

PLAYBILL*

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 Iuliette 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 Ionathan Beiler Hirono Oka

Richard Amoroso
Robert and Lynne Pollack
Chair
Yayoi Numazawa
Jason DePue*
Larry A. Grika Chair
Jennifer Haas
Miyo 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 Davvd 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, Ir., Chair Kirsten Johnson, Associate Principal Kerri Ryan, Assistant Principal **Burchard Tang** Renard Edwards Anna Marie Ahn Petersen Piasecki Family Chair David Nicastro 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 Grav

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

Rassoons

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

Horns

Iennifer Montone. Principal Grav Charitable Trust Chair Jeffrey Lang, Associate Principal Hannah L. and I. 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, Ir., Manager Francis "Chip" O'Shea III Aaron Wilson

*On leave

Music and Artistic Director



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 evergrowing and diverse group of today's composers and by performing the music of underappreciated 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



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



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





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.

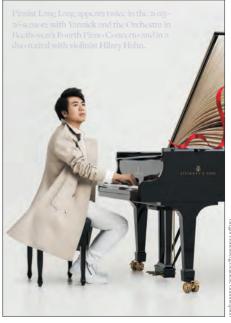
Many of these commissions, often made during times of war, were from composers who had sought refuge in America from hostile regimes abroad. "We are celebrating works this Orchestra brought to America," Rothman said, "and celebrating the composers, some of whom were in exile from their own countries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



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 Vikingur 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 Parnther. 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.

2024–2025 | 125th Season Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Saturday, March 22, at 8:00 Sunday, March 23, at 2:00

Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider Conductor and Violin

Beethoven Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61

I. Allegro ma non troppo

II. Larghetto-

III. Rondo: Allegro

Intermission

Dvořák Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Op. 70

I. Allegro maestoso

II. Poco adagio

III. Scherzo: Vivace

IV. Finale: Allegro

This program runs approximately one hour, 55 minutes.

These concerts are part of the Peter A. Benoliel Violin Concerts, established in his honor by **Dr. Richard M. Klein.**

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



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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, around the community, 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; sideby-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 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 and Soloist



Violinist and conductor **Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider** made his Philadelphia Orchestra soloist debut in 2000 and makes his conducting debut with these performances. He is in his fifth season as music director of the Orchestre National de Lyon, a partnership that has been extended until the 2026–27 season. He regularly guest conducts the world's leading orchestras, with recent and upcoming performances including the New York and Oslo philharmonics and the Chicago and Bamberg symphonies. Following a successful

debut conducting Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at the Dresden Semperoper, he was immediately re-invited to conduct Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. He also recently made debuts with the Royal Danish Opera and the Zurich Opera House with *The Magic Flute*, a work he will also conduct at the Bavarian State Opera.

Also a virtuoso violinist, Mr. Szeps-Znaider maintains a busy calendar of concerto and recital engagements. This season he returns to the London Philharmonic and Leipzig's Gewandhaus, where he takes part in a Shostakovich Festival, performing works alongside pianist Daniil Trifonov and cellist Gautier Capuçon on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the composer's death. With the London Symphony he has recorded the complete Mozart violin concertos, leading from the violin. Mr. Szeps-Znaider's extensive discography also includes the Nielsen Concerto with Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic and award-winning recordings of the Brahms and Korngold concertos with Valery Gergiev and the Vienna Philharmonic. He has also recorded the complete works of Brahms for violin and piano with Yefim Bronfman.

Mr. Szeps-Znaider is passionate about supporting the next generation of musical talent, and he is president of the Nielsen Competition, which takes place every three years in Odense, Denmark. He plays the "Kreisler" Guarnerius "del Gesù" 1741 on extended loan to him by the Royal Danish Theatre through the generosity of the Velux Foundation, the Villum Foundation, and the Knud Højgaard Foundation.

Peter A. Benoliel Violin Concerts

A passionate violinist from early childhood, Peter A. Benoliel joined the Philadelphia Orchestra Board of Directors in 1980 and served as chair from 1995 to 2000. His huge contributions to the Orchestra as a leader and philanthropist are paralleled only by his deep love for the violinists who help bring the famous Philadelphia Sound to the world.

