



PHILADELPHIA /ORCHESTRA

Yannick Nézet-Séguin
Music & Artistic Director

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MAY/JUNE 2025

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Specially design art for the Wagner's Tristan and Isolde concerts, June 1 and 8, 2025, by Haeg Design

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From the Interim President and CEO



Dear Friends:

Summer is a special time for the Orchestra, when we perform residencies in locations that feel like second homes to us. This year is especially celebratory as we mark 60 years of performing at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center and 50 years of performing at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, two venues the Orchestra helped to open. In addition, this summer will mark 18 years since our first performance at the Bravo! Vail Music Festival.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is widely lauded for its ability to perform many styles of music, and summer residencies showcase this variety from one night to the next. This season at the Mann, for example, we open with an all-Beethoven concert, play the soundtrack to *Star Wars: A New Hope* while the film is shown on giant screens, and the following night perform with superstar Cynthia Erivo. Additional concerts include a 125th birthday salute for the Orchestra (ahead of our official anniversary on November 16), a celebration of the Eagles's championship season, and a collaboration with rapper Nas.

Yannick and the Orchestra have been deeply committed to performing works by historically underrepresented composers, and residencies give us the opportunity to take some of those remarkable works to audiences in other cities. This year we look forward to performing William Grant Still's Symphony No. 2 ("Song of a New Race") in Saratoga and Augusta Holmès's "La Nuit et l'amour" from *Ludus pro patria* at Bravo! Vail. We also bring former Composer in Residence Gabriela Lena Frank's *Picaflor: A Future Myth* to Vail, which partnered with us to co-commission the piece.

I hope you will join us at our Mann Center residency in June and July. And if you happen to find yourselves in either Vail, Colorado, in July or Saratoga Springs, New York, in August, please come see us.

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

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 Nicaastro

Che-Hung Chen

Rachel Ku

Marvin Moon

Meng Wang

Hsiang-Hsin Ching

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

(position vacant)
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 Segel 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

MuChen Hsieh Violin

Chloe McKenna



Where were you born?

I was born in Taipei, Taiwan.

What is your most treasured possession?

Gowns, concert clothes, dresses, and mix-match outfits made by my 86-year-old grandmother over the years. Some of my outfits were made 40+ years ago by my grandma for herself. Others were made for me since I was in high school for special occasions and concerts.

What's your favorite food?

I love so many kinds of food; I can't pick a favorite! I like a variety of cuisines: Chinese/Taiwanese, Korean, Thai, sushi, and Italian are my favorites.

Tell us about your instrument.

I play a Joseph Curtin violin made in 1989 and a Benoit Rolland bow I commissioned in 2014.

What's in your instrument case?

A pencil case, humidity pack, five different kinds of violin mutes, viola rosin, ear plugs, and a tiny dachshund bag charm.

What piece of music never fails to move you?

The second movement of Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major, especially the English horn solo.

What do you love most about performing?

I love the energy a performer can create and transfer to the audience.

When did you join the Orchestra? In July 2024.

Do you play any other instruments?

I grew up playing the piano.

What's your favorite Philadelphia restaurant?

Vernick Food & Drink, Illata, and Kalaya.

Do you speak any other languages?

I speak fluent Mandarin and understand Taiwanese.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I like to cook, bake, and try new restaurants.

What is your favorite memory with the Orchestra?

Although I only joined in 2024, I have a fond memory of the 2024 Canada tour when we performed Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 and Brahms's *A German Requiem*. I was so in awe of the colors and rich tone in the Rachmaninoff. The string sound was so lush, and it was a blast playing with a group with such history.

Immortal *Tristan and Isolde*

A thousand-year-old story continues to
haunt our music and our culture

By Paul J. Horsley

Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* tells a straightforward tale with surprising economy of means. Yet its musical-dramatic design is fantastically complex, and its historical impact—not just on music but on literature, art, and cinema—has been so profound that we are, in many ways, still assessing it. The Philadelphia Orchestra, which in 1934 presented the first complete *Tristan* heard in the United States, performs the opera in concert this June, with Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin and internationally renowned soloists, including Stuart Skelton and Nina Stemme.

