

ALEXANDER SHELLEY

ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR



One of the foremost conductors of his generation, Alexander Shelley is “a natural communicator, both on and off the podium” (*The Daily Telegraph*), appearing regularly across six continents with the world’s finest orchestras and soloists. A passionate and articulate advocate for the role of music in society,

Shelley has spearheaded multiple award-winning and groundbreaking projects, unlocking creativity in the next generation and bringing symphonic music to new audiences.

With a conducting technique described as “immaculate, everything crystal clear” (*Yorkshire Post*), and with a “precision, distinction and beauty of gesture not seen since Lorin Maazel” (*Le Devoir*), Shelley is known for the integrity of his interpretations and for his creative programming. He has led over 50 major world premieres, highly praised cycles of Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms symphonies, operas, ballets, and innovative multimedia productions. He is admired in the industry for bringing the best possible sound out of orchestras.

Shelley regularly collaborates with internationally renowned soloists, including Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Renée Fleming, Hilary Hahn, Thomas Hampson, Daniel Hope, Lang Lang, and Itzhak Perlman. He is a regular guest with renowned orchestras of Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Australasia, including Leipzig’s Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande; the Helsinki, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, Malaysian, Oslo, Rotterdam, and Stockholm philharmonic orchestras; and the São Paulo, Houston, Seattle, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Montreal, Toronto, Munich, Singapore, Melbourne, Sydney, and New Zealand symphony orchestras.

Shelley is known for bold programming rooted in collaboration, creation, and innovation. In 2026–27, he leads Pacific Symphony in Southern California into a thrilling new era as its Artistic & Music Director. Additionally, this season marks Shelley’s first full season as Principal Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra Ireland (NSOI). Since 2024, he has also served as the Artistic & Music Director of Artis-Naples, in Florida, where he provides artistic leadership for the Naples Philharmonic and the wider multidisciplinary arts organization. Across each ensemble, Shelley is committed to presenting music as a complete artistic experience. With Pacific Symphony and Artis-Naples, he leads performances of the entire Beethoven symphonic cycle, inviting audiences into a deeper engagement with the composer’s creative vision.

Shelley also champions the creation of new works by contemporary composers. In 2026 with Artis-Naples, and

in 2027 with Pacific Symphony, he premieres the orchestral version of *African Queens*, which brings together arias composed by each member of the “Blacknificent 7” collective of living Black contemporary composers: Jasmine Barnes, Damien Geter, Jessie Montgomery, Shawn Okpebholo, Dave Ragland, Carlos Simon, and Joel Thompson, co-commissioned by the Naples Philharmonic and Pacific Symphony. With NSOI, Shelley will offer the world premiere of *Porcelain* by Northern Irish composer Amelia Clarkson in addition to two Irish premieres of works by Anna Clyne and Kati Agócs.

During 2026–27, Shelley will make his debut with the Gstaad Festival Orchestra in Switzerland as a part of the Menuhin Festival’s 70th season. He will also appear as a guest conductor with the Seattle Symphony, performing Cusson’s *1084* alongside works by Sibelius and Rachmaninoff with pianist Benjamin Grosvenor.

Shelley served for 11 years as the Music Director of Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra (NACO) and—assuming the role at age 35—was the youngest-ever director in its history. During his tenure with NACO, the ensemble was praised as “an orchestra transformed... hungry, bold, and unleashed” (*Ottawa Citizen*). His programming is credited for turning the ensemble “almost overnight... into one of the more audacious orchestras in North America” (*Maclean’s*). Through his leadership, NACO championed Canadian creation through its major tours, critically acclaimed recordings, and the commissioning of more than 50 new works by Canadian composers. His work reflected the fabric and values of Canada, engaging communities from coast to coast through inclusive programming, compelling storytelling, and visionary partnerships.

Shelley also served as Principal Associate Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra from 2015–2026, touring both nationally and internationally with the ensemble, while also curating a series at London’s Cadogan Hall. As a conductor of opera, he has led productions with the Royal Danish Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, and Opéra National de Montpellier. His eight-year tenure as Chief Conductor of the Nürnberger Symphoniker concluded in 2017, a period that was hailed as a golden era for the orchestra.

Born in London to the celebrated concert pianists, Shelley studied cello and conducting in Germany and gained widespread attention when he was unanimously awarded first prize at the 2005 Leeds Conductors Competition, with the press describing him as “the most exciting and gifted young conductor to have taken this highly prestigious award.”



