2023-24 SEASON
TIME TO DISCOVER
On behalf of the Curtis Institute of Music, welcome to our 2023–24 season: *Time to Discover*!

Our students are among the world's most talented and promising young musicians, and their enthusiasm and excitement for playing for you is unparalleled. We can't wait for you to discover their talents, passion, and music on our stages here in Philadelphia, on tour, and online around the world.

There is so much exciting music ahead of us this season. You'll experience the vibrancy of our orchestra, delight in rapturous opera productions, explore new music, and savor the intimacy of solo recitals and chamber music ensembles. Our 2023-24 season features a celebration of cherished repertoire favorites—such as Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony, “Pathétique;” Beethoven’s Violin Concerto, featuring soloist Pamela Frank; and a concert of opera excerpts, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin—and showcases stunning new music—including world premieres by James Ra and Steven Mackey, which features groundbreaking guitarist JIJI, and so much more.

I do hope you will join us for these performances and others throughout the season. I am eager to hear all that Curtis's students will accomplish together this year, and I look forward to welcoming you to the extraordinary array of performances that await us.

Roberto Díaz  
President and CEO  
Nina von Maltzahn President’s Chair
Yannick Nézet-Séguin, the Curtis Symphony Orchestra and rising stars of the Curtis Opera Theatre kick off the 2023–24 season with a tribute to Strauss. A celebration of the German Romantic composer’s life and legacy, the program features highlights from some of his most popular operas, and it scales the spectacular heights of his final tone poem, An Alpine Symphony. This breathtaking work depicts a perilous mountain-climbing expedition from the composer’s childhood, capturing the brilliance of a blazing sunrise over the Alps, the wonder of cascading waterfalls, the pastoral sounds of bleating sheep, and the terrifying violence of a raging thunderstorm.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is “a musical powerhouse who conducts with such intensity and finesse that he breathes new life into every note.” - New York Times
Renowned conductor Robert Spano leads the Curtis Symphony Orchestra in its final concert of the bold and ambitious 2023–24 season, a remarkable program featuring two exhilarating world premieres and a late-Romantic era classic. The afternoon opens with a newly commissioned work by James Ra. Praised by the Philadelphia Inquirer as “a composer to watch,” Ra’s compositions have been described as “coursing with adrenaline-pumping energy.”

The program continues with GRAMMY Award-winning Curtis composition faculty member Steven Mackey’s Concerto for Electric Guitar, featuring the jaw-dropping virtuosity of guitarist JIJI, followed by Tchaikovsky’s impassioned, intensely personal Symphony No. 6 (“Pathétique”).

Acclaimed conductor Michael Stern leads the Curtis Symphony Orchestra in an evening of extraordinary emotional contrasts. The program opens with the quiet whisper of one of classical music’s most intimate, impassioned masterpieces, Beethoven’s transcendent Violin Concerto in D major, featuring internationally renowned violinist Pamela Frank. The concert concludes with another classical music masterpiece to be revealed in the coming months.
Inspired by the poetry of 17th-century English writer John Milton, author of the epic Paradise Lost, Handel’s magnificent pastoral ode, L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato (The Cheerful Man, the Thoughtful Man, and the Moderate Man), launches the Curtis Opera Theatre season at the Philadelphia Film Center with a stunning theatrical oratorio. This feast for the senses, featuring a thrilling cast of young opera stars and the renowned Curtis Symphony Orchestra, is a breathtaking collision of darkness and light, innocence and experience, and a celebration of the wonders of nature and the mysteries of life.

L’Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato is sung in English with English supertitles.

**PROGRAM**

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL | music  
Based on two poems by John Milton, adapted and extended by Charles Jennens | libretto

**ARTISTS**

CHAS RADER-SHIEBER | stage director  
NICHOLAS MCGEGAN | conductor  
CURTIS OPERA THEATRE

**ABOUT NICHOLAS**

Nicholas McGegan—long hailed as “one of the finest baroque conductors of his generation” (Independent) and “an expert in 18th-century style” (New Yorker)—is recognized for his probing and revelatory explorations of music of all periods.

**CURTIS OPERA THEATRE**

Through imaginative productions, bold concepts, and absorbing theater, the artists of the Curtis Opera Theatre prepare to become stars of the world stage. The combination of key elements of artistry—music, acting, singing, and costumes—allows these student-artists to create a lasting connection with audiences.

