

**PHILADELPHIA  
/ORCHESTRA**

Yannick Nézet-Séguin  
Music & Artistic Director

# OF MAGIC

**125 YEARS**

**1900**

**2025**

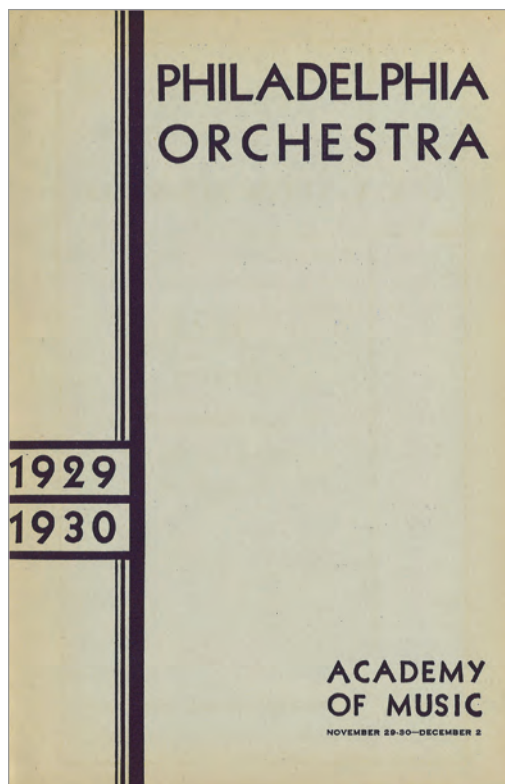
*Inspired by a 1929–30 Orchestra program cover*

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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025

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# From the President and CEO



Dear Friends:

Welcome to The Philadelphia Orchestra's 2025–26 season, a celebration of our 125th anniversary! Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin has crafted a season during which the Orchestra will simultaneously look to its past and shine a light on the future, as is befitting such an important milestone. The Orchestra will revisit works that received their world or U.S. premieres by the ensemble, including Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, Shostakovich's Symphony No. 6, and Barber's Violin Concerto.

World premieres and new works by some of the world's most important contemporary voices will include John Adams's *The Rock You Stand On*, Wynton Marsalis's Symphony No. 5 ("Liberty"), Julia Wolfe's *Liberty Bell*, and Tyshawn Sorey's Piano Concerto. And Yannick and the Orchestra will continue their exploration of works by historically underrepresented composers, with performances of Amy Beach's "Gaelic" Symphony, Julius Eastman's Symphony No. 2, and Louis Ballard's *Devil's Promenade*. Principal Guest Conductor Marin Alsop returns, conducting several weeks at home in Philadelphia along with a Midwest tour, continuing the Orchestra's rich tradition of sharing music across the country and around the world. Some of the biggest stars of classical music are joining us for this landmark anniversary, including cellist Yo-Yo Ma and pianist Lang Lang for one-night-only concerts with the Orchestra, events that are not to be missed.

We believe that every moment of your experience in all three of our buildings should be as exceptional as the performances themselves, from the moment you arrive until well after the final notes. That is why we strive to enhance every aspect of your visit, ensuring comfort, convenience, and delight at every turn. We invite you to enjoy one of the food and beverage experiences inside the Kimmel Center. Leo, our incredible new restaurant named after former Philadelphia Orchestra Music Director Leopold Stokowski, is one of Resy's top 10 recommendations and one of the city's best new restaurants—a "rousing performance all on its own" according to *Philadelphia* magazine. It's wonderful seeing people from the neighborhood, musicians, and audience members enjoying a quick bite or our pre-theater prix fixe menu. And we can't forget about Curtain Call, our all-day café and lounge perfect for a morning coffee, lunch meeting, or intimate pre- or post-show drink.

Since its creation in 1900, The Philadelphia Orchestra has been a global symbol of artistic excellence. From the bold vision of our pioneering founding members to the development of the iconic "Philadelphia Sound" to the unmatched talent of the musicians of today, our legacy has been shaped by the power of music to inspire and connect. Music remains our guiding light, and every moment of this anniversary reflects our ongoing commitment to innovation and community.