Tristan exerted enormous influence on its contemporaries, although it wasn't until several years after its 1865 premiere in Munich that it began to gather steam—with performances in Berlin (1876), London (1882), Vienna (1883), and in 1886, New York, Prague, and Bayreuth. Initially, many music critics reacted negatively to it. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* of July 5, 1865, called it “the glorification of sensual pleasure, tricked out with every titillating device ... an act of indecency.”

Philosophers, in contrast, have been inclined to describe *Tristan* in high-flown, even hyperbolic terms. Friedrich Nietzsche called it “the real *opus metaphysicum* of all art ... overpowering in its simple grandeur” and even after his celebrated break with Wagner in the late 1870s he acknowledged the opera's legacy: “I am still in search of a work that exercises such a dangerous fascination, such a spine-tingling and blissful infinity as *Tristan*. I have sought in vain, in every art form.”

Tristan remains one of the most psychologically dense dramatic works that has ever graced the stage. It “transcends its scenario of a conventional love story to offer a profound meditation on the nature of the material world, and on the mysteries of human existence itself,” as scholar Barry Millington writes. Yet it tells a fundamentally human tale. A nobleman and a beautiful princess fall in love—rather inconveniently, as they are en route to the woman's arranged wedding to the nobleman's uncle. The sudden passion that strikes Tristan and Isolde on board a ship is so intense that it leads to extravagant declarations of eternal love, even death-wishes. (Perhaps the love-potion that Brangäne, her maid, administers acts as an accelerant to an already-existing flame: “less a maker of uncontrollable passion,” writes Henry Krehbiel, “than a drink which causes the lovers to forget duty, honor, and the respect due to the laws of society.”) ➤

John William
Waterhouse's
Tristan and Isolde
with the Potion
(1916)



Richard Wagner,
circa 1860



Nevertheless, in Wagner's world a love this ferocious brings a "sweet suffering" that can only be extinguished, or apotheosized, through death. King Marke arrives to forgive the couple and permit them to marry, but he is too late. Tristan succumbs to Melot's sword, and Isolde sings her "Liebestod."

Wagner has structured the opera with great clarity, even simplicity. Its three weighty acts are organized symmetrically: The first is devoted to Isolde, the third to Tristan, and the second to the union of the two. Moreover, the primary action is in the hands of three almost-matching pairs of characters: Tristan and his attendant, Kurwenal; Isolde and Brangäne; and Marke and his disgruntled courtier, Melot.

If the story seems elemental, even archetypal, it is partly because it dates back to a foundational

12th-century tale, *Tristan and Iseult*, aspects of which can be traced to even earlier Irish tales such as *The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Gráinne*. And if a tale of warring families and star-crossed lovers feels familiar, it might be because the author of a well-known 16th-century tragedy was obviously familiar with the medieval tale. Some believe Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is an intentional nod to the Tristan stories.

Tristan was the fruit of Wagner's longstanding fascination with medieval legends, folk tales, and ancient heroes of Norse and Celtic mythology, which found expression in such figures as Tannhäuser, Lohengrin, Parsifal, and Siegfried. "As was usual when a legend seized his imagination," writes biographer Curt von Westernhagen, "Wagner was closely identifying himself with its hero." There is little doubt that the composer placed himself, psychologically speaking, in the middle of his own opera. Penniless, unhappy in marriage, and on the verge of nervous collapse, Wagner had fallen under the dazzling spell of Mathilde Wesendonck—who together with her husband, Otto, supported the composer financially during this period. Meanwhile, his wife, Minna, was understandably perturbed, as Richard and Mathilde carried on a somewhat public (if possibly never consummated) affair.

With pressures mounting on all sides, Wagner was nearing a personal and an artistic crossroads. In 1857 he famously broke off from composing *Siegfried*, the third of his *Ring of the Nibelung* operas, not returning until more than a decade later, after having completed both *Tristan* (1857–59) and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1862–67).

The pause was sparked, in part, by tumultuous events in Wagner's life during the 1850s, including years of political exile. But one cannot underestimate the extent to which this was also an artistic crisis. The harmonic, dramatic, and philosophical innovations of *Tristan* represented a fundamental shift not just in Wagner's musico-dramatic style but in the tonal landscape of Western music. When he resumed the *Ring* in 1868, it is no exaggeration to say that he was a composer transformed. "One can see that he would not have been able to write [*Götterdämmerung*] without first having mastered the harmonies of *Tristan* and the counterpoint of *Die Meistersinger*," von Westernhagen writes. ►

The innovations of *Tristan* were not purely musical or dramatic: They were also philosophical and, perhaps just as significantly, sexual. The composer’s immersion in Arthur Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Idea* beginning in 1854 exerted a formidable impact on the composer’s libretto for *Tristan*. Schopenhauer’s concepts, influenced by Buddhist thought, maintained that by denying our “will” we relinquish individuality and begin learning empathy—losing ourselves in a virtuous state of selflessness.

