



PHILADELPHIA / ORCHESTRA

Yannick Nézet Séguin · Music & Artistic Director

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MARCH 2025

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Specially designed art for the Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 concerts, March 28–29, 2025, by Haeg Design

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From the Interim President and CEO



Dear Friends:

Since its founding in 1900, The Philadelphia Orchestra has been a melting pot, an ensemble of passionate musicians from diverse backgrounds with a shared belief in the power of music to inspire and bring people together. In the Orchestra's earliest years, Music Director Fritz Scheel recruited musicians from Europe, bringing together immigrants who worked tenaciously to establish themselves, and their art form, in a new country.

When Leopold Stokowski became music director in 1912, he not only lured away musicians from other orchestras around the country but also continued the process started by Scheel of bringing over top artists from Europe, which was widely considered the best training ground at the time. Stokowski's ability to identify talent was one of his best gifts, and he was responsible for recruiting such stars as oboist Marcel Tabuteau and flutist William Kincaid, and the ensemble's first woman player, harpist Edna Phillips.

It wasn't long before The Philadelphia Orchestra became known for its distinctive "Philadelphia Sound," a unique combination of great musical traditions from across the globe. This signature sound continues to this day and has evolved over the last 125 years with members hailing from the United States, Europe, Asia, Canada, Israel, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

As we get ready to mark our 125th anniversary in November, let's celebrate this unique quality of our hometown Orchestra, a quality found nowhere else in the world.

Best regards,

Ryan Fleur
Interim President and CEO

The Philadelphia Orchestra

2024–2025 Season

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Music and Artistic
Director

*Walter and Leonore
Annenberg Chair*

Marin Alsop

Principal Guest Conductor
*Ralph and Beth Johnston
Muller Chair*

Naomi Woo

Assistant Conductor

Joseph Conyers

Education and
Community Ambassador
*Mark and Tobey Dichter
Chair*

Charlotte Blake Alston

Storyteller, Narrator,
and Host
*Osagie and Losenge
Imasogie Chair*

First Violins

David Kim, Concertmaster
Dr. Benjamin Rush Chair
Juliette Kang, First
Associate Concertmaster
*Joseph and Marie Field
Chair*
Christine Lim, Associate
Concertmaster
Marc Rovetti, Assistant
Concertmaster
*Dr. James F. Dougherty
Chair*
Barbara Govatos
Robert E. Mortensen Chair
Jonathan Beiler
Hirono Oka

Richard Amoroso

*Robert and Lynne Pollack
Chair*

Yayoi Numazawa
Jason DePue*
Larry A. Grika Chair
Jennifer Haas
Miyu Curnow
Elina Kalendarova
Daniel Han
Julia Li
William Polk
Mei Ching Huang

Second Violins

Kimberly Fisher, Principal
Peter A. Benoliel Chair
Paul Roby, Associate
Principal
*Sandra and David
Marshall Chair*
Dara Morales, Assistant
Principal
Anne M. Buxton Chair
Philip Kates
Peter A. Benoliel Chair
Davyd Booth
Paul Arnold
*Joseph Brodo Chair, given
by Peter A. Benoliel*

Boris Balter
Amy Oshiro-Morales
*Volunteer Committees
Chair*
Yu-Ting Chen
Jeoung-Yin Kim
Willa Finck
John Bian
MuChen Hsieh
Eliot Heaton

Violas

Choong-Jin Chang,
Principal
*Ruth and A. Morris
Williams, Jr., Chair*
Kirsten Johnson,
Associate Principal
Kerri Ryan, Assistant
Principal
Burchard Tang
Renard Edwards
Anna Marie Ahn
Petersen
Piasecki Family Chair
David Nicastrò
Che-Hung Chen
Rachel Ku
Marvin Moon
Meng Wang

Cellos

Hai-Ye Ni, Principal
Priscilla Lee, Associate
Principal
Yumi Kendall, Assistant
Principal
*Elaine Woo Camarda and
A. Morris Williams, Jr.,
Chair*
Richard Harlow
Kathryn Picht Read
John Koen
Derek Barnes
Alex Veltman
Jiayin He

Basses

Joseph Conyers,
Principal
*Carole and Emilio
Gravagno Chair*
Gabriel Polinsky,
Associate Principal
Tobias Vigneau, Assistant
Principal

David Fay*
Duane Rosengard
Nathaniel West
Michael Franz
Christian Gray

Some members of the string sections voluntarily rotate seating on a periodic basis.

Flutes

Jeffrey Khaner, Principal
Paul and Barbara Henkels Chair
Patrick Williams,
Associate Principal
Rachelle and Ronald Kaiserman Chair
Olivia Staton
Erica Peel, Piccolo

Oboes

Philippe Tondre, Principal
Samuel S. Fels Chair
Peter Smith, Associate Principal
Jonathan Blumenfeld
Edwin Tuttle Chair
Elizabeth Starr
Masoudnia,
English Horn
Joanne T. Greenspun Chair

Clarinets

Ricardo Morales,
Principal
Leslie Miller and Richard Worley Chair
Samuel Caviezel,
Associate Principal
Sarah and Frank Coulson Chair

Socrates Villegas
Paul R. Demers, Bass
Clarinet
Peter M. Joseph and Susan Rittenhouse Joseph Chair

