



NEWS RELEASE

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“The kind of musician who is shaping the future of classical music” –New York Magazine

Celebrating Rachmaninoff 150, Firebrand Pianist Conrad Tao Explores Rachmaninoff’s Work and Influence on American Music at The Soraya

Thu, Apr 6 at 8pm

Tickets start at \$41 and are available at www.thesoraya.org

(Los Angeles, CA) March 21, 2023—American pianist **Conrad Tao** is shaping the future of classical music through his rich and unique interpretations of the Classical Canon. For his debut appearance at The Soraya on Thu, Apr 6 at 8pm, Tao pairs American works that inspired or were inspired by Rachmaninoff—from Billy Strayhorn, Art Tatum, Irving Berlin, to Stephen Sondheim—with selections from the composer’s *Études Tableaux*, *Preludes*, and *Symphonic Dances*, as well as Rachmaninoff’s *Cello Sonata* featuring cellist, **Jay Campbell**.

The last of the Romantics, Russian composer **Sergei Rachmaninoff** forged a new musical path for modern composers. The Soraya celebrates Rachmaninoff’s piano prowess – both as a performer and composer – and the 150th anniversary of his birth. The artist not only influenced the lush Hollywood sound of movie-music, but also frequented New York Jazz clubs for creative inspiration after his emigration from Russia in 1917.

Tao states, "In my program, Rachmaninoff's move to New York in 1918 serves as a jumping off point for a speculative evening exploring the influence of jazz and American popular music on Rachmaninoff, Rachmaninoff's influence on composers of those same traditions, and other surprising musical connections along the way, featuring music by Billy Strayhorn, Art Tatum, Irving Berlin, Stephen Sondheim, and, of course, Sergei Rachmaninoff himself."

About Conrad Tao

Conrad Tao has appeared worldwide as a pianist and composer and has been dubbed “the kind of musician who is shaping the future of classical music” by *New York Magazine*, and an artist of

“probing intellect and open-hearted vision” by *The New York Times*. Tao has performed as a soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and Boston Symphony.

As a composer, his work has been performed by orchestras throughout the world; his first large scale orchestral work, *Everything Must Go*, received its world premiere with the New York Philharmonic, and its European premiere with the Antwerp Symphony, and he was the recipient of a 2019 New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Award, for Outstanding Sound Design / Music Composition, for his work on *More Forever*, in collaboration with dancer and choreographer Caleb Teicher. He is the recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant and was named a Gilmore Young Artist—an honor awarded every two years highlighting the most promising American pianists of the new generation.

In the 2022-23 season, Tao returns to perform Mozart with the New York Philharmonic, for whom he will also curate a program for their Artist Spotlight series, featuring collaborations with vocalist, Charmaine Lee, and wind ensemble, The Westerlies. He will also return to the San Francisco Symphony both as a soloist in Gershwin’s Concerto in F major at Davies Symphony Hall, and as a curator for their Soundbox series. In Washington, DC, he will make his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra performing Shostakovich with Dalia Staveska, and—following Atlanta Symphony’s premiere of his Violin Concerto with Stefan Jackiw in 2021—Tao will appear as soloist with the orchestra performing Ravel with Ryan Bancroft. After their successful collaboration with the Finnish Radio Symphony, Tao will further re-unite with Hannu Lintu to perform Tchaikovsky with the Naples Philharmonic, as well as return to Finland to open the season with the Tampere Philharmonic and Santtu-Matias Rouvali.

In his first collaboration with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra in the Fall of 2022, Tao curated and led a program of music by Ruth Crawford Seeger, Gesualdo, CPE Bach, Feldman, and Mozart. Other upcoming collaborations include ongoing performances of *Counterpoint* with dancer Caleb Teicher, and performances of Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue with Orchestra of St Luke’s, as part of Paul Taylor Dance Company’s season at Lincoln Center. The 22-23 season will also include a multi-city tour with the Junction Trio, which includes the group’s Celebrity Series of Boston debut, alongside performances in New York City, San Francisco, Washington DC, and more.

A Warner Classics recording artist, Tao’s debut disc *Voyages* was declared a “spiky debut” by *The New Yorker’s* Alex Ross. Of the album, *NPR* wrote: “Tao proves himself to be a musician of deep intellectual and emotional.” His next album, *Pictures*, with works by David Lang, Toru Takemitsu, Elliott Carter, Mussorgsky, and Tao himself, was hailed by *The New York Times* as “a fascinating album [by] a thoughtful artist and dynamic performer...played with enormous imagination, color and command.” His third album, *American Rage*, featuring works by Julia Wolfe, Frederic Rzewski, and Aaron Copland, was released in the fall of 2019. In 2021, Tao and brass quartet The Westerlies released *Bricolage*, an album of improvisations and experiments recorded in a small cabin in rural New Hampshire in June 2019.

Tao was born in Urbana, Illinois in 1994. He has studied piano with Emilio del Rosario in Chicago and Yoheved Kaplinsky in New York, and composition with Christopher Theofanidis.

For tickets and information, visit www.thesoraya.org or call the Ticket Office at (818) 677-3000.

For interview and ticket requests, contact Marie Estrada, Communications Associate (marie.estrada@csun.edu), or Gary Murphy, Consultant (gmurphypr@gmail.com). [Access your press kit here for photos.](#)

About The Soraya

Located on the vibrant and diverse campus of California State University in the heart of Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley, The Soraya continues its vigorous commitment to innovating, exceling, and amplifying access by offering a wide variety of performances that reflect LA's many distinctive communities and featuring new and original work from the Los Angeles region as well as artists from around the world.

Each season The Soraya features a vibrant program of nearly 50 classical and popular music, dance, theater, family, and international events that establish it as one of the top arts companies in Southern California that uplifts and inspires its audiences.

For Calendar Listing

Thu, Apr 6, 2023 | 8pm

Conrad Tao Plays Rachmaninoff

Firebrand pianist Conrad Tao is shaping the future of classical music through his rich and unique interpretations of the Classical Canon. For his debut appearance at The Soraya, the prodigy breaks open Rachmaninoff, reflecting on the composer's contemporary influence in celebration of the 150th anniversary of his birth. Weaving in contemporary works from Stephen Sondheim, Billy Strayhorn, and Art Tatum with improvisations on Rachmaninoff's breathtakingly lush melodies, Tao illuminates the work for new generations of music lovers.

Who: Conrad Tao Plays Rachmaninoff
When: Thu, Apr 6 at 8pm
Tickets: \$41-\$88
Where: Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)
18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330.
Website: www.thesoraya.org
Phone: 818-677-3000

The Soraya

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