



# 2022-23 Season

## **Curtis Symphony Orchestra Presents “Perry, Schumann, and Mahler” and Curtis’s Spring Gala on April 15 at Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center**

GRAMMY Award-winning conductor Osmo Vänskä leads the Curtis Symphony Orchestra in an afternoon of stirring performances, featuring a symphonic “Titan,” a widely popular piano concerto, and an orchestral tour de force.

PHILADELPHIA, PA—March 29, 2023—The **Curtis Symphony Orchestra’s** 2022–23 season in Philadelphia concludes on **Saturday, April 15, 2023, at 3 p.m.** with “**Perry, Schumann, & Mahler**” at **Verizon Hall** in the **Kimmel Center**, part of the **Curtis Institute of Music’s** highly anticipated **Spring Gala 2023**. Under the baton of GRAMMY Award-winning conductor **Osmo Vänskä**, former music director of the Minnesota Orchestra, and first-year student **Micah Gleason**, Curtis’s Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow, the **Curtis Symphony Orchestra** presents neoclassical composer, pianist, and conductor **Julia Perry’s** dynamic *Study for Orchestra*, Robert Schumann’s popular Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54, performed by acclaimed pianist **Amy Yang** (’06), associate dean of piano studies and artistic initiatives at Curtis, and Gustav Mahler’s thunderous Symphony No. 1 in D major (“Titan”). Following the concert, Spring Gala 2023 guests will enjoy festivities in celebration of the school’s extraordinary legacy of conducting and composition.

Curtis kicks off the program with neoclassical composer, pianist, and conductor **Julia Perry’s** dynamic *Study for Orchestra* (originally titled *A Short Piece for Orchestra* when it premiered in Turin, Italy, in 1952). This fiercely raucous, high-octane work shifts gears between intensely dramatic moments reminiscent of a menacing Bernard Hermann film score and quiet, poetic passages. In 1965, Perry’s energetic piece made history as the first work by a woman of color to be performed and recorded by the New York Philharmonic and only the third by a female composer.

Facing sexism and racial discrimination in a pre-Civil Rights world, as well as significant personal health issues, Perry was an inspiring trailblazer who left behind an extraordinary body of work when she died at age 55, with over a dozen symphonies, two concertos, and three operas. Although her compositions have been largely neglected until recent years, Perry’s work is primed for audience rediscovery and celebration.

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The program continues with **Robert Schumann's** beloved **Piano Concerto in A minor**, featuring **Amy Yang** ('06), “a jaw-dropping pianist who steals the show...with effortless finesse” (*The Washington Post*). One of the most widely performed and recorded piano concertos in the Romantic repertoire, this challenging, immensely rewarding work—the only piano concerto he composed during his lifetime—forgoes pyrotechnic displays of virtuosity for subtlety, poise, and precision, flitting between elegant dreamlike passages and bold rhythmic syncopations that culminate in an exhilarating finale.

**Gustav Mahler** once wrote that “a symphony should be like the world, it should embrace everything,” and his magnificent **Symphony No. 1 (“Titan”)** does precisely that, with its soaring melodies, thunderous crescendos, and evocative sounds of nature. Considered one of the composer's most accessible works, this monumental symphony brings the concert to a close with four wildly varying movements that take the listener on an imaginative journey. The symphony begins with whispers of a sunlit dawn in the woodlands, followed by the boisterous stomp of Ländler folk tunes and the foreboding sounds of a dead woodsman's funeral march led by a parade of spirited forest creatures. The somber yet darkly merry mood is dispelled as the triumphant sounds of trumpets and trombones open the fourth and final movement, where the shadows of hell give way to the soaring heights of paradise. Named after a novel by one of Mahler's favorite German writers, Jean Paul, the opening of this stirring work was once described by its creator as an “awakening of nature from a long winter's sleep.” It is a fitting conclusion to the Curtis Symphony Orchestra's vibrant programming for this spring concert, one that is a celebration of the natural world, the human experience, and the dazzling artistry and virtuosity of these extraordinary students.

