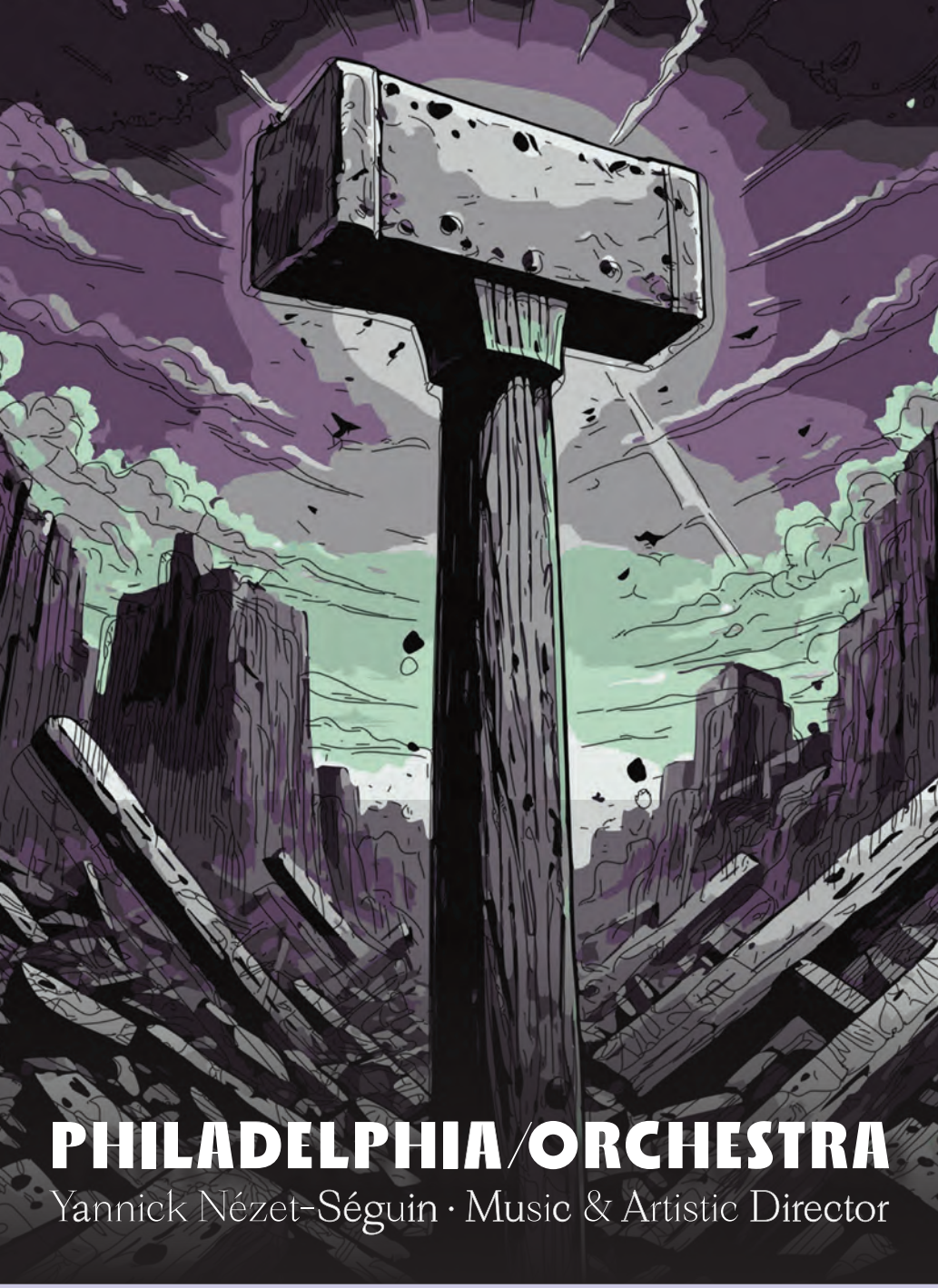

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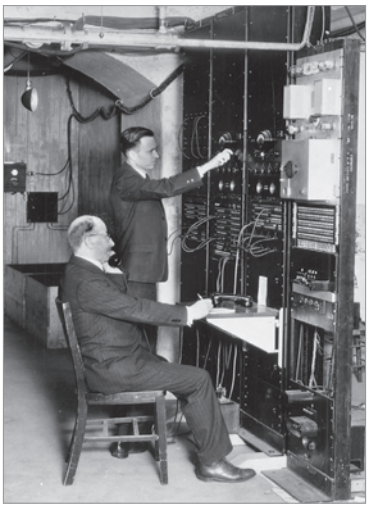