Scan for Digital
Program Book

IPACIFIC SYMPHONY

Founded in 1978, Pacific Symphony welcomes Alexander Shelley for his inaugural season as Artistic & Music Director in 2026-27, building on nearly five decades of artistic growth, innovation, and community impact. His inaugural season reflects an ambitious artistic vision that blends core symphonic masterworks, contemporary voices, multidisciplinary collaboration, and a commitment to expanding access to orchestral music. Today, Pacific Symphony is recognized as a major cultural force in Southern California and performs as a resident company of the Segerstrom Center for the Arts at the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Costa Mesa.

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. The Symphony in the Cities and Symphony on the Go programs bring free outdoor concerts and interactive musical activities to cities across Orange County.

As the largest orchestral institution founded in the United States in the past half century, Pacific Symphony has evolved from a regional orchestra into one of the nation's leading cultural institutions. Under the transformative 35-year leadership of Music Director Laureate Carl St.Clair, the Symphony has earned international and national recognition for its exceptional performances, commitment to American composers, award-winning music education programs, and meaningful community engagement.

Recent highlights include 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*. Pacific Symphony has released 16 commercial recordings, primarily devoted to new American works, many of them commissioned by the Symphony. 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.

Through artistic excellence and a deep commitment to community engagement, Pacific Symphony continues to shape the cultural life of Southern California while expanding the reach and relevance of symphonic music for future generations.



MEET THE ORCHESTRA

Alexander Shelley / Artistic & Music Director

Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons Artistic & Music Director Chair

Carl St.Clair / Music Director Laureate

St.Clair Chair

Enrico Lopez-Yañez / Principal Pops Conductor

Hal and Jeanette Segerstrom Family Foundation Principal Pops Conductor Chair

Richard Kaufman / Principal Pops Conductor Laureate

Moon Doh / Assistant Conductor

Mary E. Moore Family Assistant Conductor Chair

FIRST VIOLIN

Dennis Kim

Concertmaster

Eleanor and Michael Gordon Chair

Yoomin Seo

Associate Concertmaster

Judy and Wes Whitmore Chair

Jeanne Skrocki 35

Assistant Concertmaster

Arlene and Seymour Grubman Chair

Michael Siess

Christine Frank

Ayako Sugaya

Ann Shiau Tenney

Joanna Lee +

Robert Schumitzky 40

Agnes Gottschewski

Dana Freeman

Julie Ahn

Paul Manaster

SECOND VIOLIN

Madalyn Parnas Möller*

Elizabeth and John Stahr Chair

Jennise Hwang**

Ruth Ann and John Evans Chair

Yen Ping Lai

Yu-Tong Sharp

Ako Kojian

Linda Owen

Sooah Kim

MarlaJoy Weisshaar

Alice Miller-Wrate

Shelly Shi

VIOLA

Meredith Crawford*

Leona Aronoff-Sadacca Chair

Victor de Almeida**

Carolyn Riley 30

John Acevedo 40

Hanbyul Jang

Julia Staudhammer

Joseph Wen-Xiang Zhang

Cheryl Gates

Phillip Triggs

CELLO

Warren Hagerty*

Catherine and James Emmi Chair

Ben Lash**

Evan Nicholson

Robert Vos

László Mező

Ian McKinnell

M. Andrew Honea

Rudolph Stein

Emma Lee

Xi Yang

BASS

Richard Cassarino*

Douglas Basye**

Christian Kollgaard 40

David Parmeter

Andrew Chilcote

David Black

Andrew Bumatay

FLUTE

Benjamin Smolen* 15

Valerie and Hans Imhof Chair

Sharon O'Connor

Cynthia Ellis

PICCOLO

Cynthia Ellis

OBOE

Jessica Pearlman Fields*

Suzanne R. Chonette Chair

Ted Sugata

ENGLISH HORN

Lelie Resnick

CLARINET

Vacant*

The Hanson Family Foundation Chair

David Chang

Charlie and Ling Zhang Chair

BASS CLARINET

Joshua Ranz

BASSOON

Vacant*

Elliott Moreau

Andrew Klein

Allen Savedoff 40

CONTRABASSOON

Allen Savedoff

FRENCH HORN

Keith Popejoy*

Adedeji Ogunfolu

Kaylet Torrez** +

Henry Bond

TRUMPET

Barry Perkins*

Susie and Steve Perry Chair

Tony Ellis

TROMBONE

Hiram Rodriguez*

David Stetson

Griffin Cutaia

TUBA

Benjamin Vargas*

TIMPANI

Will Howald*

PERCUSSION

Robert A. Slack*

HARP

Vacant*

Michelle Temple

The Sungaila Family Chair

* Principal

** Assistant Principal

+ On Leave

Celebrating milestone years
with Pacific Symphony this season.

