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Anne Akiko Meyers, violin (Masterworks 4 soloist)

24/25 SEASON

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For more information, go to
TidewellFoundation.org

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Greeting from Music Director Designate.....8

Sarasota Orchestra Musicians..... 10

Board of Directors 12

Staff 12

Individual Donors 14

Beethoven's Seventh 42

Ravel's Bolero 48

Heroic Spirit..... 54

Melting Pot of Music 58

The Planets 64

Grand Treasures..... 68

Sarasota Orchestra Friends..... 74

Corporate & Foundation Donors 78

Individual Donors (continued)..... 84

Endowment Donors..... 94

BOX OFFICE:

Beatrice Friedman Symphony Center
709 N Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34236

(941) 953-3434, then press '2'

SarasotaOrchestra.org

HOURS:

Monday - Friday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
And at the concert venue one hour prior to showtime.

DONATIONS:



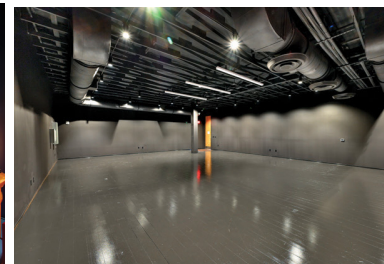
If you would like to make a gift to Sarasota Orchestra, please contact us at 941-487-2710 or visit our website: SarasotaOrchestra.org/Donate



Shawna Trost, violin

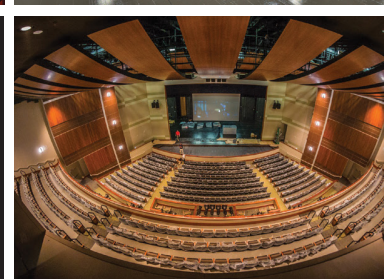


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how we build community
landmarks.



Welcome, Giancarlo Guerrero!

Music Director Designate

“It is so special to join an organization like Sarasota Orchestra with a unified vision and sense of purpose.”

— *Giancarlo Guerrero*

Six-time GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor Giancarlo Guerrero will join Sarasota Orchestra for two concert weekends as music director designate this season, before fully assuming the role of music director in fall 2025.



Passionate

Born in Nicaragua, Giancarlo immigrated during his childhood to Costa Rica, where the local youth symphony sparked his passion. Given his beginnings in civic youth orchestras, Giancarlo is particularly engaged with conducting training orchestras and giving back to the community through music.

“As we continue advancing our plans for a Music Center, it was important for us to select a Music Director whose artistic vision could elevate us both now and into the future.”

— *Tom Koski, Sarasota Orchestra Board Chair*

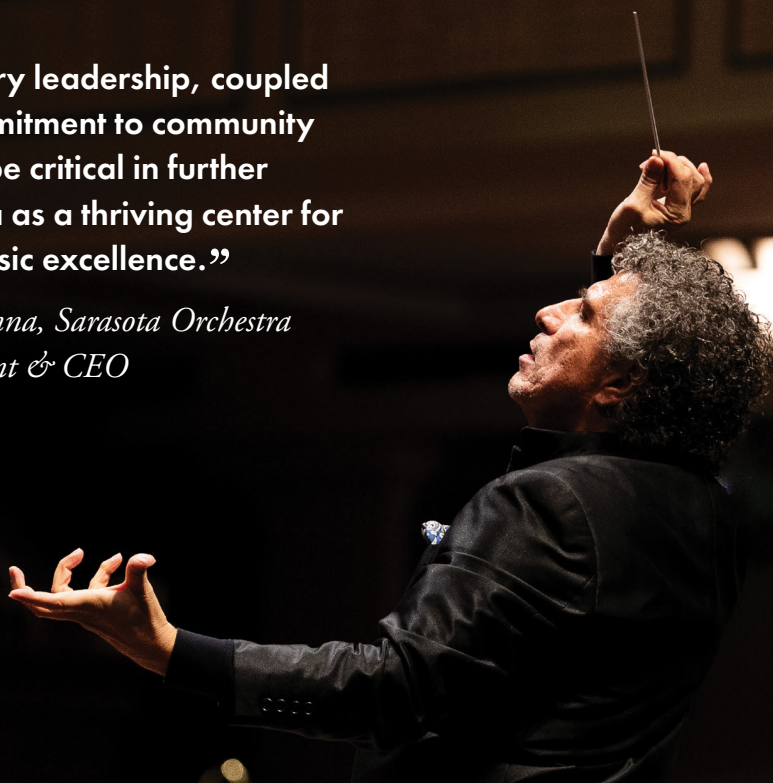


Bold

Giancarlo is a sought-after guest conductor by top orchestras around the world, known for his charisma and showmanship.

“Giancarlo’s visionary leadership, coupled with a fervent commitment to community advocacy, will be critical in further establishing Sarasota as a thriving center for classical music excellence.”

*— Joseph McKenna, Sarasota Orchestra
President & CEO*



Joyous

A champion of prominent American composers, Giancarlo has led the Nashville Symphony in nearly two dozen world premieres.

“When the [music director search] committee visited Giancarlo and saw him perform, it was obvious he has the special ‘it’ factor that allowed him to truly connect with audiences.”

— Daniel Jordan, Sarasota Orchestra Concertmaster





SARASOTA CONCERT ASSOCIATION

Experience the Extraordinary!

80TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



Chanticleer Holiday Concert

Dec 3, 2024, 7:30 pm

Sarasota Opera House

Renaissance classics and holiday favorites.



Pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet

Jan 15, 2025, 7:30 pm

Riverview Performing Arts Center

Debussy's *Preludes Books I and II*.



The Cleveland Orchestra

Kahchun Wong, conductor | Sayaka Shoji, violin

Jan 26, 2025, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel

Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.



Czech National Symphony Orchestra

Steven Mercurio, Music Director | Maxim Lando, piano

Feb 13, 2025, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel

Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.



An Evening with Yo-Yo Ma

Reflections in Words and Music

Feb 27, 2025, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel



Vivaldi Four Seasons

Les Arts Florissants

March 14, 2025, 7:30 pm

Riverview Performing Arts Center

National Symphony Orchestra

Gianandrea Noseda, Music Director | Hilary Hahn, violin


March 24, 2025, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel

Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*.



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Learn more.



Greeting from Music Director Designate Giancarlo Guerrero



Dear Fellow Music Lovers,

As the newly appointed music director designate of your Sarasota Orchestra, it is my honor to welcome you to the 2024-2025 Masterworks season. It seems hard to believe that it was only in January 2024 when I first stepped onto the podium in front of your Orchestra.

What I discovered was an extraordinary group of musicians who were eager to make music at the highest level, supported by a dedicated staff and visionary board. I also discovered what makes the Sarasota-Manatee region so renowned as a haven for the arts as I witnessed large, knowledgeable, and appreciative audiences and donors at every event.

Your love for and support of this Orchestra is impressive, and I am thrilled to become “part of the family.” We have an exceptional season of concerts planned, with programming ranging from beloved works by Beethoven, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky to the brilliance of contemporary American composers such as Adolphus Hailstork and Jennifer Higdon.

We will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Maurice Ravel with his iconic *Bolero* and honor one of Sarasota Orchestra’s champions with a new commission by Peter Boyer. World-class soloists will arrive to perform with the Orchestra as we bring the finest music and musicians in the world to this corner of paradise.

I’m delighted that you have chosen to join us, to experience the power of live music to move us and bring joy to our lives. Welcome and enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Giancarlo Guerrero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Giancarlo Guerrero
Music Director Designate

INSIGHTS & INSPIRATIONS

2024
2025

Be Safer, Smarter, and More Connected

These three featured events are part of an extraordinary season-long exploration of Jewish identity and culture through film, provocative speakers, visual arts, literature, and learning!

KLEZ FEST



DECEMBER 28

6PM • The Ora

Celebrate the rich tradition of this joyful Eastern European Jewish and Yiddish music! Dance along to lively, energetic tunes, featuring Sarasota's own Yiddish Cowboys, one of Florida's only professional

Klezmer bands. Optional dinner component from Michael's On East and a cash bar available. This event will include a marketplace with vendors of local crafts and Judaica.

MORT SKIRBOLL JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

**MORT SKIRBOLL
JEWISH FILM
FESTIVAL**
OF SARASOTA-MANATEE



DECEMBER – MARCH
Various Locations

Celebrating its 16th year, the Mort Skirboll Jewish Film Festival will again present an inspiring and thought-provoking range of film genres and topics starting in December.

The crowd-pleasing

Feature Films will continue this year for all to enjoy. In March, we will offer a series of films over a 4-day period; most of these films will be screened at Regal Hollywood Sarasota.

SIGALIT LANDAU



FEBRUARY 5

7PM • The Ora

Landau is one of Israel's most prominent contemporary artists of her generation. Her works include installation, video, photography, sculpture, and painting. Her ongoing Dead Sea art project, a magnum opus, comprises artworks in diverse media. Her pieces are cultivated with salt crystals, using an organic process to transform mundane, everyday artifacts into objects of haunting beauty. Landau's work has been displayed in many solo exhibitions around the world.

For tickets, visit **events.JFEDSRQ.org/insights**

For more information about this season's events check out **JFEDSRQ.org/events**.



Sarasota Orchestra

VIOLIN

Daniel Jordan, Concertmaster

Virginia B. Toulmin Chair

Christopher Takeda,

Associate Concertmaster

Jennifer Best Takeda,

Assistant Concertmaster

Barbara & Maurice L.

Hirsch Chair

Michael Turkell, Principal Second

Meghan Jones, Assistant Principal

Second

George A. Bernat Chair

Katherine Baloff

Felicia Brunelle

Léna Cambis

Anne Chandra

Yen-Ling Chen

Hannah Cho Dougherty

Carlann Evans

ChungYon Hong

Laura Jensen-Jennings

Leah Latorraca

Flavia Zappa Medlin

Milene Rossato Moreira

Alexander Bloch Chair

Amanda Nix

Sean O'Neil

David Qi

Max Tan

Shawna Trost

Chih-Chun Wang

Margot Zarzycka Whitelaw

Ida S. Krawitz Chair

VIOLA

Stephanie Block, Principal

Maurice L. Hirsch Chair

Matt Pegis, Assistant Principal

Viola Ruth Deluca Chair

Peter Ayuso

Rachel Daniels

Nathan Frantz

YooBin Lee

Jean Phelan

Irene E. Delynn Chair

Edwardo Rios +

Daniel Urbanowicz*

CELLO

Natalie Helm, Principal

Allan Friedman Chair

Christopher Schnell,

Assistant Principal

Eugene H. Clay Chair

Isabelle Besançon

Jennie Sokoloff Chair

Troy Chang*

Chizuko Matsusaka

Sara Page +

Nadine Trudel

DOUBLE BASS

John Miller, Principal

Geri and Ronald

Yonover Chair

Samuel Dugo, Assistant Principal

Alex Albanese

George F. Gibbs Chair

Justin McCulloch

Michael Nigrin

John Price

FLUTE

Betsy Hudson Traba, Principal

Kenneth Scott Chair

Carmen Newell Bannon

Allison DeFrancesco

PICCOLO

Allison DeFrancesco

OBOE

Bobby Nunes, Principal

Carol & Earl Holley Chair

Nicholas P. Arbolino

Michael Austin

ENGLISH HORN

Nicholas P. Arbolino

Michael Austin

CLARINET

Bharat Chandra, Principal

Maj. Gen. Ray & Margaret Mason Chair

Daniel Parrette, Assistant Principal

Calvin Falwell

E-FLAT CLARINET

Daniel Parrette

BASS CLARINET

Calvin Falwell

BASSOON

Fernando Traba, Principal

Sheila Ann Vincent Chair

Edward Rumzis

Scott Radloff

CONTRABASSOON

Scott Radloff

HORN

Hugo Bliss, Co-principal

Joshua Horne, Co-principal

John C. Schluer Chair

Melvin Jackson

Shea Kells-Murphy

Connor Landers +

TRUMPET

Gianluca Farina, Principal

Morgen Low, Co-principal +

Stephen Madancy

TROMBONE

Brad Williams, Principal

Casey Maday +

Steven Osborne*

BASS TROMBONE

Ian Marc Morgan

TUBA

Nate Seman, Principal

Hubert & Ruth Delynn Chair

TIMPANI

Yoko Kita, Principal

PERCUSSION

Marcelina Suchocka, Principal

Hanna Kim

HARP

Phoebe Powell, Principal

KEYBOARD

Jonathan Spivey, Principal

Beatrice Friedman Chair

LIBRARY

Katie Nakanishi, Principal +

Paul Greitzer, Assistant Principal

* Leave of Absence

+One-Year Position



The Musicians of Sarasota Orchestra are proudly represented by the American Federation of Musicians, Gulf Coast Local 427-721.



Daniel Jordan performs on the ex Humphreys 1695 Peter Guarneri of Mantua violin using either a Dominique Peccatte or Joseph Fonclause bow, all on loan to Sarasota Orchestra from the Steinwachs Family Foundation.

Jennifer Best Takeda performs on a 1697 Giovanni Battista Rogeri violin, generously **donated to Sarasota Orchestra by Ernest and Alisa Kretzmer**. Formerly owned by Charles Ringling, this instrument has been part of the Orchestra since its founding.