Bassoons

Daniel Matsukawa,
Principal
Richard M. Klein Chair
Mark Gigliotti,
Co-Principal
Angela Anderson Smith
Holly Blake*,
Contrabassoon

Horns

Jennifer Montone,
Principal
Gray Charitable Trust Chair
Jeffrey Lang, Associate Principal
Hannah L. and J. Welles Henderson Chair
Christopher Dwyer
Chelsea McFarland
Ernesto Tovar Torres

Trumpets

Esteban Batallán,
Principal
Marguerite and Gerry Lenfest Chair
Jeffrey Curnow,
Associate Principal
Anthony Prisk

Trombones

Nitzan Haroz, Principal
Neubauer Family Foundation Chair
Matthew Vaughn,
Co-Principal
Jack Grimm

Blair Bollinger, Bass
Trombone
Drs. Bong and Mi Wha Lee Chair

Tuba

Carol Jantsch, Principal
Lyn and George M. Ross Chair

Timpani

Don S. Liuzzi, Principal
Dwight V. Dowley Chair
Angela Zator Nelson,
Associate Principal

Percussion

Christopher Deviney,
Principal
Charlie Rosmarin,
Associate Principal
Angela Zator Nelson

Piano and Celesta

Kiyoko Takeuti

Keyboards

Davyd Booth

Harp

Elizabeth Hainen,
Principal

Librarians

Nicole Jordan, Principal
Holly Matthews

Stage Personnel

Dennis Moore, Jr.,
Manager
Francis “Chip” O’Shea III
Aaron Wilson

*On leave

Music and Artistic Director



Landen Nordeman

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is currently in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. An inspired leader, Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is both an evolutionary and a revolutionary, developing the mighty “Philadelphia Sound” in new ways. His collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him “phenomenal,” adding that “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.”

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling and sought-after talents of his generation. He became the third music director of New York’s Metropolitan Opera in 2018. In addition, he has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2017 he became the third-ever honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He served as music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick has shown a deep commitment to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today’s composers and by performing the music of under-appreciated composers of the past. In 2018 he signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 14 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*, which won a GRAMMY® Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2022.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductors, most notably Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; Companion to the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; an Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres; *Musical America*’s 2016 Artist of the Year; ECHO KLASSIK’s 2014 Conductor of the Year; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada’s National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; the Oskar Morawetz Award; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Pennsylvania, Laval University, and Drexel University.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

Marian Anderson Hall

Adrian Siegel Collection/Philadelphia Orchestra Archives



Marian Anderson with Music Director Eugene Ormandy during a Philadelphia Orchestra rehearsal at the Academy of Music in December 1938

On June 8, 2024, Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary Black contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The first major concert venue in the world to honor Marian Anderson—85 years after she was barred from performing at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., because of her race—the hall is a permanent monument to its namesake’s artistry and achievements, a reflection of the inclusive future she helped to engender, and an active testament to the intersection of music, art, and positive social impact. We look forward to honoring Marian Anderson in perpetuity with a venue that reflects the ideals by which she lived her life: equity, justice, freedom, and the belief that the arts are for everyone.

Marian Anderson Hall was named in her honor by a visionary \$25-million philanthropic gift from Richard Worley and Leslie Miller. Worley has been a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra’s Board of Trustees since 1997 and served as board chair from 2009 to 2019. Miller is a former Kimmel Center trustee and previous acting president of the Kimmel Center. They are among the largest donors in Philadelphia Orchestra history. Additional generous support for Marian Anderson Hall was given by Sidney and Caroline Kimmel.

Musicians Behind the Scenes

Che-Hung Chen Viola



Seth Jacobson

Where were you born?

I was born in Taipei, Taiwan.

What piece of music could you play over and over again?

Brahms's Two Songs for Voice, Viola, and Piano, Op. 91.

What is your most treasured possession?

My Shohei Ohtani and Yoshinobu Yamamoto LA Dodgers jerseys gifted by our stagehand Chip O'Shea in celebration of my United States citizenship.

What's your favorite food?

Mediterranean.

Tell us about your instrument.

My main instrument is a viola made by Carlo Antonio Testore in Milan, Italy, in 1756, which I pair with a bow made by Canadian Michael Vann that I won as part of the Grand Prize at the 7th International Banff String Quartet Competition. I also use a 1949 Genuzio Carletti viola and a bow by Frenchman Jean-Jacques Millant. Both were acquired by my parents for me when I was 12 years old.

What piece of music never fails to move you?

Chopin's Etude in E major, Op. 10, No. 3.

What is the most challenging piece you have ever played?

Everything is challenging on the viola.

When did you join the Orchestra?

January 15, 2001.

What's your favorite Philadelphia restaurant?

Lau Kee in Chinatown.

Do you speak any other languages?

Chinese and Taiwanese.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Re-watch the 2024 World Series.

What's on your Spotify playlist?

Edgar Meyer's Quintet for Strings and Double Bass; "Demons" by Imagine Dragons; Hilary Hahn and Natalie Zhu playing Mozart violin sonatas.

What is your favorite memory with the Orchestra?

On February 22, 2023, when the Orchestra played "The Star-Spangled Banner" for me and fellow new United States citizens at the top of our naturalization ceremony.