Single tickets start at \$19 and are available for purchase through the Kimmel Cultural Campus Box Office at [KimmelCulturalCampus.org](https://www.kimmelculturalcampus.org). Learn more about this and other Curtis performances at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).

### About Osmo Vänskä

Conductor Laureate of the Minnesota Orchestra, where he held the music directorship for 19 years, and music director of Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra from 2020 to 2023, Osmo Vänskä is recognized for his compelling interpretations of repertoire and his energetic presence on the podium. His democratic and inclusive style of work has been key in forging long-standing relationships with many orchestras worldwide.

Performances of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with Minnesota Orchestra in June 2022 provided a fitting culmination for Mr. Vänskä's tenure as music director. Together they undertook five major European tours, as well as an historic trip to Cuba in 2015—the first visit by an American orchestra since the two countries re-established diplomatic relations. They also made a ground-breaking tour to South Africa in 2018 as part of worldwide celebrations of Nelson Mandela's centenary—also the first visit by an American orchestra—drawing together South African and American performers in musical expressions of peace, freedom, and reconciliation on a five-city tour. Mr. Vänskä and Minnesota Orchestra also made an acclaimed return to London's BBC Proms in summer 2018.

He returned this season to the symphony and philharmonic orchestras of Bamberg, Chicago, Los Angeles, Helsinki, Israel, Houston, Montreal, and Pittsburgh. Past guest conducting invitations include renowned

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international ensembles such as Cleveland, Philadelphia, and San Francisco Symphony orchestras in North America, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Iceland Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, and London Philharmonic Orchestra. He is regularly invited to guest conduct in Asia including with Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, and the China, Hangzhou, Hong Kong and Taiwan philharmonic orchestras. In the 2022–23 season, in addition to continuing his relationship with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Vänskä was invited to guest conduct the New World Symphony in Miami, where he also coaches its conducting fellows.

A distinguished recording artist for the BIS label, Mr. Vänskä is currently recording all of Mahler's symphonies with Minnesota Orchestra. His recording of Symphony No. 5 received a GRAMMY nomination in 2017 for Best Classical Orchestral Performance. Mr. Vänskä and Minnesota Orchestra have also recorded the complete symphonies of Beethoven and Sibelius to critical acclaim, winning a GRAMMY Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2014 as well as being nominated on several other occasions. In 2021 they were voted Gramophone's Orchestra of the Year.

Mr. Vänskä studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy and was awarded first prize in the 1982 Besançon Competition. He began his career as a clarinetist, occupying the co-principal chair of Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. He regularly performs chamber music, having been invited to La Jolla Summerfest, Seattle Chamber Music Festival, Naantali Summer Festival, Sysmä Summer Sounds, and Music in Ruovesi. He has recorded Bernhard Henrik Crusell's three Clarinet Quartets and Kalevi Aho's Clarinet Quintet for the BIS label and is recording several duos for clarinet and violin which he has commissioned with his wife, violinist Erin Keefe.

Mr. Vänskä is the recipient of a Royal Philharmonic Society Award, the Finlandia Foundation's Arts and Letters award, the 2010 Ditson Award from Columbia University, and the Pro Finlandia medal awarded to him by the State of Finland. He holds honorary doctorates from the universities of Glasgow and Minnesota and was named Musical America's 2005 Conductor of the Year. In 2013 he received the Annual Award from the German Record Critics' Award Association for his involvement in BIS's recordings of the complete works by Sibelius.

### **About Amy Yang ('06)**

Praised by the *Washington Post* as a "jaw-dropping pianist who steals the show...with effortless finesse," pianist Amy Yang balances an active career as soloist, chamber musician, and pedagogue. Among Ms. Yang's numerous collaborators are Yefim Bronfman, Roberto Díaz, Miriam Fried, Richard Goode, Kim Kashkashian, Ani and Ida Kavafian, Patricia Kopatchinskaya, Anne-Marie McDermott, Tito Muñoz, and Joseph Silverstein; the St. Paul and Mahler chamber orchestras; Third Coast Percussion; A Far Cry; members of the Guarneri String Quartet; and the Dover, Jasper, and Aizuri string quartets. She has appeared as a soloist with the Houston, Tuscaloosa, and Mansfield symphony orchestras; the Connecticut Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, and Orquesta Juvenil Universitaria Eduardo Mata de la UNAM. Ms. Yang has also performed in

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solo and chamber recitals for the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society—including a solo recital and collaborations with Jasper String Quartet in piano quintets by Tania León and Joan Tower for their 35th season. She was also featured in a full episode of Emmy® Award-winning producer Jim Cotter’s *Articulate*, which aired on PBS in 2021.