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With a simple monthly donation, you can:

- Make a Big Impact: Consistently support world-class performances and music education.
- Reach Your Giving Goals: Easily achieve your desired donation level, one month at a time.
- Keep Music Accessible: Help bring the joy of music to everyone in our region.



Stephanie Block, Principal viola



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Chair, Sarasota Orchestra Board

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Vice Chair

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Vice Chair

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Beatrice Friedman
Virginia B. Toulmin

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PERSONNEL MANAGER
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KELVIN CAMACHO, ASSISTANT
PRODUCTION MANAGER

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JESSIE SCHOCH, EDUCATION COORDINATOR
GAY BURTON, YOUTH ORCHESTRA
COORDINATOR

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We also express our gratitude to
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members not shown here who make
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A gathering place for all who wish to **experience** great music.

Now is the time to dream of, work toward, and usher in a brilliant new era for the arts and culture in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. Sarasota Orchestra's new Music Center will expand our region's cultural capacity for many generations. We envision a Music Center that not only addresses our critical need for expansion, but also elevates our community's artistic reputation with something it's never had: a concert hall purpose-built for acoustic, non-amplified music.

"A concert hall is not just a space for performances; it's a vibrant community center where people from all backgrounds come together to experience the joy and connection that only music can provide."

— Giancarlo Guerrero, Music Director Designate

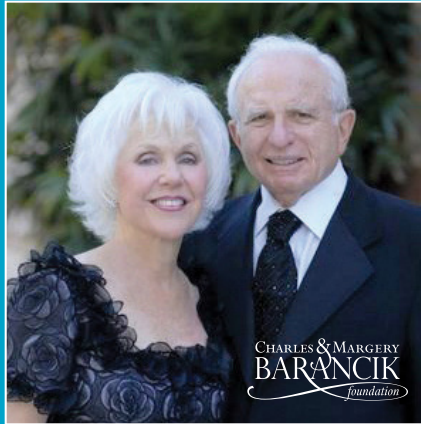


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memory of David Bavar**



**Mr. and Mrs.
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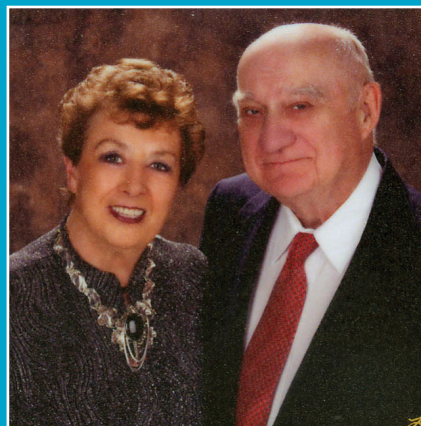
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(1920-2018)**



Sherry and Thomas Koski



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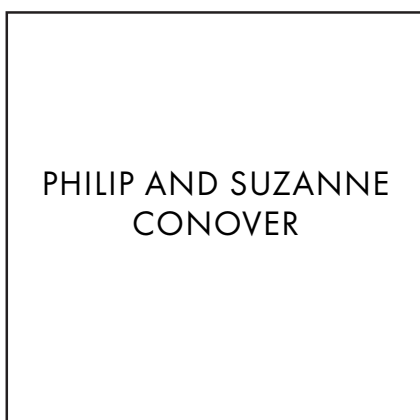
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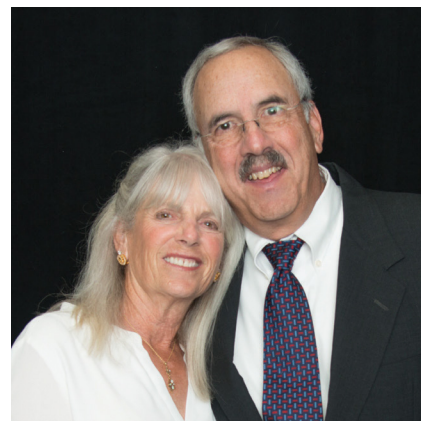
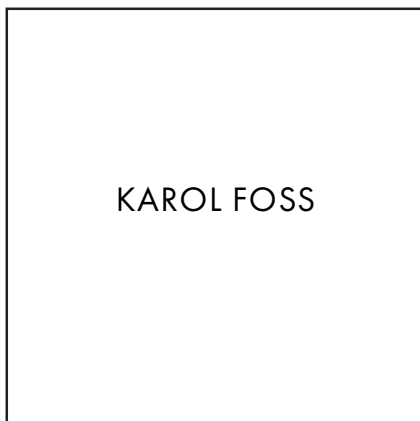
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ANONYMOUS (2)

WHERE CULTURE AND COMMUNITY CONVERGE

on the Bay.

Lynne Woodman grew up with music, tutored by a grandfather who, "fully believed in the value of the arts." From a young age, her instrument of choice was the piano. She spent over a decade teaching music while accompanying Cleveland Orchestra musicians in the studio. An early tragedy shifted her into the field of communications.

"I treasure all culture, but the orchestra is my great draw."

When it was time for retirement, she and her husband researched cities in Florida. "Sarasota popped to the top." They especially loved the orchestra. "We have one that you would expect in a much, much larger city."

Plymouth Harbor also rose to the top when researching life care communities. "There was no question that this was the place for us. I love the superb programming. I love the location—who doesn't want to wake up to that beautiful bay every morning."

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2024-2025 SEASON

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CELEBRATION CONCERT & DINNER - January 11

PMP ALUMNI PERFORMANCES

ABEO QUARTET February 11 & 13, 2025

Njioma Grevious & Rebecca Benjamin, violin; James Kang, viola; Macintyre Taback, cello

RENAISSANCE QUARTET March 24, 26 & 27, 2025

Randall Goosby & Jeremiah Blacklow, violin; Jameel Martin, viola; Daniel Hass, cello

AEOLUS QUARTET April 13 & 15, 2025

Nicholas Tavani & Rachel Shapiro, violin; Caitlin Lynch, viola; Jia Kim, cello
with Peter Dugan, piano

Tickets & Info: **PMPSuncoast.org**

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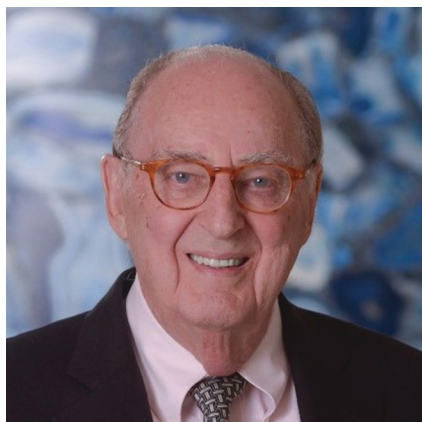
Barbara Brizzle



Mike Corrigan in memory of Marcia



Richard Davis and Lana Em



Bette Hoffman in memory of Arn Hoffman



Audrey Robbins and Harry Leopold



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THE CREATION OF
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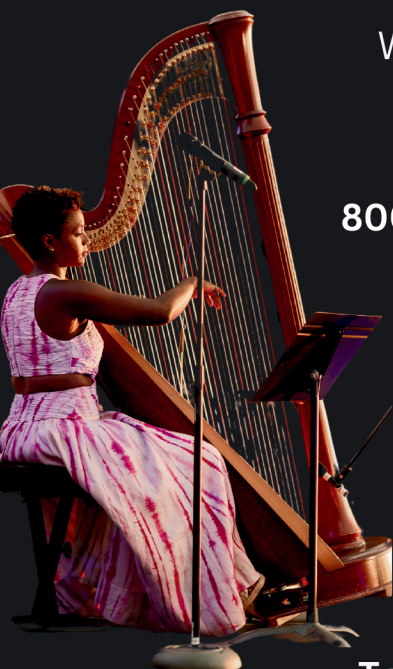
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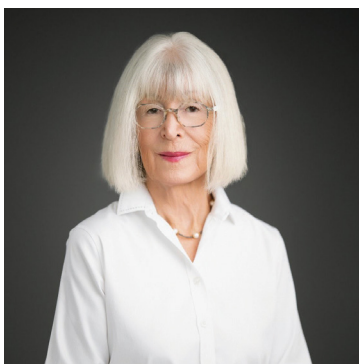
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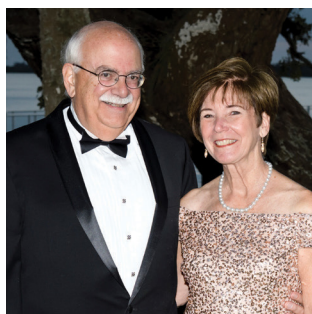


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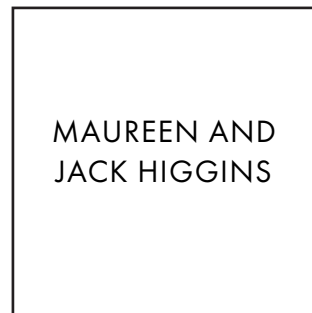
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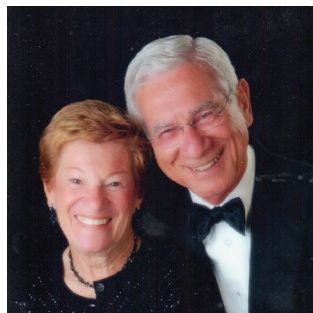
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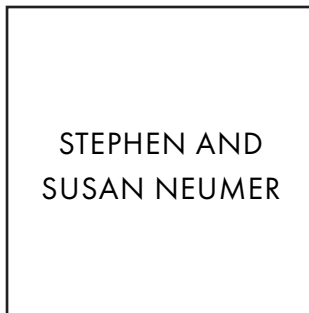
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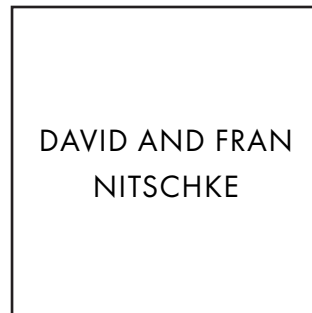
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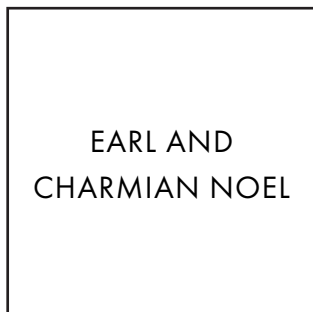
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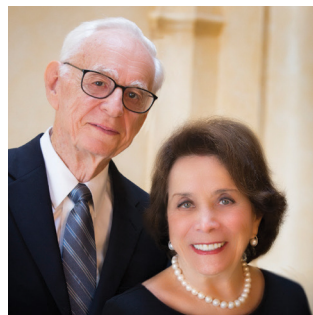
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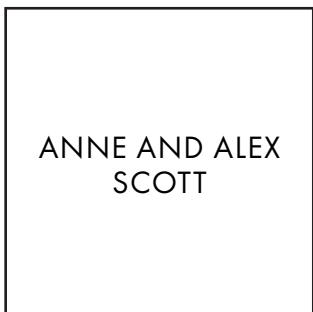
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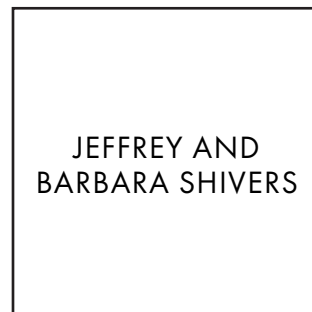
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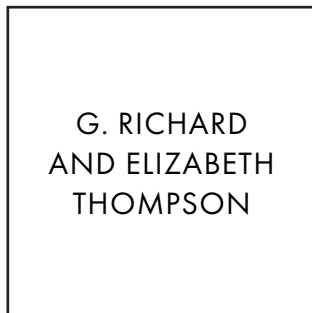
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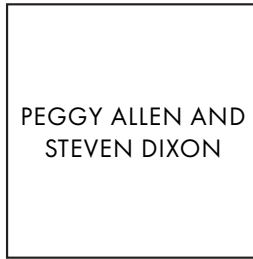