Schopenhauer also believed that music was the supreme art form, and that the sound world can guide us through situations in which words fail. “There are limits to what can be even symbolically represented on the stage,” writes Robert Gutman of what we might call *Tristan*’s sex scenes, “and the music must tell the full tale to the audience, too often led astray by the unruffled attitudes of soprano and tenor ... singing at one another while decorously seated on a papier-mâché bench.”

Regardless of how one stages the scene in Act II where Marke and his men interrupt the couple *in flagrante delicto*, the music indicates all too clearly the effect that the intrusion has on the lovers.

Considering the formidable resources that Wagner corralled for *Tristan*, the year 1865 stands as a pivot-point in the history of music. It would be another half-century before Arnold Schoenberg emancipated the 12 notes of the chromatic scale to treat them as co-equals. But when Schoenberg stated that his efforts to systematize atonality were an attempt to “break the barriers of a past aesthetic,” *Tristan* was certainly one of the works he had in mind. It had, as much as any other composition, signaled the impending breakdown of traditional tonality.

Among the more disruptive early examples of the “post-*Tristan* era” were Schoenberg’s song cycle *Gurrelieder* (1900–11) and his monodrama for soprano *Erwartung* (1909). The latter is a sort of miniature *Tristan*, complete with a compact love-death finale. The *Tristan* effect can



Music and Artistic Director
Yannick Nézet-Séguin leading
The Philadelphia Orchestra and
soloists in Puccini’s *La bohème*,
June 2024

Joselyn Griffin

also be traced through works by Mahler, Webern, Debussy, and Berg (*Lyric Suite*, 1925–26), among others. There is also self-conscious and at times satirical use of the *Tristan* chord in composers as diverse as Britten and Peter Schickele, Bernard Herrmann and Radiohead.

The enervating power of *Tristan* is found in literature, too. Thomas Mann’s 1903 novella *Tristan* takes place in a sanatorium, where the fragile Gabriele (Isolde) is recovering from a tracheal illness. Fellow resident Detlev Spinell (Tristan) is a flighty writer who bonds with Gabriele over a love of the arts, much to the chagrin of her bourgeois husband, Anton (Marke). In Willa Cather’s vivid 1904 short story *A Wagner Matinee*, a young man living in Boston invites his aging aunt for a visit; as Aunt Georgina listens to a Boston Symphony all-Wagner concert, she melts into an emotional heap from the sense of loss: from a memory of the life she gave up.



Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld and his wife, Malvina, starred as Tristan and Isolde at the 1865 premiere of the opera.



Alfred Roller's set designs for Acts I and II of the 1903 Viennese production of *Tristan and Isolde* conducted by Gustav Mahler

Tristan has had an impact on the art world, as well. The early “conceptual” set and costume designs of Secession artist Alfred Roller, created for the 1903 Viennese production that Mahler conducted, helped push operatic production into an era of stylized abstraction, which ultimately reflected the art of the period.

Tristan has also eked into cinema. In Luis Buñuel’s and Salvador Dalí’s surrealist *L’Âge d’or* (1930), a couple flouts taboo by making passionate love in awkward places—each time to music of *Tristan*—only to be suppressed by society, government, religion. In Lars von Trier’s *Melancholia*, extended passages of the opera fit neatly into an end-of-the-world scenario: There is love and there is hate, and there will be death. “Human insistence on suffering is bringing about its own destruction,” writes *OperaWire*’s David Salazar of this savvy film, adding that this “could not be more in line with the thinking of Arthur Schopenhauer.”

Paul Horsley is performing arts editor of the Independent in Kansas City. Before that 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

Wednesday, June 25, at 7:00

Thursday, June 26, at 7:00

Friday, June 27, at 7:00

Joe Hisaishi Conductor and Piano
Choong-Jin Chang Viola

Hisaishi Symphony No. 2
I. What the World Is Now?
II. Variation 14
III. Nursery Rhyme
First Philadelphia Orchestra performances

Intermission

Hisaishi *Viola Saga*
Movement I
Movement II
First Philadelphia Orchestra performances

Hisaishi *Spirited Away* Suite
First Philadelphia Orchestra performances

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 50 minutes.