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From the Interim President and CEO

Dear Friends:

Art has always been, and will continue to be, a source of inspiration, connection, and profound resilience. And the art on our stages speaks volumes about who we are as an organization. Our core values—to be authentic, collaborative, exceptional, and inclusive—are integrated in everything we do. Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin exhibits these values every time he is on the podium. Knowing who we are gives us the inspiration and strength to move forward with our mission, vision, and values serving as our guiding light.

Art has the power to create understanding and unity, and I have been moved to see this in action recently as we welcomed thousands of children for the Jazz for Freedom program, which takes students on a vibrant journey through the history of art and jazz in the 1920s that culminated in the Harlem Renaissance. Last month, former Principal Guest Conductor Nathalie Stutzmann led the Orchestra in Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony. Written in response to the Stalin regime, this masterpiece shines as an example of the power of music to bring us together in the face of dark and difficult times. This month we celebrate the spring residency of PHILADANCO!, known for its legacy of breaking barriers and building bridges across cultural divides with predominantly African-American traditions in dance.

We are committed to programming that speaks to the many interests of Philadelphia's communities. In the coming months, our stages will be animated by artists and events that do just that, from Paul Simon to comedian Nikki Glaser, Kristin Chenoweth with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Martha Graham Cracker Cabaret, Yannick and the Orchestra in concert performances of Wagner's revolutionary opera *Tristan and Isolde,* the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, the Broadway sensation *The Wiz,* the great Joe Hisaishi with the Orchestra, and so much more. Each performance highlights the universe of world-class art forms, genres, and ideas that take shape here and speaks to our belief that the arts are a universal human right.

Please join us and celebrate art's unwavering perseverance.

Best regards,

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
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
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 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
Michael Katz

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

Landon 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

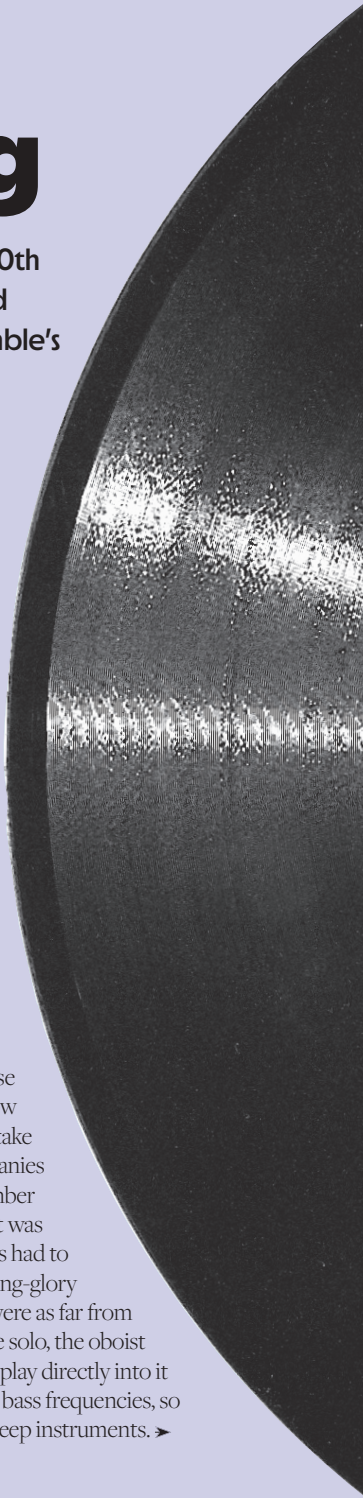
On June 8, 2024, Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary Black contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The first major concert venue in the world to honor Marian Anderson—85 years after she was barred 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.

A Century of Recording

As The Philadelphia Orchestra celebrates the 100th anniversary of being the first orchestra to record electronically, we take a look back at the ensemble's early and unprecedented recording history

By Steve Holt



Until 1877, and Thomas Edison's invention of the phonograph, the only way to hear music was live: in a concert hall, a salon, perhaps a house party. Today, we take for granted that we can carry with us, in pocket or purse, a relatively tiny device capable of holding more music than we can listen to in a lifetime. It's been quite a journey from then to now. And The Philadelphia Orchestra has been there almost every note of the way.