At the Curtis Institute of Music, she is the associate dean of piano studies and artistic initiatives. She previously held the roles of program director and piano faculty of Curtis Summerfest’s Young Artist Summer Program for nine summers.

Ms. Yang has premiered music by Caroline Shaw, Avner Dorman, Michael Hersch, Ezra Laderman, and Hua Yang. She has appeared in such prestigious venues such as Wigmore Hall and Carnegie Recital Hall; at the Marlboro, Ravinia, Aldeburgh, Bravo! Vail, Chelsea, Olympic, and Ojai music festivals; Verbier Academy; Cal Performances; Caramoor; IMS Prussia Cove; Music from Angel Fire; and Chamber Music Northwest, among others. Ms. Yang’s discography includes a debut solo album (MSR Classics); recordings with violinists Tessa Lark (First Hand Records) and Itamar Zorman (BIS Records) and clarinetist José Franch-Ballester (iTinerant Records); and a live recording of music by Michael Hersch, performed at the Aldebergh Festival (New Focus Records).

Ms. Yang is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, the Juilliard School, and the Yale School of Music, and joined the Curtis faculty in 2011.

### **About the Curtis Symphony Orchestra**

Acclaimed for its “otherworldly ensemble and professional level of sophistication” (*The New York Times*), the Curtis Symphony Orchestra offers a dynamic showcase of tomorrow’s exceptional young talent. Each year the 100 extraordinary musicians of the orchestra work with internationally renowned conductors, including Osmo Vänskä, Vladimir Jurowski, Marin Alsop, Simon Rattle, Robert Spano, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, who also mentors the early-career conductors who hold Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellowships. This professional training has enabled Curtis alumni to assume prominent positions in America’s leading orchestras, as well as esteemed orchestral, opera, and chamber ensembles around the world.

### **About the Curtis Institute of Music**

The Curtis Institute of Music educates and trains exceptionally gifted young musicians to engage a local and global community through the highest level of artistry. For nearly a century Curtis has provided each member of its small student body with an unparalleled education alongside musical peers, distinguished by a “learn by doing” philosophy and personalized attention from a faculty that includes a high proportion of actively performing musicians. With admissions based solely on artistic promise, no student is turned away due to financial need. Curtis invests in each admitted student, ensuring no tuition is charged for their studies and they enter the profession free from educational debt. In a typical year, Curtis students hone their craft through more than 200 orchestra, opera, and solo and chamber music offerings in Philadelphia and around the world. Learn more at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).



**CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**  
**Perry, Schumann, and Mahler**  
**Spring Gala 2023**

**Saturday, April 15, 2023, at 3 p.m.**

Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center, Broad and Spruce Streets, Philadelphia

Osmo Vänskä, conductor

Micah Gleason, Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow

Amy Yang ('06), piano

**PROGRAM**

JULIA PERRY	<i>Study for Orchestra</i>
ROBERT SCHUMANN	Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54
GUSTAV MAHLER	Symphony No. 1 in D major (“Titan”)

**TICKETS**

Single tickets: \$19–55, sold by the Kimmel Cultural Campus Box Office at [KimmelCulturalCampus.org](https://www.kimmelculturalcampus.org), or (215) 893-1999. Learn more about Curtis’s Spring Gala 2023 tickets at [Curtis.edu/Gala](https://www.curtis.edu/Gala).

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*Guest conductor appearances for each Curtis Symphony Orchestra performance are made possible by the Rita E. and Gustave M. Hauser Chair in Conducting Studies.*

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