These concerts are part of the **Ellenberg Philadelphia Orchestra Soloist Spotlight Series**.

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.



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.

PHILADELPHIA/ORCHESTRA

Yannick Nézet-Séguin · Music & Artistic Director

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Photo: Pete Checchia

Conductor and Piano

Nick Rutter



Composer, conductor, and pianist **Joe Hisaishi** has established himself as a formidable force in contemporary music for his delicately crafted symphonic and solo works, as well as his globally successful film music. He is greatly in demand as a conductor performing with the most notable symphony orchestras across the globe. With nearly 40 solo albums and over 100 film scores to his name, he is one of the most celebrated composers of our time. Renowned for his longstanding collaboration with Japanese anime director

Hayao Miyazaki and the Studio Ghibli films, he has won international awards for his scores. His popular soundtracks capture his sensitive and imaginative amalgamation of the symphonic, jazz, electronic, and minimalist genres. Many of these iconic works have been brought to huge live audiences in his recent sold-out performances at Madison Square Garden in New York, La Defense in Paris, and Olympic Hall in Munich.

Mr. Hisaishi's recent performance highlights include a two-day residency at Royal Albert Hall in London for his "Hisaishi Symphonic" live shows, which included the *Princess Mononoke* Suite, his Symphony No. 2, and Britten's Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes* with the Royal Philharmonic; conducting engagements with the Toronto, Chicago, and Vienna symphonies and the Helsinki Philharmonic; and a week-long residency with the Seattle Symphony. This season he debuted with the San Francisco Symphony and, after a successful debut at the Hollywood Bowl in 2023, returned to the Los Angeles Philharmonic for the world premiere of his Harp Concerto, commissioned by the orchestra and performed by its harpist, Emmanuel Ceysson. Mr. Hisaishi is a Deutsche Grammophon exclusive artist and most recent recording, *Joe Hisaishi in Vienna*, features the world premiere recordings of two of his compositions, Symphony No. 2 and *Viola Saga* with the Vienna Symphony and soloist Antoine Tamestit.

Mr. Hisaishi is the recipient of both the Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon and the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, given by the government of Japan. He is a music partner with the New Japan Philharmonic and, since 2021, principal guest conductor with the Japan Century Symphony where he is music director-designate for the 2025–26 season. He was also appointed as composer-in-association of the Royal Philharmonic in April 2024. He makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances.

Soloist



Jessica Griffin

A native of Seoul, Korea, **Choong-Jin (C.J.) Chang** has been principal viola of The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2006, having joined the ensemble in 1994 as associate principal; he holds the Ruth and A. Morris Williams, Jr., Chair. He made his performance debut at age 12 with the Seoul Philharmonic. In 1981, at age 13, he moved to the United States to attend the Juilliard School of Music. He later studied at Temple University's Esther Boyer College of Music and the Curtis Institute of Music, earning degrees in both violin and viola

under the tutelage of Jascha Brodsky and former Philadelphia Orchestra Principal Viola Joseph dePasquale.

Mr. Chang made his solo recital debut at Carnegie Hall in 2007 and has since performed in numerous recitals across the United States and South Korea. In 2008 he was a featured soloist with The Philadelphia Orchestra during its Asian Tour, performing in Seoul and Shanghai, and at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. He made his subscription solo debut with the Orchestra in 2009 and has been a frequent soloist, including a notable performance of Bruch's Concerto for Clarinet and Viola in 2022. In 2013 he curated the Bach and Hindemith Project, performing all 19 viola pieces by both composers in four recitals at the Kuhmo Arts Hall in Seoul. As a chamber musician, he collaborates with renowned artists at prestigious festivals worldwide.

Mr. Chang was one of the founding members of the Johannes String Quartet, which debuted to critical acclaim at Philadelphia's Ethical Society and Carnegie Hall. Since 1997 the Quartet has performed extensively across the United States, premiering works such as Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Homunculus* and William Bolcom's Double Quartet with the Guarneri Quartet.