That 1877 phonograph was shockingly primitive by today's standards. The original recording medium was tin foil, which unfortunately lasted only a few playbacks before it crumbled. Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, and many other scientists and inventors continued to improve on the device. But as veteran engineer Ward Marston explains, even as late as 1917, when The Philadelphia Orchestra made its first recordings (under Music Director Leopold Stokowski), conditions were less than ideal.

> It wasn't quite a full complement of musicians, maybe 80 or so. They were crammed into a very small studio in Camden, New Jersey, a former church that had been remodeled for that purpose by the Victor Talking Machine Company. We actually don't know a lot about how the recordings were made, because they didn't take a lot of photographs. They didn't want competing record companies to learn any tricks of the trade! But years later, I did talk to a number of players who had made those early recordings. They told me it was very difficult and tremendously stressful. The softer instruments had to be placed closer to the recording horn [think of the large, morning-glory speakers on early Victrolas] while the brass, being the loudest, were as far from the horn as possible. And then if there was, for example, an oboe solo, the oboist would have to get up out of his chair, walk over to the horn, and play directly into it when it was time for the solo! It was also very difficult to record bass frequencies, so the string bass parts had to be reinforced using tubas, or other deep instruments. ➤

The Philadelphia Orchestra's first commercial recording, Brahms's Hungarian Dance No. 5

Unfortunately, the resulting records simply didn't sound like a live performance, because the recording system couldn't capture all the frequencies an orchestra produces. Another problem: It was impossible to tell if a "take" was acceptable until after it had been recorded. That left a lot of recordings on the cutting-room floor.

Despite all these difficulties, Stokowski was determined to use this new technology to bring the music of his Philadelphia Orchestra to the wider world. Those numerous first sessions in 1917 produced usable recordings of only a handful of works: Brahms's Hungarian Dance No. 5, the Scherzo from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Gluck's "Dance of the Blessed Spirits" from *Orfeo ed Euridice,* and "Anitra's Dance" from Grieg's *Peer Gynt*.

Stokowski and the Orchestra kept at it in the ensuing years, recording composers from Wagner to Schubert to Stravinsky. Sergei Rachmaninoff even recorded his Second Piano Concerto with the Philadelphians and Stokowski—only the second and third movements were initially released.

Then, one hundred years ago, in 1925, the "Big Bang" of recorded music exploded on the scene. The Bell Telephone Laboratories had developed an electrical recording process, using microphones instead of the primitive, giant horns of earlier days. On April 29, 1925, with Stokowski on the podium, The Philadelphia Orchestra recorded Saint-Saëns *Danse macabre* and the "Polovtsian Dances" from Borodin's *Prince Igor*. Gone was the poor frequency response, replaced by a stunning and vivid realism.

Over the next several years, disc after disc flew out of the studio: Dvořák's "New World" Symphony; Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* Suite; Stravinsky's *Firebird* Suite; and the first complete American recordings of Brahms's Symphony No. 1, Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade,* Franck's Symphony in D major, and Stokowski's own signature transcription for orchestra of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor.

Leopold Stokowski and The Philadelphia Orchestra during a recording session in the Academy of Music

The sound technology continued to improve. Engineers on both sides of the Atlantic experimented with microphone placement, different recording media, and other innovations to improve the sound quality for people listening to records at home.

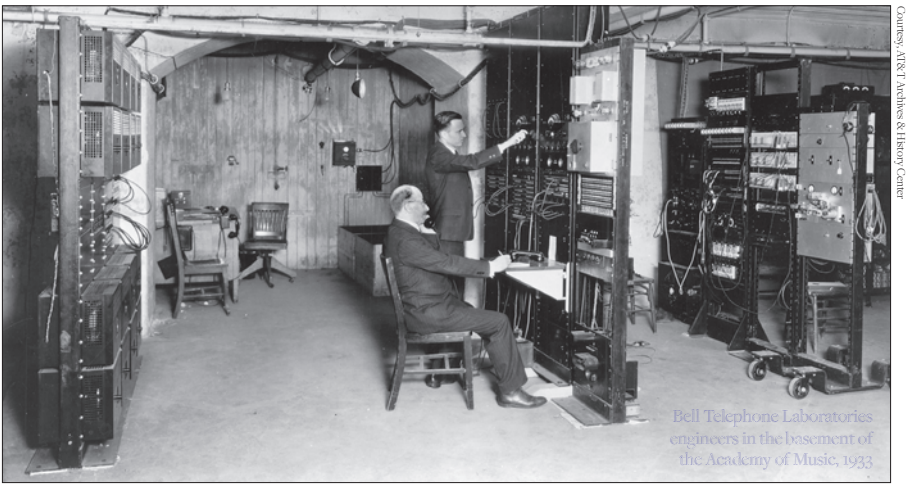
By 1931, Bell Labs had set up its latest recording equipment in the basement of the Academy of Music. The concert hall became a hi-tech sound lab, where Bell engineers could work on creating longer-playing records (the then-standard 78 rpm record could only hold a few minutes of music per side); develop stereo recording (to recreate the impression of hearing instruments in their respective spaces in the concert hall); and even learn how to transmit an orchestra concert over telephone lines.

