

## VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON PLAYS BACH'S GOLDBERG VARIATIONS IN HIS ORANGE COUNTY PIANO RECITAL DEBUT



IRVINE, CA (March 4, 2024)— The Philharmonic Society of Orange County presents the Orange County debut of Icelandic pianist Víkingur Ólafsson, dubbed “the new superstar of classical piano” (*The Daily Telegraph*), as he performs J.S. Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* at Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, Segerstrom Center for the Arts, May 2, 2024. This concert is part of the Donna L. Kendall Classical Series sponsored by the Donna L. Kendall Foundation, with additional support from The Segerstrom Foundation.

Víkingur Ólafsson has made a profound impact with his remarkable combination of highest-level musicianship and visionary programming. His recordings for Deutsche Grammophon— *Philip Glass Piano Works* (2017), *Johann Sebastian Bach* (2018), *Debussy Rameau* (2020) and *Mozart & Contemporaries* (2021) have led to career streams of over 600 million. On October 6, 2023, Ólafsson released his much-anticipated new album recording of the *Goldberg Variations* on Deutsche Grammophon.

In just a few short years, Ólafsson has become one of the most sought-after artists of today, performing internationally with orchestras such as the Philharmonia Orchestra,

Concertgebouworkest, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Berliner Philharmoniker, The Cleveland Orchestra, London and Bergen Philharmonic orchestras, Toronto, and Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. His multiple awards include the CoScan's International Nordic Person of the Year (2023), Rolf Schock Prize for music (2022), *Gramophone magazine* Artist of the Year, Opus Klassik Solo Recording Instrumental (twice) and Album of the Year at the *BBC Music Magazine Awards*.

Celebrated for his visionary interpretations of J.S. Bach, Ólafsson dedicates his 2023-24 season to a *Goldberg Variations* world tour, performing the work across six continents throughout the year.

*"The Goldberg Variations* contain some of the most virtuosic keyboard music ever written, some of the most astonishingly brilliant uses of counterpoint in the repertoire and countless instances of exalted poetry, abstract contemplation, and deep pathos—all within immaculately shaped structures of formal perfection. In 30 variations, built on the humble harmonic framework of a simple, graceful aria, Bach turns limited material into boundless variety like no one before or since. He is the greatest keyboard virtuoso of his time," said Víkingur Ólafsson.

He continues: "Like with some of Bach's other works on this scale, I was inclined to think of the *Goldberg Variations* as a grand, commanding cathedral of music, magnificent in its structure and intricate in its ornamentation. Now I find another metaphor more apt: That of a grand oak tree, no less magnificent, but somehow organic, living, and vibrant, its forms both responsive and regenerative, its leaves constantly unfurling to produce musical oxygen for its admirers through some metaphysical, time-bending photosynthesis."

Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, Segerstrom Center for the Arts is located at 615 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626. Ticket prices for this concert start at \$23 and are available at the Philharmonic Society box office at (949) 553-2422, or online at [www.philharmonicsociety.org](http://www.philharmonicsociety.org).

## **ABOUT THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY:**

Founded in 1954 as Orange County's first music organization, the Philharmonic Society of Orange County presents national and international performances of the highest quality and provides dynamic and innovative music education programs for individuals of all ages to enhance the lives of Orange County audiences through music.

Since its inception, the Philharmonic Society has evolved and grown with the county's changing landscape, presenting artists and orchestras who set the standard for artistic achievement from Itzhak Perlman, Gustavo Dudamel, Yo-Yo Ma, and Renée Fleming to the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and many others. In addition, the Philharmonic Society celebrates multi-disciplinary performances under its Eclectic Orange brand and embraces music from a wide range of countries with its World Music performances. Its celebrated family concerts introduce children to classical music with creative and inspiring performances, instilling music appreciation for future generations.

The Philharmonic Society's nationally recognized Youth Music Education Programs, offered free of charge, engage more than 100,000 students annually through curriculum-based music education programs that aim to inspire, expand imaginations, and encourage learning at all levels. These programs are made possible by the Committees of the Philharmonic Society comprised of 500 volunteer members who provide more than 90,000 hours of in-kind service each year. As a key youth program, the exceptional Orange County Youth Symphony and String Ensemble provide top-tier training to the area's most talented young musicians through multi-level ensemble instruction, leadership training, touring opportunities, challenging professional repertoire, and performances in world-class venues. The Philharmonic Society also promotes life-long learning by connecting with colleges and universities to conduct masterclasses and workshops and providing pre-concert lectures to introduce audiences to program selections.

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- WHAT:** Vikingur Ólafsson plays Bach's *Goldberg Variations*
- WHEN:** Thursday, May 2, 2024, 8pm
- PROGRAM:** Pre-concert lecture with KUSC's Brian Lauritzen, 7pm
- BACH: *Goldberg Variations*, BWV 988
- WHERE:** Renée & Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, Segerstrom Center for the Arts  
615 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626
- TICKETS** Ticket prices start at \$23.  
**AND** Call for pricing and availability.
- INFORMATION:** Available at the Philharmonic Society box office (949) 553-2422,  
or online at [www.philharmonicsociety.org](http://www.philharmonicsociety.org).