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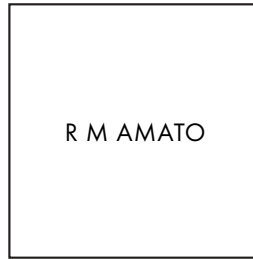
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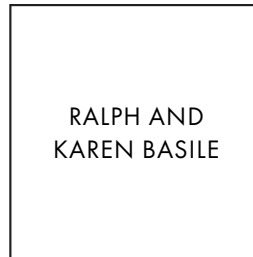
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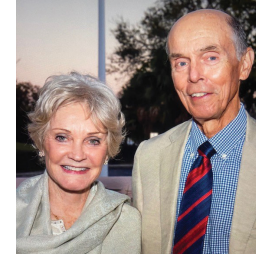
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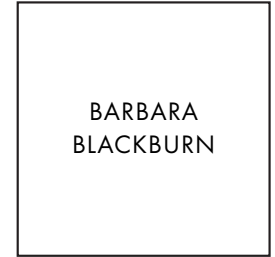
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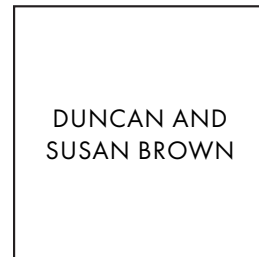
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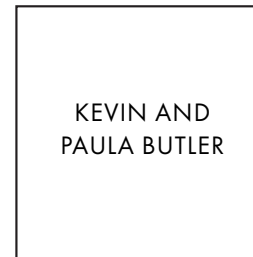
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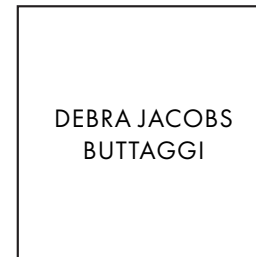
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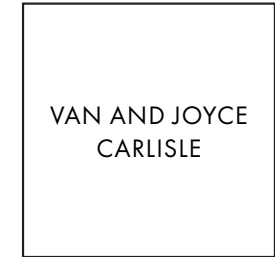
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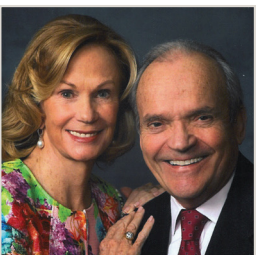
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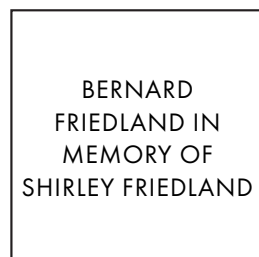
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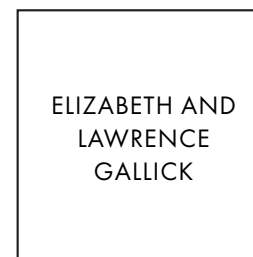
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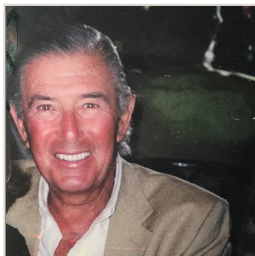
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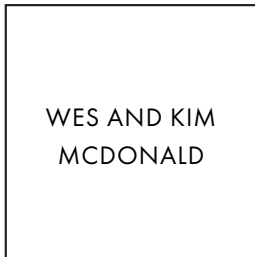
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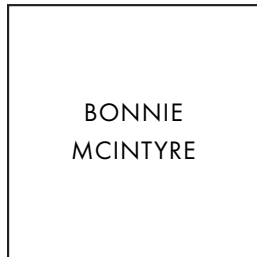
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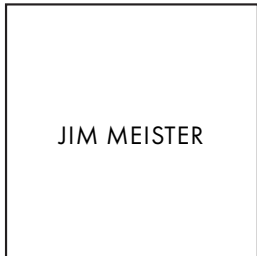
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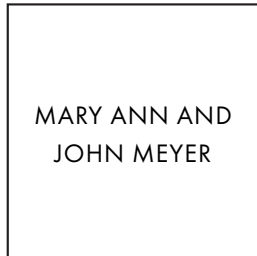
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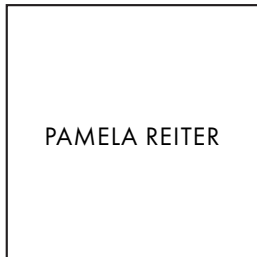
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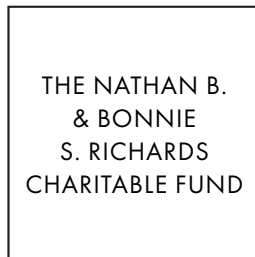
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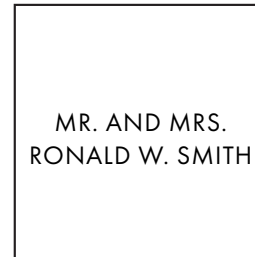
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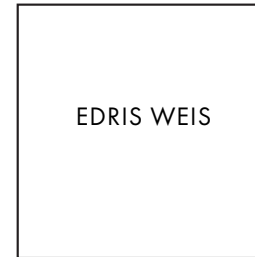
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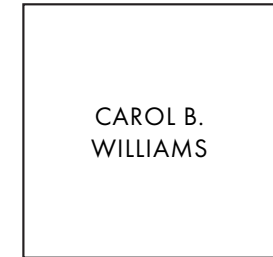
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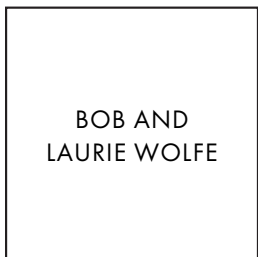
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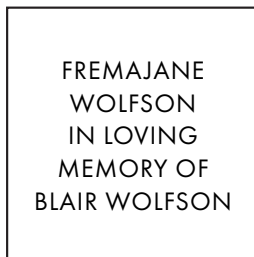
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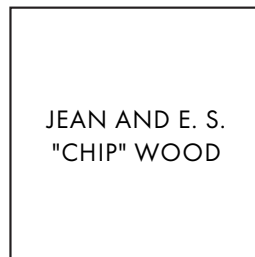
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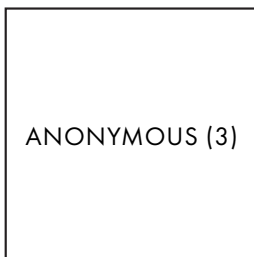
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Alli Mauzey, vocals

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APRIL 18, 19

POPS 3 CELEBRATE JOHN WILLIAMS



Stuart Chafetz, conductor

At age 91, John Williams won his 26th GRAMMY®. From *Harry Potter* to *Indiana Jones*, Williams is one of America's most iconic composers of film scores that are on track to become timeless. Stuart Chafetz leads the Orchestra in this special tribute featuring music from *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, *Schindler's List*, *Superman*, *Close Encounters*, *Jaws*, *Hook*, *The Cowboys*, and more!

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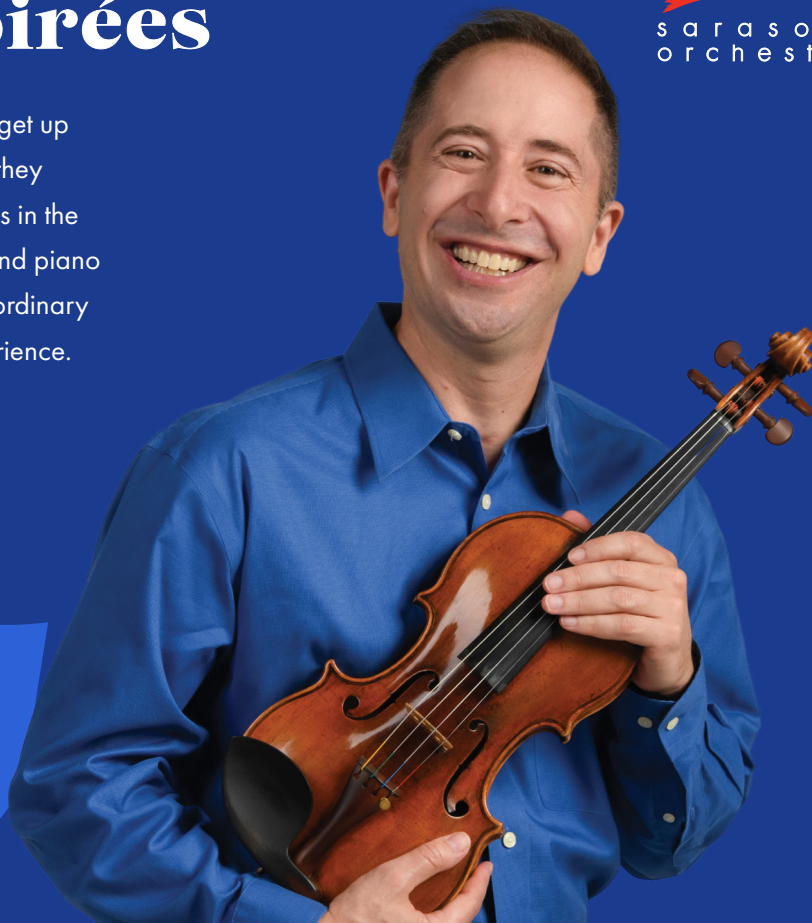


Don't miss this season's **Chamber Soirées**



Chamber Soirées offer the opportunity to get up close and personal with our musicians as they perform magnificent small-ensemble works in the intimacy of Holley Hall. Powerful strings and piano and virtuosic winds and brass bring extraordinary music to life in a compelling, shared experience.

Joy



Daniel Jordan, Concertmaster

CHAMBER SOIRÉE 4

Beethoven and Brass

DECEMBER 22 | Holley Hall

Take a break from the holiday whirlwind with this enchanting program of timeless favorites. Ferenc Farkas' sparkling folk dance adaptations for wind quintet evoke the village festivities of a bygone era. Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Quartet in E-flat Major features a highly virtuosic piano score that Beethoven wrote for himself to play. The brilliant sounds of holiday brass conclude this festive program.

CHAMBER SOIRÉE 5

Poulenc and Dvořák

FEBRUARY 6 | Holley Hall

Masterpieces for strings, winds, and piano are paired in this powerful program. Francis Poulenc's lighthearted Sextet for Piano and Winds is an energetic romp, offering jazzy riffs, wistful melancholy, and biting satire. Antonín Dvořák composed his G-major String Quintet just as he was beginning to gain international recognition. The addition of a double bass to the standard string quartet adds a powerful depth of sound to this magnificent work.

CHAMBER SOIRÉE 6

20th Century Masters

MARCH 20 | Holley Hall

Four 20th-century masterpieces close out the Chamber Soirée season in grand style. Hungarian composer György Ligeti's music has been utilized in film scores by Stanley Kubrick and Martin Scorsese. Dimitri Shostakovich dedicated his brief, somewhat eerie String Quartet No. 7 to his wife, Nina. Eugène Bozza's Sonatine for brass quintet is a virtuosic showpiece. The program concludes with Maurice Ravel's Introduction and Allegro, featuring the glorious harp.

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Fellows shown on cover: 2022 SMF fellow Nicole Martin, clarinet and 2023 SMF fellow Hila Dahari, violin



PETER OUNDJIAN, CONDUCTOR

Peter Oundjian is the principal conductor of the Colorado Symphony and music director of the Colorado Music Festival. He is the conductor emeritus of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra where he served as music director for 14 years. Previous appointments included serving as music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, principal guest conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, artistic director of the Caramoor International Music Festival, and music director of the Amsterdam Sinfonietta. He appears regularly with major North American, European, and Asian orchestras. Prior to beginning his conducting career, Oundjian was first violinist of the Tokyo String Quartet, with whom he recorded over 35 albums. He has served as professor at Yale University since 1981.



YEFIM BRONFMAN, PIANO

Internationally recognized as one of today's most acclaimed and admired pianists, Yefim Bronfman stands among a handful of artists regularly sought by festivals, orchestras, conductors and recital series. Bronfman appears across the globe with the world's finest orchestras and conductors. He has been nominated for six GRAMMY® Awards, winning in 1997 with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic for their recording of the three Bartok piano concerti. Born in the Soviet Union, Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, where he studied at the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the United States, he studied at The Juilliard School, Marlboro School of Music, and the Curtis Institute of Music.

PROGRAM NOTES

***Fate Now Conquers* Carlos Simon (b. 1986)**

Carlos Simon is the Composer-in-Residence for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and Composer Chair of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. His music has been performed by major orchestras, opera companies and choruses the world over, and his album, *Requiem for the Enslaved* was nominated for a 2023 GRAMMY® Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition.

Simon's wide-ranging works span genres from jazz to gospel to neo-romanticism, and topics as disparate as Black womanhood, God's presence, and George Floyd. Many of his works center on a positive response to struggle, including *Fate Now Conquers*, inspired by an 1815 journal entry from Beethoven's notebook. In his journal, Beethoven quoted a passage from the 22nd book of the Iliad, in which Hector, having been mortally wounded by Achilles, utters the words "Fate now

conquers; I am hers; and yet not she shall share in my renown; that life is left to every noble spirit and that some great deed shall beget that all lives shall inherit." By 1815 Beethoven was nearly completely deaf, yet had resolved to continue to compose despite the disability. His preoccupation with the role of fate in his life is well documented, and Carlos Simon chose this concept of mankind's futile struggle in the face of fate as the focus of his work.

continued on page 44

Beethoven's Seventh

December 6, 7, 2024

PETER OUNDJIAN, conductor

YEFIM BRONFMAN, piano

Church of the Palms

Friday, December 6, 2024 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, December 7, 2024 at 2:30 pm and 7:30 pm

CARLOS SIMON
b. 1986

Fate Now Conquers

c. 5'

JOHANNES BRAHMS
1833 - 1897

Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15

c. 44'

I. Maestoso

II. Adagio

III. Rondo: Allegro non troppo

Yefim Bronfman, piano

-INTERMISSION-

LUDWIG VAN
BEETHOVEN
1770 - 1827

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92

c. 35'

I. Poco sostenuto – Vivace

II. Allegretto

III. Presto

IV. Allegro con brio

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Please silence your cell phone.

BEETHOVEN'S SEVENTH PROGRAM NOTES continued

The composer has provided the following notes on the piece:

"Using the beautifully fluid harmonic structure of the 2nd movement of Beethoven's 7th Symphony, I have composed musical gestures that are representative of the unpredictable ways of fate. Jolting stabs, coupled with an agitated groove with every persona. Frenzied arpeggios in the strings that morph into an ambiguous cloud of free-flowing running passages depicts the uncertainty of life that hovers over us. We know that Beethoven strived to overcome many obstacles in his life and documented his aspirations to prevail, despite his ailments. Whatever the specific reason for including this particularly profound passage from the Iliad, in the end, it seems that Beethoven relinquished to fate. Fate now conquers."

Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15 **Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

Sometimes, when it rains, it pours. In the space of just over seven months in early 1853, Johannes Brahms went from being an earnest 20-year-old pianist/composer trying to eke out a living playing and teaching, to meeting one of the most important musical power couples of the era, Robert and Clara Schumann, to having Robert Schumann publicly proclaim Brahms as Beethoven's successor. It was a head spinning launch to a career.

A lifelong friendship had also been launched, as Robert, and especially Clara Schumann, would become not only mentors to the young Brahms, but eventually like family. It was only five months later that Brahms received word that Robert Schumann, long afflicted with mental health conditions that caused him to hear voices, had tried to commit suicide by drowning himself in the Rhine. Schumann had been rescued, and voluntarily committed to an asylum. Although he had known them for only

a short time, Brahms felt compelled to rush back to be with Clara who was pregnant with the couple's seventh child. He traveled frequently to visit Robert in the asylum, relaying news back to Clara who had been forbidden from visiting her husband. The 21-year-old Brahms also very quickly felt compelled to begin work on a new piece - prompted by the trauma of Robert's suicide attempt - a massive work which would eventually become his first piano concerto. It would take Brahms a full five years to finish the work, during which time Robert Schumann would die, and his relationship with Clara would deepen into one of the most important of his life.

Opening with thundering timpani, historians believe that the concerto's first movement was a visceral response to Robert Schumann's suicide attempt - its massive mood swings equating to Schumann's tortured psyche. Angry, slashing motifs in the orchestra open the movement with an unparalleled sense of anxiety. This first theme, full of furious trills and relentless blows, eventually gives way to bucolic melodies that, although beautiful, never fully relax. Even in its most serene moments, the sense of unrest is never far away, as the music cycles through periods of tremendous anxiety and relative tranquility, not unlike Robert Schumann's difficult life. The sheer magnitude of the orchestral forces caused more than a bit of consternation in early audiences who were more accustomed to concerto soloists having a deferential orchestral accompaniment. The orchestra is an equal partner in almost every aspect of the movement, as the pianist trades melodies with orchestral soloists, and is even relegated to the role of accompanist occasionally. Rather than viewing this as a competition however, the movement is best heard as a collaboration between soloist and orchestra, with each having their turn in the spotlight, and working together to

maximize the drama and pathos. The conclusion of the enormous movement is nothing less than symphonic in scope, leaving one to wonder what can possibly follow.

What does follow is an achingly beautiful tribute to Clara Schumann. By the time Brahms was completing the second movement, Clara had become (at the least) his closest friend and confidante, and (at the most), a forbidden romantic interest. While no one knows the exact nature of their relationship, what is indisputable is that they loved one another deeply. Even before Robert Schumann's death in 1856, Brahms was an indispensable help to Clara - aiding her in sorting out Robert's papers and finances, and assisting with the couple's seven children. Clara was also the first to see many of his compositions, offering her opinions and suggestions for revisions. As he was working on the movement in 1857, Brahms wrote to Clara that he was "painting a tender portrait of you, which is to be the *Adagio*." That tender portrait has a reverence to it that remains a remarkable testament to Brahms' admiration for a woman, 14 years his senior, who would forever be his first love.

After completing two such emotionally packed movements, Brahms was at a bit of a loss as to how to finish the piece. He eventually settled on a final movement *Rondo*, a format where a single theme recurs multiple times, interspersed with different material. The main *rondo* theme is an energetic romp, begun by the piano, then echoed by the orchestra. Interspersed are more lyrical sections where Brahms flexes his compositional muscles. An extended cadenza gives the pianist a final chance to show off, after which jaunty winds and horns usher in a coda section full of flash and flourish. Following the seriousness of the first two movements, the *Rondo* is the type of good natured, optimistic fun one would

BEETHOVEN'S SEVENTH PROGRAM NOTES continued

expect from the pen of a 25-year-old just at the beginning of his career.

The concerto received three performances in early 1859 with Brahms as soloist, none of them particularly successful. It was only in later years, after Clara began performing it, that the work's true brilliance was recognized. Rather than a one-dimensional vehicle for a virtuoso soloist, Brahms had offered the innermost thoughts of a young man who had already experienced more of the world's darkness (and beauty) than most people his age. Luckily for us, he had the maturity and skills to translate them into music.

Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

The evening of December 8, 1813 was likely one of the happiest in Ludwig van Beethoven's entire life. That night, at the University of Vienna, he took to the podium to conduct two of his newest works at a charity concert benefitting Austrian and Bavarian soldiers wounded at the Battle of Hanau, the most recent skirmish in the campaign to expel Napoleon's forces from Germany. Opening the program was Wellington's Victory, Beethoven's patriotic work celebrating the British victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Vittoria. Wellington's Victory caused a great deal of excitement due to its massive orchestra, replete with dueling percussion sections that included muskets and artillery sound effects. Following this spectacle, which a concert attendee commented was "seemingly designed to make the listener as deaf as its composer," the orchestra played the premiere of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7.

The audience was quite enamored with the symphony, especially the second movement, which they demanded be played again immediately. Beethoven, despite (or perhaps because of) his worsening hearing loss, was at his most animated on the podium, with a violinist noting that "as a *sforzando* occurred, he tore his arms with a great vehemence asunder ... at the entrance of a forte he jumped in the air..." and the entire evening was such a huge success that a repeat performance was scheduled for days later, providing Beethoven with a much-needed boost to his bank account. Calling the work "one of the happiest products of my poor talents," even the irascible Beethoven seemed to revel in the pure joy with which the symphony is imbued.

The first movement opens with a lengthy and stately introduction, where long, sustained woodwind melodies are punctuated with chords from the string section. The mood is one of anticipation, almost as if courtly dancers are greeting one another tentatively on the dance floor. When everyone is in their place, the dance begins, as the vivace section starts with a leaping motive that will form the basis of the rest of the movement. Whereas other composers would focus on a melody around which to structure the music, Beethoven instead focuses on this jumping rhythm in 6/8 meter which will be continually present, in some form, throughout the remainder of the movement. The mood is joyful and playful, and one can almost picture Beethoven, leaping up and down while conducting, as the propulsive rhythm dominates.

The *Allegretto* is among the most beloved compositions Beethoven ever wrote. Arresting in its simplicity, the entire movement is again based

upon a repeated rhythm, begun in the low strings, which underpins one of Beethoven's most heartfelt melodies. Again, as in the previous movement, this simple rhythm is the focal point of the music, constantly present somewhere in the orchestra, like a reassuring heartbeat.

The third movement is a boisterous *scherzo*, again characterized by a repeated rhythm, in this case a galloping motive that recurs continually throughout the faster portion of the movement. The slower trio section is a stately affair, as restrained as the *scherzo* is untamed. The two sections alternate back and forth, with the rowdy music having the final word.

The final *Allegro con brio* is a joyous barn dance of a movement, featuring relentlessly whirling music in the strings, punctuated by raucous brass and timpani. A quirky second theme features off-kilter accents that momentarily make us forget what foot we're on, but the giddy spinning music always returns, ending in a joyous, foot stomping conclusion. Richard Wagner called Beethoven's 7th Symphony "the apotheosis of the dance," and indeed, it can be difficult to sit still while hearing it played. One suspects that Beethoven, leaping up and down and throwing his arms wildly asunder, would not have wanted us to.

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SHIYEON SUNG, CONDUCTOR

South Korean conductor Shiyeon Sung is the principal guest conductor of the Auckland Philharmonia. She previously held positions as chief conductor of the Gyeonggi Philharmonic Orchestra (South Korea), associate conductor of the Seoul Philharmonic and assistant conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She appears regularly with major orchestras worldwide, including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin, Adelaide Symphony, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Hankyung and the Daejeon Philharmonics, the KBS Symphony Orchestra and the Kanagawa Philharmonic. Recent North American engagements include the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Pacific Symphony, and the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC.



NATASHA PAREMSKI, PIANO

With her consistently striking and dynamic performances, pianist Natasha Paremski continues to generate excitement from all corners with her musical sensibility and a powerful, flawless technique. Natasha has performed with major North American orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Minnesota Orchestra. She has toured extensively with European orchestras including Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchester, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Tonhalle Orchester in Zurich, and the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra. Born in Moscow, Paremski moved to the United States at the age of eight. She made her professional debut at age nine, and at fifteen she debuted with Los Angeles Philharmonic and recorded two discs with Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra.

PROGRAM NOTES

D'un matin de printemps Lili Boulanger (1893-1918)

Music history is sadly full of stories of brilliant composers whose lives were cut tragically short. Felix Mendelssohn and George Gershwin both died at 38; Mozart was only 35 when he left us, and Franz Schubert, a mere 31. Despite their early deaths, each of these composers left behind a substantial catalog of works. Not so the brilliant French composer Lili Boulanger, who had just begun to set the music world on fire when Crohn's disease took her at the tender age of 24.

Lili was the second child of two professional musicians. Her older sister Nadia also composed, and would eventually become known worldwide as one of the preeminent composition teachers of the 20th century. Lili's talent was recognized early, but a bout with bronchial pneumonia at age two left her physically frail. Her weakened condition meant that her musical studies were mostly done at home, as she was not physically strong enough to undertake the normal curriculum at the Paris Conservatory. She did manage to enroll in one composition class from 1911-1913 however, and

at the conclusion of that class she submitted her cantata *Faust et Hélène* for consideration for the Prix de Rome, an enormously prestigious prize that funded a residency for composers to study in Rome. Incredibly, she was awarded the top prize that year, the first woman ever to do so. The resulting attention and headlines in the international press were extraordinary. Lili was 19 years old.

Her residency at the Villa Medici in Rome was unfortunately cut short by the outbreak of World War I. It was shortly

continued on page 50

Ravel's Bolero

January 10, 11, 12, 2025

Allan Friedman Memorial Piano Concert

SHIYEON SUNG, conductor

NATASHA PAREMSKI, piano

Neel Performing Arts Center

Friday, January 10, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Saturday, January 11, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, January 12, 2025 at 2:30 pm

LILI BOULANGER
1893-1918

D'un matin de printemps

c. 5'

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK
1841-1904

Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60
I. Allegro non tanto
II. Adagio
III. Scherzo (Furiant): Presto
IV. Finale: Allegro con spirito

c. 41'

-INTERMISSION-

MAURICE RAVEL
1875-1937

Piano Concerto in G Major
I. Allegramente
II. Adagio assai
III. Presto

c. 21'

Natasha Paremski, piano

MAURICE RAVEL
1875-1937

Boléro

c. 14'

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RAVEL'S BOLERO PROGRAM NOTES

after undergoing an appendectomy in 1917 that she wrote two brief companion pieces, *D'un soir triste* (Of a Sad Evening) and *D'un matin de printemps* (Of a Spring Morning). They would be among her final compositions, as she died mere months after their completion. While *D'un soir triste* (Of a Sad Evening) is an understandably somber work, *D'un matin de printemps* (Of a Spring Morning) is the definition of joy. The bustling energy of new life is everywhere as chirping woodwinds, delicate percussion, muted strings, celeste and harp combine in delicious sweeping gestures - a whirlwind of activity as life, large and small, reawakens. A mere two months from death, a weakened Lili Boulanger composed a love letter to the energy of new life, making us all wonder what else she could have accomplished, if she'd only had more time.

Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Music history is full of the life stories of composers who were child prodigies - creative geniuses whose gifts were discovered and celebrated early and by many. But for every Mozart who was performing for royalty before his 10th birthday, there is a Dvořák. Born into a family of butchers, Dvořák struggled for decades as an underpaid church organist and community orchestra violist. It was only in his mid-30's that he was finally "discovered" and began to gain international recognition. The "discovering" was done in large part by Johannes Brahms, who in 1875 had served on a panel of composers judging works submitted by "impoverished artists" seeking scholarships from the Viennese Ministry of Culture and Education. Dvořák had submitted 15 works, including two complete symphonies. It is recorded that Brahms was "visibly overcome" by "the mastery and talent of Dvořák," and the struggling Czech

composer was awarded first prize. It was this financial award that finally allowed the 33-year-old husband and father to begin composing full time.

The Symphony in D major was written in 7 weeks during the early fall of 1880 after a request by Hans Richter, then conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic. The symphony is a shining example of Dvořák's mature style which incorporates his lifelong love of Bohemian folk music within the traditional Germanic symphonic structures. The first movement *Allegro non tanto* has frequently been compared with the opening of Brahms' Second Symphony, not only in that they share the key of D major, but also in the pastoral quality of the themes and the bucolic writing for horns and woodwinds. The composer's sheer joy in nature is evident throughout the movement. The *Adagio* is one of Dvořák's most idyllic slow movements. Here the woodwinds and horns still reign supreme, and the comparisons to Beethoven's Pastoral 6th Symphony are frequently noted. The third movement *Furiant* is where Dvořák's love of Czech folk music is front and center. It was following this movement that the audience at the premiere in Prague demanded an immediate encore. The *Finale* is a jubilant romp through the countryside - a full-throated expression of joy from a mature artist finally receiving the recognition he so long deserved.