Stokowski was keeping up on all these developments, to ensure his orchestra could take full advantage of them. In April 1931, he began recording with Bell Labs's latest: a new way of transferring sound to the grooves of an acetate disk. Later, when Stokowski heard a playback of Berlioz's *Roman Carnival* Overture, recorded with the Orchestra in December 1931 using the new techniques, he called it the finest recording he had ever heard.

From those now seemingly primitive beginnings, the list of Philadelphia Orchestra breakthroughs in electronic media has continued to grow, from performing the soundtrack to *Fantasia* in 1939, to being the first orchestra on nationwide television in 1948, and the first major American orchestra to give a live concert cybercast on the internet in 1997, and on to the present day.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is commemorating all these sonic breakthroughs by reaching as far into the technological past as possible. According to Andrew Mellor, the Orchestra's audio producer and engineer, recreating the 1925 breakthrough would be prohibitively expensive, due to the elaborate machinery involved. But for a recording of Ravel's *Alborada del gracioso* (part of a program conducted this past January/February by Daniele Rustioni), Mellor produced a two-microphone capture of the Orchestra using 1930s techniques, while simultaneously recording the concert using modern methods. On May 11 and 12, as part of its regular Philadelphia Orchestra broadcasts, WRTI will air *both* versions of the Ravel piece. Like time travelers, listeners will be able to experience the Philadelphia Sound as it was emerging into the modern era.

Steve Holt, managing partner at re:Write, is a veteran journalist and musician.



Courtesy, AT&T Archives & History Center

Bell Telephone Laboratories engineers in the basement of the Academy of Music, 1933

Musicians Behind the Scenes

Eliot Heaton Violin

P.D. Rearick

Where were you born?
I was born and raised in Geneva, New York, a small city in the Finger Lakes region.

What is your most treasured possession?
It's definitely my violin, although it feels more like a buddy than a possession. We have been through a huge number of failures and successes together, and we spend long hours together every day shut in a room trying to figure out our way through great pieces of music.

Tell us about your instrument.
I play a violin made by Joseph Curtin, an outstanding luthier who lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It has a big, warm open sound and is beautiful to look at, and I believe that I am the first person to own it.

What's in your instrument case?
There's the violin, two bows, rosin, nail clippers, a few different mutes, a granola bar, and behind the bows I have a quotation from *Moby Dick* that my violin teacher gave me when I graduated from college.

What piece of music never fails to move you?
When I really need a boost in inspiration or emotional investment in music, I put on Christian Ferras playing the slow movement of the Sibelius Violin Concerto. It works every time!

What do you love most about performing?
I like the feeling that we are all having this experience at exactly the same time. All of the ears in the audience and the different voices in the orchestra come together in the same moment to create the music that the composer describes in the score, and being a part of that makes me feel connected to a large group of people in a really positive and unique way.

Do you play any other instruments?
My hometown did not have a strings program so I grew up playing the trombone in the school band.

What are you reading right now?
I'm just finishing the last book in *Narratives of Empire* by Gore Vidal [*The Golden Age*]. I've been on those for a while and am open to suggestions of what to start next.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
My wife and I have two cats who give us endless entertainment. I also play a lot of tennis and have been very happy to discover that Philly has such a robust tennis scene.

What advice would you give to aspiring young musicians?
Feed your musical imagination by listening to as many great performances and recordings as you can find. You can only play as well as what your ear can imagine, so give it good material to work with!

