



PHILADELPHIA / ORCHESTRA

Yannick Nézet Séguin · Music & Artistic Director

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MARCH 2025

Contents

March 2025



Page 4

From the Interim President and CEO

Page 10

Marian Anderson Hall

Page 12

Musicians Behind the Scenes

Page 14

When Past, Present, and Future Merge

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

Page 19

The Program

On the Cover:

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 Hohenberg/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*.



David Ross/Orchestra

2024–2025

Marian Anderson Hall

Sunday, March 23, at 7:00

Lang Lang Piano

Fauré Pavane, Op. 50

Schumann *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16

- I. Äusserst bewegt
- II. Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch
- III. Sehr aufgeregt
- IV. Sehr langsam
- V. Sehr lebhaft
- VI. Sehr langsam
- VII. Sehr rasch
- VIII. Schnell und spielend

Intermission

Chopin Mazurka in F minor, Op. 7, No. 3

Mazurka in B-flat major, Op. 17, No. 1

Mazurka in E minor, Op. 17, No. 2

Mazurka in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4

Mazurka in C major, Op. 24, No. 2

Mazurka in B-flat minor, Op. 24, No. 4

Mazurka in D-flat major, Op. 30, No. 3

Mazurka in C-sharp minor, Op. 30, No. 4

Mazurka in C major, Op. 33, No. 3

Mazurka in B minor, Op. 33, No. 4

Mazurka in D major, Op. 33, No. 2

Mazurka in F-sharp minor, Op. 59, No. 3

Chopin Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Op. 44

This program runs approximately two hours.

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA/125

YANNICK NÉZET-SÉGUIN
MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



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125 years in this unforgettable 2025–26 season.

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Soloist



Lang Lang is a leading figure in classical music today. As a pianist, educator, and philanthropist, he has become one of the world's more influential and committed ambassadors for the arts in the 21st century. Equally happy playing for billions of viewers at the 2008 Olympic Opening Ceremony in Beijing, the 2020 Dubai EXPO Opening Ceremony, the 2024 reopening of Notre Dame in Paris, or for just a few hundred children in public schools, he is a master of communicating through music. He has performed sold-out concerts all over

the world; formed ongoing collaborations with conductors including Simon Rattle, Gustavo Dudamel, Daniel Barenboim, and Christoph Eschenbach; and played with all the world's top orchestras. He is known for thinking outside the box and frequently steps into different musical worlds. His performances at the GRAMMY Awards with Metallica, Pharrell Williams, and jazz legend Herbie Hancock were watched by millions of viewers.

Lang Lang's passion for innovation has led him to partnerships beyond classical music. He has worked with global pop icons such as Ed Sheeran, John Legend, Rose from BLACKPINK, and Jay Chou, bringing classical music to new and diverse audiences. He has also collaborated with Disney. For the past decade he has contributed to musical education worldwide. In 2008 he founded the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, aimed at cultivating tomorrow's top pianists, championing music education at the forefront of technology, and building young audiences. In 2013 he was designated by the secretary general of the United Nations as a "Messenger of Peace" focusing on global education.

Lang Lang began playing the piano at age three and gave his first public recital before he was five. He entered Beijing's Central Music Conservatory at nine and won First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians at 13. He subsequently came to Philadelphia to study with Gary Graffman at the Curtis Institute of Music. He was 17 when his big break came, substituting for André Watts at the Gala of the Century, playing Tchaikovsky's First Concerto with the Chicago Symphony; he became an overnight sensation. He was presented with the 2010 Crystal Award in Davos and was picked as one of the 250 Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum. He is the recipient of honorary doctorates from the Royal College of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and New York University. In 2011 he was honored with the highest prize awarded by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China. Lang Lang is an exclusive recording artist of Universal Music Group and Deutsche Grammophon. For further information visit www.langlang.com and www.langlangfoundation.org.

The Music

Pavane

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Organist, pianist, and composer Gabriel Fauré approached music in a very personal way, imagining an intimate conversation between creator and muse. Even his popular Requiem turned away from the earlier judgement-threatening Requiems to assure comfort and solace at death's hour. His piano works were equally refined, with languid melodies over Impressionistic harmonic palettes. He originally composed the Pavane for chamber orchestra and optional chorus in 1887, subsequently arranging a version for solo piano, which he recorded with player piano. Deriving its rhythm from the 16th-century traditional dance, the Pavane captures the Belle Époque elegance of pre-World War I Europe.

Kreisleriana

Robert Schumann (1810–56)

Robert Schumann composed the piano cycle *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, over four days in 1838 as an homage to an E.T.A. Hoffmann literary character, the eccentric composer Johannes Kreisler, whom Schumann saw as the “very essence of the new Romantic spirit in art.” Comprised of eight keyboard vignettes, the cycle expresses Schumann’s dual musical personalities of the exuberant Florestan and introspective Eusebius. The short pieces alternate between agitated or very fast and intimate or very slow, ending with a *schnell und spielend* (fast and playful) movement calling for a wide range of dynamic effects and pianistic touches. Schumann expressed great enthusiasm for *Kreisleriana*, writing to Clara Wieck (his future wife), “My music seems to me, just now so extraordinarily intricate with all its simplicity,” and that the work “speaks so entirely from the heart.”

