Rights by the Human Rights Foundation for her ongoing commitment to human rights advocacy in Venezuela. In January 2020, she was invited to give the Dean's Lecture at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute and has spoken and performed twice at the World Economic Forum in Davos. She was also awarded the 2012 Rockefeller Award for her contribution to the arts and was a featured performer at Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential Inauguration. In 2024 Gabriela Montero received the Vaclav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent at the Oslo Freedom Forum.

Maurice Ravel

Born: Mar. 7, 1875, in Ciboure, France

Died: Dec. 28, 1937, in Paris

Daphnis et Chloé



Composed: 1909-1912

Premiered: Jun. 8, 1912 by Orchestre Colonne at the Théâtre du Châtelet conducted by Pierre Monteux with the Ballets Russes, with Tamara Karsavina dancing the shepherdess Chloé and Vaslav Nijinsky dancing the goatherd Daphnis.

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

Instrumentation: Four flutes including piccolo and alto flute, three oboes including English horn, four clarinets including bass clarinet and e-flat clarinet, four bassoons including contrabassoon, four horns, four trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, two harps, celesta, strings, and chorus.

Approximate duration: 50 minutes.

With its huge orchestra and wordless chorus, this remarkable ballet score—the largest-scaled that Ravel ever composed—captures the classical union of physical and spiritual love with vivid immediacy. Ravel worked on it for three years, completing it in April of 1912. It is one of the greatest ballet scores of the 20th century and is considered by many to be Ravel's greatest masterpiece.

The commission for *Daphnis et Chloé* came to Ravel in 1909 from Serge Diaghilev, impresario of the Ballets Russes—a company that was a virtual hothouse of creative talent, attracting the greatest composers and artists of the day. The ballet's myth-based plotline, though unfamiliar here, was derived from an ancient Greek story by the 2nd-century novelist Longus. Well known in France since Renaissance times, it combines elements of a pastoral romance, a heroic adventure, and a fairy tale. The action takes place on the legendary Greek isle of Lesbos in a sylvan grove sacred to the god Pan and depicts how childhood companionship flares into passionate romance between two foundlings, Daphnis and Chloé, raised by shepherds. As friendship blooms between them, Daphnis teaches Chloé to play the pan-pipes and they instruct each other in life. Their naïve but increasingly passionate relationship foreshadows modern romances such as *The Blue Lagoon*: They don't realize they are falling in love, though it is obvious to us as we watch (or listen).

Throughout *Daphnis et Chloé* we experience a sense of magic—an elusive sense that we have entered the world of our dreams, a sensual realm that extends into the furthest reaches of our imagination. Ravel achieves this in part through musical values that are beautiful and ambiguous in equal measure: strange, unfamiliar rhythms that never seem to settle down and resolve themselves; startling instrumental entrances; luminous textures and shimmering harmonies that, again, never seem to reach a clear resolution; and "stacked" intervals of interlocking fourths and fifths. But that accounts for only part of the ballet's supernatural effect. The rest is sheer genius.