Noted in Passing

The Philadelphia Orchestra mourns the passing of former Philadelphia Orchestra Board Chair Peter Benoliel on February 17, 2025.

Peter Benoliel with the Orchestra's second violin section, taken in April 2024

Born in Philadelphia, Mr. Benoliel attended Princeton University, majoring in philosophy, and upon graduation served in the United States Navy before joining Quaker Chemical, built by his father and uncle, first as a chemist, then as president and chief executive officer, chair of the board, and finally, chair emeritus. He served on a number of corporate boards, including as chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, and was very active in many cultural and philanthropic organizations, including the Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Grand Teton Music Festival, and the Settlement Music School, which named its Germantown branch after him this past January.

Mr. Benoliel wanted to be a violinist, beginning lessons at the age of eight, and remained an enthusiastic violinist throughout his life. He devoted his time, talent, and treasure to The Philadelphia Orchestra in numerous ways. He served on the Board for decades and was chair from 1995 to 2000. He served as chair of the endowment campaign from 2003 to 2008, which exceeded its original goal. He also made significant financial contributions to the Orchestra, endowing three chairs in the second violin section, those held by Principal Second Violin Kimberly Fisher, Philip Kates (which will be named for him upon his retirement), and Paul Arnold (named in honor of Joseph Brodo, a former member of the Orchestra's second violin section). He worked diligently to ensure that the Orchestra would remain a cultural treasure for future generations.

2024–2025 | 125th Season
Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, April 10, at 7:30
Friday, April 11, at 2:00
Sunday, April 13, at 2:00

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor

Mahler Symphony No. 6 in A minor
I. Allegro energico, ma non troppo
II. Scherzo: Wuchtig
III. Andante moderato
IV. Finale: Allegro moderato

This program runs approximately one hour, 20 minutes, and will be performed without an intermission.

These concerts are sponsored by **Peter and Mari Shaw.**

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.

Jeff Fusco

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; 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 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.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1904
Mahler
Symphony No. 6

Music
Puccini
Madame Butterfly
Literature
Chekhov
The Cherry Orchard
Art
Rousseau
The Wedding
History
Work begins on the Panama Canal

Gustav Mahler conducted his Sixth Symphony just three times and on the final occasion it carried the title "Tragic." Composed during one of the happiest periods of his life—recently married, newly a father, and at the height of his professional career—the massive Symphony seems fatefully to anticipate traumas that would unfold in Mahler's life not long afterward.

At least that is what his widow later explained. Alma Schindler Mahler, herself a composer, recounted stories about autobiographical elements in the Sixth Symphony, which culminates with "blows of fate" sounded by a hammer in the final movement. The meanings this Symphony may have held for Mahler can never be determined, but its passion, integrity, and innovations remain extraordinarily powerful for performers and audiences alike more than a century after its composition.

PHILADELPHIA/ORCHESTRA

Yannick Nézet-Séguin · Music & Artistic Director

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Photo: PeteCheechia

The Music

Symphony No. 6

Gustav Mahler
Born in Kalischt (Kaliště), Bohemia, July 7, 1860
Died in Vienna, May 18, 1911

The Sixth Symphony is widely viewed as one of Gustav Mahler's most personal and darkest creations. There is, admittedly, a good deal of competition in this regard among his compositions and what we know (or think we know) about his music is often based on accounts by others rather than on what Mahler said himself or indicated in sketches and manuscripts. He wrote this Symphony during the summers of 1903 and 1904, by which time he had decisively moved away from explicit extra-musical programs that would guide audiences. In his first four symphonies Mahler had called upon material from his own earlier songs or had actually incorporated songs and choruses within them. Between 1901 and 1905, however, he produced a trilogy of purely instrumental works that mark his ostensible retreat from programs explicit and vocal components.

Summer Composition Pressing administrative and performance duties forced Mahler to do most of his composing during summers. In June 1901 he moved to a new house on the Wörthersee—the idyllic mountain resort where Brahms had loved to vacation—and started work on his Fifth Symphony. It had been a harrowing winter, marked by a near fatal medical emergency in February and by his resignation as principal conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic soon thereafter. (He remained as director of the Court Opera, arguably the most powerful musical position in Europe.)