Best regards,

Ryan Fleur  
President and CEO

# Music and Artistic Director



Landen Nordeman

Canadian-born conductor and pianist **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** is currently in his 14th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. An inspired leader, Yannick 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 *Philadelphia Inquirer* has said that under his baton the Orchestra is “at the top of its considerable form”; the Associated Press has called it “a premier orchestra at its peak”; and the *New York Times* wrote, “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 and recording the music of underappreciated composers of the past, including Florence Price, Clara Schumann, William Dawson, Lili Boulanger, Louise Farrenc, and William Grant Still. In 2018 he signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 15 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](http://philorch.org/conductor).

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

2025–2026 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 Nicastrò

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

Eugene Lin

## 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*  
Victoria Knudtson  
Christopher Dwyer  
Chelsea McFarland  
Ernesto Tovar Torres

### **Trumpets**

(position vacant)  
*Marguerite and Gerry  
Lenfest Chair*  
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

### **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

# 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.



# Witness to History: Mimi O'Malley

Part of a season-long series of oral histories

By Judith Kurnick

Mary ("Mimi") Read O'Malley started at The Philadelphia Orchestra Association in 1958, as an assistant bookkeeper. She soon moved up to become the secretary to Assistant Manager Joseph H. Santarlasci. Now a spry 90 years old, Mimi vividly remembers those early days. "It was like a family, very Mom and Pop," she says. "There were 15 of us who did everything: We sold tickets, put out press releases, you name it. Everything was done by hand. There was a file card for each subscriber, and we stuffed each renewal envelope ourselves." The performances were also meticulously recorded—also on file cards, by hand.

Mimi often went to concerts. "Listening to the music was such a treat," she recalls. "I lived very close to a train station, so I could go to the evening concerts, get off the train, and be home. It was harder after I got married, but when our offices moved to the Academy House, they

## MIMI O'MALLEY

For over three decades, Mimi O'Malley has been a deeply valued member of The Philadelphia Orchestra's family. A native Philadelphian, Mrs. O'Malley began her career with the Orchestra in 1960 in the accounting department, preparing the weekly Philadelphia Orchestra/Academy of Music payrolls and general ledger entries. In 1961 she became Secretary to the Assistant Manager, where her duties included assisting with Orchestra travel arrangements, sales of subscription tickets for the Orchestra's series in Baltimore and New York, and general secretarial work, which included determining artists' availabilities and soliciting repertoire.



In 1978 Mrs. O'Malley was promoted to the position of Secretary to the Executive Director (now President) with its attendant duties, including responsibilities for various Board committees. She currently also serves as Assistant Secretary of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association. In addition, since 1978 she has been responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Philadelphia Orchestra Federal Credit Union, founded by the Orchestra members themselves in 1958. Upon the retirement of Eugene Ormandy's long-time assistant in 1978, Mimi assumed the duties of Secretary to the Music Director, a position she has held throughout the tenures of Riccardo Muti and Wolfgang Sawallisch. Prior to her work with the Orchestra, she was a registered nurse at Bryn Mawr Hospital. She is a great lover of animals and birds and is an avid golfer. "To be part of the support structure of this fantastic organization is something most people can only dream of. I have been most fortunate."

## THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA AWARD

The Philadelphia Orchestra Award is given by the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association to one or more persons in the Orchestra family of Board members, volunteers, musicians, staff, and friends, or to an organization that has made exemplary contributions to the Philadelphia Orchestra Association.

The recipient may be recognized for their musicianship, artistic leadership, philanthropy, fundraising, innovation, management, education, governance, or dedicated service.

Tonight is the seventh presentation of the Philadelphia Orchestra Award. The recipient of the Award receives the magnificent crystal Trillium bowl, made by Steuben. The bowl is mounted on a base inscribed with the honoree's name and the date of the ceremony. Previous recipients were Mrs. Eugene Ormandy, Norman Carol, Doris Frankel, Polly Newbold, Joseph de Pasquale, Anthony Gigliotti, the Honorable and Mrs. Walter H. Annenberg, CIGNA Corporation, and David P. Eastburn.

The program book insert created when Mimi O'Malley was given the Philadelphia Orchestra Award in 2002



set up a PA system where anything being played on stage in the Academy came into the office, which was really neat. One year I heard 16 performances of *The Nutcracker*!”

