

### Curtis Symphony Orchestra Presents “Yannick Leads Mahler & Dawson” on March 26 at Marian Anderson Hall, Kimmel Center

Grammy Award-winning conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin leads the Curtis Symphony Orchestra in a poignant program featuring orchestral songs by Gustav and Alma Mahler, Wagner’s *Rienzi* Overture, and Dawson’s groundbreaking *Negro Folk Symphony*.

PHILADELPHIA, PA—March 12, 2026—The **Curtis Symphony Orchestra** presents the final concert of its 2025–26 series on **Thursday, March 26, at 7:00 p.m.** in **Marian Anderson Hall, Kimmel Center**, featuring selections from Gustav Mahler’s *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and Alma Mahler’s *Fünf Lieder*, performed with rising stars from **Curtis Opera Theatre** under the baton of maestro Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Curtis’ head of conducting. This evocative program also features William Dawson’s 1934 masterpiece *Negro Folk Symphony* and Richard Wagner’s *Rienzi* Overture, led by Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow **Yoann Combémoré**.

The program opens with the overture to **Wagner’s** early opera *Rienzi*, conducted by Mr. Combémoré. Premiered in Dresden in 1842, the opera reflects the grand, spectacle-driven style of French grand opera and helped launch Wagner’s career. The overture captures the drama of the story—based on the Roman tribune Cola di Rienzi—in a sweeping orchestral prelude. Opening with a solemn chorale drawn from *Rienzi’s* prayer, the music soon surges into brilliant fanfares, driving rhythms, and bold orchestral colors, building toward a triumphant, electrifying close.

Selections from **Alma Mahler’s** *Fünf Lieder*, performed by soprano **Nikan Ingabire Kanate**, follow. Composed between 1900 and 1901 while Mahler was living in Vienna, the songs reveal her distinctive voice within the city’s late-Romantic musical culture. Kanate performs “Laue Sommernacht” (Mild Summer Night) and “Bei dir ist es traut” (With You It Is Pleasant), two intimate settings of German poetry that explore themes of longing, tenderness, and quiet reflection.

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The concert continues with selections from **Gustav Mahler's** *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, performed by mezzo-soprano **Carlyle Quinn**, mezzo-soprano **Maisy Parker**, tenor **Landry Allen**, and baritone **Emilio Vásquez**. Drawing on texts from the famous 19th century folk-poetry anthology *Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Boy's Magic Horn)*, Mahler transforms these deceptively simple poems into vivid musical scenes that range from playful to deeply poignant. Several of the songs would later find their way into Mahler's symphonies, underscoring the central role this collection played in shaping his musical imagination.

**William L. Dawson's** *Negro Folk Symphony* concludes the program. Premiered in 1934 by Leopold Stokowski and The Philadelphia Orchestra, this groundbreaking 35-minute work blends African American spiritual traditions with the scale and architecture of the classical symphony. Across three movements, Dawson evokes the historical journey of the African diaspora in

America through soaring melodies, powerful brass writing, and richly layered rhythms. The composer later revised the work following a 1952 trip to West Africa, deepening its rhythmic language and connection to African musical traditions. Today, the symphony remains Dawson's best-known orchestral work—and his only symphony.

### **Tickets**

Single tickets for “Yannick Leads Mahler and Dawson” at Marian Anderson Hall start at \$24 and are available through [curtis.edu](https://curtis.edu). To learn more about performances in Curtis' 2025–26 season, including the Curtis Opera Theatre, Curtis Recital Series, and more, visit [curtis.edu/calendar](https://curtis.edu/calendar).

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Marian Anderson Hall, Kimmel Center

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Wagner                    *Rienzi Overture*  
Alma Mahler              **Selections from Fünf Lieder**  
                                  "Laue Sommernacht"  
                                  "Bei dir is es traut"

Nikan Ingabire Kanate, soprano

Gustav Mahler            **Selections from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn***  
                                  " Lob des hohen Verstands"  
                                  " Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen"  
                                  " Urlicht"  
                                  " Revelge"  
                                  " Verlorene Müh"

Carlyle Quinn, mezzo-soprano

Maisy Parker, mezzo-soprano

Landry Allen, tenor

Emilio Vásquez, baritone

Dawson                    *Negro Folk Symphony*

Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor

Yoann Combémoré, Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow

Curtis Opera Theatre

Curtis Symphony Orchestra

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

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### **About Curtis Opera Theatre**

Through innovative 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 compelling performances from across the operatic repertoire. Under the visionary leadership team of Miloš Repický, Karen Slack, Amanda Majeski, and John Matsumoto Giampietro, Curtis' 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, Paris Opera, the Vienna Staatsoper, Zurich Opera, Houston Grand Opera, the San Francisco Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera.

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

At Curtis, the world's great young musicians develop into exceptional artists, creators, and innovators. With a tuition-free foundation, Curtis is a unique environment for teaching and learning. A small school by design, 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. 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' extraordinary artists challenge, support, and inspire one another—continuing an unparalleled 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).

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