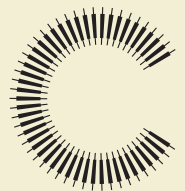


CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

WITH CURTIS OPERA THEATRE



OCTOBER 2023



CURTIS
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

2023-24 SEASON TIME TO DISCOVER

CONTENTS

- 1 FROM THE PRESIDENT
- 2 ABOUT CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC
- 3 CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
October 22, 2023
- 10 STUDENTS
- 14 FACULTY
- 16 STAFF
- 18 VOLUNTEER BOARDS
- 19 DONORS

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Dear Friends,

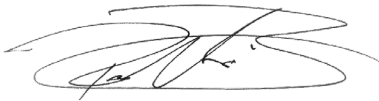
It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first Curtis Symphony Orchestra concert of the 2023–24 school year. These incredibly talented musicians are some of the most promising young artists from across the globe. But while their talent is unmistakable, what perhaps truly sets them apart is their unparalleled enthusiasm and excitement for playing music together, and we can't wait to share that joy with you tonight.

The 160 young musicians who make up the Curtis student body this year come from 21 countries and 26 states. Some have only been at Curtis for two months—and yet they are already walking onto the stage of Verizon Hall for the first time with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of our beloved faculty member Yannick Nézet-Séguin. This is the epitome of Curtis's "learn by doing" philosophy.

The first concert of the year is always an exciting one. What you will hear tonight reflects not only their many years of individual study and practice, but their commitment and dedication to each other. Throughout the initial weeks of the school year, our students worked to shape their relationships together as ensemble musicians and as people—building skills that they'll rely upon throughout their careers.

And there are so many more Curtis performances ahead of us this year—we hope you can join us often. Of course, all of these performances are made possible thanks to the generous support of friends like you. We are immensely grateful for the time and resources that you invest in our students and our school. Thank you for all you do for Curtis.

All my very best,



Roberto Díaz (Viola '84)
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Nina von Maltzahn President's Chair
James and Betty Matarese Chair in Viola Studies



ABOUT CURTIS

At the Curtis Institute of Music, the world's most talented young musicians develop into exceptional artists, creators, and innovators.

With a tuition-free foundation, Curtis is a unique environment for teaching and learning. Curtis is a small school by design, where students realize their artistic potential through intensive, individualized study with the most renowned, sought-after faculty.

Animated by a learn by doing philosophy, Curtis students share their music with audiences through more than 100 performances each year, including solo and chamber recitals, orchestral concerts, and opera—all free or at an affordable cost—offering audiences unique opportunities to participate in pivotal moments in these young musicians' careers.

In addition to a wealth of performance opportunities, Curtis students experience

a close connection to the greatest artists and organizations in classical music, and innovative initiatives that integrate new technologies and encourage entrepreneurship—all within an historic campus in the heart of culturally rich Philadelphia.

In this diverse, collaborative community, Curtis's extraordinary artists challenge, support, and inspire one another—continuing an unparalleled 100-year legacy of musicians who have led, and will lead, classical music into a thriving, equitable, and multidimensional future.

Learn more at [Curtis.edu](https://www.curtis.edu).

CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Combining outstanding talent with unparalleled enthusiasm for making music together, the Curtis Symphony Orchestra is a cornerstone of the Curtis Institute of Music experience and an essential part of Philadelphia's brilliant cultural landscape. For 100 years, our extraordinary students have honed their skills and expanded their musical horizons as they prepare for professional careers with the world's leading orchestras and chamber ensembles. Under the mentorship of internationally renowned conductors, including Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Osmo Vänskä, Marin Alsop, Simon Rattle, and Robert Spano, Curtis students present audiences with an array of inspiring programming, ranging from the time-honored to dynamic new works.

CURTIS OPERA THEATRE

Through imaginative productions and extraordinary musicianship, the promising young artists of Curtis Opera Theatre work alongside renowned conductors, directors, and designers to present audiences with fresh and passionate performances from across the operatic repertoire. With the visionary leadership of Eric Owens and Miloš Repický, Curtis's voice and opera students are cast regularly throughout the season, providing a unique level of performance experience to draw upon throughout their careers with top opera companies across the United States and Europe, including La Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper, Houston Grand Opera, the San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera.

Curtis Symphony Orchestra

AND

Curtis Opera Theatre

PRESENT

Spectacular Strauss

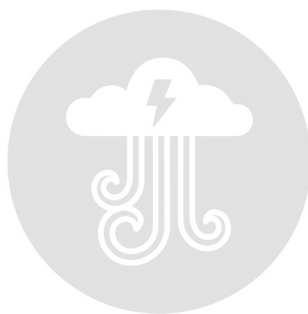
Yannick Nézet-Séguin, *conductor*

Micah Gleason, *conductor*

Sunday, October 22, 2023

at 7:00 p.m.

Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center



The concert runs approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes, including one intermission.

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

Orchestral concerts are supported by the Pennsylvania Tourism Office, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the Jack Wolgin Curtis Orchestral Concerts Endowment Fund.

Opera stage direction by John Matsumoto Giampietro.

Photographic and recording equipment may not be used in Verizon Hall.

PROGRAM

RICHARD STRAUSS

Dance of the Seven Veils

from *Salome*

Micah Gleason, conductor

Opera Selections by Strauss

Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor

Quintet: “Die Dame gibt mit trübem Sinn...”

from *Ariadne auf Naxos*

Brighella: Hongrui Ren, tenor

Scaramuccio: Jackson Allen, tenor

Harlekin: Erik Tofte, baritone

Truffaldino: Morgan-Andrew King, bass

Zerbinetta: Maya Mor Mitrani, soprano

Act II opening and Presentation of the Rose

from *Der Rosenkavalier*

Faninal: Nathan Schludecker, baritone

Marianne: Kylie Kreucher, soprano

Haushofmeister: Landry Allen, tenor

Sophie: Juliette Tacchino, soprano

Octavian: Judy Zhuo, mezzo-soprano

Trio: “Hab mir’s gelobt”

from *Der Rosenkavalier*

Octavian: Katie Trigg, mezzo-soprano

Marschallin: Emily Damasco, soprano

Sophie: Sarah Fleiss, soprano

—INTERMISSION—

STRAUSS

An Alpine Symphony (Eine Alpensinfonie), Op. 64

Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

CONDUCTOR

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is music and artistic director of The Philadelphia Orchestra, music director of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain, and in September 2018, began his tenure as music director of the Metropolitan Opera. Widely recognized for his musicianship, dedication, and charisma, Mr. Nézet-Séguin has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most exciting talents of his generation. His highly collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, boundless enthusiasm, and fresh approach to programming have been heralded by audiences and critics alike.

Mr. Nézet-Séguin has appeared with most of the world's leading orchestras. He enjoys close collaborations with the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He is honorary conductor of the Rotterdam Philharmonic after serving as its music director from 2008 to 2018; and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has appeared repeatedly at the BBC Proms and many European and North American festivals, among them Edinburgh, Grafenegg, Lanaudière, Lucerne, Mostly Mozart, Salzburg, Saratoga, and Vail. He has conducted annually at the Metropolitan Opera since 2009, and has led productions at Teatro alla Scala in Milan; the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in London; Netherlands Opera; and the Vienna State Opera. He records for Deutsche Grammophon.

A native of Montreal, Mr. Nézet-Séguin studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at the Conservatoire de music du Québec. He continued his studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini, and also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. His honors include *Musical America's* Artist

of the Year (2016), the Royal Philharmonic Society Award, Canada's National Arts Centre Award, and the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres du Québec. He holds honorary doctorates from multiple institutions, including the University of Québec in Montreal, Westminster Choir College, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Curtis Institute of Music, where he has served on the faculty as mentor conductor since 2013.

Micah Gleason

CONDUCTOR

Micah Gleason, from Chapel Hill, N.C., entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2022 and studies conducting with Yannick Nézet-Séguin. All students at Curtis receive merit-based, full-tuition scholarships, and Ms. Gleason is the Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow.

Ms. Gleason has been recognized for her diverse performance abilities as a conductor, vocal soloist, and chamber musician. Interdisciplinary collaboration and community building are at the core of her music-making. She is curious about the most effective ways to disrupt the stasis and comfort of the modern concert hall; to examine how the disciplines of music research, performance, and perception can grow more aware of each other, and how artists across disciplines, activists, and researchers can most effectively collaborate. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from the Chicago College of Performing Arts and Master of Music degrees in conducting and vocal arts from the Bard College Conservatory of Music.

An alumna of several notable training programs, including the Aspen Music Festival and the Conducting Institute at Oxford, Ms. Gleason was one of eight inaugural vocal fellows at the Crested Butte Music Festival. Her output as a vocal soloist ranges from concert appearances, including alto soloist in Handel's

BIOGRAPHIES

Messiah and Mozart's *Requiem*, multiple operatic roles, and an extensive song and chamber music repertoire. She also served as the alto artist in residence at the University of Chicago for two years, where she was a regularly featured soloist. As a conductor, Ms. Gleason has led notable ensembles such as The Orchestra Now and the Eastern Festival Orchestra.