What is a little-known fact about you?

Google "General Tso's Chicken costume."

When Past, Present, and Future Merge

The Philadelphia Orchestra announces a bold 2025–26 season to celebrate its 125th birthday

By Paul J. Horsley

The orchestra of the 21st century gazes into the past and the future simultaneously as it draws inspiration from its foundational principles to forge a solid yet innovative path forward. As The Philadelphia Orchestra marks its 125th anniversary during the 2025–26 season, it embraces old and new as one, tapping into the peerless heritage of master composers and interpreters with an ongoing resolve to continue refreshing the repertoire with new points of view.

The Orchestra will also celebrate the intersection of its own 125th birthday with America 250—the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The season shines light on a diverse range of American composers, invites the world's best performers, engages the community in education and outreach programs, and presents milestones of the repertoire that the Orchestra helped bring to America during its 125-year history.



"The 2025–26 season of The Philadelphia Orchestra is a joyful celebration—of the Orchestra's 125 years of musical brilliance and of America's 250th birthday," said Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin. "In this year-long musical fête, we will illuminate works by Bartók, Ravel, Shostakovich, Sibelius, Stravinsky, and more—many of which The Philadelphia Orchestra introduced to America. We will honor the significant yet often overlooked voices of Amy Beach, Julius Eastman, and William Grant Still, whose contributions to American music reflect the cultural landscape of our nation. And, as always, we will create a path for the future of music with 21st-century commissions from John Adams, Wynton Marsalis, Tyshawn Sorey, Julia Wolfe, and Du Yun, and other contemporary voices. Please come celebrate with us—everyone is welcome!"

The Orchestra also brings works by American composers John Williams (Tuba Concerto, with Principal Tuba Carol Jantsch), Leonard Bernstein (*Candide* Overture, "Jeremiah" Symphony, and Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*), George Gershwin (Piano Concerto), and Kevin Puts (*Contact*, with Time for Three).

The creation of new repertoire by the most prominent composers has been central to the Orchestra's mission since its earliest days. Running like a thread through the 2025–26 season is a selection of significant pieces that The Philadelphia Orchestra introduced, and which are now acknowledged as masterworks.

Among these storied world premieres is Jennifer Higdon's Concerto for Orchestra, which was part of the Orchestra's Centennial Commissions nearly 25 years ago and which caused a minor



Pianist Yuja Wang joins Yannick and the Orchestra for the 2025 Opening Night Concert.

BBC Studios



sensation at its premiere in June 2002. “It’s a piece that this Orchestra commissioned, and which has gone on to be one of the most successful American contemporary works of the new millennium,” said Chief Programming Officer Jeremy Rothman.

Other historic past world premieres on the season include Béla Bartók’s Piano Concerto No. 3 with 2022 Van Cliburn Competition Gold Medalist Yunchan Lim and Samuel Barber’s Violin Concerto with soloist Augustin Hadelich.

Many of these commissions, often made during times of war, were from composers who had sought refuge in America from hostile regimes abroad. “We are celebrating works this Orchestra brought to America,” Rothman said, “and celebrating the composers, some of whom were in exile from their own countries when they came here.”

Among the compositions on the 2025–26 season that were presented as United States premieres are Ravel’s *Une Barque sur l’océan* (led by former Principal Guest Conductor Stéphane Denève), celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States Navy’s founding in Philadelphia; Sibelius’s Symphony No. 5 and Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*, both with Yannick; Shostakovich’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with Seong-Jin Cho; Falla’s original version of *El amor brujo* with guest conductor Rafael Payare; and Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 6 with Santtu-Matias Rouvali in his long-awaited debut.

What is striking is how fresh these works sound today. “*The Rite of Spring* still sounds as surprising and shocking and avant-garde as it did over 100 years ago,” Rothman said.

In addition, selections from William Grant Still’s tone poem *Wood Notes* are presented in a new version prepared by Principal Librarian Nicole Jordan and former Assistant Conductor Austin Chanu, as part of the Orchestra’s revival of the music of this prolific and enormously gifted Black composer.

Past and present mingle in other ways throughout the upcoming season. Just as earlier generations of Philadelphians witnessed composer-conductors such as Zoltán Kodály, Virgil Thomson, Leonard Bernstein, and Luciano Berio interpreting their own works, the 2025–26 season features Matthias Pintscher conducting his *Assonanza* with violin soloist Leila Josefowicz.

Pianist Lang Lang appears twice in the 2025–26 season: with Yannick and the Orchestra in Beethoven’s Fourth Piano Concerto and in a duo recital with violinist Hilary Hahn.



Gregor Hakenberg/Deutsche Grammophon

The new season celebrates a cornucopia of world-renowned conductors, many of whom are women, including Dalia Stasevska, Xian Zhang, Jane Glover, and Elim Chan—as well as Payare, Rouvali, and András Schiff, the latter also appearing as solo pianist in concertos by Bach and Mozart.

Some of the world's most prominent soloists will grace the stage of Marian Anderson Hall, including cellist Yo-Yo Ma; pianists Lang Lang, Marc-André Hamelin, and Hélène Grimaud; violinists Gil Shaham, Lisa Batiashvili, María Dueñas, Concertmaster David Kim, and Hilary Hahn; pipa player Wu Man; and soprano Ying Fang and mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato appearing in Mahler's magisterial Second Symphony ("Resurrection"). Pianist Emanuel Ax marks the 50th anniversary of his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1975 with performances of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3.

