

2025-26 Hal & Jeanette Segerstrom
Family Foundation Classical Series

SHELLEY CONDUCTS SCHEHERAZADE

Preview Talk at 7 p.m.
KUSC midday host Alan Chapman
Thursday, October 16, 2025 @ 8 p.m.
Friday, October 17, 2025 @ 8 p.m.
Saturday, October 18, 2025 @ 8 p.m.

Alexander Shelley, conductor
Pablo Sainz-Villegas, guitar
Pacific Symphony

JESSIE MONTGOMERY *Starburst*
Arr. Jannina Norpoth

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ *Concerto Místico y Profano,*
for Guitar and Orchestra
Encuentro
Serenata Piadosa
Diferencias sobre la Romanesca
Pablo Sainz-Villegas, guitar

—INTERMISSION—

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV *Scheherazade, Op.35*
The Sea and Sindbad's Ship
(Largo e maestoso - Allegro non troppo)
The Tale of Prince Kalendar
(Lento - Allegro molto)
The Young Prince and the Princess
(Andantino quasi allegretto)
The Festival at Bagdad; The Sea;
The Ship Goes to Pieces on a Rock
(Allegro molto)

This concert is being recorded for broadcast
on July 5, 2026 on Classical California KUSC.

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



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Pablo Sainz-Villegas



Pablo Sainz-Villegas has been praised by the international press for his "virtuous and moving performance, with an irresistible exuberance and a range of bright colors" (*The New York Times*).

Undoubtedly the most virtuoso guitarist of his generation, Pablo Sainz-Villegas has been acclaimed by

the international press as the successor to Andrés Segovia and an ambassador of Spanish culture in the world. He is the first solo guitarist to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York since Maestro Andrés Segovia did so in 1983, the first guitarist to play with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 2001, and the first guitarist to perform with the Berliner Philharmoniker at the New Year's Eve Gala since 1983.

Since his debut with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos at the Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center, he has performed in over 40 countries and with orchestras such as the Israel Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra, and the National Orchestra of Spain, as well as in venues such as the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow, the Musikverein in Vienna, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, and the Suntory Hall in Tokyo, among many others of equal importance and reputation.

His most notable milestones include the Princess of Asturias Awards Concert and his participation in the Metropolitan Opera Gala last May at the Palace of Versailles. His numerous performances at the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in Madrid, which captivated more than 85,000 attendees, as well as concerts held in distinguished venues such as Grant Park in Chicago, the iconic Praça do Comércio in Lisbon, and the illustrious Hollywood Bowl, accompanied by the LA Phil, have made him one of this generation's most remarkable and prolific performers.

As a socially committed artist, he is the founder and driving force behind the non-profit association Strings in Common in the United States. He is also the creator and artistic director of the La Rioja Festival in Spain.

As an exclusive artist for SONY Classical, he has released three albums. His latest project, *The Blue Album*, was released in June 2023.

Highlights of his 2024-25 performance season include the premier of Arturo Márquez's Guitar Concerto, a tour of Colombia with the National Orchestra of Spain and a solo tour in Taiwan, and performances at Teatro Real of Madrid, Carnegie Hall, Hollywood Bowl, and orchestras such as Brussels Philharmonic, LA Phil and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande among many others.

Pablo Sainz-Villegas was born in La Rioja, Spain, and has been living in the United States since 2001.

PROGRAM NOTES

Jessie Montgomery

Born: 1981 in New York City

Starburst



Composed: 2012

Premiered: Sept., 2012 in Miami, Florida

Most recent Pacific Symphony

performance: This is a Pacific Symphony premiere.

Instrumentation: Three flutes including piccolo, two oboes, three clarinets including bass clarinet, two

bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, and strings.

Approximate duration: 4 minutes.

Jessie Montgomery is an acclaimed, award-winning composer, violinist, and educator whose works are performed frequently around the world by leading musicians and ensembles. Her music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, language, and social justice, placing her squarely as one of the most relevant interpreters of 21st-century American sound and experience. Her profoundly felt works have been described as "turbulent, wildly colorful and exploding with life" (*The Washington Post*).