PHILADELPHIA/ORCHESTRA

Yannick Nézet-Séguin · Music & Artistic Director

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Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1806 Beethoven Violin Concerto

Music
Weber
Symphony No. 1
Literature
Armin and
Brentano
Des Knaben
Wunderhorn

Art
Constable
Windermere
History

History
Formal
dissolution of
the Holy Roman
Empire

1884 Dvořák Symphony No. 7 Music
Debussy
L'Enfant prodigue
Literature

Ibsen *The Wild Duck*

Art Seurat Une Baignade, Asnières History

First subway, in London Beethoven's lone Violin Concerto was an unusually substantive concerto for its time, which led to its being largely ignored for many decades. This is a signal work from the composer's "heroic" period, alongside the "Eroica" and Fifth symphonies. And as with those transformative and challenging masterpieces, the Violin Concerto breaks with contemporaneous expectations for entertainment and flashy virtuosity. Beethoven aimed for something more, which is why the piece is beloved while nearly every other violin concerto of his time is forgotten.

In 1884 Antonín Dvořák heard a performance of Johannes Brahms's most recent symphony, the brooding Third in F major, which inspired him to write a new one of his own, the Seventh in D minor. This impassioned work, which partly reflects the political struggles of his Czech countrymen, has touched audiences since its London premiere in 1885, conducted by the composer.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM's *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 4 PM.

The Music

Violin Concerto

Ludwig van Beethoven Born in Bonn, probably December 16, 1770 Died in Vienna, March 26, 1827



As he entered his 30s at the turn of the 19th century, Beethoven's personal life dramatically changed, and so, too, did his music. In letters dating from the fall of 1801 he revealed for the first time the secret of his looming deafness. Despite ever growing professional successes, he lamented how "that jealous demon, my wretched health, has put a nasty spoke in my wheel; and it amounts to this, that for the past three years my hearing has become weaker and weaker."

The following spring Beethoven moved to the Vienna suburb of Heiligenstadt, where he penned the remarkable "Heiligenstadt Testament," an unsent letter to his brothers in which he poured out his heart. After describing various social, personal, and professional consequences of his condition, such as that he could no longer hear the sounds of nature, he confessed: "Such incidents brought me almost to despair; a little more and I would have ended my life. Only my art held me back. It seemed to me impossible to leave the world until I had produced all that I felt was within me."

New Paths The challenges Beethoven faced at this crucial juncture in his life can be sensed in many of the compositions he wrote over the next decade, usually labeled as his "heroic" period. He talked of writing in a "completely new manner" and of a "new path," producing music that proved increasingly challenging both for performers and audiences. The Third Symphony, the monumental "Eroica," is a key work in this respect, but his first two symphonies (a genre he came to relatively late) had already been greeted with some skepticism. "Bizarre"— the word is the same in German—crops up more and more often in reviews.

Beethoven initially played it somewhat safer with the genre of the concerto, partly because, as for his model Mozart before him, they were meant for his own use as a virtuoso soloist. While he held off writing a symphony, concertos came early and his involvement extends beyond the canonic five piano concertos; the "Triple" Concerto for piano, violin, and cello; and the Violin Concerto. During his student years in his native Bonn, and then after moving to Vienna at age 21, Beethoven experimented with concertos for piano, for violin, and even one for oboe, but these early works are either incomplete or lost. Around 1800 he composed two attractive Romances for violin and orchestra, a sort of preview of coming attractions, specifically of the second movement

of the Concerto we hear today. Beethoven played the violin, but he was far from the virtuoso that Mozart had been with the instrument

A Concerto for a Friend Beethoven's Violin Concerto challenged the expectations of his contemporaries, who were more accustomed to flashy entertainment in such pieces than to works of sustained substance. It took several decades for the piece to enter the standard repertoire. Beethoven composed it quickly in 1806 for Franz Clement, an important figure in Vienna's musical scene whom he had long admired. Clement was the first violinist at the Theater an der Wien, a position that gave him the opportunity to present an annual concert for his own benefit. On April 7, 1805, he played his own Violin Concerto in D on a program that also included the public premiere of the "Eroica." It was for Clement's concert the next year, given on December 23, that Beethoven wrote his Violin Concerto, which he allegedly completed just before the premiere. The concert opened with an overture by Etienne Méhul followed by the new Concerto. After works by Handel, Mozart, and Cherubini, Clement improvised and then performed a "Sonata on one string played with the violin upside down" before a concluding chorus by Handel. It was thus hardly an event of sustained high-mindedness.