10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

The musicians of Pacific Symphony are
members of the American Federation of
Musicians, Local 7.



2026-27 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom
Family Foundation Classical Series

NOBU PLAYS RACHMANINOFF'S MIGHTY THIRD

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

Thursday, Nov. 19, 2026 @ 8 p.m.
Friday, Nov. 20, 2026 @ 8 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 21, 2026 @ 8 p.m.

Alexander Shelley, conductor
Nobuyuki Tsujii, piano
Pacific Symphony

BARTÓK Concerto for Orchestra
*Introduzione: Andante non troppo -
Allegro vivace*
*Giuoco delle coppie: Allegretto
scherzando*
Elegia: Andante non troppo
Intermezzo interrotto: Allegretto
Finale: Pesante - Presto

—INTERMISSION—

RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No. 3
Allegro ma non tanto
Intermezzo
Finale
Nobuyuki Tsujii, piano

The Thursday, Nov. 19 performance is sponsored by

Colburn foundation

The 2026-27 season piano soloists are generously
sponsored by **The Michelle F. Rohé Fund.**

This concert is being recorded for broadcast at
7 p.m. Saturday, Mar. 13, 2027, as part of SoCal
Saturday Night on Classical California.

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



Nobuyuki Tsujii, piano

Scan for Digital
Program Book



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Nobuyuki Tsujii (Nobu) piano



Described by *The Observer* as the “definition of virtuosity,” Japanese pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii (Nobu), who has been blind from birth, won the joint Gold Medal at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2009 and has gone on to earn an international reputation for the

passion and excitement he brings to his live performances.

During the 2025–26 season, Nobu began with two stellar U.S. debuts: Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra as part of Ravinia Festival; and The Cleveland Orchestra as part of Summers at Severance. He returned to Carnegie Hall twice that season, once in recital and later with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. In Europe he performed a long-awaited recital in Munich followed closely by Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor with conductor Klaus Mäkelä and Orchestre de Paris. Mäkelä, Tsujii and musicians from the orchestra also joined forces in a chamber concert to start the week in Paris. Nobu's recital and orchestral repertoire was varied and that season incorporated Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 with performances in Tokyo, Mexico City and Oslo.

Previous seasons have included concerts with leading orchestras worldwide such as Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, Philharmonia Orchestra, NHK Symphony, Seattle and Baltimore symphony orchestras, Münchner Philharmoniker, Filarmonica della Scala, Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich at the Wiener Musikverein, Sinfonieorchester Basel, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi and Hong Kong Philharmonic. He maintains a close relationship with Royal Liverpool Philharmonic

Orchestra, with whom he performed a sold-out concert at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms in 2023. Notable past collaborations also include the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg under Kent Nagano, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra under Klaus Mäkelä, the Mariinsky Orchestra under Valery Gergiev, the NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover under Andrew Manze, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Vasily Petrenko, and BBC Philharmonic under Juanjo Mena. Nobu's appearances as a recitalist have comprised performances at prestigious venues worldwide such as Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, Wigmore Hall and Royal Albert Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, and Singapore Esplanade.

Nobu's debut Deutsche Grammophon album, released digitally on 29 November 2024, featured a Beethoven program that paired the towering “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, with Liszt's transcription of the song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* (“To the Distant Beloved”). His previous recordings with Avex Classics International includes Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 with Vladimir Ashkenazy and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Grieg's Piano Concerto and Rachmaninoff's *Variations on a Theme of Paganini* under Vasily Petrenko with Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Nobu has also recorded several recital programmes of Chopin, Mozart, Debussy, and Liszt.

A live DVD recording of Nobu's 2011 Carnegie Hall recital was named DVD of the Month by *Gramophone*, as was his latest DVD release, *Touching the Sound – The Improbable Journey of Nobuyuki Tsujii*, a documentary film by Peter Rosen.

Nobuyuki Tsujii's international tours are supported by All Nippon Airways (ANA) and he gratefully acknowledges their assistance.

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.

THERE'S A SERIES FOR EVERYONE

CLASSICAL | POPS | SUNDAY MATINEES | CAFÉ LUDWIG SPECIALS | FAMILY MUSICAL MORNINGS | YOUTH ENSEMBLES

From breathtaking masterworks and celebrated guest artists to Broadway favorites, intimate chamber music, and musical adventures for the entire family, there is always something extraordinary waiting for you.