12 Waltzes/Polonaise

Frédéric Chopin (1810–49)

In 1830, age 20, Frédéric Chopin left his native Poland and eventually settled in Paris. Although he never returned to the country of his birth, Poland was so ingrained in his identity that the urn of Polish soil Chopin took with him on his departure was buried with him when he died. Poland never left Chopin, but rather informed his musical writing, with three Polish folk dances particularly influencing his keyboard repertory: the lively oberek, the more reflective kujawiak, and the animated mazurka.

The triple-meter mazurka originated in the 17th century in the province of Mazovia near Warsaw and evolved, along with its musical cousin, the polonaise, from an informal folk idiom with singing to an instrumental dance popular in European aristocratic circles. Musical traits include accents on the second or third beats and unusual scales accompanied by steady chords resembling a bowed stringed instrument. Chopin’s more than 50 mazurkas for piano not only kept his homeland alive, but his unique combination of song, dance, and storytelling were also a way of expressing himself. G.C. Ashton

Jonson wrote that in Chopin's hands "the mazurka ceased to be an actual dance tune, and became a tone poem, a mirror of moods, an epitome of human emotions, joy and sadness, love and hate, tenderness and defiance, coquetry and passion."

The Mazurka in F minor, Op. 7, No. 3, begins with a melancholy introduction before launching into a Slavic melody contrasted by guitar-like arpeggios. A middle section, marked by a joyful dialogue, leads to passages in which the right hand carries the mazurka rhythm and the left hand the melody.

The Op. 17 mazurkas, published in 1834, demonstrate Chopin's own brilliance as a pianist. The opening one in B-flat major begins with a bright and triumphant theme. A middle section of mixed meters between the right and left hands conveys humor, suggesting instrumental musicians playing together informally. The Mazurka in E minor, No. 2, moves effortlessly between a nostalgic kujawiak waltz and quicker mazurka rhythms. The closing Mazurka in A minor, No. 4, builds a poignant melody from a three-note cell, varied with a fluid, jazz-like right hand against steady chords. A chipper middle section in A major recalls Chopin's happy childhood summers in the Polish village of Szafarnia.

The mid-1830s Op. 24 set shows great use of the oberek and kujawiak. The Mazurka in C major, No. 2, evokes a shepherd's flute in the right hand over steady chords evoking a bowed stringed instrument. The closing Mazurka in B-flat minor, No. 4, is full of musical interplay, with cascading chromatic counterpoint as two voices struggle to come together and are propelled apart.

The Mazurka in D-flat major, Op. 30, No. 3, from 1837, begins with a single note before launching into a conversation of contrasting dynamics and shifts from major to minor. The Mazurka in C-sharp minor, No. 4 of the same set, reaches into the highest register of the piano with right-hand appoggiaturas and guitar-like accompaniment in the left hand.

The four mazurkas of Op. 33, published in 1838, differ in spirit from one another, with the Mazurka in C major, No. 3, marked with the unusual notation of *semplce*. The middle section is striking in its elegant thirds and sixths. This Mazurka was later transcribed as a lullaby by the great dramatic mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, a good friend of Chopin's. The Mazurka in B minor, No. 4, is a multicharacter ballade in rondo form with the theme repeated eight times. One episode is for left hand only, while a section in B major presents one of the composer's most expressive melodies. The Mazurka in D major, No. 2, is one of the most difficult pianistically, with contrasting voices in the right hand and a second beat upbow in the left hand. This Mazurka captures both a rustic polka spirit and the charm of salon dancing.

Chopin's Op. 59 set from 1845 reflects the composer's lifelong study of Bach and has been described as Chopin "at the summit of his powers." The Mazurka in F-sharp minor, No. 3, mixes major and minor passages with triplets conveying a crisp oberek feeling. Swirling eighth notes lead to a majestic, yet quiet, close.

Like the mazurka, Chopin's more than 20 polonaises for keyboard helped make the

dance a national symbol of Poland. The Polonaise in F-sharp minor, Op. 44, is the first of his three “grand polonaises” in which he departs from the conventional form to create a free-fantasy “dance poem.” With its distinctive rhythm in the left hand, this Polonaise is full of patriotic spirit and rich keyboard orchestral effects. A mazurka in the central section reminds the audience of the power of Poland’s musical soul.

—Nancy Plum

Nancy Plum has been a program annotator for 30 years and has written notes for The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Kimmel Center, Carnegie Hall, and Philadelphia Singers, among others. She has been a music critic in Princeton for more than 35 years and is a member of the Philadelphia Chorale. She wrote a history of the U.S. Air Force Singing Sergeants and is completing a book about an incident in the Cuban underground in the 1950s.