Beethoven's Concerto was to some extent influenced by Clement's own from the previous year, the work that had been paired with the "Eroica." As with that profoundly challenging symphony, some critics worried that the composer was pursuing the wrong path. The *Wiener Theater-Zeitung* noted that the Concerto was "received with exceptional applause due to its originality and abundance of beautiful passages" and commended Clement's performance but followed with a word of caution: "It is feared that if Beethhofen [sic] continues to follow his present course, it will go ill both with him and the public. The music could soon fail to please anyone not completely familiar with the rules and difficulties of the art. ... [Listeners risk being] oppressed by a multitude of interconnected and overabundant ideas and a continuous tumult of the combined instruments ... [and may] leave the concert with only an unpleasant feeling of exhaustion."

A Closer Look Beethoven establishes an unusually meditative mood at the outset of the Concerto with an expansive orchestral introduction featuring one of his most lyrical themes (Allegro ma non troppo)—indeed, a lovely lyricism and soaring melodies in the highest registers characterize much of the movement. The following Larghetto opens with a hymn-like theme for muted strings before horns and clarinet take over and the violin provides decorative commentary. This movement, in a modified variation form, leads without pause to the lively and dancelike Rondo finale that more overtly showcases virtuosic playing for the soloist.

Beethoven was asked a couple of years later to transform the work into a piano concerto, which was then published in London. While the orchestral parts are the same, the violin solo is arranged for piano. It is not entirely clear how much of this version was actually Beethoven's own work; not many musicians today find the result persuasive, which means it is rarely performed, although a few recordings are available. The arrangement

is of some interest, however, because while Beethoven did not write any cadenzas for the Violin Concerto, he did for the piano arrangement. Neither version was often performed during Beethoven's lifetime, nor even in the 1830s, as the work was widely viewed as "ungrateful" and "unplayable." The great violinist Joseph Joachim is credited for championing the Concerto beginning in 1844, when, as a 12-year-old virtuoso, he played it with Felix Mendelssohn conducting the London Philharmonic Society. In the absence of any cadenzas by Beethoven, Joachim's were widely played for many years until displaced by Fritz Kreisler's, which we hear today.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and has been the program annotator for The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2000. He is the author of several books on Schubert and Liszt, and the co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.

Beethoven composed the Violin Concerto in 1806.

Conductor Fritz Scheel and violinist Fritz Kreisler collaborated on the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, in January 1902. The most recent subscription performances were in November 2016, with Gil Shaham and conductor Susanna Mälkki. In between, most of the great violinist have played the piece with the Orchestra, including Eugène Ysaÿe, Joseph Szigeti, Jascha Heifetz, Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern, Nathan Milstein, David Oistrakh, Itzhak Perlman, Gidon Kremer, Joshua Bell, Leonidas Kavakos, Lisa Batiashvili, and Midori.

The Orchestra has recorded the work only once, in 1950 for CBS, with soloist Zino Francescatti and Eugene Ormandy.

The Concerto is scored for an orchestra of solo violin, flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 45 minutes.

The Music

Symphony No. 7

Antonín Dvořák Born in Nelahozeves, Bohemia, September 8, 1841 Died in Prague, May 1, 1904



In a 1941 article titled "Dvořák the Craftsman," the British composer and conductor Victor Hely-Hutchinson wrote, "To begin with, Dvořák was not a miniaturist, nor an epigrammatist, but a composer in the true sense of the word: he had from the outset that sense of musical construction and development on a big scale which distinguished the great masters. ... He is a master of the terse expository style, and equally of discursive development; and he can also perorate at the end of a movement with real

oratorical power." He continued, "Among the symphonies the 'New World' is obviously the most popular, while the tragic and impassioned [Seventh] Symphony in D minor has, at any rate, until recent years been comparatively seldom performed." Hely-Hutchinson was joined in his admiration of the Seventh Symphony by the composer, conductor, and music analyst Donald Francis Tovey, who was quite impressed by this majestic score: "I have no hesitation in setting Dvořák's [Seventh] Symphony along with the C-major Symphony of Schubert and the four symphonies of Brahms, as among the greatest and purest examples of this art-form since Beethoven." He concluded, "There should be no difficulty at this time of day in recognizing its greatness."