Santarlaschi was “a lovely man who took care of his people,” Mimi recalls. One day an angry subscriber became abusive to the staff member responsible for ticket sales. “Get out,” he told her. “And she left.” Santarlaschi’s regular bridge games with musicians came in handy on tour, Mimi says. “In those days the Orchestra traveled by train, in sleeper cars. There were upper and lower bunks, and not everyone was happy with their assignments. But when they came after him to complain, the other bridge players said ‘Go away. He’s busy.’ They protected him.”

Part of Mimi’s job was to take minutes at meetings of The Philadelphia Orchestra Association’s Board of Directors. In the early days “everyone was afraid of the 3 Bs,” she remembers. Orville Bullitt, Charles G. Berwind, and C. Wanton Balis were tough and imperious. “But at the end of the year, if the finances were a few thousand dollars short, one of them would write a check.”

After Eugene Ormandy’s secretary died, Mimi was asked to handle his correspondence. Every morning, she would go to his home in the Barclay Hotel and take his dictation. “Then when I got it all typed up, I would take it back up to him because he always wanted to sign it himself.” At first, she had a manual typewriter and was thrilled when they gave her an IBM Selectric, and eventually an Executive typewriter. “But because of the proportional spacing, if you made a mistake you had to start all over again.” ➤



In Ormandy's later years, he sometimes wasn't well. "He called me all the time," Mimi remembers. "My number was 1911, but he would dial 911 and get the emergency response operators. They would say, 'No, Mr. Ormandy, this is not the right number.' They knew him well."

Mimi left the organization in 1968 but returned a decade later at Mr. Santarlasci's request. When he retired, she worked for Executive Directors Seymour Rosen and Stephen Sell. By then, her title was assistant to the executive director and music director.

Riccardo Muti became music director in 1980. "Maestro Muti is a wonderful, wonderful man. Extremely kind. It was a pleasure to work with him. When he first came in the 1970s, he was always sure of himself in music, but he spoke very little English. Esther Klein, the wife of Orchestra Board member Philip Klein, took him around and showed him the nice places to eat, things like that," Mimi remembers. "When his third child was born, his wife was in Italy, and he was here conducting. That was a hard time for him." She remembers shopping for a crib when the young family came to visit.

A high point for Mimi was when Muti was given an award in New Jersey. "He invited my husband, Frank, and me to go with him in the car. It was very laid back, not a formal occasion by any stretch, and it was fun, a lovely time."

She notes that, as executive director, Steve Sell "was very good at what he did and knew exactly what he wanted. He wasn't afraid of anything. Steve was his own man, and he did a wonderful job. It was a shame he got sick [with cancer]. He came into the office until two weeks before he died in 1989." General Manager Joseph H. Kluger became executive director, and later president, and Mimi's boss until she retired in 2004.

Meanwhile, Wolfgang Sawallisch had succeeded Muti as music director. Once again, Mimi had a front-row seat. "I worked with him for a long time," she says. "He was a fabulous musician, a fabulous pianist, and a wonderful man. He was very business-like, very Germanic, as makes sense. He and his wife were the perfect husband and wife, and when she died, he really took it hard. Every death is sad, of course, but he really suffered."

When Mimi retired, she received the Philadelphia Orchestra Award, given to a Board member, volunteer, musician, employee, "friend," or organization for extraordinary service to the Association. "It was a big honor, but I had to get up and make a speech. That didn't please me at all. But it was very nice."

The best part, says Mimi, was when "people would ask, 'What do you do?' And they would go, 'Oh, you work for the Orchestra!!' That was something I could be proud of. They say if you like your work, you never work a day in your life. I think that's very true."

*Judith Kurnick has written about music for the New York Times, the Philadelphia Inquirer, and media outlets in Europe. She was The Philadelphia Orchestra's vice president for communications from 1983 to 1989 and 2000 to 2005, and held the same role at the League of American Orchestras from 2008 to 2013.*

Scan the QR code to visit the Orchestra's special 125th anniversary website, including more oral histories.