Musical Terms

Appoggiatura: An embellishing note or tone performed before a note of the melody and falling on the beat

Arpeggio: A broken chord (with notes played in succession instead of together)

Ballade: A term applied to an instrumental (normally piano) piece in a narrative style

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

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

Counterpoint: The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

Dynamics: The varying and contrasting degrees of loudness

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

Mazurka: A lively Polish dance in triple meter

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

Pavane: A court dance of the early 16th century, probably of Spanish origin

Polka: A lively 19th century couple dance of Bohemian origin in fast duple time

Polonaise: A Polish national dance in moderate triple meter

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

Tone poem: A type of 19th-century symphonic piece in one movement, which is based upon an extramusical idea, either poetic or descriptive

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

Triplet: A group of three equal notes performed in the time of two

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Aufgeregt: Excited, energetic

Bewegt: Animated, with motion

Innig: Heartfelt, sincere, fervent

Langsam: Slow

Lebhaft: Animated, lively

Rasch: Quickly, lively

Schnell: Fast

Semplice: Simply

Spielend: Easily, effortlessly

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Äusserst: Extremely

Nicht zu: Not too

Sehr: Very

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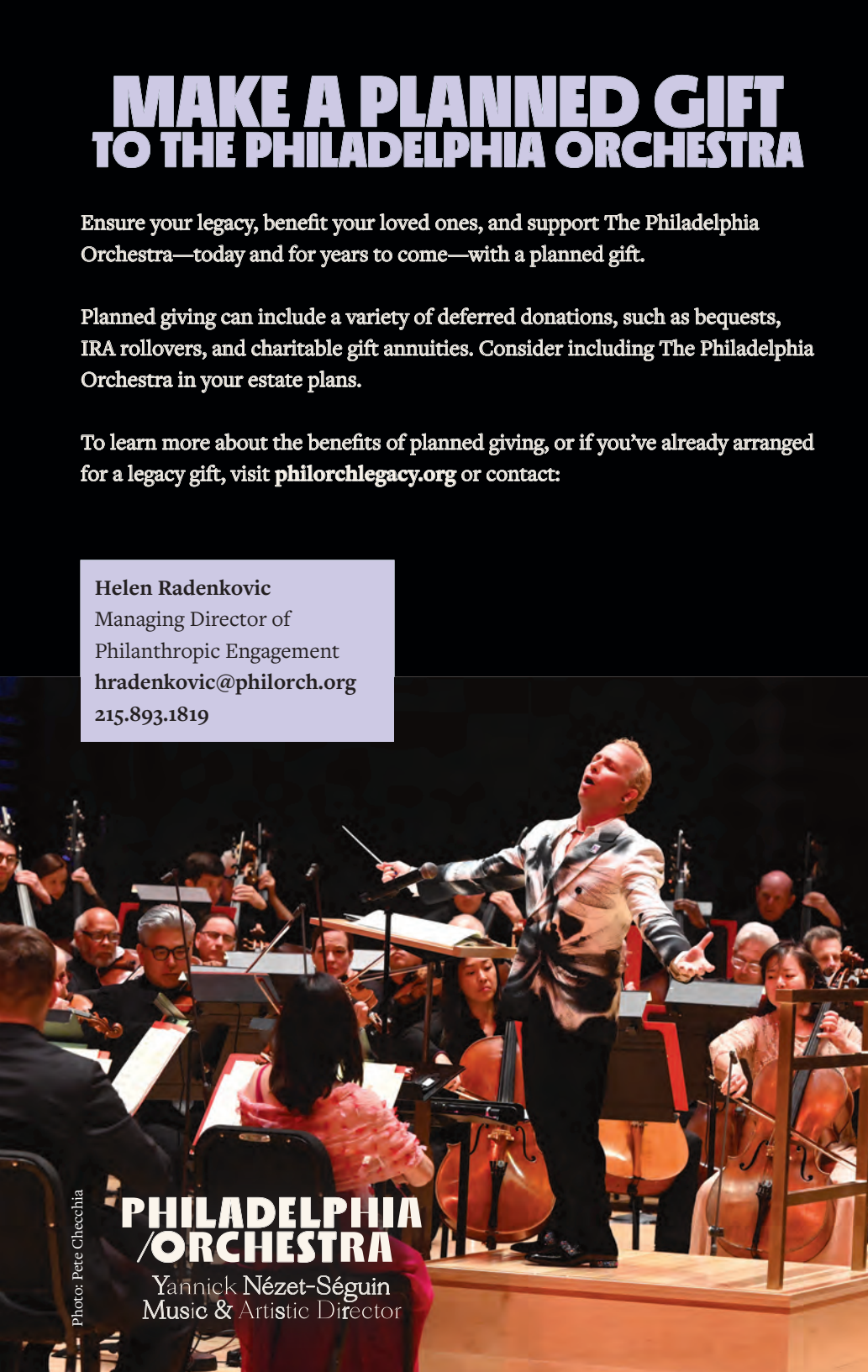
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