Piano Concerto in G Major Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

It was March 7, 1928, and Maurice Ravel was celebrating his 53rd birthday in New York. The Frenchman, who by this point in his career was widely considered one of the world's greatest living composers, was in the midst of a four-month American tour which would take him to 20 cities across North America. He was scheduled to conduct the New York Symphony the following day, but had accepted an invitation from the Canadian mezzo-soprano Éva Gauthier to attend

a party in his honor. Among the guests invited that evening was one young man in particular that Ravel had been eager to meet, 29-year-old George Gershwin.

Like many Europeans, Ravel had heard Gershwin's music. He had wanted to meet him, hoping to possibly hear him perform his *Rhapsody in Blue*. At the party that evening, Gershwin happily complied with the request, and the attendees were treated to an impromptu performance of *Rhapsody in Blue*, along with a selection of Gershwin's songs. The performance, according to Gauthier, was spectacular. She later recalled, "George that night surpassed himself, achieving astounding feats in rhythmic intricacies, so that even Ravel was dumbfounded." The respect between the men was apparently mutual, as Gershwin actually approached Ravel that evening with a request for composition lessons. Ravel however, was so impressed with Gershwin's natural talent that he turned him down saying, "It is better to write good Gershwin than bad Ravel, which is what would happen if you worked with me." A friendship had been struck however, and Gershwin took Ravel to the Savoy Ballroom and the Cotton Club in Harlem, where he heard Duke Ellington's orchestra. Later that month, Ravel published an essay in the magazine *Musical Digest*, where he encouraged Americans to take jazz seriously, writing "Personally I find jazz most interesting: the rhythms, the way the melodies are handled, the melodies themselves. I have heard some of George Gershwin's works, and I find them intriguing." It should not be surprising then that when Ravel began work the following year on his second piano concerto, the rhythms, melodies, and harmonies of American jazz were at the forefront of his consciousness.

Opening with the "crack of a whip," the first movement, marked *Allegro moderato* (cheerfully), takes off like a horse bursting out of the stall as a perky piccolo solo,

RAVEL'S BOLERO PROGRAM NOTES

pizzicato strings and piano glissandos set a jaunty mood. The soloist takes the spotlight next in a sultry blues music that could have come directly from one of the Harlem nightclubs Ravel and Gershwin visited. Extended solos for woodwinds, trumpet, harp, and horn, give the middle of the movement an exotic feel as the nightclub music blends dreamily with elegant French impressionist harmonies. The movement vacillates seamlessly between these French and American sounds - and ends with a virtuosic, "Gershwin-esque" coda.

The second movement, one of the most poignant and beautiful Ravel ever wrote, opens with an extended piano melody, the composition of which Ravel lamented "nearly killed him." The painstaking work paid off however, as the deceptively simple right-hand melody, accompanied by a muted waltz rhythm in the left hand, creates an almost hypnotic effect.

Thundering brass and percussion announce the opening of the final movement, a virtuosic tour de force for soloist and orchestra. Here Gershwin makes a return appearance, as the syncopated rhythms and bustling energy of the music bring to mind the streets of New York. By the end, the entire orchestra is whirling in a magnificent frenzy, as they and the soloist race together to a breathtaking conclusion.

Ravel conducted the premiere of the work in 1932, and the concerto found immediate and lasting acclaim. It also served as convincing evidence that the "high-brow" European classical tradition and the "unwashed emotion" of American jazz could not only co-exist, but could combine for a pretty spectacular cocktail – if only you have a composer skilled enough to create it.

Boléro

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Composers, and artists in general, can be notorious control freaks. It is natural, when you are creating something that

is a profoundly personal statement, to want it to be "perfect." What the artist cannot control however, is the public's reaction to their work. While some may be stung by harsh criticism, others may be mystified, or even annoyed that a project that they considered relatively insignificant becomes their most celebrated work. Author A.A. Milne produced 25 plays and 7 novels during his lifetime, but remains most famous for his children's series *Winnie the Pooh*. Arthur Conan Doyle resorted to killing off Sherlock Holmes to give Doyle more time to devote to writing historical fiction. And so, it would undoubtedly be frustrating to the brilliant Maurice Ravel that, despite having produced an extraordinary catalog of elaborate, complex, and meticulously crafted masterpieces, history remembers him first and foremost for a work that he once described as "a piece . . . consisting wholly of orchestral texture without music..." - his repetitive, unrelenting, and thoroughly magnificent *Boléro*.

The piece is stunningly simplistic in its construction, comprised of just two competing melodies, repeated in sequence, with each repetition gradually becoming louder and more harmonically complex. The two melodies are accompanied by a relentless bolero rhythm played by a lone snare drum. (The snare drummer is frequently moved toward the front of the orchestra in recognition of the importance of their role, as well as the extraordinary difficulty of playing the same rhythm over and over, while gradually getting louder and louder, for almost 15 minutes.) Opening with a lone flute, the work slowly builds through multiple extended solos, duos, and passages for ever-larger forces. In total there are 18 repetitions of the main themes before a dazzling coda finally breaks the cycle. With swooping brass and thundering percussion, the tension reaches critical mass, and the final explosion of color and sound

inevitably leaves the listener breathless and exhilarated.

Although the work's premiere was immediately successful, its popularity exploded after Arturo Toscanini programmed it for a performance by the New York Philharmonic at the Paris Opera in 1930. The story of that performance, and the "not so gentlemanly" disagreement between Toscanini and Ravel, remains a favorite tidbit of classical music folklore. Apparently, Toscanini's tempo that night was markedly faster than what Ravel had indicated in the score. Ravel was so annoyed that he refused to stand when acknowledged from the stage by Toscanini during the ample applause. Backstage, the two men had a tense exchange. By one account, Ravel said, "That's not my tempo." Toscanini replied, "When I play it at your tempo, it is not effective", to which Ravel retorted, "Then do not play it!"

Ravel was anxious that the public understand that *Boléro* was not intended to be a profound work, writing that it was nothing more than "an experiment in a very special and limited direction" that "should not be suspected of aiming at achieving anything different from, or anything more than, it actually does achieve." "I have done exactly what I have set out to do, and it is for listeners to take it or leave it" he wrote. Listeners have been gratefully "taking it" for almost 100 years now, and no one would be more surprised by that than the composer himself.

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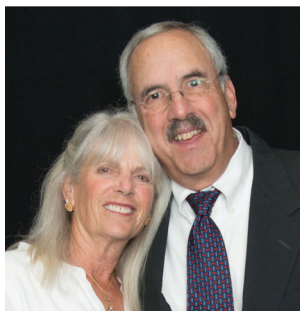
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GIANCARLO GUERRERO, CONDUCTOR

Six-time GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor Giancarlo Guerrero is the music director designate of Sarasota Orchestra. 2024-25 marks his 16th and final season as music director of the Nashville Symphony. In 2025, Guerrero also takes on the role of artistic director and principal conductor of Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival. He previously held posts as the music director of the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic in Poland, principal guest conductor of both The Cleveland Orchestra Miami Residency and the Gulbenkian Symphony in Lisbon, music director of the Eugene Symphony, and associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra. Guerrero has appeared with prominent American orchestras, including those in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC as well as major European and Australian ensembles.



ANNE AKIKO MEYERS, VIOLIN

Esteemed violinist Anne Akiko Meyers has appeared worldwide as a soloist and in recital. She has collaborated with many of today's leading composers, commissioning a remarkable collection of new violin repertoire for future generations. Recent highlights include performances of the Philip Glass Concerto No. 1 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the premiere of *Blue Electra*, a new concerto by Michael Daugherty, at The Kennedy Center. In 2024, Meyers was nominated for a GRAMMY® Award for her live recording with the Los Angeles Philharmonic of Arturo Márquez's *Fandango*, written for her in 2021. Born in San Diego, she appeared on The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson at age 11. She performs on the 1741 Ex-Vieuxtemps Guarneri del Gesù violin.

PROGRAM NOTES

Coriolan Overture **Ludwig van Beethoven** **(1770-1827)**

The adjective "heroic" is often used to describe Beethoven and his music. While Beethoven himself is widely considered a hero for having persevered in composing despite ever-increasing deafness, his music is also described as heroic, in that it pushed hard against the boundaries set by the musical conventions of its time. Beethoven himself also fixated on leaders he saw as heroic. His Third Symphony was originally dedicated to Napoleon. When the Frenchman declared himself

Emperor however, Beethoven angrily erased Napoleon's name from the cover page of the Symphony's score – with such ferocity that it left a hole in the paper. Beethoven craved heroism, but when his heroes disappointed him, his judgement was fierce.

Perhaps it is not surprising then that in 1807 when Beethoven needed an opening work for a concert to be held at the palace of his patron, Prince Lobkowitz, he turned to Shakespeare's fallen hero, the Roman general Coriolanus. Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* is a political tale of greed and hubris, as the one-time war hero is exiled

after expressing his hatred of the common people. In anger, he returns to try to conquer his former city. When he and his army reach the city gates, the Romans, as a last resort, send Coriolanus' mother out to plead with him to stop his assault. She eventually prevails, after which Coriolanus is murdered. This story had also been the inspiration for an 1804 play titled *Coriolan* by Heinrich Joseph von Collin. Collin's play was being revived for a performance at Lobkowitz's palace, alongside Beethoven's Fourth Symphony and Fourth Piano Concerto.

continued on page 56

Heroic Spirit

January 30, 31 & February 1, 2, 2025

GIANCARLO GUERRERO, conductor
ANNE AKIKO MEYERS, violin

Neel Performing Arts Center

Thursday, January 30, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Friday, January 31, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, February 1, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 2, 2025 at 2:30 pm

LUDWIG VAN
BEETHOVEN
1770-1827

Coriolan Overture, Op. 62

c. 8'

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ
b. 1950

Fandango

Anne Akiko Meyers, violin

c. 32'

-INTERMISSION-

DMITRI
SHOSTAKOVICH
1906-1975

Symphony No. 5 in D Minor, Op. 47

c. 46'

I. Moderato

II. Allegretto

III. Largo

IV. Allegro non troppo

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At the opening of the overture, we meet Coriolanus, the swaggering hero, in three sets of dramatic chords. An agitated melody then begins in the strings as we sense Coriolanus' anger and a general sense of foreboding. A second theme eventually emerges, much more lyrical, representing Coriolanus' mother and her pleas for her son to stop his assault. These two contrasting themes, one dark and foreboding, the other tragically pleading, form the basis of the entire overture. In contrast to many of Beethoven's other "heroic" works however, this piece does not end triumphantly. Rather, it culminates in a final searing restatement of the opening chords, as Coriolanus dies. A lesser composer might have ended the work there, but Beethoven, in a stroke of genius, instead allows the music to slowly disintegrate, as the life ebbs from the fallen hero. In the end, we are left with three soft pizzicato plucks from the string section as Coriolanus' heartbeat fades away... and a lesson in the futility of greed that is deafening.

Fandango for violin and orchestra **Arturo Márquez (b. 1950)**

Recognized as among the most important Mexican composers of our time, Arturo Márquez was born in the town of Álamos, in the Mexican State of Sonora in northwestern Mexico. Both his father and paternal grandfather were mariachi musicians who introduced Márquez to a variety of musical styles during his childhood. His *Danzón* No. 2 for orchestra skyrocketed him to international fame when it was featured on a 2007 tour by the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra, led by conductor Gustavo Dudamel. *Danzón* No. 2's popularity has led it to be dubbed Mexico's "second national anthem," and has sparked international interest in Márquez's wider catalog of compositions.

Commissioned by violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, *Fandango for Violin and Orchestra* was premiered at the Hollywood Bowl on August 24, 2021 by

Meyers and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, led by Gustavo Dudamel. The composer has provided the following program notes on the piece (abbreviated here for space):

"In 2018 I received an email from violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, a wonderful musician, where she proposed to me the possibility of writing a work for violin and orchestra that had to do with Mexican music. The proposal interested and fascinated me from that very moment, not only because of Maestra Meyers' emotional aesthetic proposal, but also because of my admiration for her musicality, virtuosity and, above all, for her courage in proposing a concerto so out of the ordinary. I had already tried, unsuccessfully, to compose a violin concerto some 20 years earlier with ideas that were based on the Mexican fandango. I had known this music since I was a child, listening to it in the cinema, on the radio and listening to my father, a mariachi violinist, (Arturo Márquez Sr.) interpret *huastecos* and mariachi music.

The first movement, *Folia Tropical*, has the form of the sonata or traditional classical concerto: introduction, exposition with its two themes, bridge, development, and recapitulation. The second movement, *Plegaria* (prayer), pays tribute to the *huapango* mariachi together with the Spanish fandango, both in its rhythmic and emotional parts. The third movement *fandanguito* is a tribute to the famous *fandanguito huasteco*."

Symphony No. 5 in D Minor, Op. 47 **Dmitri Shostakovich** **(1906-1975)**

It was January 28, 1936, and 29-year-old Dimitri Shostakovich had a serious problem. That day, the Communist newspaper *Pravda* had published a scathing review of Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. Titled "Chaos Instead of Music," the article was a direct response to Joseph Stalin's having seen the opera, and Stalin's

personal belief that it was scandalous. In an era where artists who crossed Stalin regularly ended up in prison or worse, Shostakovich knew that he was in trouble.