In addition to his performing career, Mr. Chang is a respected educator in both violin and viola. His former students include members of The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Cleveland Orchestra, as well as winners of major competitions. He currently serves as a viola professor at Johns Hopkins University's Peabody Conservatory of Music and is an artist/faculty member at the Aspen Music Festival and School during the summer.

The Music

Joe Hisaishi

Born December 6, 1950, in Nakano, Japan

Nick Rutter



Symphony No. 2 and *Viola Saga*

Joe Hisaishi recently built himself a small studio outside Tokyo, inspired by Gustav Mahler, who in the late 19th century liked to work in “composing huts” at scenic locations around Austria. “It was 2020, just as COVID was beginning,” Hisaishi said in a recent interview for Deutsche Grammophon.

“Up until then, I’d been using things like synths and had been working with an assistant, but during that period I had no choice but to go [to the studio] alone. ... I ended up

composing two symphonies in two years.”

His Symphony No. 2 is the first of the pair (his Symphony No. 1 was completed in 2016) and was premiered by the New Japan Philharmonic World Dream Orchestra at Kyoto Concert Hall in April 2021. In March 2023 he led a performance with the Vienna Symphony that was recorded and later released on Deutsche Grammophon. The first movement, **What the World Is Now?**, is perhaps an allusion to COVID, while the second movement, **Variation 14**, includes 14 cheerful variations on a prodding theme. The finale, **Nursery Rhyme**, is based on an old Japanese children’s song, first presented in the double basses and then subtly layered on top of itself as the orchestral weight piles up.

Viola Saga, from 2023, is a two-movement concerto for an instrument Hisaishi hears as especially similar to the human voice. He premiered it in July of that year with the French violist Antoine Tamestit and Future Orchestra Classics in Tokyo. Liner notes for its Deutsche Grammophon release describe the piece as “dancing light-footedly from its delicate opening in frequently startling directions, its emotional punch as powerful as the enriching reiteration of its themes.”

Spirited Away Suite

Hayo Miyazaki made *Spirited Away* for a generation of Japanese children he thought had grown dull and unimaginative with ever-increasing commercialism. “If you let me have my own way, I’d first reduce the amount of manga, video games, and weekly magazines,” Miyazaki said in a 2001 press interview. “If we let children have more of their own time and have their own way, they’ll become more lively.”

Chihiro, the main character, is an ordinary 10-year-old girl who grows independent and confident when transported into a colorful and frightening spirit world. After her parents are turned into pigs, she goes to work at a magnificent bathhouse that was partly modeled on Studio Ghibli itself. “For us, Ghibli is a familiar place, but it would look like a labyrinth to a girl coming here for the first time, a scary place,” Miyazaki said. He introduces a

memorable cast of characters: the dragon-boy Haku, the six-armed boilerman Kamaji, the witch Yubaba, the sisterly Lin, and the enigmatic No Face.

Hisaishi's *Spirited Away* Suite weaves together a handful of important cues from the soundtrack. "One Summer's Day" begins with the first sounds heard in the movie—three descending major ninth chords on the piano, which then rise slightly into a ghostly, unnamable chord of stacked fourths—a perfect harmonic representation of Chihiro's transition into the liminal world.

"The Gods" accompanies the procession of spirits within the bathhouse with plucked strings and deep brass tones. The scholar Kyoko Koizumi has pointed out this melody uses an Okinawan scale "thought to be exotic in Japan for both historical and cultural reasons ... [resembling] Indonesian music more than that of Japan's adjacent regions." This helps to "draw a line between Chihiro's life in Japan and the mysterious magic kingdom, a world *somewhere else* from everyday space."

The serene "View of the Morning" and clanging dissonance of "The Bottomless Pit" accompany Chihiro's awakening for her first full day in the bathhouse and her battle with Yubaba's giant-baby son. The silvery harp and chirping winds of "Dragon Boy" represent Haku, while the percussive thump and clang of "No Face" underscore the spirit's transformation into a ravenous monster. "The Sixth Station" brings back the solo piano theme for Chihiro's haunting train journey across a shallow ocean. The lush, cyclic melody of "Reprise" scores Chihiro's flight and skydive with Haku after she realizes their shared past, and "Return" brings back the "Summer" theme as she rescues her parents and reenters the normal world.