Music Director Wolfgang  
Sawallisch and his wife,  
Mechthild, at the  
Academy of Music



# New Orchestra Recording



The Philadelphia Orchestra's newest recording on the Deutsche Grammophon (DG) label, released digitally in August, features William Grant Still's Second and Fourth symphonies and Margaret Bonds's *The Montgomery Variations*, all under the baton of Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Still's Symphony No. 2 ("Song of a New Race") was given its world premiere in 1937 by the Philadelphians and Leopold Stokowski, who said of Still, "He is one of our greatest American composers." The Symphony, as Still wrote, depicts "the American colored man of today, in so many instances a totally

new individual produced through the fusion of White, Indian and Negro bloods." The Symphony No. 4 from 1947 "is subtitled 'Autochthonous,' to explain that the music has its roots in our own soil," Still wrote, "and portrays—in a sense—the spirit of the American people." Margaret Bonds's *The Montgomery Variations*, from 1964, is the only purely orchestral work of hers to have survived. The genesis of the piece lies in the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, that killed four young girls and was a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement. The work draws upon key historical moments in the 1950s and '60s.

All three works on this new release were taken from live performances: Still's Fourth Symphony from October 2023 and the Second Symphony and *The Montgomery Variations* from January 2025. In his review for Bachtrack, Cameron Kelsall said of Still's Symphony No. 2, "the music feels tailor-made to this orchestra's strengths, with a luscious, vibrato-laden string complement that envelopes gossamer woodwinds and stormy percussive elements." Of the Bonds he wrote: "The Orchestra traced a historical timeline across the work's seven movements, from the triumphantly defiant attitude of March to the soulful suspension in Lament... The concluding Benediction contained spiritual resolution and earthly resolve." Kelsall continued by writing that the "two works by 20th-century American composers ... deserve a wider hearing and that he [Yannick] and the ensemble delivered with conviction and panache." On Concerto.net Linda Holt called Still's Fourth Symphony "a work of scope, originality, and vitality." And Kelsall from Bachtrack wrote, "Nézet-Séguin drew the best out of every section in the Orchestra."



# Noted in Passing

The Philadelphia Orchestra mourns the passing of former Principal Bassoon Bernard Garfield on April 29 at the age of 100.



Born in Brooklyn, New York, Mr. Garfield served in the United States Army from 1943 to 1946. He received an associate diploma from the Royal College of Music in 1945, a bachelor's degree in English literature from New York University in 1948, and a master's in composition from Columbia University in 1950. In 1946 he organized the New York Woodwind Quintet, of which he was director until 1957. He was principal bassoon of the Little Orchestra Society of New York from 1949 to 1957 and principal bassoon of the New York City Ballet Orchestra from 1950 to 1957. He joined The Philadelphia Orchestra as principal bassoon in 1957 and held the position until his retirement in 2000.

Mr. Garfield appeared numerous times as soloist with The Philadelphia Orchestra, performing a wide range of works by such composers as Vivaldi, Haydn, Mozart, Richard Strauss, Karl-Heinz Köper, and the world premiere of Ezra Laderman's Concerto for Flute, Bassoon, and Orchestra with his colleague Murray Panitz. He also appeared as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony and the Little Orchestra Society of New York. His solo recordings with The Philadelphia Orchestra include Mozart's Bassoon Concerto and Sinfonia concertante, and Weber's Hungarian Rondo; he also made numerous recordings with the New York Woodwind Quintet. An influential teacher, he was on the faculties of the Yale School of Music, the Aspen Institute, the Curtis Institute of Music, and Temple University's Esther Boyer College of Music. Many of his students occupy positions in some of the world's finest orchestras, including Philadelphia Orchestra Principal Bassoon Daniel Matsukawa, Co-Principal Bassoon Mark Gagliotti, and contrabassoonist Holly Blake.

**2025–2026 | 126th Season**  
**Marian Anderson Hall**

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Friday, October 3, at 2:00

Saturday, October 4, at 8:00

Sunday, October 5, at 2:00

**Marin Alsop** Conductor

**Yunchan Lim** Piano

**Adams** *The Rock You Stand On*

*World premiere—co-commissioned by Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra*

**Bartók** Piano Concerto No. 3 / 

I. Allegretto

II. Adagio religioso—Poco più mosso—Tempo I—


III. Allegro vivace—Presto—Tempo I

## Intermission

**Prokofiev** Selections from *Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 64

1. Montagues and Capulets
2. A Scene
3. Morning Dance
4. The Young Juliet
5. Masks
6. Friar Laurence
7. Dance
8. The Death of Tybalt
9. Dance of the Antilles Girls
10. Morning Serenade (Aubade)
11. Romeo at Juliet's Tomb
12. The Death of Juliet

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

/  designates a work that was given its world or United States premiere by The Philadelphia Orchestra, part of the Orchestra's 125th anniversary celebration.