The film series returns with *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* with Howard Shore's peerless score performed live; *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* with masterful music by that most prolific of American nonagenarians, John Williams; and *Fantasia in Concert*, the epochal film for which The Philadelphia Orchestra provided the original soundtrack. The Orchestra After 5 series, which had a tremendous debut in the 2023–24 season, continues, with its informal one-hour concerts examining specific works ("great introductions to these pieces in a more casual environment," Rothman said).

The Spotlight Series includes recitals by pianist Víkingur Ólafsson and a joint performance by violinist Hilary Hahn and pianist Lang Lang. The annual holiday programs include Handel's *Messiah*, with Yannick conducting; The Glorious Sound of Christmas with guest conductor Enrico Lopez-Yañez; and the annual New Year's Eve Celebration led by Anthony Parnter. And the Chamber Orchestra of Europe visits Marian Anderson Hall with an all-Brahms program conducted by Yannick.

The Orchestra also presents familiar masterpieces throughout the season, including Strauss's *Alpine Symphony* with Denève; Bruckner's Symphony No. 4 with Esa-Pekka Salonen; Brahms's Third and Fourth symphonies with Yannick; Mozart's Requiem with Glover; Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 with Zhang; Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 and Mahler's Symphony No. 4, both with Stasevska; Mahler's Second and Fifth symphonies with Yannick; and Musorgsky's *Pictures from an Exhibition* with Chan.

"The Philadelphia Orchestra continues to interpret music in a way that few orchestras can match," said Rothman. "We are fortunate to have the direction and vision that Yannick brings to the mix, as we head undaunted into the future of music in America and the world."

Paul Horsley is performing arts editor for the Independent in Kansas City. Previously he was music and dance critic for the Kansas City Star and program annotator and musicologist for The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Pipa player Wu Man, shown during a rehearsal on the Orchestra's 2024 Tour of China, joins the Philadelphians for Du Yun's *Ear of the Book*.



Todd Rosenberg

2024–2025 | 125th Season
Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Friday, March 7, at 2:00
Saturday, March 8, at 8:00
Sunday, March 9, at 2:00

Osmo Vänskä Conductor
Pierre-Laurent Aimard Piano

Tilson Thomas *Agnegram*
First Philadelphia Orchestra performances

Ravel Piano Concerto for the Left Hand
Lento—Andante—Allegro—Tempo I—Allegro

Intermission

Beethoven Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55 (“Eroica”)
I. Allegro con brio
II. Marcia funebre: Adagio assai
III. Scherzo (Allegro vivace) and Trio
IV. Finale: Allegro molto—Andante—Presto

This program runs approximately one hour, 50 minutes.

The March 8 concert is sponsored by **Robert L. Pratter in memory of Gene E.K. Pratter.**

The March 9 concert is sponsored by **Vincent N. and Lila Russo.**

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit www.wrti.org to listen live or for more details.

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA/125

YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



The GRAMMY® Award-winning Orchestra celebrates
125 years in this unforgettable 2025–26 season.

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The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united. Today, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts brings the greatest performances and most impactful education and community programs to audiences in Philadelphia and beyond.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community. In addition to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers, Yannick and the Orchestra are committed to performing and recording the works of previously overlooked composers.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and around the community, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. The Kimmel Center has been the ensemble's home since

2001, and in 2024 Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides; PopUP concerts; Our City, Your Orchestra Live; the free annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concert; School Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; All-City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 14 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Conductor



Joel Larson

Conductor laureate of the Minnesota Orchestra, where he held the music directorship for 19 years, and music director of the Seoul Philharmonic from 2020 to 2023, **Osmo Vänskä** is recognized for his compelling interpretations of repertoire of all ages 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, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, with which he made his debut in 2002. Performances

of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Minnesota Orchestra in June 2022 provided a fitting culmination to his tenure as music director. Together they undertook five major European tours, as well as a 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 groundbreaking tour to South Africa in 2018 as part of worldwide celebrations of Nelson Mandela's Centenary.

In addition to these current performances, other highlights of Mr. Vänskä's 2024–25 season include conducting the Montreal, Pittsburgh, San Diego, Tokyo, and Antwerp symphonies; the Philharmonia and Gurzenich orchestras; and the Bergen Philharmonic. He also returns to his long-time partners, the Minnesota Orchestra and the Iceland and Lahti symphonies. A distinguished recording artist for the BIS label, he has recorded all of Mahler's symphonies with the Minnesota Orchestra; the Fifth Symphony received a GRAMMY nomination in 2017 for Best Orchestral Performance. He and Minnesota 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 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 the Helsinki Philharmonic. He has recorded Bernhard Henrik Crusell's three Clarinet Quartets and Kalevi Aho's Clarinet Quintet for the BIS label and is in the process of recording several duos for clarinet and violin, which he has commissioned with his wife, violinist Erin Keefe. He is a recipient of a Royal Philharmonic Society Award, the Finlandia Foundation's Arts and Letters award, and the Pro Finlandia Medal awarded by the Republic of Finland. Named *Musical America's* 2005 Conductor of the Year, he also holds honorary doctorates from the Curtis Institute of Music and the universities of Glasgow and Minnesota.