—Benjamin Pesetsky

Benjamin Pesetsky is a composer and writer. He serves on the staff of the San Francisco Symphony and also contributes program notes for the St. Louis Symphony and the Melbourne Symphony.

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The Volunteer Committees for The Philadelphia Orchestra are dedicated to supporting the Orchestra through audience development, educational programs, fundraising, community relations, and special events. The Committees were first formed in 1904 and have the distinction of being the oldest auxiliary volunteer organization associated with an orchestra in the United States. We are profoundly grateful for the Volunteers' leadership and support throughout the years.

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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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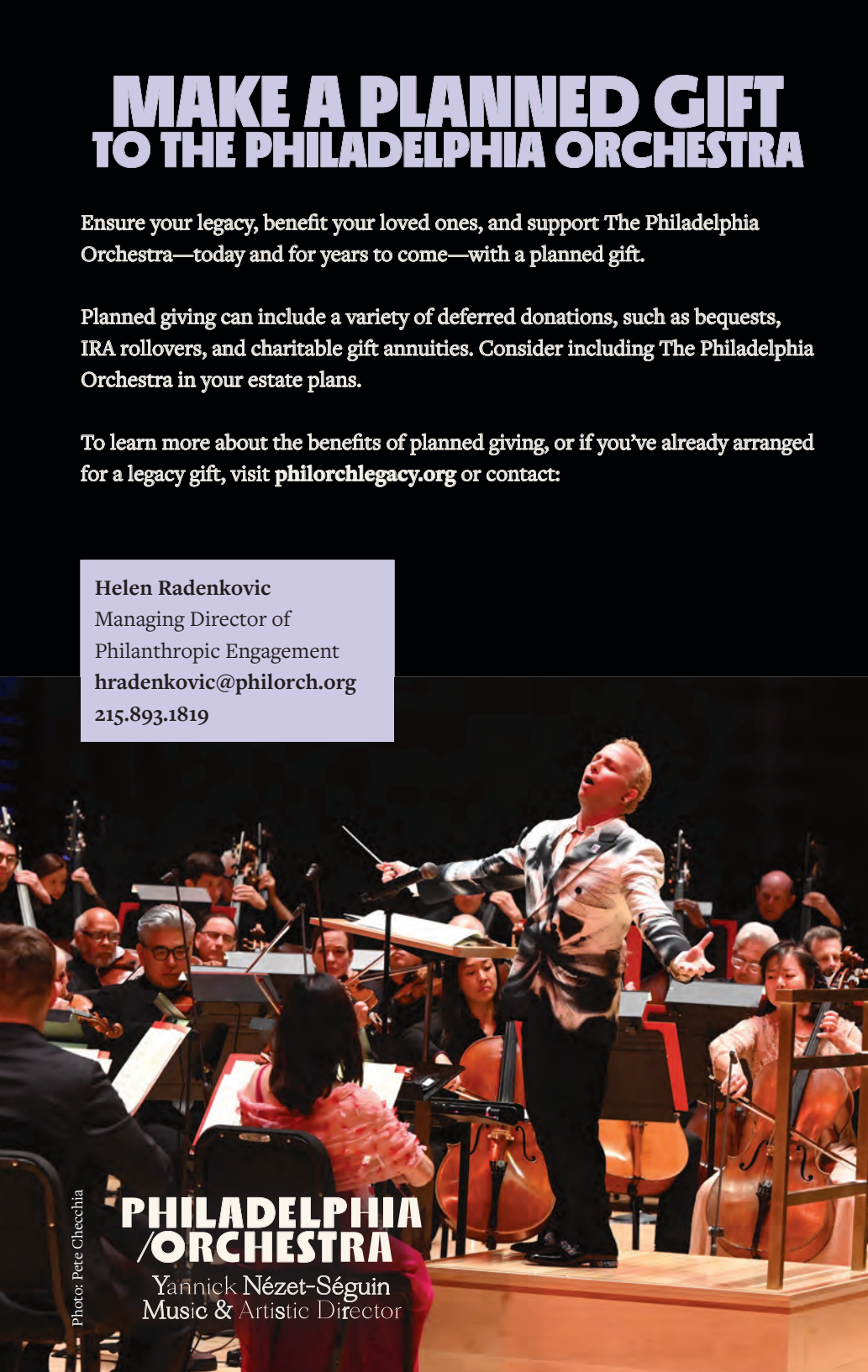
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