Montgomery was born and raised in Manhattan's Lower East Side in the 1980s. Her parents—her father a musician, her mother a theater artist and storyteller—were engaged in the activities of the neighborhood and regularly brought Montgomery to rallies, performances, and parties where neighbors, activists, and artists gathered to celebrate and support the movements of the time. From this unique experience, Montgomery has created a life that merges composing, performance, education, and advocacy.

Since 1999, Montgomery has been affiliated with The Sphinx Organization, which supports young African-American and Latinx string players. She currently serves as Composer-in-Residence for the Sphinx Virtuosi, the organization's flagship professional touring ensemble. She was a two-time laureate of the annual Sphinx Competition and was awarded an MPower grant to assist in the development of her debut album, *Strum: Music for Strings* (Azica Records). She has received additional grants and awards from the ASCAP Foundation, Chamber Music America, American Composers Orchestra, the Joyce Foundation, and the Sorel Organization.

In *Starburst*, a composition inspired by the idea of an exploding star, we might expect to encounter violent flashes and musical evocations of blinding light; instead, Montgomery gives us unstoppable, radiant energy that suggests the generative power of creativity and a universe shimmering with power and positivity. On her website, she notes: *This brief one-movement work originally for string orchestra, and arranged for chamber ensemble by Jannina Norpoth, is a play on imagery of rapidly changing musical colors. Exploding gestures are juxtaposed with gentle fleeting melodies in an attempt to create a multidimensional soundscape. A common definition of a starburst: the rapid formation of large numbers of new stars in a galaxy at a rate high enough to alter the structure of the galaxy...lends itself almost literally to the nature of...The Sphinx Virtuosi, and I wrote the piece with their dynamic in mind.*

PROGRAM NOTES

Arturo Márquez

Born: Dec. 20, 1950, in Alamos, Mexico

Concerto Místico y Profano, for Guitar and Orchestra



Composed: 2025

Premiered: July 5, 2025, by the Sinfónica de Minería at the Sala Nezahualcóyotl, conducted by Carlos Miguel Prieto, with Pablo Sainz-Villegas as soloist.

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: This is a Pacific

Symphony premiere.

Instrumentation: Two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, percussion, harp, strings, and solo guitar.

Approximate duration: 20 minutes.

The Mexican composer Arturo Márquez was born deep in the Sonoran desert in the colonial town of Alamos, and was named for his father, Arturo, a man of many talents—a mariachi musician and violinist by choice, and a carpenter when family finances required it. He introduced his son to music by ensuring that young Arturo was present at his father's performances of chamber music, traditional Mexican music, waltzes, and polkas.

In 1962, the Márquez family moved to Los Angeles, where Arturo began studies on violin and other instruments in junior high school. He also began to compose. Márquez said his adolescence "was spent listening to Javier Solís, sounds of mariachi, The Beatles, The Doors, Carlos Santana, and Chopin." At 17 he returned to Sonora, and the following year he was named director of the Municipal Band in Navojoa. He entered the Mexican Music Conservatory in 1970, and later received a scholarship from the French government to study composition in Paris. He came to the U.S. on a Fulbright Scholarship, completing his M.F.A. degree at the California Institute of the Arts.

As in all his compositions, Márquez's guitar concerto brilliantly evokes the color, light and warmth of his native Mexico. The concerto received its world premiere with our guest artist Pablo Sáinz-Villegas as soloist.

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Born: Mar. 18, 1844, in Tikhvin, Russia

Died: Jun. 21, 1908, in Lyubensk, Russia

Scheherazade, Op. 35



Composed: 1888

Premiered: Oct. – Nov. 1888, in St. Petersburg, conducted by the composer.

Most recent Pacific Symphony performance: Feb. 2, 2019, in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall with Carl St.Clair conducting.

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

Approximate duration: 42 minutes.