Mahler composed some of his Fifth Symphony that summer, as well as magnificent songs, and upon his return to Vienna for the new season, he met, and four months later married, the beautiful Alma Schindler, also a composer, who at 22 was nearly half his age. By the time he could finish the work the following summer they were expecting their first child, Maria. The Sixth Symphony followed over the course of the next two summers, written amid the same inspiring natural surroundings and as the couple saw the birth in June 1904 of their second child, Anna. In what would later seem to Alma to be tempting fate, Mahler completed his haunting *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs of Dead Children) that summer as well. He continued working on the orchestration of the Sixth Symphony during the winter and dated the manuscript May 1, 1905.

The apparent change in Mahler's compositional strategies in his middle symphonies therefore coincided with crucial developments in his personal life. At age 41 he was starting his own family—another kind of bid for immortality, as the psychoanalyst Stuart Feder

observed. The range of emotions in the Fifth Symphony, beginning with the opening funeral march, to the "love song" of the famous Adagietto, to the blazing triumph of the last movement, may give some indication of his hopes. The Sixth charts a decidedly different course.

First Hearings of a "Tragic" Symphony Mahler premiered the Sixth Symphony in May 1906 at the Essen Festival of Contemporary Music. The critical response there and in Berlin (where Oskar Fried conducted it in October) was largely negative, as it was when Mahler presented it in Munich in November 1906, notwithstanding enthusiasm from many audience members. Mahler remarked, "I gave up reading the reviews after one critic. ... These little people are always the same. Now all at once they like my first five symphonies. The Sixth must just wait until my Seventh appears."

Mahler revised the Sixth several times, beginning after preliminary reading rehearsals in April with the Vienna Philharmonic before the Essen premiere. The changes—principally a lightening of the orchestration at various points, the alteration of tempo indications, and the elimination of the third hammer blow in the final movement—were incorporated into the second edition of the published score.

Mahler performed his Sixth just three times. The printed program for the last performance in Vienna carried the title "Tragic." (It was not so named in the manuscript, at the premiere, or in the published editions released during his lifetime.) Title or not, colleagues and critics alike remarked on its mood. "It reeks of the bitter cup of human life," wrote the conductor Bruno Walter, a close colleague of Mahler's. "In contrast with the Fifth, the Sixth says 'No,' above all in its last movement, where something resembling the inexorable strife of 'all against all' is translated into music. 'Existence is a burden; death is desirable and life hateful' might be its motto."

What Alma Tells Us Much of what we know (or think we know) about the Sixth Symphony comes from Mahler's long-lived widow. (Mahler died in 1911, Alma in 1964.) While Mahler had sought to suppress explanations as to its meanings, her stories helped to construct a "program." She relates in her memoirs: "Not one of his works came so directly from his heart as this one. We both wept that day [when he finished writing it]. The music and what it foretold touched us so deeply. The Sixth is the most completely personal of his works and a prophetic one also. ... In the Sixth he anticipated his own life in music."

Many commentators have mused about how Mahler's music anticipates the future. What is usually meant is the future of music, the path, for example, pursued by such ardent younger admirers as Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton von Webern. Leonard Bernstein went further when he argued that Mahler foresaw the future in broader cultural and historical ways, foretelling the cataclysms of the 20th century. Alma was the one who cast the Sixth as specifically prophetic of Mahler's own life, turning it into a "fate symphony" in the tradition of Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, and others. There is even a musical fate motto (a major triad changing one note to shift to minor) combined with a distinctive fate rhythm. But unlike the heroic affirmations with which earlier fate symphonies conclude, Mahler's Sixth ends in defeat. The final movement, according to Alma, traces the hero's decline with

three mighty hammer blows: "In the last movement he described himself and his downfall or, as he later said, that of his hero—It is the hero on whom fall three blows of fate, the last of which fells him as a tree is felled."

Mahler had hoped to keep ideas about the Symphony abstract. The published score offers a telling comment in this regard with respect to the marvelous effect of using cowbells in three of the four movements. He indicates that they "must be treated very discreetly—in realistic imitation of the higher and lower bells of a grazing herd, sounding from afar, sometimes combined, sometimes singly," and then tellingly adds: "It must be expressly stated that this technical remark allows no programmatic interpretation."