The Curtis Opera Theatre is generously supported by the Ernestine Bacon Cairns Trust, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, and the Wyncote Foundation.

**TICKETS STARTING AT $19. CURTIS.EDU/DISCOVER**
The Curtis Opera Theatre's 2023–24 season concludes with Janáček’s masterpiece, The Cunning Little Vixen, one of the most powerful operatic works of the 20th century. Led by a plucky heroine, this poetic parable celebrates the cyclical nature of life and death as it spins a comical yet bittersweet tale of Vixen Sharp Ears. Captured by a Forester, the mischievous young fox cub grows up to become a strong, independent vixen, escaping into the wild, where she encounters a forest full of possibilities. Janáček’s adaptation of the beloved Czech novella features a lushly orchestrated, folk-infused score bursting with boundless energy and an imaginative array of dazzling colors.

The Cunning Little Vixen is sung in Czech with English supertitles.

The Curtis Opera Theatre’s exciting season continues with a double bill at the Philadelphia Film Center. Gender norms explode on the French Riviera in Les Mamelles de Tirésias (The Breasts of Tiresias), Poulenc’s outrageous piece of absurdist satire. This clever comedy features a delightfully fizzy cocktail of opera, cabaret, and jazz, with a tale as consciously arty, feminist, and political as it is insightfully witty.

A biting critique of industrial capitalism, Weill’s darkly satirical “ballet chanté,” The Seven Deadly Sins, draws on the classic pop song and dance numbers of the 1920s and ’30s with a timeless commentary on values, virtues, and the “almighty dollar.”

Les Mamelles de Tirésias is sung in French with English supertitles.

The Seven Deadly Sins is sung in German with English supertitles.
**ENSEMBLE 20/21**

Ensemble 20/21’s repertoire features works from the 20th and 21st centuries. With bold collaborations and striking productions, Ensemble 20/21 embraces the cutting edge of contemporary classical music through the highest level of artistry.

Generous support for Ensemble 20/21 is provided by the Daniel W. Dietrich II Foundation.

**TICKETS STARTING AT $19. CURTIS.EDU/DISCOVER**

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**MUSIC OF THE EARTH**

"Music of the Earth" showcases compositions inspired by the natural world, with "eco-composer" John Luther Adams’s captivating solo violin ode to Alaska; Three High Places; Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Raven Chacon’s haunting string quartet piece, *The Journey of the Horizontal People*; and composer Allison Loggins-Hull’s poignant *Homeland*. The concert also features Curtis alumna Gabriella Smith’s "(13) coral reef"-inspired work, *Anthozoa*, Icelandic composer and guitarist Gulli Björnsson’s striking pieces for solo electric guitar, *Landslag*, and pioneering electronic music composer Luciano Berio’s 1964 anthology of eleven songs from eight countries, *Folk Songs*.

**NOVEMBER 18**

**MARCH 30**

**APRIL 13**

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**INTERSECTION**

"Intersection" features music by composers who explore the terrain between traditional genre boundaries. The program features Anna Meredith’s astonishing 1980s electronica meets ’90s clubland composition *Tuggemo*, the first movement of Edgar Meyer’s virtuosic *Concert Duo for Violin and Bass*, Courtney Bryan’s gospel and jazz-flavored *Soli Deo Gloria* for two guitars, and the world premiere of Dmitri Tymoczko’s *Nerds*. The evening concludes with Angélica Negrón’s *dóabin*, inspired by the invented language of a pair of twins; acclaimed composer Tyshawn Sorey’s *For Fred Lerdahl*, and György Ligeti’s minimalist composition for woodwind quintet, *Six Bagatelles*.

**NOVEMBER 18**

**MARCH 30**

**APRIL 13**

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**PORTRAIT OF GEORGE LEWIS**

Ensemble 20/21 celebrates this year’s composer in residence with a "Portrait of George Lewis," featuring works by the award-winning composer, musicologist, author, computer-installation artist, and trombonist. Since the early 1970s, Mr. Lewis has expanded the frontiers of experimental music with wildly inventive works that bridge traditions of acoustic and electric, American and European, rhythmic and free form. This final concert of the season honors the MacArthur Fellow and pioneering legend who continues to sit at the vanguard of contemporary musical expression.
Past and future meet through Curtis Presents, which features a diverse collection of artists—alumni, faculty, students, and contemporary creators—whose musical foundations are rooted in the Curtis community. This series of intimate and innovative recitals offers a unique experience with exceptional artistry and one-of-a-kind programs.