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](http://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. 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 14th 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 esteemed 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, throughout 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 programs connect, uplift, and celebrate nearly 40,000 Philadelphians and 250 schools from diverse communities annually, through inclusive arts education and vibrant engagement that reflect our city's voices and expand access to creative opportunities. Students, families, and other community members can enjoy free and discounted experiences with The Philadelphia Orchestra through programs such as the Jane H. Kesson School Concerts, Family Concerts, Open Rehearsals, PlayINs, and Our City, Your Orchestra community concerts.

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 became the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange through music.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 15 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](http://www.philorch.org).



# Principal Guest Conductor



Cigata Photo

One of the foremost conductors of our time, **Marin Alsop** is principal guest conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra, with which she made her debut in 1990. She is the first woman to serve as the head of major orchestras in the United States, South America, Austria, and Great Britain. She is also the first and only conductor to receive a MacArthur Fellowship. This season marks her third as artistic director and chief conductor of the Polish National Radio Symphony and her third as principal guest conductor of London's Philharmonia. She is

also chief conductor of the Ravinia Festival and the first music director of the National Orchestral Institute + Festival at the University of Maryland. She served as chief conductor of the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony from 2019 to 2025; she is now honorary conductor. Season highlights include her five-concert Carnegie Hall Perspectives series, Washington National Opera's new production of Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and a tour to Japan with the Polish National Radio Symphony. She also conducts the Chicago, Dallas, Houston, and ORF Vienna Radio symphonies; the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin; and London's Philharmonia. Last season, she became the first United States-born woman to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic.

In 2021 Ms. Alsop assumed the title of music director laureate and OrchKids founder of the Baltimore Symphony. During her 14-year tenure as its music director, she led the orchestra on its first European tour in 13 years, released multiple award-winning recordings, and conducted more than two dozen world premieres, as well as founding OrchKids, its groundbreaking music education program for Baltimore's most disadvantaged youth. In 2019, after seven years as music director, she became conductor of honor of Brazil's São Paulo Symphony. Deeply committed to new music, she was music director of California's Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music for 25 years, leading 174 premieres.

Recognized with *BBC Music Magazine's* "Album of the Year" and Emmy nominations in addition to GRAMMY, Classical BRIT, and *Gramophone* awards, Ms. Alsop's discography comprises more than 200 titles on the Decca, Harmonia Mundi, Sony Classical, Naxos, Pentatone, and LSO labels. Among her many awards and academic positions are the 2025 Golden Baton Award, the highest accolade conferred by the League of American Orchestras; the 2019 World Economic Forum's Crystal Award; the 2021–22 Harman/Eisner Artist-in-Residence of the Aspen Institute Arts Program; and the 2020 artist-in-residence at Vienna's University of Music and Performing Arts. She is currently director of graduate conducting at the Johns Hopkins University's Peabody Institute. She holds honorary doctorates from Yale University, Johns Hopkins University, and the Juilliard School. To promote and nurture the careers of her fellow women conductors, Ms. Alsop founded the Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship in 2002. *The Conductor*, an Emmy-nominated feature documentary about her life, debuted at New York's 2021 Tribeca Film Festival.

# Soloist



James Hole

**Yunchan Lim** makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. Since becoming the youngest person ever to win gold at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition at the age of 18 in 2022, his ascent to international stardom has been meteoric. He has made orchestral debuts with the New York, Los Angeles, Munich, Tokyo, and Seoul philharmonics; the Chicago, Lucerne, BBC, and Boston symphonies; and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, among others. Recital appearances have included Carnegie Hall, the Verbier Festival, Wigmore Hall, the Concertgebouw, and Suntory Hall. He regularly works with conductors such as Marin Alsop, Myung-Whun Chung, Gustavo Dudamel, James Gaffigan, Paavo Järvi, Cristian Măcelaru, Klaus Mäkelä, Gianandrea Noseda, Antonio Pappano, Matthias Pintscher, Tugan Sokhiev, Thomas Søndergård, Jaap van Zweden, and Kazuki Yamada.