There are reasons, moreover, for some skepticism concerning Alma's interpretation of the Symphony. For one thing, Mahler apparently originally planned five hammer blows in the last movement, then reduced them to three, which he ultimately cut back to two. Moreover, there is often little or no connection between the kind of music that a composer writes and the external circumstances in his or her life at the time. Cheerful music is written in sad times, as well as the reverse, which would seem to be the case in this instance with Mahler. He composed the Sixth at the height of his professional fame and personal happiness. Newly married, Alma was pregnant when he began the Symphony and his second daughter had been born by the time it was finished. It was only a few years later that this joyous world was indeed shattered by devastating professional and personal blows: leaving the Vienna Court Opera in 1907, Maria's death at age four that summer, and the diagnosis of a dangerous heart condition. As biographer Henry-Louis de La Grange has noted, Alma fails to mention a fourth blow: her love affair with the young architect Walter Gropius, which Mahler learned of and consulted Sigmund Freud about.

Much as we may wish to resist (or at least question) the idea of Mahler as musical prophet, there is a good bit of accuracy to a remark he made in a letter to the critic Richard Specht: "My Sixth will pose puzzles which can only be broached by a generation which has imbibed and digested my first five." The Symphony indeed took quite some time to appeal to audiences. The American premiere, with the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall, only came in 1947; it was first played by the Philadelphians in 1968. In recent years, however, it has emerged as one of the composer's most admired and frequently performed pieces.

A Closer Look The Sixth is one of Mahler's most Classical compositions. As published, it is his only symphony arranged in the "normal" four-movement order, and it is clearly centered in the key of A minor. There are also cyclical elements—musical ideas that appear in different movements and that unify the whole—as Beethoven had done most overtly in his Fifth and Ninth symphonies. Except for the opening movement of the First Symphony, the Sixth is the only one in which Mahler indicates that the exposition should be repeated (about the first four minutes of the work).

The opening movement (**Allegro energico, ma non troppo**) is built from various ideas, beginning, as do many of Mahler's symphonies, with a march. The fate motto—a loud A-major triad that dies away to a soft A-minor one—is sounded by the trumpets at the same time as the fundamental fate rhythm is pounded out by the timpani. After a chorale-

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like bridge (but one that does not modulate—it has been called a "negative" chorale), there is a passionate theme marked schwungvoll (with vigor). According to Alma, this was intended as her theme: "After [Mahler] had drafted the first movement, he came down from the woods to tell me he had tried to express me in a theme. 'Whether I've succeeded, I don't know; but you'll have to put up with it.' This is the great soaring theme of the first movement." Cowbells, which will return in later movements, evoke an eerie dream world of distance and memory. The movement ends with a passionate affirmation of the "Alma" theme.

For nearly a century there has been debate concerning the order of the middle two movements, about which Mahler changed his mind, perhaps several times. There are musical and interpretative arguments to be made for both orderings, which is probably why Mahler was conflicted about the matter.

The Scherzo (**Wuchtig**) is one of Mahler's darker dances, a distorted *Ländler.* The trio section, with frequent meter changes, is marked altväterisch (grandfatherly or old-fashioned). What Alma tells us about this movement, once again, does not quite align with the facts. Here, she writes, Mahler "represented the unrhythmic games of the two little children, tottering in zigzags over the sand. Ominously, the childish voices became more and more tragic, and at the end died out in a whimper." The summer he wrote the music, however, only Maria was born. Arnold Schoenberg praised the "curious structure" of the beautiful melody that opens the **Andante moderato.** The movement does not allude to the common thematic material found in the other ones and therefore stands more on its own.

The finale (**Allegro moderato**) is the longest movement and one of Mahler's most complex. It opens with a fantastic Expressionist outburst, the fate rhythm, and a series of fragmentary themes that take some time to coalesce. When Mahler revised the Symphony, he pared down some of the rich orchestration and, as mentioned, eliminated the third hammer blow. (Mahler was specific about how he wanted them to sound: "short, mighty, but dull in resonance, with a non-metallic character, like the stroke of an ax.")

Bruno Walter saw the movement as "the mounting tensions and climaxes [that] resemble, in their grim power, the mountainous waves of a sea that will overwhelm and destroy the ship. … The work ends in hopelessness and the dark night of the soul. *Non placet* is his verdict on this world; the 'other world' is not glimpsed for a moment." Indeed, the fate motifs—the major/minor triad and rhythm—reappear for the terrifying conclusion of this tragic Symphony.

—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.