ALEXANDER SHELLEY
ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR



LEARN MORE AND BUY TICKETS
AT PACIFICSYMPHONY.ORG

MAKE PACIFIC SYMPHONY PART OF YOUR 2026–27 SEASON.

PROGRAM NOTES

Béla Bartók

Born: Mar. 25, 1881 in Nagyszentmiklós, Hungary (now Sânnicolau Mare, Romania)

Died: Sep. 26, 1945 in New York City

Concerto for Orchestra



Composed: 1943

Premiered: Dec. 1, 1944 in Boston, with Serge Koussevitzky conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Dec. 14, 2013, with Carl St.Clair conducting.

Instrumentation: Three flutes including piccolo, three oboes

including English horn, three clarinets including bass clarinet, three bassoons including contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, two harps, and strings.

Approximate duration: 36 minutes.

The special reverence that musicians accord to Béla Bartók is especially strong when they discuss his Concerto for Orchestra. To many it is the proof that Bartók was one of classical music's transformative figures—a man whose commitment to aesthetic principles ran as deep as his talent, and whose name should be spoken alongside Bach's and Beethoven's...whose creative breakthroughs came precisely when they were needed, in the first half of the 20th century, as music was struggling to find a way to be modern.

Bartók's major works are recognized as masterpieces that have formed a cornerstone of the post-Romantic repertory—pathbreaking music that opened new possibilities in composition even as they resisted imitation. By combining nationally distinctive folk sources with modern compositional techniques, Bartók developed a voice that was both individual and nationalistic, demonstrating how other composers could do likewise. Along the way he became one of the founders of the modern study of ethnomusicology. But after winning recognition in the first half of his career and with every reason to expect an even brighter future, Bartók found the events of his own life paralleling Europe's grim slide to war in the 1930s. Demoralized by the political landscape and especially by his country's alliance with the Nazi regime, he left Europe for the U.S. at the start of World War II. Once he arrived, lack of public interest in his work sapped his creative energy just as leukemia began to sap his health. It was in this dark time—in the summer of 1943—when Bartók received the commission for what would become one of his greatest compositions, the Concerto for Orchestra. It came from Serge Koussevitzky, the music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and a champion of new music.

Contemporary observers said that the ailing Bartók weighed less than 100 pounds when he began work on the Concerto (and, as composers tell us, the sheer concentration required in composing is physically exhausting). But somehow he rallied, working through the summer and early fall of 1943.

The Concerto's premiere the following December, with war still raging in Europe, is one of classical music's affirmative moments. It confirmed Bartók's greatness when both he and his profession needed it, and Bartók's own comments at the time show his gratification at its success: "We [Bartók and his wife, Ditta Pásztory] went there [to Boston] for the rehearsals and performances—after having obtained the grudgingly granted permission of my doctor for this trip...The performance was excellent. Koussevitzky says it is the 'best orchestra piece of the last 25 years' (including the works of his idol, Shostakovich!)." Today the Concerto continues to astonish us with a sound that is both new and timeless.

"Bracing" is a word that is often used to describe the Concerto for Orchestra. It is not a concerto in the grand, Romantic sense of a showcase for a single virtuoso framed by a large orchestra; instead, it is more closely related to the Baroque form of the concerto grosso, which featured foreground and background instruments—a small orchestra of background players, or *ripieno*, arranged around a *concertino* of two, three or more soloists. But in listening to Bartók's concerto we also experience something like a five-movement symphony that presents a unified emotional arc, rather than the Baroque idea of a suite of movements whose alternations are designed to entertain us with contrasting tempos and moods. Bartók was not a symphonist, but he invested the Concerto with symphonic ideas. Hearing it takes us from a dark, introspective opening to a triumphant, affirmative close.

The structure of the Concerto is beautifully symmetrical, forming an abcb pattern: After the brooding opening, we hear a lighter second movement (b) mirrored by the fourth (d). The grave sound of the tragic c movement, the Concerto's emotional center, seems to embody Bartók's revulsion at the horrors of fascism, and some listeners hear echoes of the savage indictment of totalitarianism that Shostakovich poured into his seventh symphony. But the mood of Bartók's third movement is not one of hopelessness, but rather of elegiac contemplation of themes taken up from the Concerto's opening.

Bartók's own program note on the Concerto offers the following description: "The general mood of the work represents, apart from the jesting second movement, a gradual transition from the sternness of the first movement and the lugubrious death-song of the third, to the life-assertion of the last one... The title of this symphony-like orchestral work is explained by its tendency to treat the single orchestral instruments in a *concertant* or soloistic manner. The 'virtuoso' treatment appears, for instance, in the fugato sections of the development of the first movement (brass instruments), or in the *perpetuum mobile*-like passage of the principal theme in the last movement (strings), and especially in the second movement, in which pairs of instruments consecutively appear with brilliant passages.