In addition to these current performances, highlights of Mr. Lim's 2025–26 season include debuts with the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and the Royal Concertgebouw and Gewandhaus orchestras and returns to the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics, the Boston and Chicago symphonies, and the Orchestre de Paris. He will be heard in recital in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, and at Carnegie Hall and Wigmore Hall. As an exclusive Decca Classics recording artist, his acclaimed debut studio album, *Chopin Études Opp. 10 & 25*, has gone triple platinum in South Korea and topped the classical charts around the world. The album won a 2024 *Gramophone* Award in the piano category and Mr. Lim was named Young Artist of the Year. He also received a prestigious Diapason d'Or and was nominated for an Opus Klassik. He made history winning three awards at the *BBC Music Magazine* Awards, including Recording of the Year. His other Decca releases include his momentous performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3, live from the Cliburn Competition, and Tchaikovsky's *The Seasons*. Previous releases include his award-winning Cliburn performance of Liszt's *Transcendental Études* (Steinway & Sons), Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 (Universal Music Group), and his appearance on KBS's 2020 *Young Musicians of Korea* album. Since January 2024 he has been an Apple Music Classical Global Ambassador.

Born in Siheung, Korea, Mr. Lim began piano lessons at age seven. He entered the Music Academy of the Seoul Arts Center the next year and at age 13 met his teacher and mentor, Minsoo Sohn. A year later, in 2018, he captured international attention when he won both Second Prize and the Chopin Special Award in his first competition: the Cleveland International Piano Competition for Young Artists. That same year, he won both the Third and Audience prizes at the Cooper International Competition, which also provided him the opportunity to perform with the Cleveland Orchestra. He is currently studying at the New England Conservatory of Music with Mr. Sohn.

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

1935

**Prokofiev**

*Romeo and Juliet*

**Music**

Orff

*Carmina burana*

**Literature**

Steinbeck

*Tortilla Flat*

**Art**

Dalí

*Giraffe on Fire*

**History**

Roosevelt signs

Social Security

Act

1945

**Bartók**

Piano Concerto

No. 3

**Music**

Strauss

*Metamorphosen*

**Literature**

Orwell

*Animal Farm*

**Art**

Moore

*Family Group*

**History**

WWII:

Surrender of

Germany

What better way to begin The Philadelphia Orchestra's 125th anniversary celebration than by co-commissioning and giving the world premiere of a new work by the eminent American composer John Adams? Adams wrote *The Rock You Stand On* as a gift for Marin Alsop, one of his closest collaborators and the Orchestra's principal guest conductor. Adams remarks that the title "is not meant to suggest anything other than perhaps hinting at the qualities—loyalty, determination, devotion—that make Marin Alsop so very special to me."

Béla Bartók fled his native Hungary during the Second World War and settled in America, where he died of leukemia in September 1945. He had nearly completed his Third Piano Concerto, written as a birthday gift for his pianist wife. Philadelphia Orchestra violist Tibor Serly orchestrated the final 17 measures of the Concerto and the Orchestra gave its world premiere in 1946.

Sergei Prokofiev's brilliant ballet *Romeo and Juliet* premiered in 1938, two years after the composer returned to the Soviet Union following nearly two decades living in America and Western Europe. He made three different concert suites for independent orchestral performance, from which we hear a prime selection today.

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

## *The Rock You Stand On*

John Adams

Born in Worcester, Massachusetts, February 15, 1947

Now living in Berkeley, California

Deborah O'Grady



Listening to John Adams often feels like stepping into a drama already in motion. His scores unfold with a sense of live action—bursts of rhythm, collisions of sonority, sudden shifts of focus—propelling the ear through landscapes that flare into brilliance before swerving in unexpected directions. At once inventive and unmistakable, his voice has been continually evolving throughout his career, shaping drama and energy into new forms—in the concert hall and opera house alike.

*The Rock You Stand On* was written as a gift for Marin Alsop, one of Adams's closest collaborators and a musician with whom he shares an unusual rapport. "She is one of the very few conductors whom I can trust to do the right thing with what I've written," he remarks. "She knows what I want. She understands it—she 'gets it.'" He adds that, beyond her musical insight, "as a person, she embodies inner strength and calm and generosity, qualities that have helped her endure the long and sometimes difficult course of her career, an odyssey that has taken her to where she is now—the indisputable model for a new generation of women conductors."