Mahler composed his Symphony No. 6 from 1903 to 1905.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Sixth Symphony were in October 1968, with Claudio Abbado on the podium. Antal Dorati conducted the work in November 1974, Klaus Tennstedt in February

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1990, James Conlon in March 1999, Christoph Eschenbach in November 2005, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin in January 2012. Most recently, Simon Rattle led the piece here in a non-subscription concert in October 2016.

The Philadelphians recorded the Symphony in 2005 with Eschenbach for the Ondine label.

The work is scored for piccolo, four flutes (III and IV doubling piccolo), four oboes (III and IV doubling English horn), English horn, four clarinets (IV doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, four bassoons, contrabassoon, eight horns, six trumpets, four trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cowbells, cymbals, glockenspiel, hammer, orchestra bells, rute, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle, xylophone), two harps, celesta, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 80 minutes.

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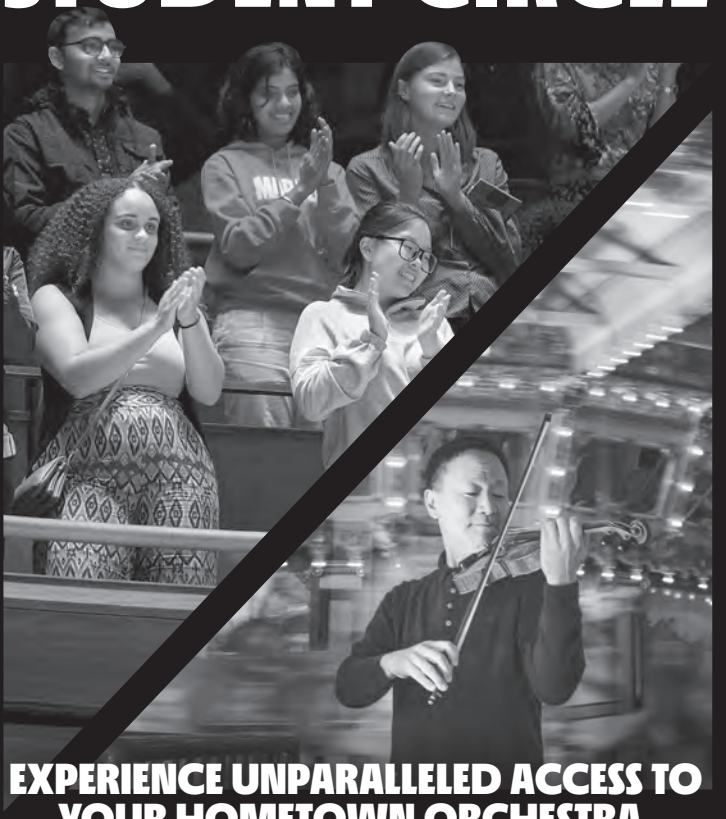

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Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Bridge: A contrasting section that prepares for the return of the original material

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

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

Diatonic: Melody or harmony drawn primarily from the tones of the major or minor scale

Exposition: See sonata form

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

Ländler: An Austrian folk dance in triple time

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Modulate: To pass from one key or mode into another

Mode: Any of certain fixed arrangements of the diatonic tones of an octave, as the major and minor scales of Western music

Octave: The interval between any two notes that are seven diatonic (nonchromatic) scale degrees apart

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

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.

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)

Adagietto: A tempo somewhat faster than adagio

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Energico: With vigor, powerfully

Moderato: A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

Wuchtig: Ponderous, slow, emphatic

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Ma non troppo: But not too much

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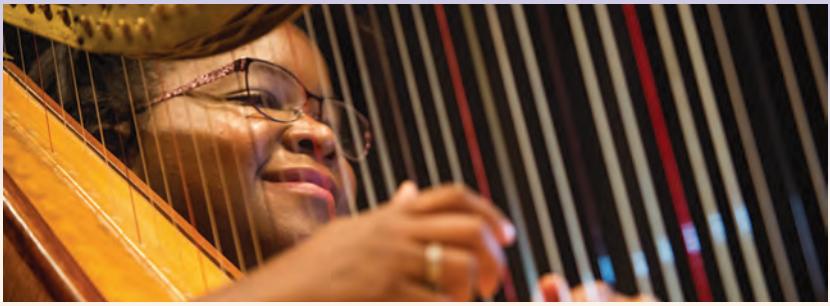

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For more information about making a gift to the Academy Restoration Fund, please contact the Annual Fund office at 215.893.3151 or AcademyofMusic@philorch.org.

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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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