Soloist

Marco Borggreve



Pianist **Pierre-Laurent Aimard** made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in January 2001 and this season celebrates the 150th anniversary of Maurice Ravel's birth with today's performance as well as appearances with the Bern Symphony, the SWR Symphonieorchester, the Teatro alla Scala Orchestra, and at the Kissinger Sommer and Litomysyl festivals with the Czech Philharmonic. He also marks the centenary of his teacher and close friend Pierre Boulez, appearing as soloist with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, the

Ensemble Intercontemporain, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as in recital at Carnegie Hall, Vienna's Musikverein, the Auditorium National de Lyon, the Centro Nacional de Difusión Musical in Madrid, and the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden.

Additional highlights of Mr. Aimard's 2024–25 season include Péter Eötvös's *Cziffra Psodia* with the Berlin Philharmonic and the world premieres of two new works: ... *selig ist* ... for piano and electronics by Mark Andre at the Donaueschingen Festival and a work for four hands by George Benjamin, which will be premiered at Berlin's Boulez Saal alongside the composer. Mr. Aimard has had close collaborations with many leading composers including Helmut Lachenmann, Elliott Carter, Harrison Birtwistle, György Kurtág, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Marco Stroppa, and Olivier Messiaen, and given many notable premieres. He continues his associations with chamber music partners both old and new, notably pianist Tamara Stefanovich at the Leipzig Gewandhaus and Zürich's Fraumünster, and actor Mathieu Amalric at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. He also features prominently in numerous festival line-ups throughout the year including Musikfestspiel Berlin, the Prague Spring Festival, and Klavierfestival Ruhr.

In 2024 Mr. Aimard released *Schubert: Ländler*. Awarded five stars by *BBC Music Magazine*, this recording is the latest in a series of critically acclaimed collaborations with Pentatone, following his complete Bartók piano concertos with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the San Francisco Symphony (2023); Messiaen's *Visions de l'Amen* (2022) recorded with Ms. Stefanovich; Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata and "Eroica" Variations (2021); and Messiaen's magnum opus *Catalogue d'oiseaux* (2018), which garnered multiple awards including the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik, the prestigious German music critic's award. A member of the Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste, Mr. Aimard has held professorships at the Hochschule Köln and was previously an associate professor at the Collège de France, Paris. His prizes include the International Ernst von Siemens Music Prize in 2017 in recognition of a life devoted to the service of music and the Leonie Sonning Music Prize, Denmark's most prominent music award, in 2022.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1803

Beethoven

Symphony

No. 3

Music

Spohr

Violin Concerto

No. 1

Literature

Schiller

Die Braut von

Messina

Art

West

Christ Healing

the Sick

History

Louisiana

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Piano

Concerto for

the Left Hand

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discovered

Michael Tilson Thomas is widely hailed as one of the leading conductors America has ever produced. He is also an accomplished composer, and the concert today opens with his *Agnegram*. Tilson Thomas wrote the work to honor the 90th birthday of Agnes Albert, one of the most generous patrons of the San Francisco Symphony, of which he was music director at the time.

Maurice Ravel was at the height of his international fame in 1928 when he toured America, where he deepened his enthusiasm for jazz. Upon his return to France, he began composing the Piano Concerto in G major, which he interrupted to write the Piano Concerto for the Left Hand, both pieces jazz inspired.

Beethoven's Third Symphony, the monumental "Eroica," proved to be a turning point not only in the composer's career but also in the history of orchestral music. It ushered in his "heroic" middle period and broke with audience expectations of what a symphony should be. The piece initially baffled many listeners because of its length, complexity, and unusual form. Although originally inspired by the figure of Napoleon, the heroic nature of this Symphony is deeply connected to Beethoven's own personal struggles at the time as, only in his early 30s, he realized that he was losing his hearing.

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The Music

Agnegram

Michael Tilson Thomas

Born in Los Angeles, December 21, 1944

Now living in San Francisco



We all know Michael Tilson Thomas as a supreme conductor, but he also has a sizeable catalogue of compositions to his name. A couple of years before the pandemic hit, he was here with his exuberant *Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind*, in which a poem by Carl Sandburg is delivered by a soloist with backup singers plus chamber orchestra and bar band. Now we hear a shorter piece for full orchestra, *Agnegram*, just as exuberant but in a different way, which he wrote in 1998 for the San Francisco Symphony.

Based on a Name As that orchestra's music director since 1995, he had come to know not only the players but also the supporters, of whom not the least vigorous and munificent was Agnes Albert. It was for her 90th birthday that Tilson Thomas composed this seven-minute *Agnegram*, a telegram for Agnes based on the musical notes contained in her name. "A," "G," and "E" translate easily enough into music. Other letters can be found with the help of German note names and solfège. If this sounds like a strange way to come up with music, remember that composers from Johann Sebastian Bach through Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms to Alban Berg and Olivier Messiaen have gone about things the same way to send coded names and longer messages.