Alsop has long been an advocate for Adams, introducing his music at festivals, on recordings, and with major orchestras worldwide. Her advocacy has ranged from early performances at the Cabrillo Festival and with the Baltimore Symphony to major milestones such as the Metropolitan Opera's 2024 company premiere of *El Niño*—which also marked Alsop's own debut at the Met.

That history sets the stage for The Philadelphia Orchestra's world premiere in this program. In his new concert opener, Adams responds to Alsop's musical personality with a score of jolts and surges that flare into powerful orchestral eruptions. The composer notes: "The title, *The Rock You Stand On*, is non-specific and is not meant to suggest anything other than perhaps hinting at the qualities—loyalty, determination, devotion—that make Marin Alsop so very special to me."

**An Evolving Language** One of the most striking aspects of Adams's output is the way it both connects across decades and suddenly swerves into new territory. Each new piece seems to reinvent the form for its specific context or challenge: cross-references abound, but Adams resists the formulaic. His concertos, for example, have never followed a single model, but instead rethink the genre each time around.

The same is true of the compact orchestral opener. Adams has often returned to the genre as a kind of laboratory, reinventing it with each commission and infusing it with ideas recently—or even simultaneously—explored in larger-scale operas or orchestral works. *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* (1986)—a work Alsop has conducted to wide visibility at the BBC Proms—hurtles forward on the relentless tick of a woodblock, exhilarating in its Minimalist motoric drive. *Lollapalooza* (1995) takes a different tack, with punkishly syncopated accents that give the piece a swaggering, irreverent character. The much more recent *I Still Dance* (2019), written for Michael Tilson Thomas, layers buoyant syncopations into a jazzy celebration, with a prominent solo piano part adding a bright, percussive edge to the orchestral texture.

*The Rock You Stand On* joins this lineage while striking out in its own direction—volatile, angular, and closer in spirit to the layered rhythmic crosscurrents of Adams's most recent opera, *Antony and Cleopatra* (2022), an expansive setting of Shakespeare's tragedy, than to the sleek propulsion of *Short Ride*.

**A Closer Look** For all its large, quasi-Straussian orchestral forces, *The Rock You Stand On* often sounds surprisingly taut and transparent. Adams works with spare textures: rhythmic cells tossed between instrumental groups, sharp registral separation, and sudden unisons that give the music a clean, chiseled profile. What propels the piece is a dense layering of rhythms, with multiple pulses unfolding and colliding at once.

Equally distinctive is the way Adams constantly interrupts momentum. Abrupt pauses and silences slice into the flow, creating a sense of stop-and-start animation. Just as the ear begins to settle into a groove, the music halts, pivots, and springs off in another direction. The syncopated shocks that punctuate these shifts recall Stravinsky's rhythmic punches—not a steady motor but a series of unpredictable ruptures. The effect is paradoxical: fragmented enough to feel unsettling, yet brimming with energy that makes the piece exhilarating to hear. In this volatility one can sense the persistence and resilience Adams associates with Alsop, qualities he invoked in describing the piece's title.

Adams notes that “there is a certain ‘big band’ quality to the ensemble writing, with the full orchestra at times executing irregular, bouncing figurations that are driven by an underlying jazz-inflected pulse.” Brass chords crash in with irregular riffs, while percussion, celesta, and harp flash bright details across the texture, turning the full orchestra into a kind of outsized rhythm section. The sonic restlessness produces a sense of shifting ground beneath the listener's feet—one tectonic shift at a time.

At times, the writing seems to reach back into musical memory. Descending fragments in the minor recall the stormy DNA of the opening theme of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Near the close, the entire orchestra surges in contrary motion, swelling simultaneously upward and downward in a thrilling sonic spread reminiscent of the famous THX “Deep Note,” the cinematic sound logo that expands from a single pitch into a vast surround-sound chord. The final stroke is as enigmatic as it is decisive: a tam-tam crash immediately muted, its resonance abruptly cut off, leaving the audience suspended in silence.