While obtaining her degrees at Bard College Conservatory of Music, studying under James Bagwell and Stephanie Blythe respectively, she served as the assistant conductor of the Bard Symphonic Chorus, conductor of the Bard Opera Workshop, and the assistant conductor of the Bard Graduate Vocal Arts Program's main stage production of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, in collaboration with The Orchestra Now. In July 2022, Ms. Gleason served as the

music director for the world premiere of the opera *The Final Veil* during its residency at The Cell Theater in New York City.

Alongside mezzo-soprano Joanne Evans, she is a co-founder of Loam, an artistic partnership presenting semi-immersive musical works. Current projects include co-conceiving, producing, and performing as a featured singer in *The Fragile Femme*, collaborating with director George Miller and choreographer Matilda Sakamoto.

Ms. Gleason was named a 2021 conducting fellow at the Eastern Music Festival, where she studied with Gerard Schwarz, received the 2021 Emerging Conductor Award from the Gena Branscombe Project, and was named a National Finalist for the American Prize in Conducting.



Dance of the Seven Veils

from *Salome*

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

When Richard Strauss's harrowing psychodrama *Salome* premiered at the Königliches Opernhaus (now Semperoper Dresden) on December 9, 1905, it was met with critical acclaim and public accusations of blasphemy. Daring, dark, and unsettling, this searing portrait of insanity and unchecked desire provoked outrage with its blend of the sacred and profane. Yet it was controversy that fueled its success, and within the span of two years, the work was performed in fifty opera houses across the globe.

Inspired by one of Gustave Moreau's 19th-century paintings, *The Apparition*, and based on the scandalous 1891 French play by Oscar Wilde with a German translation by author and poet Hedwig Lachmann, this one-act masterpiece recounts the Biblical story of a princess who becomes infatuated with Jokanaan (John the Baptist). Imprisoned by her stepfather, King Herod, for his heretical beliefs and for slandering his wife Herodias, the prophet rejects Salome's advances. Scorned, she agrees to dance for the king but demands that Jokanaan's head be delivered on a silver platter in return for her efforts.

Beneath the lush chromaticism of the opera's most iconic scene, the "Dance of the Seven Veils," is a discordant waltz that builds to a feverish frenzy as Salome removes each of her veils in a sensuous dance and spirals deeper into madness. This extended symphonic episode opens with a manic, percussive introduction that gives way to languorous, ornamented passages teasing and taunting the listener as the Biblical anti-heroine flits about in wild abandon, collapsing to exhaustion before rising to face Herod in triumph, sealing Jokanaan's fate and ultimately her own. ♦

10 minutes

Quintet: "Die Dame gibt mit trübem Sinn..."

from *Ariadne auf Naxos*

Strauss

Following the tremendous success of *Der Rosenkavalier*, Richard Strauss began composing his next opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, during the first years of the Great War. Like its predecessor, the work featured neo-baroque conventions blended with the sumptuous sounds of late Romanticism, centering on the social rise of the nouveau riche. Initially conceived as a thirty-minute "divertissement with a small chamber orchestra," the work swelled in scope, fusing opera, ballet, and drama. While the idea was quite radical at the time, the execution was anything but well-received.

The premiere of the piece on October 25, 1912 at the Hoftheater Stuttgart (known today as Staatsoper Stuttgart) was an undeniable flop. Opera lovers who attended were displeased that they had to endure Hugo von Hofmannsthal's adaptation of Molière's play *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* before experiencing Strauss's short satirical opera. In contrast, theater lovers were indifferent to the incidental music throughout the play and the opera that was tacked on at the end. Hiring both a theater troupe and an opera company to resurrect it in future performances was also an impractical nightmare.

On October 4, 1916, *Ariadne auf Naxos* was mounted in a revised form and went on to become one of Strauss's most popular works. The spoken play was removed, the action shifted from Paris to Vienna, roles were expanded into a new prologue, and the first half took place entirely in the backstage of a theater. The new opera within an opera featured a clever theatrical battle between lighthearted comedy and dramatic tragedy, setting up a collision of low-brow opera buffa hijinks and high-art dramatic heroism. In this delightful quintet, "Die Dame gibt mit trübem Sinn," the commedia dell'arte troupe of Brighella, Truffaldino, Scaramuccia, Harlekin, and the

PROGRAM NOTES

saucy comedienne Zerbinetta attempt to lift the spirits of the inconsolable Ariadne with a charming song and dance number, reminding the princess of Crete, and that the best way to mend a broken heart is to look for a new love. ♦