The lightness of the fourth movement leads us to a finale that is breathtaking both in its pace and in its sense of triumph—a presto movement of fanfares in the brasses and whirling effects in the strings. We owe the joy of hearing this great work to two heroes of music: Béla Bartók, who composed it in the bleakest of circumstances, and to Serge Koussevitzky, who provided the commission and recognized its merits.

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Born: Apr. 1, 1873 in Semyonovo, Russia

Died: Mar. 28, 1943 in Beverly Hills, California

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30



Composed: 1909

Premiered: Nov. 28, 1909 in New York, with the composer as soloist and Walter Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony Society.

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Jul. 13, 2025 at Festival Napa Valley with Tianxu An as soloist and Gavriel Heine conducting.

Instrumentation: Two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, strings, and solo piano.

Approximate duration: 39 minutes.

Sergei Rachmaninoff, the last of the great Russian Romantic composers, was also one of history's great pianists—perhaps the greatest of all, according to some current re-evaluations. (Recordings of Rachmaninoff exist, and his performances are well documented.) With Frederic Chopin, Franz Liszt, and the great Baroque organists like Bach and Telemann, he was one of classical music's legendary masters of the keyboard who were also great composers. Of these, he was an heir of Liszt—whose works demand power, speed, and fire—rather than the poetic, introspective Chopin.

Rachmaninoff's hallmarks are dazzling virtuosity and plush melody. Big intervals and big sound were natural parts of his musical vocabulary, and seemed to come naturally to his huge hands and long limbs; in fact, it is now believed that he had Marfan's Syndrome, a congenital condition associated with these skeletal proportions. But if Marfan's contributed to his heroic sound, there was a more delicate aspect to the Rachmaninoff style—fleet passagework, rhythmic pliancy, and long, singing lines. His third piano concerto is known to many pianists as Rach 3, or—thanks to Sylvester Stallone—as Rocky III because it is so formidable a heavyweight.

The difficulties lie in Rachmaninoff's unique combination of power, poetry, and speed. Those huge, complex chords, thundering octaves, cascading phrases, and purling legatos might be nearly impossible to play, but should sound effortless as they hold you in their thrall. It's only afterwards, when you are released from their spell, that you might wonder how in the world the pianist played them with only two hands. Rachmaninoff's music asks much of a pianist: power, speed, the ability to spin out a deeply sculpted legato line, and sometimes all three at once. Not surprisingly, his third concerto is associated with some of the greatest pianists of the early 20th

Century. Its dedicatee was the revered Josef Hoffmann. Though he never played it, 11 years later it would help launch the career of an astounding newcomer named Vladimir Horowitz, who chose it for his graduation recital at the Kiev Conservatory and was soloist in the premiere recording.

The composer felt that his third concerto was more "comfortable" to perform than his second, but now, more than a century later, the sheer virtuosity required in the third casts a longer shadow among pianists. Could Rachmaninoff really have found these demands so manageable? Composed in 1909 for his first major performances in America, the concerto was a spectacular showcase for his particular gifts. Touring with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Rachmaninoff was both soloist and conductor in Chicago and Philadelphia; in New York he played the concerto with the New York Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Walter Damrosch, and with the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Gustav Mahler.

Written in the three-movement form typical of Romantic concertos, the Piano Concerto No. 3 is replete with Rachmaninoff's stylistic hallmarks: dazzling virtuosity and plush melody. It begins with an allegro movement in D minor in which the opening statement, a simple melody, is juxtaposed against a slower theme. They frame a characteristic Rachmaninoff development section, with brilliant passagework and thundering climaxes that create intense drama before the original theme reappears in relative tranquility.

The concerto's second movement, marked *intermezzo*, reveals what many listeners value most in Rachmaninoff: a melody of intense, swooning romanticism that goes wherever its organic, spontaneous development seems to lead it. Introspective in character, it builds gradually from quiet nostalgia to dramatic fortissimos that showcase the soloist's power. This development is mediated by the reintroduction of the main melody from the first movement. Solo flourishes from the piano lead directly from its close. In a work that is both a sprint and a marathon, this movement provides the few moments of respite for the soloist.

Grace and speed are on order for the final movement, which builds toward a powerful climax by weaving together contrasting materials: accented march rhythms alternating with flowing, lyrical phrases. The movement reprises melodic materials from the concerto's opening, concluding with a coda of thrilling power.

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