A Closer Look Still have doubts? Listen to how the "Agnes" notes come bounding and swirling from around the orchestra at the start of the piece. Single notes no more, they have combined themselves into music going forward strongly in 6/8 time, with the proud alternating steps of a march making room for buoyant internal activity. Tilson Thomas calls this "almost a mini-concerto for orchestra." The various sections come in to build up "a jazzy and hyper-rangy tune."

Within 20 seconds, this has come to a stop, been taken into the air by violins and woodwinds, and then whisked away as the march turns more oomphy. So it goes on. The music is all the time vividly present, but, as the march keeps shifting in character, we might feel ourselves watching a jubilant procession on film or TV, cutting from a close-up on a group right here to a distance shot of another farther off. There are comedians in the march, and monsters. Then, just when the monsters have gone by, around two and a half minutes into the piece, there comes a cadence, someone lets off a rocket (siren), and snare drum and bass drum with suspended cymbal trail off. We now, as it were, return to the studio for some commentary.

This is the middle section. If the opening was a blast, the music now is weird and funny, starting with a new march tune on oboes and bassoons in an angular rhythm. Other groups enter, but playing in their own keys, so that the harmony goes askew and opens the way for a wild clarinet solo. The spirit of Charles Ives appears, with familiar marching tunes and quotations from orchestral classics, these defamiliarized because some of their notes are not available in the Agnes Albert scale. Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* is easy to spot.

At a relatively quiet spot, the brass section makes an assertive entrance to bring the music back to the speed and meter it had at the start. The show, however, is far from over. There are more things lurking in the undergrowth as the big tune of the opening is carried around in canon, repetitions of it coming in one after another and overlapping. A burst of hammered minimalism ups the energy for the apotheosis.

—Paul Griffiths

Paul Griffiths has been writing on classical music for over half a century. A pair of novels by him, let me tell you and let me go on, will be published by New York Review Books next month.

Agnegram was composed in 1998.

These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the piece.

The score calls for piccolo, two flutes (both doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets (III doubling piccolo trumpet), three trombones, tuba, timpani, piccolo timpani, percussion (alto lion's roar, anvil, bass drum, chimes, cencerros, cowbells, crash cymbal, crotales, cymbals, flexatone, glockenspiel, hi-hat, low brake drum, ratchet, side drum, snare drum, suspended cymbal, tambourine, triangle, vibraphone, whip, wood blocks, xylophone), harp, piano (doubling celesta), and strings.

Performance time is approximately seven minutes.

The Music

Piano Concerto for the Left Hand

Maurice Ravel

Born in Ciboure, Lower Pyrenees, March 7, 1875

Died in Paris, December 28, 1937



The pianist Paul Wittgenstein (1887–1961)—brother of the philosopher Ludwig—is a kind of model for all those who struggle against obstacles. When his right arm had to be amputated as the result of a World War I injury, he railed against fate by becoming a one-armed concert pianist. And as he had the financial resources to do so, he spent the next three decades commissioning the leading composers of his day to write important works for him, heroically building up a small but excellent repertoire for the left hand, including

some works that have become staples and are played today even by pianists whose right arms are intact.

In 1930 Wittgenstein asked Maurice Ravel to write a concerto to add to this impressive and growing list of works. Richard Strauss had already composed two pieces for him, Prokofiev would soon complete his Fourth Piano Concerto, and later Benjamin Britten would present Wittgenstein with the brilliant (and still underplayed) *Diversions* for piano and orchestra (1940). Hans Gál and Leopold Godowsky were among the many other composers the pianist commissioned. But none of these took the virtuosic and concertante possibilities of left-hand piano with full orchestra so much to heart as did Ravel, who wrote a piece that was both a technical and a conceptual challenge. The dedicatee, however, finding Ravel's orchestration too thick and his piano part not prominent enough, took it on himself to revise the piece according to his own concerns.

A Soloist and a Composer at Odds Wittgenstein had found Prokofiev's 1931 Fourth Concerto "incomprehensible." But his battle with Ravel over the Concerto for the Left Hand, composed the year before, was just as thorny. The composer's friend Marguerite Long was present when Wittgenstein first played the piece at a private gathering in Vienna. "During the performance I followed the score of the Concerto," she later wrote, "and I could read our host's enterprising faults on Ravel's face, which became increasingly somber. As soon as the performance was over ... Ravel walked slowly toward Wittgenstein and said to him, 'But that's not it at all!'" Ravel had been alarmed to hear that Wittgenstein had altered the score to make the piano part more prominent. When the composer later insisted that he play the work exactly as it had been written, the uncomprehending pianist wrote to him, "That is completely out of the question! No self-respecting artist could accept such a condition. All pianists make modifications, large

or small, in each concerto we play. ... You write indignantly and ironically that I want to be 'put in the spotlight.' But, dear Maître ... that is precisely the reason I asked you to write a concerto! Indeed I do wish to be put in the spotlight. I therefore have the right to request the necessary modifications for this objective to be attained." Nevertheless, the two worked out their differences, and the work was given its public premiere in Paris in January 1933, with the composer on the podium.

Ravel composed the dark-hued D-major Concerto for the Left Hand almost simultaneously with the bright Concerto in G (for two hands), and the two pieces are indeed like night and day. "The Concerto for the Left Hand, in one movement, is very different [from the other]," the composer said in a 1931 interview. "In a work of this kind it is essential to give the impression of a texture no thinner than that of a part written for both hands. For the same reason I resorted to a style that is much nearer to that of the more solemn kind of concerto." He later wrote that it was the very limitations that had served as his inspiration.