Shostakovich's first act of self-preservation was to cancel the premiere of his Fourth Symphony. That work, which was near completion, was an equally provocative piece, and Shostakovich knew that it would put the final nail in his coffin, were it to be heard. His next act of contrition would come in the form of his Fifth Symphony, which he began in April of 1937, and completed a mere three months later. Shostakovich knew that he needed to appease Stalin if he was to continue to work, and perhaps live, and he set about composing a symphony that he hoped would live up to Stalin's ideals - populist works that glorified life under Communism. The final product, premiered in November of 1937, not only satisfied the Soviet authorities, but was a massive popular success as well.

Although there is no explicit story depicted in the symphony, Shostakovich later described his intent, writing "I wanted to convey in the symphony how, through a series of tragic conflicts of great inner spiritual turmoil, optimism asserts itself as a world-view..." The "great inner spiritual turmoil" is evident from the very first bars, as the string section opens the work with a series of wide, forceful leaps, lower strings and upper strings responding angrily to each other. This is no genteel introduction - rather, the listener is put on notice immediately that danger is lurking. As the menacing opening music relents, an eerie first theme emerges in the violins. It is an unsettled music, full of large, sometimes dissonant leaps. As this melody is developed, the angular opening music interrupts repeatedly. Eventually gentle, rhythmic chords announce a ghostly second theme that, while it is somewhat more relaxed, again uses large leaps and displaced octaves to maintain an ominous atmosphere. An angry keyboard

HEROIC SPIRIT PROGRAM NOTES *continued*

heralds the return of danger as the entire horn section, playing in their lowest register, announce the central part of the movement. The tempo has quickened, and the sense of manic danger increases exponentially as frenzied woodwinds and caustic brass clamor for attention. Finally, the percussion join the fray, and a deranged march begins. The macabre, grotesque madness continues, culminating with the entire orchestra screaming in unison. Exhausted, the chaos eventually subsides, with a flute and horn duet helping the dust settle. An eerie stillness returns, like night settling on a battlefield. Delicate scales from the celeste evaporate into the ether, and the listener is left with a profound sense of unease as the movement ends.

The second movement *Scherzo* provides a bit of comic relief after the intensity of the first movement. A sardonic waltz that alternates between buffoonish clamor and faux elegance, the movement is a delight. It's a brilliant example of Shostakovich's dark humor, and provides a welcome respite before the anguish of the next movement.

If one were seeking a sonic representation of loneliness and desperation, you'd be hard pressed to find a better one than the *Largo* movement. Here the darkness and fears

Shostakovich must have had for his own career, and even his life, are front and center in a wrenchingly beautiful orchestral soliloquy. The opening desolate melody in the strings eventually leads to an eerie duo for flute and harp. The interlude is short-lived however, as the strings return with an even more searing version of the opening music. The emotional centerpiece of the movement arrives in the form of three impossibly delicate solos, for oboe, clarinet and flute. Like a tiny voice crying out in the dark, the sheer loneliness of the music is devastating. The full orchestra returns and builds to a wrenching climax, but nothing is resolved and the opening, desolate music returns. As the harp and celeste reprise the lonely woodwind solos, darkness is everywhere, although the hushed major chord that ends the movement hints at hope.

As the final movement begins, we are jolted from the intensely private atmosphere of the *Largo* into the cacophony of a garish military march. Thundering timpani and marauding brass evoke an almost malevolent marching band. Music historians disagree as to whether Shostakovich was genuinely portraying triumph over the desolation of the previous movement, or secretly thumbing his nose at the pompousness of the Soviet regime. Regardless, the mood is manic, with screaming woodwinds

and swirling strings adding to the fierce melee. A slower central section recalls the pain of the previous movement, with searing strings and a feeling of aimless wandering. Eventually, the military theme returns, but now in a less frantic, more noble presentation. At the conclusion, with a giant cymbal crash, the sun dawns on a new day, and it appears that our hero has prevailed – bloodied, but alive. Shostakovich - similarly bloodied, yet alive - also prevailed, as the premiere of the work in November, 1937 was an enormous success. One reviewer described the symphony as “a Soviet artist’s response to just criticism,” and Shostakovich did not dispute the description. An audience member recalled, “The whole audience leapt to their feet and erupted into wild applause – a demonstration of their outrage at all the hounding poor Mitya had been through. Everyone kept saying the same thing: ‘That was his answer, and it was a good one.’ [Shostakovich] came out white as a sheet, biting his lips. I think he was close to tears.”

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MIGUEL HARTH-BEDOYA, CONDUCTOR

Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Emmy award-winning and GRAMMY®-nominated conductor, has served as chief conductor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra and as music director of the Fort Worth Symphony, where he now holds the title of music director laureate. Previously he held music director positions with the Auckland Philharmonia, Eugene (Oregon) Symphony, Lima Philharmonic (Peru), and the New York Youth Symphony. He is the newly appointed resident director of orchestras and professor of conducting at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, where he will begin in the 2025-26 academic year. He is currently the director of orchestral studies at Baylor University, music director of the Baylor Symphony Orchestra, and a regular guest conductor with major orchestras worldwide.



STEVEN BANKS, SAXOPHONE

As a performer, saxophonist Steven Banks is striving to bring his instrument to the heart of the classical music world. An active and intentional supporter of diverse voices in concert music, he is driven to program music that directly addresses aspects of the human experience. Banks has appeared with The Cleveland Orchestra, Montreal Symphony, Utah Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra and Aspen Festival Orchestra, and in 2022, was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. He is a founding member of the Kenari Quartet, an all-saxophone ensemble that performs inspiring and uplifting compositions. Banks is a visiting faculty member at the Cleveland Institute of Music and holds the Jackie McLean Fellowship at the University of Hartford.

PROGRAM NOTES

Fiesta!

Jimmy López Bellido (b. 1978)

The musical career of Jimmy López Bellido began in his native Peru, but he has since become a truly international artist. From a young age, López was intrigued by his sister's electric keyboard, but it wasn't until he was 12 and encountered Bach that the spark of a future composer was ignited in him. López eventually sought training in Finland and the United States, where the music of Sibelius and Mahler began to influence him deeply. Lopez can now,

at 45, look back on relationships with the finest orchestras and festivals in the world. Among his many high-profile successes was an opera based on the bestselling book *Bel Canto* for Chicago Lyric Opera in 2015. It was broadcast nationally on PBS two years later.

López's most popular work, by far, is *Fiesta!*, subtitled *Four Pop Dances for Orchestra*. He couldn't have known this piece would be his *Bolero* or his *1812 Overture* when he wrote it in 2007, but he does admit now in interviews that its popularity has "paid for many meals." Since he completed the score, *Fiesta!*

has been performed over 100 times worldwide. Here's what López wrote about it in 2008: "During recent years, eclecticism has become an important part of my musical language. The challenge of creating musically sensible interactions out of the juxtaposition of apparently incompatible musical sources—some of which result in unexpected contrasts—fascinates me. *Fiesta!* draws influences from several musical sources including: European academic compositional techniques, Latin American music, Afro-Peruvian

continued on page 60

Melting Pot of Music

February 21, 22, 23, 2025

Fred M and Lurita D Wechsler Memorial Concert

MIGUEL HARTH-BEDOYA, conductor

STEVEN BANKS, saxophone

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Friday, February 21, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, February 23, 2025 at 2:30 pm

JIMMY LÓPEZ

BELLIDO

b. 1978

Fiesta!

I. Trance 1

II. Countertime

III. Trance 2

IV. Techno

c. 8'

BILLY CHILDS

b. 1957

Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra

Part 1: *Motherland*

Part 2: *If We Must Die*

Part 3: *And Still I Rise*

Steven Banks, saxophone

c. 20'

-INTERMISSION-

RICHARD STRAUSS

1864-1949

Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier*, Op. 59

c. 22'

MAURICE RAVEL

1875-1937

La Valse

c. 13'

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music, and today's pop music. It utilizes elaborate developmental techniques while keeping the primeval driving forces still latent in popular culture." He went on to remark, "This is the first piece where I have made explicit use of elements from popular music, but it is certainly not the first time it's being done. Composers from the past, especially during the Baroque, would write suites that would consist of a series of dances with names such as allemande, gigue, sarabande, etc. These dances were very popular at European courts: the nobles would gather and dance to the accompaniment of a small, instrumental ensemble-in-residence. Later on, some composers decided to use these dances and make them more sophisticated. That was part of my intention when picking up the genres that I mentioned earlier. I believe they have enough potential to justify further development, but always keeping those primeval driving forces present in them."

Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra **Billy Childs (b. 1957)**

If he wanted to, American composer Billy Childs could rest solely on the laurels of his jazz career. But he was never meant to be just one thing. According to his biography, Childs grew up "immersed in jazz, classical and popular influences." Perhaps that is why the biographer refers to him as "the most distinctly American composer since Aaron Copland." Those are huge shoes to fill. But even while spending so much in the recording studio with the greatest jazz artists of the day, Childs has also been building an impressive portfolio of orchestral and chamber music commissions for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Kronos Quartet, the Detroit Symphony, and others. The GRAMMY® nominations are up to 13 at this point, but Childs is far from done.

Childs included the following

description in the 2022 score: "Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra is a symphonic poem which strives to chronicle the paradigm of the forced black American diaspora, as sifted through the prism of my own experience as a black man in America. When Steven Banks approached me about the piece, the first thing we discussed was the narrative: What particular story would the piece tell? How would it unfold? We decided that, much in the same way that Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* illustrates three poems by Aloysius Bertrand in three separate movements, so would this concerto do with poems by black poets. But then I started thinking of the elegantly succinct and fluent structure of Barber's Symphony No. 1, where in one multi-sectioned suite, he brilliantly ties together a handful of thematic materials into a seamless and organic whole. So I started to compose from the vantage point that the poems Steven and I settled on ("Africa's Lament" by Nayyirah Waheed, "If We Must Die" by Claude McKay, and "And Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou) would be guideposts which inspired the direction of a three-part storyline: Motherland, If We Must Die and And Still I Rise. Also, I wanted to tie the piece together thematically with various melodies and motifs treated in different ways (inverted, augmented, contrapuntally treated, reharmonized, etc.), like a loosely structured theme and variations—except there are several themes used." The story in the music takes the listener on an enslaved person's journey from Africa to America. We travel from the complex "purity" of life in the Motherland, through the abject hell of the Middle Passage, and finally to the sanctuary of church and community. Both harrowing and thrilling, the concerto is a technical *tour de force* and a potent musical commentary on the Black American experience.

Suite from *Der Rosenkavalier* **Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**

By 1909, Richard Strauss had securely established himself as a bona fide modernist, thanks to the deadly operatic sisters *Salome* and *Elektra*. *Salome* had already shocked the world in 1906 with its scandalous disruption of the operatic status quo, when *Elektra* followed as confirmation that something subversive and special was afoot in German-language stage music. Celebrated Austrian author Hugo von Hofmannsthal had adapted the German dramatic version of *Elektra* in 1903, and the operatic treatment he worked on with Strauss in 1909 was the beginning of an important friendship. But, after so much blood and fire, where would Strauss go next?

There would be no third sister. Strauss had apparently walked a bit too far down the avant-garde path for his own comfort. After the lurid darkness of his back-to-back contemporary masterpieces, the composer was ready to look once again to music history's past for inspiration. For their second collaboration, Strauss asked Hofmannsthal to consider the more civilized possibilities of an 18th-century comedy à la Mozart. *Salome* and *Elektra* had essentially been plays set to music, but for his next opera, Strauss was determined to co-create a libretto from scratch. The highly literary and successful *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911) was the happy result. In terms of structure and style, *Rosenkavalier* was different from the previous two operas in almost every possible way. It was cast in the customary three acts and employed a much more conventional musical language that even included waltzes, those out-of-fashion reminders of simpler times. It was all designed to fit the plot, which was, in fact, a wonderful echo of the traditional Mozartean farce set in the golden age of Viennese high society.

MELTING POT OF MUSIC PROGRAM NOTES *continued*

It was filled to its limits with courtly intrigue, amorous entanglements, and cross-dressing hijinks. *Rosenkavalier* arguably remains the most popular of Strauss' operas and is certainly the best-loved of the Hofmannsthal partnerships. Strauss was initially reluctant to excerpt a suite from the score, even though parts of it (the waltzes in particular) seemed perfect for concert performance. After first working with Hofmannsthal on an ultimately unsuccessful film version in 1925 and later creating his own waltz sequences, Strauss finally consented to a suite of key moments from the opera in 1945. The six movements make no attempt to trace linear highlights of the story, as Strauss' selected scenes were not assembled with regard for narrative legibility. But they hold together quite nicely as a compact and musically sensible concert experience.

La Valse

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

When Debussy died in 1918, Ravel found the throne of French concert music unguarded, and the unobstructed path did not suit him. For years, the two men had been set up as rivals in Paris, and though neither of them gave the topic any oxygen, it led to some mild

resentment between them. Neither man liked being called an Impressionist, and likely resented how the superficiality of the word masked their individuality as artists. In any case, Ravel had never wanted to be the top man of Parisian musical letters, and when that honor became suddenly inevitable, he demurred and moved away from the city.