**NATE’S WORLD**

The 2023-24 Curtis Presents season kicks off with the return of acclaimed alumnus Nathan Farrington (‘06), principal bassist for L.A. Opera Orchestra, as he takes listeners on an adventurous musical safari through Nate’s World. He is joined by composer, pianist, and clarinetist Teddy Abrams (Conducting ’08), music director of the Louisville Orchestra and the Britten Festival, and Gabriel Kovach (’99), principal horn of the Phoenix Symphony, for an evening of unexpected surprises. This genre-hopping concert features a diversity of styles, with a program written, arranged, and performed according to the trio’s current musical passions, from classical to country and everything in between.

**STRING SEXTETS**

Curtis on Tour presents an evening with acclaimed violinist and Curtis faculty member Benjamin Beilman (‘12), former Dover Quartet violist Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt (‘10, ’11, ’14), award-winning cellist Oliver Herbert (’19), and emerging professional artists from Curtis for the memorable evening of chamber music. This phenomenal sextet presents Richard Strauss’s richly scored Sextet from his luminous final opera Capriccio, Alban Berg’s colorful and chromatic transcription of his Piano Sonata in B minor, Johannes Brahms’s ethereal String Sextet No. 2 in G major, and a newly commissioned work composed by Curtis alumna Alyssa Weinberg (‘16).

**CURTIS COMPOSERS**

The third concert of the Curtis Presents season builds upon the school’s longstanding tradition of innovation, inspiration, and artistic excellence as it celebrates eight of its distinguished composition alumni. As Curtis looks to its centennial in 2024, this retrospective program highlights iconic Curtis composers George Walker (’45), Jennifer Higdon (‘88), Leonard Bernstein (Conducting ’41), David Serkin Ludwig (’01), Samuel Barber (’34), Ned Rorem (’44), Julius Eastman (’63), and recently appointed composition faculty member, Jonathan Bailey Holland (’96), in an evening of boundary-pushing chamber works and early-career classics that shaped the landscape of contemporary classical music.

**NED ROREM CELEBRATION CONCERT**

The Curtis Institute of Music honors the life, legacy, and genius of alumnus, longtime faculty member, and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and prolific writer Ned Rorem (’44) with a concert at Field Concert Hall. Mr. Rorem received a GRAMMY Award and wrote three symphonies, four piano concerti, ten operas, choral works, ballets, song cycles, and numerous orchestral works in his lifetime. Revered faculty members, rising stars of the Curtis Opera Theatre, and some of the school’s gifted musicians pay tribute to one of the greatest American composers of the twentieth century and a cultural luminary who inspired generations of young artists and composers.

*Sales prior to performance date announcement are eligible for free exchange and/or refunds.*
Curtis Recital Series

The promise of “learn by doing” lies at the heart of the Curtis Recital Series. From young student artists experiencing their first professional performance to faculty who’ve played on stages across the globe, this series showcases the amazing passion and artistry of Curtis musicians. Each year over 100 free Student, Studio, and Faculty Recitals are presented on most Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings.

In the spring semester, members of the class of 2024 will share the breadth of their talent through a culminating graduation recital.

Visit Curtis.edu/Calendar for the full schedule.

The Curtis Institute of Music received funding from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Edith L. and Robert Proskoff Memorial Concert Series

**SEASON AT A GLANCE**

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LEGACY OF VOICE

FEATURING CURTIS OPERA THEATRE’S PRODUCTION OF THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN FOLLOWED BY COCKTAILS AND DINNER

Join us at the annual Curtis Gala for a festive celebration of Curtis’s legacy of voice. Proceeds from the gala play a vital role in underwriting the unparalleled education of Curtis students. Your participation today can help define the legacy of Curtis for generations to come.

WHERE
KIMMEL CULTURAL CAMPUS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT GIVING@CURTIS.EDU

WHERE
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WHEN
MAY 4, 2024

SAVE THE DATE
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