A Closer Look The composer's own description of working within these strictures is elucidating:

A severe limitation of this sort poses a rather arduous problem for the composer. The attempts at resolving this problem, moreover, are extremely rare, and the best known among them are the Six Etudes for the Left Hand by Saint-Saëns. Because of their brevity and sectionalization, they avoid the most formidable aspect of the problem, which is to maintain interest in a work of extended scope while utilizing such limited means.

The fear of difficulty, however, is never as keen as the pleasure of contending with it, and, if possible, of overcoming it. That is why I acceded to Wittgenstein's request. ... I carried out my task with enthusiasm, and it was completed in a year, which represents a minimum delay for me. In contrast to the Piano Concerto in G major, first performed last year by Marguerite Long, which calls for a reduced orchestra, the Concerto for the Left Hand utilizes a full orchestral complement.

The work is divided into two parts that are played without pause. It begins with a slow introduction (*Lento*), which stands in contrast to the powerful entrance of Theme I; this theme will later be offset by a second idea (*Più lento*), marked *espressivo*, which is treated pianistically as though written for two hands, with an accompaniment-figure weaving about the melodic line. The second part is a scherzo (*Allegro*) based upon two rhythmic themes. [The first of these is marked by the descending parallel staccato chords in the piano.—Ed.] A new element suddenly appears in the middle, a sort of ostinato figure extending over several measures which are indefinitely repeated but constantly varied in their underlying harmony, and over which innumerable rhythmic patterns are introduced which become increasingly compact. This pulsation increases in intensity and frequency, and following a return of the scherzo, it leads to an expanded reprise of the initial theme

of the work and finally to a long cadenza, in which the theme of the introduction and the various elements noted in the beginning of the Concerto contend with one another until they are brusquely interrupted by a brutal conclusion.

The Concerto is indeed a work in which, as one writer has said, “a sense of the pianist in peril adds to the overall impact.” The difficulties of this piece are nerve-racking for both performer and audience; this tension is of course intentional. Even the brief jazz twists are wry and frightening rather than playful and fun, as they are in the G-major Concerto. And hints of an even darker world are to be found in allusions to the “Dies irae” chant and perhaps Liszt’s somber *Totentanz*.

—Paul J. Horsley

Paul J. Horsley is performing arts editor for the Independent in Kansas City. Previously he was program annotator and musicologist for The Philadelphia Orchestra and music and dance critic for the Kansas City Star.

Ravel composed his Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in 1930.

The French pianist Robert Casadesus was the soloist in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Left-Hand Concerto, in January 1947, with Eugene Ormandy on the podium. Most recently on subscription Alexandre Tharaud performed the work with Yannick Nézet-Séguin in April 2016.

The Philadelphia Orchestra, Casadesus, and Ormandy recorded the piece twice, in 1947 and 1960 for CBS.

Ravel’s score calls for solo piano, three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle, wood block), harp, and strings.

The Concerto runs approximately 20 minutes in performance.

The Music

Symphony No. 3 (“Eroica”)

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born in Bonn, probably December 16, 1770

Died in Vienna, March 26, 1827



“In his own opinion it is the greatest work that he has yet written. Beethoven played it for me recently, and I believe that heaven and earth will tremble when it is performed.” Beethoven’s pupil Ferdinand Ries wrote this prescient statement in a letter to the publisher Nikolaus Simrock dated October 22, 1803. Ries also mentioned that his teacher was planning to name the new symphony “Bonaparte” in homage to Napoleon. As Beethoven scholar Lewis Lockwood has noted, “The story of Beethoven’s original

plan to dedicate the symphony to Napoleon, or name it for him, and his angry decision to tear up this tribute on hearing of Napoleon’s coronation as Emperor, is not a myth.” When Ries brought the news of Bonaparte’s coronation to Beethoven, his teacher cried out in fury, “Is he then, too, nothing more than an ordinary man! Now he will trample on all the rights of man and indulge only his ambition. He will exalt himself above all others and become a tyrant!” Disillusioned, Beethoven changed the title of his work from “Bonaparte” to *Sinfonia Eroica composta per festeggiare il sovvenire di un grand Uomo* (Heroic Symphony composed to celebrate the memory of a great man).

Quite apart from Beethoven’s changing opinion of Napoleon, the story of the Symphony’s creation provides insight into the composer’s tenacious and economical creative process. During the winter of 1801, he composed a contredanse for use in Viennese ballrooms. Obviously pleased by this little piece, he reused it in his ballet, *The Creatures of Prometheus*, which premiered in March 1801. In late 1802 Beethoven came back to the contredanse melody, making it the basis of his Fifteen Variations and Fugue for piano, Op. 35, now known as the “Eroica” Variations. Finally, he used the theme and part of the piano variations in the variations that comprise the finale of the “Eroica” Symphony, Op. 55. This unpretentious dance tune thus provided the point of departure for one of the grandest symphonies ever written.

By the winter of 1803 Beethoven was working obsessively on the new symphony, which grew ever longer and denser. After the premiere the following year, the Viennese audience was stunned by the score’s power, length, and difficulty. By the time of its publication in 1806, however, it was celebrated as one of Beethoven’s finest achievements.