5 minutes

Act II Opening;
Presentation of the Rose
Trio: “Hab mir’s gelobt”

from *Der Rosenkavalier*

Strauss

Richard Strauss’s most celebrated opera, *Der Rosenkavalier*, was an instant hit upon its premiere at Dresden’s Königliches Opernhaus on January 26, 1911. Loosely adapted by librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal from French novelist and playwright Jean-Baptiste Louvet de Couvray’s novel *Les amours du chevalier de Faublas* and Molière’s comedy *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, this satirical, three-act comic opera touches upon themes of infidelity, aging, “old money” versus “new money,” lust, exploitation, infatuation, and the dissolution of relationships. Set in the decadent, idealized Vienna, Austria, of the 1740s (during the final years of the Habsburg Empire), the opera’s plot blends aristocratic intrigue and historical references with fictional customs of nobility (like the ceremonious presentation of a silver rose) and extensive, anachronistic use of waltzes (which had yet to emerge until the mid-18th-century) to create a world of high-society glamour and soaring romance.

As Act II opens, the wealthy Herr von Faninal, his steward (Der Haushofmeister), and his daughter Sophie await the arrival of the silver rose bearer (sent by the boorish Baron Ochs to his bride-to-be). Her chaperone, Marianne, reports that Count Octavian Rofrano has arrived (sent by his older lover, the Marschallin, Princess Marie Thérèse von Werdenberg) as the young woman agonizes

over her upcoming marriage to a mysterious man she has yet to meet. Instantly infatuated with this nobleman, Sophie blindly accepts the offer and finds herself swept up in a rapturous duet (“Mir ist die Ehre widerfahren,” known as the “Presentation of the Rose”), unaware of the dramatic events that will soon unfold around them.

In the opera’s final act, the Count finds himself caught between the love of these two adoring women. Acknowledging the onslaught of time as she laments the loss of her youth and the inevitable end of her passionate love affair, the Marschallin blesses the union of Octavian and Sophie in the ravishingly beautiful trio, “Hab mir’s gelobt.” This sublime, climactic moment showcases the rapturous sounds of *Der Rosenkavalier*’s three female leads—the “pants” role of Octavian, portrayed by a mezzo-soprano, the lyric soprano voice of Sophie, and the grand Marschallin, played by a dramatic soprano. As the trio concludes, time feels suspended—pain, pleasure, regret, and hope become entwined—and the princess quietly leaves the lovers alone with dreams of a bright future together. ♦

14 minutes

An Alpine Symphony
(*Eine Alpensinfonie*), Op. 64

Strauss

Richard Strauss once casually boasted, “I am the last mountain of a large mountain range. After me come the flatlands.” Equally revered and reviled in life and controversial in death, the German composer’s lofty ego was as notable as his profoundly moving operas and richly scored tone poems, each capturing the essence of a painting, landscape, literary work, or philosophical idea. Often heralded as the last of the great Romanticists, Strauss became a dominant figurehead in the music scene of the late 1800s. But by the dawn of the twentieth century, his focus had shifted from writing

these ambitious tone poems—most notably *Don Juan*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and *Ein Heldenleben (A Hero's Life)*—to composing four of his most celebrated operas, *Salome*, *Elektra*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

Following the untimely death of his colleague and close friend Gustav Mahler in May of 1911, Strauss felt the overwhelming necessity to revisit an unfinished piece that had been collecting dust for a decade, and *An Alpine Symphony (Eine Alpensinfonie)*, Op. 64, was born.

Composed from 1911 to 1915, while Strauss was living in a villa in the southern Bavarian town of Garmisch (now Garmisch-Partenkirchen) at the foot of Germany's highest peak, the soaring Zugspitze, *An Alpine Symphony* captures the adventurous spirit of the budding composer's early adolescence. At age fifteen, he joined a hiking party to reach the peak of the Heimgarten, a 5,780-foot mountain in the Bavarian lower Alps of southern Germany. Upon return, Strauss wrote to his friend, Austrian composer Ludwig Thuille, describing in detail the group's perilous trek by lantern light and a harrowing encounter with a violent storm that uprooted trees and threw about rocks. In the letter, he shares how the experience inspired him to portray "the entire ordeal on the piano." While none of these early sketches have survived, scholars attribute the first drafts of identifiable thematic material to an 1899 manuscript titled *Künstlertragödie (Tragedy of an Artist)*—a veiled reference to the suicide of prominent Swiss-born portraitist, etcher, and sculptor Karl Stauffer-Bern.