Ravel reportedly believed that every composer, himself included, secretly wished they could write an excellent waltz, but most were scared off by the difficulty and the wealth of enviable examples already in the repertory. For years, Ravel had entertained the idea of creating an homage work to Johann Strauss, Jr. entitled *Wien (Vienna)*. When Serge Diaghilev approached him after World War I to write a new ballet, he thought he had finally found reason to see it through. Ravel gave the impresario a two-piano sneak peek of *Wien* in the spring of 1920. Poulenc and Stravinsky were in attendance as well, and Poulenc recalled the disastrous tension when Diaghilev referred to the music as "genius" but "not a ballet." Ravel was highly offended and broke ties with Diaghilev on the spot. So enduring was the animosity between

them that it is believed Diaghilev challenged Ravel to a duel a few years later. Thankfully, cooler heads prevailed. *La Valse* (instead of *Wien*) premiered as an orchestral work later in 1920 and was finally produced as a ballet in 1928 by none other than Ida Rubenstein. The grey, brooding mood of *La Valse* has been popularly attributed to Ravel's impressions of the Great War and its numberless atrocities, but he remained ever resistant to that interpretation. Certainly, Ravel was unearthing something of a quaint relic with his waltz, since WWI had fully killed the 19th century and all of its confectionary comforts. Waltzes were just one among the many things of the past, memories of a time before trenches and gas clouds and mechanized slaughter. No subtext was needed to make the point. It's all in there, though, just beneath the surface of *La Valse*. Whether or not Ravel wants us to think so.

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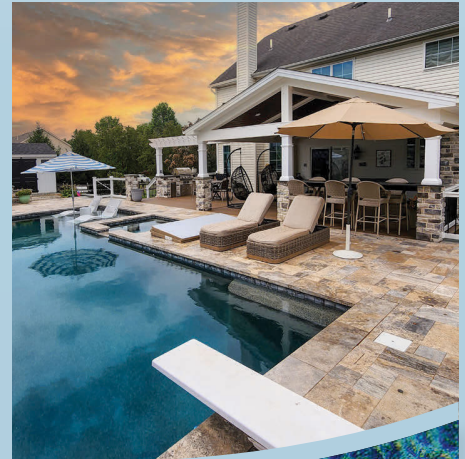
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PETER OUNDJIAN, CONDUCTOR

Peter Oundjian is the principal conductor of the Colorado Symphony and music director of the Colorado Music Festival. He is the conductor emeritus of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra where he served as music director for 14 years. Previous appointments included serving as music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, principal guest conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, artistic director of the Caramoor International Music Festival, and music director of the Amsterdam Sinfonietta. He appears regularly with major North American, European, and Asian orchestras. Prior to beginning his conducting career, Oundjian was first violinist of the Tokyo String Quartet, with whom he recorded over 35 albums. He has served as professor at Yale University since 1981.



GRACE PARK, VIOLIN

Winner of the Naumburg International Violin Competition, Grace Park is one of the leading artists of her generation, captivating audiences with her artistry, passion and virtuosity. Recent appearances include concerto debuts at Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall and The Rudolfinum in Prague, along with recital debuts at Krannert Center and Merkin Hall. She recently recorded her first solo album with the Prague Philharmonia, including concertos and solo works of Mozart and Dvorak. A native of Los Angeles, Park began violin studies at the age of 5 at the Colburn School of Music. She continued her studies at Colburn and New England Conservatory. She performs on a 1717 Giuseppe Filius Andrea Guarneri violin, on loan from an anonymous sponsor.

PROGRAM NOTES

Overture to *The Wasps* Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Although taking on students was something Maurice Ravel did sparingly (declining to instruct George Gershwin in the 1920s is the best-known example of this reluctance), he did have a few important pupils over the years. Notable among them was Ralph Vaughan Williams, who spent three Parisian months with Ravel in 1908. The strange fact that the apprentice was older than the master bothered neither of them, and

from Ravel, Vaughan Williams learned how to shake off the dense rigidity of previous mentors and explore a fresh, lighter approach to his compositional instincts. The two remained friends for many years.

After returning home to England, Vaughan Williams was approached by the Cambridge Greek Play Committee to write incidental music for a production of the Aristophanes satire *The Wasps*, which was first produced at a festival in 422 BCE. It lampoons the litigious nature of ancient Athens and focuses

on the addiction to jury duty of one old, pretentious man. Aristophanes is known today as the “father of comedy,” and his scathing attacks on Athenian society were as daring as they were funny. The old trial addict of *The Wasps*, in fact, was quite openly based on one of Aristophanes’ most ferocious political rivals. It must have been a treat for Vaughan Williams to approach such a subject right after his French awakening. With a new set of tools to rework the impenetrable seriousness of his compositional upbringing, he could

continued on page 66

The Planets

March 6, 7, 8, 9, 2025

PETER OUNDJIAN, conductor

GRACE PARK, violin

Neel Performing Arts Center

Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Friday, March 7, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Saturday, March 8, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Sunday, March 9, 2025 at 2:30 pm

RALPH VAUGHAN
WILLIAMS
1872-1958

Overture to *The Wasps*

c. 9'

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK
1841-1904

Romance in F Minor, Op. 11
Grace Park, violin

c. 12'

MAURICE RAVEL
1875-1937

Tzigane
Grace Park, violin

c. 10'

-INTERMISSION-

GUSTAV HOLST
1874-1934

The Planets

c. 48'

- I. Mars, The Bringer of War
- II. Venus, The Bringer of Peace
- III. Mercury, The Winged Messenger
- IV. Jupiter, The Bringer of Jollity
- V. Saturn, The Bringer of Old Age
- VI. Uranus, The Magician
- VII. Neptune, The Mystic

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approach the sounds of wit in a novel way. Ravel's fingerprints might be all over the score, but the folksy charm of his English mate is, too. From both the complete work and the Aristophanic Suite Vaughan Williams later drew from it, only the Overture to *The Wasps*, with its signature opening insect buzzes, gets performed with any regularity today.

Elsewhere in 1909, the city of Tel Aviv was founded, Joan of Arc was beatified by Rome, Ernest Shackleton claimed the South Magnetic Pole, and British Petroleum had its beginnings as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

Vaughan Williams' Overture to *The Wasps* makes its Masterworks series debut this concert season. The work was featured on Great Escapes programs in 1998 and 2004, led respectively by Christopher Confessore and Oscar Bustillo.

Romance in F Minor, Op. 11 Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Antonín Dvořák's artistic life in the middle years of the 1860s provided inspiration both personal and professional. His post as a violist with the Provisional Theater was a wellspring. It offered exposure to important operas from around Europe and encouraged experimentation with Dvořák's growing catalogue of works. He also fell in love with an actor from the Theater called Josefina Čermák. Dvořák did his best to woo Josefina and even wrote the song cycle *Cypresses* in her honor. Sadly, Josefina married a count instead, but Dvořák remained close to the family ever after. Close enough, in fact, that he married Josefina's younger sister Anna in 1873.

The gorgeously lyrical *Romance* for Violin and Orchestra was based on music Dvořák rescued from an 1873 string quartet he had chosen to disown. It was the slow movement of the quartet he selected for new life as

a concert work. The process took a few years to complete, and, in the end, the resurrection included much more original music than not. It is lucky that the poor history surrounding the quartet—its single, unsuccessful performance and its universally agreed-upon status as a disappointing misfire—did not bury forever the unique charms of its *Andante*. This also served as early proof that Dvořák had matured beyond his "Wagnerian" phase and was perhaps already looking towards the fully Czech sound that would define his career. Dvořák made two versions of the *Romance*, one for orchestra and one for piano. We aren't exactly sure when Dvořák composed (re-composed) the *Romance* in either form, but the orchestral iteration was premiered by the Provisional Theater Orchestra in 1877 on a program in Prague. He was a professional string player himself, we must not forget, so the solo part effortlessly soared that night and has ever since.

Elsewhere in 1877, Oglala Lakota leader Crazy Horse was killed by a soldier while in confinement in Nebraska, the first Championships at Wimbledon were held, and the Martian moons Phobos and Deimos were discovered.

Dvořák's *Romance* was most recently performed by the Sarasota Orchestra in 2019 by Concertmaster Daniel Jordan, with Music Director Anu Tali conducting.

Tzigane Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

For composer Maurice Ravel, the Roaring Twenties did not really roar. He had returned from the Great War (and the loss of his mother in 1917) much diminished mentally and physically, and though he was in many ways at the height of his living renown, his output was diminished as well. In the interwar years, Ravel was sedate and retiring but, much to the chagrin of his rabble-

rousing younger self, he was becoming more internationally popular by the minute. This was largely thanks to the fact the few works he did write in the 1920s were among his best. Even if, as in the case of *Bolero*, he did not agree.

Tzigane is French for a word nobody uses much anymore, and for good reason. That word is "Gypsy," and you won't read it again in this note. For early 20th-century composers, the term most often referred to the Hungarian Roma and their artistic traditions. The Romani people's nomadic lifestyle was banned by the Hapsburgs in the 18th century, but their culture flourished despite that and other prejudicial interferences. The inspiration for this piece came to Ravel after hearing the Hungarian violin virtuoso Jelly D'Áranyi (great-niece of the legendary Joseph Joachim) in performance with Béla Bartók. Ravel was completely smitten with her playing and spent the rest of the evening asking her to play every Roma tune she could think of. Jelly's technique and flair matched nicely with Ravel's desire to create an incredibly demanding showstopper for her, and though critics did not find much to praise at the 1924 premiere, the audience loved it from the start. Western European high society was amid a rabid fascination with all things "other," so the transliterated "exoticism" of *Tzigane* made for a highly effective musical treat.

Elsewhere in 1924, Vladimir Lenin died, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) was founded in the United States, George Mallory vanished on Mount Everest, E. M. Forster published *A Passage to India*, and Greece proclaimed the Second Hellenic Republic.

Sarasota Orchestra most recently performed *Tzigane* in 2010 with Vadim Gluzman; Music Director Leif Bjaland was on the podium.

THE PLANETS **PROGRAM NOTES** *continued*

The Planets

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

In the years prior to the Great War, Gustav Holst was already settled into a comfortable academic life. His post at the St. Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith was but one among the many he held, but it was there that he would stay until his death in 1934. It was a perfect atmosphere for a composer of Holst's carefully measured ambition, and the seclusion it offered made room for much creativity. In fact, when a new music wing was opened at St. Paul's in 1913, it included a soundproof studio for Holst. In that hushed, private space he would compose many works, from the humble St. Paul Suite to the grand galactic travel guide that made him famous.

The Planets was unique among Holst's compositions to that point, and it represented a synthesis of his interests in astrology and Theosophy, a late-

19th-century philosophy that drew from ancient religious and mythological traditions to teach access to the divine through mysticism. In addition to mixing celestial concepts high and low, *The Planets* also displayed Holst's ability to personalize the prevailing musical trends of his day. Both Schoenberg and Stravinsky toured England prior to the creation of *The Planets*, and their concerts clearly had a powerful effect on Holst. Each of the seven (excluding Earth and the then-undiscovered Pluto) tone portraits that make up the suite are brilliant, colorful portrayals of the Roman gods for whom each planet is named. Epic-scale composition was not something that came easily to Holst, according to his daughter Imogen. Perhaps that is why he never did anything quite like it again. Or maybe he never tried to repeat the feat, because the immediate popularity of *The Planets* after the 1920 premiere

led to an annoying public expectation that everything he did after would be derivative of it. Composers often accept their legacies grudgingly and, for Holst, the notion that all his work would be judged against *The Planets* was a frustration that lasted the rest of his days.

Elsewhere in 1920, the American Civil Liberties Union was created, explorer Robert Peary died, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire began, the very first "Ponzi" scheme was launched, and Joan of Arc was canonized.

The last time the Sarasota Orchestra performed *The Planets* on the Masterworks Series was in 2018. Music Director Anu Tali conducted.

Program notes by Jeff Counts © 2024

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EARL LEE, CONDUCTOR

Korean-Canadian conductor Earl Lee is music director of the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra and assistant conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He previously held positions as associate conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony and as the resident conductor of the Toronto Symphony. Winner of the 2022 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award, Lee's guest conducting engagements have included subscription debuts with the San Francisco Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic, Hawaii Symphony, and Edmonton Symphony, as well as performances with the Vancouver Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, Winnipeg Symphony, Colorado Springs Philharmonic and the Florida Orchestra. He has taken great pleasure in mentoring young musicians as former artistic director and conductor of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra, and as music director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony.



JON KIMURA PARKER, PIANO

Pianist Jon Kimura Parker is known for his charisma, infectious enthusiasm, and dynamic performances. A veteran of the international concert stage, he has performed regularly in the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London's South Bank, the Sydney Opera House, and the Beijing Concert Hall. Gold Medal winner at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition, his discography of a dozen albums features music ranging from Mozart and Chopin to Barber and Stravinsky. Parker was recently named creative partner for the Minnesota Orchestra's Summer at Orchestra Hall. He serves as the artistic director for the Honens International Piano Competition, artistic advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, and is on the faculty of the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

PROGRAM NOTES

Horizons

Peter Boyer (b. 1970)

GRAMMY®-nominated composer Peter Boyer is one of the most frequently performed American orchestral composers of his generation. His works have received over 700 public performances by more than 250 orchestras, and tens of thousands of broadcasts by classical radio stations around the United States and abroad. *Horizons* was premiered in May, 2024 by the Tucson Symphony Orchestra. The

composer has provided the following program notes on the piece:

"The commission for this work began with a call from Patricia "Pat" Joslyn, Senior Vice President of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, in late 2021. I had known Pat through her previous work at the Sarasota Orchestra, where she had helped to program my music. As Pat looked ahead to her retirement, she had the great idea to have the three orchestras at which she had worked—Tucson, Sarasota, and the

Brevard Symphony—co-commission a new work which would be performed by all of them, and would be part of her legacy. I was delighted when she told me that I was her first choice as the composer, and that she felt a strong personal connection to my music; and so I accepted this special commission. The title of *Horizons* seemed appropriate when contemplating a major threshold in life—one might look out to the horizon, thinking of what has been accomplished,

continued on page 70

Grand Treasures

April 4, 5, 6, 2025

EARL LEE, conductor
JON KIMURA PARKER, piano

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Friday, April 4, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 5, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 6, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.