A Closer Look The “Eroica” Symphony begins (**Allegro con brio**) with two explosive and defiant chords. These two root-position triads in the main key of E-flat major contain within their structure the basis for the entire Symphony’s thematic material. The forward trajectory set in motion by these powerful opening salvos is sustained throughout the rest of this movement. All of the subsidiary themes are either obviously or subtly related to the first theme. This first movement represents a vast expansion of sonata form; its development section is remarkably protracted, complex, and highly dramatic. Even the movement’s coda—far from being a perfunctory closing “tail”—is so extended as to function as a second developmental section.

The Symphony’s second movement, the Marcia funebre (**Adagio assai**), caused the French composer Hector Berlioz to observe, “I know of no other example in music of a style wherein grief is so able to sustain itself consistently in forms of such purity and nobility of expression.” Beethoven cast this funeral march in a broad three-part formal design in which the opening theme returns as a refrain, similar to a rondo. The final passage of the second movement is harrowing in its pathos, as Berlioz stated, “When these shreds of lugubrious melody are bare, alone, broken, and have passed one by one to the tonic, the wind instruments cry out as if it was the last farewell of the warriors to their companions in arms.”

While the third movement Scherzo (**Allegro vivace**) begins quietly, the music builds volume inexorably as it hurtles forward. The accompanying Trio, by contrast, with its prominently featured three horns, is stately and heroic. The last movement (**Allegro molto**) features the theme and variations mentioned above. The finale begins with a precipitous onrush of energy. Immediately afterward, pizzicato strings quietly play the bass line of the main theme—itsself obviously related to the first movement’s opening theme. From this point onward, a series of ingenious variations appear in succession until an exuberant coda brings the “Eroica” to an exultant close.

In 1817, with all but the Ninth composed, Beethoven was asked by a friend to name the favorite among his eight symphonies. With “great good humor,” he replied, “Eh! Eh! The ‘Eroica.’”

—Byron Adams

Byron Adams is emeritus distinguished professor of musicology at the University of California, Riverside. Both composer and musicologist, he specializes in French and British music of the 19th and 20th centuries. Among his publications are two edited volumes, Edward Elgar and His World (2007) and Vaughan Williams and His World (2023), which he co-edited with Daniel M. Grimley.

Beethoven composed his Symphony No. 3 from 1802 to 1803.

Fritz Scheel conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the “Eroica,” in January 1903. Its most recent appearance on a subscription series was in April 2023, with Osmo Vänska conducting. The work has become one of the most frequently performed pieces by the Orchestra, and it was chosen to be performed in memory of both Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy. Among the distinguished conductors who have led the Symphony with the Philadelphians are Leopold Stokowski, Willem Mengelberg, Clemens Krauss, Eugene Ormandy, Otto Klemperer, Fritz Reiner, Bruno Walter, Georg Solti, Daniel Barenboim, Claudio Abbado, Klaus Tennstedt, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Christoph Eschenbach, Simon Rattle, Herbert Blomstedt, Christoph von Dohnányi, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

The Orchestra has recorded the “Eroica” three times: in 1961 with Ormandy for CBS, in 1980 with Ormandy for RCA, and in 1987 with Muti for EMI. A live performance from 2005 with Eschenbach is also currently available as a digital download.

The work is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, three horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 50 minutes.

Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Cadence: The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

Cadenza: A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

Canon: A device whereby an extended melody, stated in one part, is imitated strictly and in its entirety in one or more other parts

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Chromatic: Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Concertante: A work featuring one or more solo instruments

Contredanse: The most popular French dance of the 18th century, in which couples face each other in two lines or a square, similar to a quadrille

Dies irae: Literally, day of wrath. A medieval Latin hymn on the Day of Judgement sung in Requiem Masses.

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

Etude: A study, especially one affording practice in some particular technical difficulty

Fugue: A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

Harmonic: Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Minimalism: A style of composition characterized by an intentionally simplified rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic vocabulary

Minuet: A dance in triple time commonly used up to the beginning of the 19th century as the lightest movement of a symphony

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output

Ostinato: A steady bass accompaniment, repeated over and over

Pizzicato: Plucked

Quadrille: Late 18th- and 19th-century dance for four couples in square formation

Rondo: A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

Scale: The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

Solfège: A system of teaching music that uses syllables instead of letter names to identify notes on a scale

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

Staccato: Detached, with each note separated from the next and quickly released

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

Triad: A three-tone chord composed of a given tone (the "root") with its third and fifth in ascending order in the scale

Trio: A division set between the first section of a minuet or scherzo and its repetition, and contrasting with it by a more tranquil movement and style

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Con brio: Vigorously, with fire

Espressivo: With expression, with feeling

Lento: Slow

Presto: Very fast

Vivace: Lively

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Assai: Much

Molto: Very

Più: More

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If you would like more information about how to make a planned gift to the Orchestra, please contact Helen Radenkovic, managing director of philanthropic engagement, at 215.893.1819 or hradenkovic@philorch.org.

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Zoe King, Data Analyst

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Indonesia Young, Talent Acquisition
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Philadelphia, PA 19102
Tickets: 215.893.1999

Concert dates
(two hours before concert time):
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