A Connection with England It is unsurprising that two British musicians should laud Dvořák in such terms considering the exalted reputation the Czech composer enjoyed in Britain during his lifetime and thereafter. The picturesque tale of Dvořák's time in America has overshadowed his many successful visits to England: Indeed, British musicians were greatly responsible for widening Dvořák's international reputation. In 1883 the choral conductor Joseph Barnaby presented the composer's Stabat Mater to sensational acclaim in London. In the wake of this performance, Dvořák was commissioned to write large choral scores for festivals in Birmingham and Leeds. In 1884 a young Edward Elgar played in the first violin section when Dvořák conducted his Stabat Mater at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester. Elgar wrote to a friend, "I wish you could hear Dvořák's music. It is simply ravishing, so tuneful & clever & the orchestration is wonderful." The Czech composer's esteem in Britain was confirmed in 1891 when he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Cambridge University.

In response to the ecstatic reception accorded to Dvořák's Sixth Symphony at its British premiere in 1884, the Royal Philharmonic Society made him an honorary

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fellow. It also commissioned him to write a symphony to be presented in the following season. During that same year, the composer had heard a performance of his friend Johannes Brahms's new Third Symphony and was determined to meet its high symphonic standard. Dvořák began to sketch his Seventh Symphony on December 13, 1884; he later recalled that the first theme "flashed into my mind on the arrival of the festive train bringing our countrymen from Pest." As he wrote to a friend later that month, "a new symphony (for London) occupies me, and wherever I go I think of nothing but my work, which must be capable of stirring the world, and God grant me that it will!" The Seventh Symphony was completed on March 17, 1885, and Dvořák conducted the premiere in London on April 22. It was a resounding success among audience members and music critics alike.

A Closer Look Cast in the somber key of D minor, the Seventh Symphony is one of Dvořák's towering achievements. The evidence of his labor can be seen on every page: His sketches evince a constant process of evaluation and revision. As the composer's English biographer, John Clapham, noted, "His inspiration came through hard work." The Symphony itself is brilliantly scored; Hely-Hutchinson observed that as an orchestrator Dvořák possessed an "unerring sense, born of a combination of imagination and experience, of apt and arresting tone-quality.

The first movement (**Allegro maestoso**) is cast as a taut sonata form, the material of which is derived solely from the brooding opening theme. The second movement (**Poco adagio**) begins serenely with a chorale in the woodwinds, but this otherworldly music is soon interrupted by eruptions of sweeping heroic tragedy and deep emotion. The **Scherzo** (**Vivace**) is a furiant, a wild Czech dance that is characterized by constant syncopation; it is paired with a lyrical and pastoral trio in order to offer a respite from the whirling fervor of the dance. The music of the **Finale** (**Allegro**) is barely contained within a modified sonata form, dark, impassioned music hurtling forward to a coda of overwhelming tragic grandeur.

—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.

Dvořák's Seventh Symphony was composed from 1884 to 1885.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Seventh were not until February 1965, when Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt conducted the work. Its most recent appearance on subscription concerts was in November 2021 with Rafael Payare.

The Philadelphians have recorded the Symphony twice: in 1976 with Eugene Ormandy for RCA and in 1989 with Wolfgang Sawallisch for Angel/EMI.

Dvořák scored the piece for two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 40 minutes.

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Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

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

Chorale: A hymn tune of the German Protestant Church, or one similar in style. Chorale settings are vocal, instrumental, or both.

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

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

Furiant: A rapid Bohemian dance, with alternating rhythms and changing accentuation

Mute: A mechanical device used on musical instruments to muffle the tone

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.

Romance: A title for short instrumental pieces of sentimental or romantic nature, and without special form

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.).

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. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

Sonata: An instrumental composition in three or four extended movements contrasted in theme, tempo, and mood, usually for a solo instrument

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.

Syncopation: A shift of rhythmic emphasis off the beat

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 dance music. Later, a group of pieces extracted from a larger work, especially an opera or ballet.

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow Allegro: Bright, fast Larghetto: A slow tempo Maestoso: Majestic

Vivace: Lively

TEMPO MODIFIERS

(Ma) non troppo: (But) not too much

Poco: Little, a bit

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Photo: Pete Checchia

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