Conceived as a monumental, two-part work called *Der Antichrist: Eine Alpensinfonie* after Friedrich Nietzsche's controversial 1895 book of the same name, *An Alpine Symphony* marked the end of an era for Strauss and for lush symphonic music of this ilk, which quickly fell out of fashion following the First World War. Eventually, the *Antichrist* label was dropped, and what remained was an

exhilarating, single-movement work and a title that contained the word "symphony" but bore none of the conventions of that form, substituting the characteristic, four-movement structure with twenty-two continuous sections of music. In creating this Herculean tone poem, a reinvigorated Strauss sought to capture the awe of an "eternal, magnificent nature" while delivering a paean to human strength and potential and offering up an enduring artistic statement that liberated the religious experience from the bonds of organized religion itself.

An Alpine Symphony depicts the sweeping grandeur, stunning panorama, and dramatic spectacle of an eleven-hour mountain-climbing expedition. It paints the brilliance of a blazing sunrise over the Alps and evokes the wonder of cascading waterfalls and rushing brooks, the pastoral sounds of bleating sheep, and the radiant beauty of flowering meadows, dark forests, and icy glaciers. As Strauss's pantheistic vision of humanity unfolds, the musicians and the audience experience the adrenaline rush of wind blowing across a towering summit, the terrifying violence of a raging storm, the tranquility of a sunset, and the quiet darkness of encroaching nightfall.

Strauss's colossal work features the sheer force and virtuosic splendor of a large orchestra, unleashing the raw power of the entire brass and percussion sections. Among the unusual variety of evocative sounds found throughout, *An Alpine Symphony* features a celesta, a wind and thunder machine, cowbells, an organ, and the baritonal sounds of a heckelphone, a double-reeded member of the oboe family resembling a mammoth English horn. This final breathtaking tone poem, presented in one uninterrupted, fifty-minute-long movement, scaled the heights of human expression upon its Berlin premiere in 1915. Over a century later, it continues to serve as a compelling argument that Strauss's immodesty was not entirely unjustified. ♦

47 minutes

CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN

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Micah Gleason
Rita E. Hauser Conducting
Fellowship

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Chair.*

* concertmaster
+ principal second violin
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◇◇ associate principal

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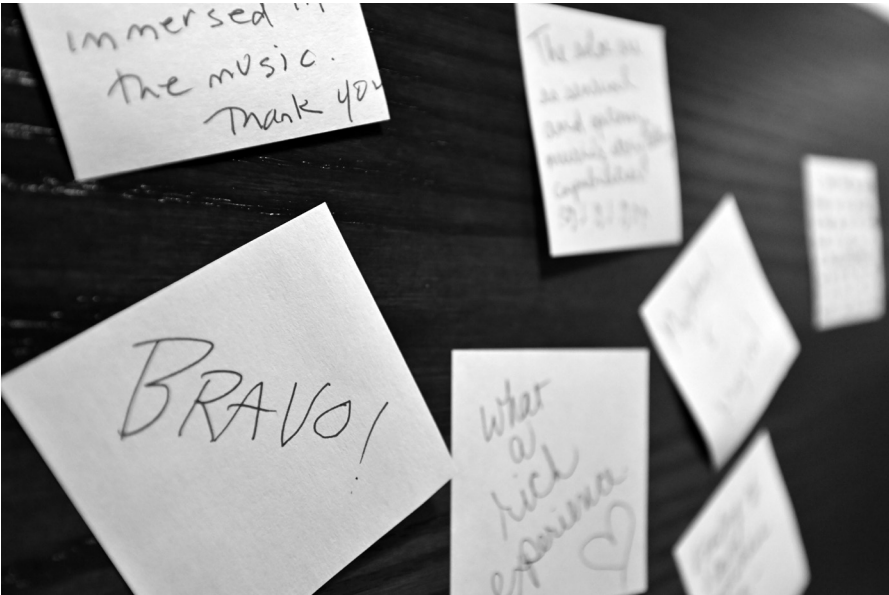
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BEETHOVEN, ORTIZ, AND BARBER

JAN 27, 2024
SAT AT 3 P.M.

MICHAEL STERN, CONDUCTOR
PAMELA FRANK, VIOLIN
CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Program

GABRIELA ORTIZ
BARBER
BEETHOVEN

Kauyumari
Symphony No. 1 (In One Movement), Op. 9
Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61



ELECTRIFYING VIRTUOSITY

RA, MACKEY, AND TCHAIKOVSKY

MAR 9, 2024
SAT AT 3 P.M.

ROBERT SPANO, CONDUCTOR
JIJI, GUITAR
CURTIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Program

JAMES RA *Te Deum*, premiere
STEVEN MACKEY Concerto for Electric Guitar, premiere
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74 ("Pathétique")

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