Scheherazade's germination began in 1887 with the death of the composer's friend Alexander Borodin, a seminal figure in Russian music and with Rimsky-Korsakov a member of the "Mighty Five." But in a broader sense, it can be traced to Rimsky's childhood. His experience of life was constrained by parents who sheltered him, but his imagination was fired by the older brother he idolized, and by the tradition of naval service in his family dating back generations. By age 12, Rimsky-Korsakov had ventured outside the confines of the town of Tikhvin only three times, but his brother was seeing the world in service to the Russian navy. Rimsky-Korsakov pored over letters from his older brother, and despite never having seen the sea, he became obsessed by it, immersing himself in nautical references and studying the fine points of naval practice, even constructing a model brig.

His career began with a combination of military and cultural elements that would be impossible to duplicate today, studying music while on a 32-month naval commission. Having seen the lands then known as the Orient, Rimsky-Korsakov first tried to capture their spirit in his *Antar* Symphony in 1868. But after taking his wife and young son on a trip that included the Crimean towns of Sevastapol and Bakhchisaray, he was deeply affected by his experience of foreign cultures teeming with sounds and music—"the coffee houses, the shouts of...vendors, the chanting of the muezzins on the minarets, the services in the mosques, and the oriental music." These inspired him to revise the *Antar* Symphony.

When Borodin died, the 42-year-old Rimsky-Korsakov tabled his own work to finish Borodin's incomplete opera *Prince Igor*. But his immersion in Borodin's music, inspired by distant Russian realms and Polovtsian folkways, seems to have reignited his musical wanderlust, and he soon began work on the "oriental fantasy" that became *Scheherazade*. It is an orchestral suite of symphonic scope based on *The Arabian Nights*, a compilation of Arabic, Persian, and Indian stories that had already been part of world culture for a millennium.

Scheherazade opens with a brassy warning, ominous and loud, with a distinctive tang we can't quite place. The

melody is spiced with chromaticism. East Asian? Arabian? Before we can be sure, this blaring statement is suddenly hushed, giving way to the ethereal voice of a lone violin. It is the voice of a woman, backed by harp chords that surround her like diaphanous veils. Of course she is the beautiful Scheherazade, and in a matter of seconds she has transported us to a setting whose exoticism is beyond anything we could imagine without Rimsky-Korsakov's brilliance. The newlywed Scheherazade is beguiling her husband and us with vivid tales of sultans, princes and the voyager Sinbad known to us as *The Thousand and One Nights*.

The four movements of *Scheherazade* bear names based on incidents in *The Arabian Nights*. But observations in Rimsky-Korsakov's memoirs confirm that the musical passages correspond not to individual plot details, but to a general sense of the overall narrative, with the listener invited to visualize a more specific scenario. In the first movement, "The Sea and Sinbad's Ship," we can easily supply it from the very beginning, when two oppositional themes—the overbearing, brass-dominated announcement of Sultan Shahriyar and Scheherazade's beautiful violin theme, introduced by a woodwind choir and tinged with melancholy—blossom into storytelling mode. Underlying both themes we can hear the ebbing, swelling sea.

The many stories of the 1,001 Arabian nights are ultimately the story of a single romance, as Scheherazade's wisdom and charm prove even more important than her beauty in saving

her life and redeeming the sultan from his bitterness—and as the suite progresses we sense the gathering triumph of romance in the onrushing lyricism of "The Young Prince and the Young Princess." This plays out in deft contrapuntal melodies riposting between high and low strings, woodwinds, and harp. This tapestry of themes culminates in a series of figures that are hushed yet seem on the verge of bursting with tense energy.

To listen to this orchestral spectacle is to experience one of Western music's great feats of orchestration. The New Zealand-based musicologist Paul Serotsky calls Rimsky-Korsakov "...the Master Magician of orchestration, surpassing even Wagner and Berlioz." (He closely studied Berlioz's *Treatise on Orchestration* and later wrote his own text on the subject.) "The music of *Scheherazade*," notes Serotsky, "is like a magic carpet: It can transport you to another world." In his autobiography, Rimsky-Korsakov bristled at the idea that his masterly evocation of color and texture was a surface feature of the score; rather, he deemed it the very essence of the music itself, no less than melody or harmony.

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



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