PETER BOYER b. 1970	<i>Horizons</i>	c. 8'
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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN 1770-1827	Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37 I. Allegro con brio II. Largo III. Rondo: Allegro Jon Kimura Parker, piano	c. 34'
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-INTERMISSION-

JOHANNES BRAHMS 1833-1897	Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 98 I. Allegro non troppo II. Andante moderato III. Allegro giocoso IV. Allegro energico e passionato	c. 39'
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Photography, video, and audio recording are prohibited during the concert.
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and imagining what lies beyond. For this nine-minute work, I chose to compose two highly contrasting sections, called "Reflection" and "Celebration." As Pat was a horn player, she had only one specific request: that I compose good horn lines in this piece. That musical direction helped shape the first section, "Reflection." After an introduction for spaciouly-voiced strings with "glittering" figures in the percussion, harp, and piano, a solo horn plays a prominent line, which is optimistic, even heroic in character. Later the second horn joins, followed by the third and fourth horns, before this theme is taken up and developed by the full orchestra. At the six-minute mark, this theme and section reach a climax which might sound as if the piece is over—but it's not. High violins sustain, and the percussion softly introduce a fast new rhythm, which builds to the introduction of the second section, "Celebration." This is a vigorous, jubilant romp in 7/8 meter for the full orchestra, as we joyfully celebrate a milestone, and look to the horizon, anticipating adventures ahead."

Piano Concerto No. 3

in C Minor, Op. 37

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Sitting in a pristine 21st century concert hall, listening to an impeccable performance of a work by one of the great masters of the past, modern audiences are normally blissfully unaware of the frequently chaotic and even disastrous circumstances surrounding the premieres of some of our most revered works. While today's most celebrated composers are normally blessed with a well-rehearsed, and well rested orchestra at the premieres of their new pieces, such was not always the case in Beethoven's time. Beethoven frequently presided over programs where he had not only composed

all the music, but had also secured an orchestra, a venue, and funding, not to mention conducting and/or performing as a soloist. His questionable organizational skills, coupled with the complexity of mounting these concerts, often led to mammoth programs that were performed with little rehearsal by an exhausted (and frequently angry) orchestra. Such was the case on April 5, 1803 at the premiere of Beethoven's Piano Concerto in C Minor.

The concert was scheduled to begin at 6:00 pm. Included on the program were three world premieres - Beethoven's Second Symphony, his Oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, and the Piano Concerto in C Minor - as well as a reprise of his First Symphony, which had been premiered a year earlier. There was exactly one rehearsal scheduled for the program, and it began at 8:00 am that morning. Apparently, Vienna's best musicians had been hired for a performance of Haydn's *The Creation* that same evening, so Beethoven was left with a collection of decidedly "junior varsity" players. "[It] was frightful," one attendee recalled. "At half past two everyone was exhausted and dissatisfied. Prince Karl Lichnowsky [one of Beethoven's patrons], who was at the rehearsal from its beginning, sent out for large baskets of buttered bread, cold meats, and wine. He invited all the musicians to help themselves, and a collegial atmosphere was restored." Complicating things further, Beethoven had not finished writing out the piano part to the concerto by concert time, which meant that he was improvising a great deal. One of his students, Ignaz von Seyfried, had been tasked by Beethoven to be his page turner, and his recollection of the experience gives a sense of the "fly by the seat of your pants" nature of the concert. "I saw empty pages with here and there what looked like Egyptian hieroglyphs,

unintelligible to me, scribbled to serve as clues for him. He played most of his part from memory, since, obviously, he had put so little on paper. So, whenever he reached the end of some invisible passage, he gave me a surreptitious nod and I turned the page. My anxiety not to miss such a nod amused him greatly and the recollection of it at our convivial dinner after the concert sent him into gales of laughter." Despite this inauspicious premiere, the concerto was a success, and has remained a beloved staple of the repertoire for over 200 years.

The first movement opens with a full orchestral exposition wherein all the melodic material is presented. The first theme is a sneaky three-note figure that climbs up, then abruptly drops back down again. The second theme is a happier affair in a major key, but the sunny moment is short-lived as the opening three-note figure returns in a thunderous end to the orchestral introduction. The piano enters with dramatic scales, joining the orchestra in new presentations of the both the fierce first theme and tender second theme. An orchestral interlude precedes the development section, during which orchestra and soloist trade snippets of both melodies. Dramatic flourishes in the piano lead into the recapitulation and finally to the soloist's cadenza, where the pianist gets to pull out all the stops. The orchestra eventually sneaks back in, joining the piano in propelling the movement to a fiery conclusion.

The mood changes abruptly as the *Largo* begins with the pianist softly playing a wistful tune, presented with a simple nobility. The achingly beautiful melody is then taken up by the orchestra. An interlude features plaintive solos for bassoon and flute, as the piano retreats to the role of accompanist, before eventually reemerging with a reprise of the opening music. Just as

the breathtakingly delicate movement draws to a close, Beethoven snaps us out of our reverie with a full orchestra, final chord, as if to say “enough heaven, back to earth now.”

As “worldly delights” go, there are few more exuberant than the final Rondo, which features a rollicking tune that recurs throughout the movement, interspersed with interludes that range from virtuosic to quirky. A final moment of repose for the pianist precedes a breakneck coda section which concludes the high-spirited movement in grand style.

Following the premiere performance, it would take Beethoven more than a year to fully notate the concerto so other pianists could play it. It was his student Ferdinand Ries who gave the second performance. By that point of course, the drama surrounding its premiere had faded, and audiences were left with a perfected “recipe,” and only the legend of the “mad chef” who had created it.

Symphony No. 4

in E Minor, Op. 98

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

By the time Brahms began work on his Fourth Symphony, he was 52, well established and financially comfortable. He did not need to write another symphony, yet he was drawn to the challenge of composing another large orchestral work. Brahms was 43 before he published his Symphony No. 1 – a piece that he had toiled over for more than 20 years. He completed his second and third symphonies in the space of only six years, and Symphony No. 4 was composed during two summers in 1884 and 1885.

From the very beginning, Brahms’ compositional skill is on full display as he takes the simplest of motifs, a two-note, sighing figure, and magically develops it into a restless first theme. Woodwinds interject themselves above

the flowing string accompaniment as the music slowly builds in intensity and complexity. Suddenly, horns and woodwinds announce a new theme, a heroic, fanfare-like figure that leads to a new melody in the cellos. This regal music is then developed, culminating in a noble cadence before the gentle opening music returns. The development section which follows takes snippets of both the opening, sighing figure and the heroic, fanfare-like figure and weaves them together into incredibly complex, yet amazingly organic-sounding music. The entire movement flows with an inevitability and beauty that belies its complexity.

The 2nd movement opens with an expansive, ceremonial call from the horn section. This simple, regal opening gives way to an exquisite melody in the clarinet and bassoons, accompanied by pizzicato strings. As complex as the first movement was, this melody is achingly simple. The strings eventually take over the tune, with a lush presentation. The energy builds briefly, but soon cedes the floor to the second theme, a poignant, nostalgic music given to the cellos. Brahms legendary “gift of melody” is on full display as this tune, and the opening horn call melody take turns, in versions both lush and delicate.

The third movement is marked *Allegro giocoso* (quick and playful), and it is exactly that. The brass and percussion join the party, with a rustic theme full of syncopations and foot stomping fun. The boisterous celebration is the perfect palette cleanser between the bliss of the second movement and the drama of what is to come.

For the last movement of his final symphony, Brahms chose to look to the past for inspiration. A lifelong admirer of the music of J.S. Bach, Brahms chose to compose a chaconne – an 18th century musical form in which a single bassline is repeated over and over,

with ever changing melodies above it. Bach had been a master of this form, and Brahms was fascinated with the challenge that the format presented. In another homage to Bach, Brahms chose the bassline from Bach’s Cantata No. 150, titled *Nach Dir, Herr, verlangst mich* — “I long to be near you, Lord” as the basis for the movement. Whether this choice was intended to convey anything particular in terms of Brahms’ state of mind at age 52, or whether he simply admired the simplicity of the music, we do not know. The movement opens with a dramatic statement of this bassline in the brass. Eight chords, bold and declarative, provide the harmonic foundation of what will be one of Brahms’ most admired symphonic movements. What follows are 32 variations, each exactly eight measures in length and utilizing the exact same bassline, yet dramatically different in sound and character. From tender woodwind variations, to solemn brass chorales and muscular full orchestra moments, the mood is constantly shifting, yet the movement never feels disjunct. Only in the final, quicker coda section does Brahms break the pattern, putting a dramatic exclamation point on the movement. The extraordinary work of a master craftsman, the Fourth Symphony exemplifies all that Brahms valued – refined artistry, knowledge of and reverence for the past, and elegance achieved through meticulous detail work. It is a loving look backward by a mature artist, composing not because he needed to, but because the sheer love of music compelled him to.

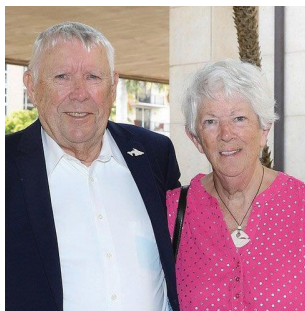
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DISCOVERIES 2

Mozart On the Road

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5

Sarasota Opera House

Conductor: David Alan Miller

Soloist: Anwen Deng, piano

Much of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's young life was spent on the road, showing off his talents as a musical prodigy in the capitals of Europe. Hear 21st-century prodigy Anwen Deng, a 15-year-old Chinese Australian pianist, as she performs a movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20, as well as the world premiere of a Mozart-inspired work by brilliant 12-year-old composer Isaac Thomas. Set in fascinating context with the music of his idols, Joseph Haydn and J.S. Bach, Mozart's grand "Prague" Symphony No. 38 completes this extraordinary program

DISCOVERIES 3

Vivaldi Inspired

SATURDAY, MAY 17

Sarasota Opera House

Conductor: Kalena Bovell

Soloist: Amaryn Olmeda, violin

Everything old is new again, as music of the distant past continues to inspire composers centuries later. "Spring" and "Summer" from Antonio Vivaldi's beloved Four Seasons bookend this program featuring violinist Amaryn Olmeda, a rising star on the concert stage. Igor Stravinsky and Ottorino Respighi both chose to go for Baroque, while Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Gustav Holst borrowed from their own earlier compositions. Conductor Kalena Bovell, making her Sarasota Orchestra debut, leads this sweet and savory mix.

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GISELLE PROGRAM TWO

November 22 - 23, 2024 | Sarasota Opera House

Sir Peter Wright's *Giselle*

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FANCIFUL JOURNEY PROGRAM THREE

December 20 - 21, 2024 | Sarasota Opera House

Sir Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs*

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Sir David Bintley's *The Spider's Feast (World Premiere)*

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QUINTESSENTIAL PROGRAM FOUR

January 31 - February 3, 2025 | FSU Center

Renato Paroni's *Rococo Variations*

Paul Taylor's *Brandenburgs*

Gemma Bond's *World Premiere*

MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP PROGRAM FIVE

February 28 - March 3, 2025 | FSU Center

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ROMEO AND JULIET PROGRAM SIX

March 28 - 29, 2025 | Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Sir Frederick Ashton's *Romeo and Juliet (Company Premiere)*

Accompanied by the Sarasota Orchestra

MOVEMENTS OF GENIUS PROGRAM SEVEN

April 25 - 26, 2025 | Sarasota Opera House

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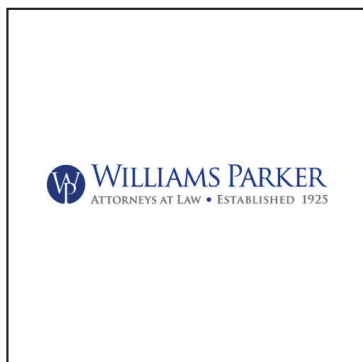

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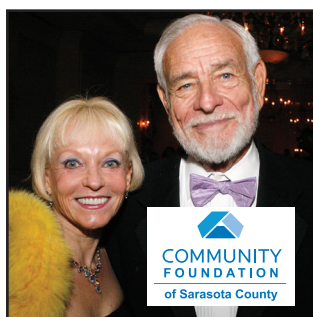
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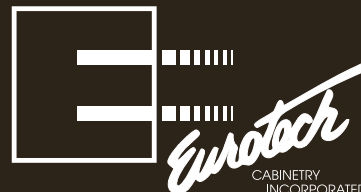


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