*Thomas May is a writer, critic, educator, and translator whose work appears in the New York Times, Gramophone, Strings magazine, and other publications. The Lucerne Festival's English-language editor, he is also the U.S. correspondent for the Strad and program annotator for the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the Ojai Festival.*

*The Rock You Stand On was composed in 2024.*

*These are the world-premiere performances of the piece.*

*The score calls for three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, clarinet in E-flat, two clarinets in B-flat (II doubling clarinet in A), bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, tam-tam, vibraphone, xylophone), harp, piano, celesta, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 10 minutes.*

# The Music

## Piano Concerto No. 3

**Béla Bartók**

**Born in Nagyszentmiklos, Hungary (now Romania), March 25, 1881**

**Died in New York City, September 26, 1945**



Béla Bartók wrote his first two piano concertos for himself and played the solo parts of both works at their premieres. The Third Concerto, which he composed in the United States, was intended for his second wife, the pianist Ditta Pasztory Bartók. Suffering from the illness that would soon claim his life, Bartók was thinking of giving Ditta a vehicle that could provide her with some income after his death.

**A Light and Graceful Work** We can find no trace of such gloomy thoughts in the Concerto itself. The work's tone

is lyrical and graceful throughout, the structure is of Mozartian clarity, and the whole composition is characterized by a lightness of touch that is rare in Bartók. Some critics have interpreted this stylistic change as a concession made to a conservative American public, but in fact, Bartók's evolution toward a warmer and more melodic style had begun almost a decade earlier with such pre-emigration works as the Second Violin Concerto and the Divertimento for Strings. At 64, dying of leukemia, Bartók was obviously not the same composer who had written *Allegro barbaro* or *The Miraculous Mandarin* in his younger years.

Yet the stylistic continuity between the earlier and the later Bartók is unbroken. Melodic and rhythmic elements derived from folk music are present in the Third Piano Concerto as much as they are in his earlier works, and the famous “nocturnal noises” in the Concerto's second movement belong to a group of “night musics” that Bartók had been writing since 1926, when he composed “Night Music” as the fourth movement of his piano suite *Out of Doors*.

**A Closer Look** The Third Concerto opens with a peaceful theme (*Allegretto*) played by the pianist with both hands in unison against a rocking accompaniment in the strings. Bartók adheres to traditional sonata form with a scherzando (playful) second theme, an expansive—though relatively short—development section, and a regular recapitulation.

The second-movement *Adagio religioso* is Bartók's personal response to the slow movement of Beethoven's String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132, titled by Beethoven “Holy Song of Thanksgiving of a Convalescent to the Deity in the Lydian Mode.” A quiet chorale melody, played by the piano, is surrounded by solemn interludes on the strings. Then suddenly the tempo becomes faster and eerie noises begin to appear. The music seems to imitate insects buzzing and birds chirping; the noises rise from a mysterious pianissimo to a full forte with the strong voices of the trumpet and xylophone joining



with the more and more elaborate arpeggios of the piano. This intermezzo ends as suddenly as it began; the chorale returns in the woodwinds, interwoven with a new piano part that sounds almost like a two-part invention by J.S. Bach, with a few brief cadenzas interspersed.

The cheerful main theme of the finale (**Allegro vivace**) is derived from a type of Hungarian folksong that Bartók had discussed at length in his ethnomusicological writings. The movement is cast in rondo form, with fugal episodes that again pay homage to Bach. At the time of Bartók's death, the final 17 bars of this movement were left unorchestrated; this accounts for little more than 10 seconds of music. Bartók felt so close to completing the piece that he drew the final double bar followed by the word *vége* (the end)—a word that, sadly, took on a symbolic meaning shortly after it was written down. His friend and compatriot, Tibor Serly, a violist in The Philadelphia Orchestra from 1928 to 1936, completed the orchestration.

Following her husband's death, Ditta was in no condition to play the premiere of the Concerto; this honor went to another Bartók student from Hungary, György Sándor. Ditta, who returned to Hungary in 1946, did not perform the work until many years later.

—Peter Laki

*Peter Laki served as program annotator for the Cleveland Orchestra from 1990 to 2007. He is currently visiting associate professor at Bard College.*

*Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 3 was composed in 1945. György Sándor presented the world premiere of the Third Concerto, on February 8, 1946, with Eugene Ormandy and The Philadelphia Orchestra. Most recently on subscription, the work was performed by pianist Hélène Grimaud and Yannick Nézet-Séguin in September 2019.*

*The Philadelphians recorded the work in 1946 with Sándor and Ormandy for CBS.*

*In addition to solo piano, Bartók scored the piece for two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), two clarinets (II doubling bass clarinet), two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tam-tam, triangle, xylophone), and strings.*

*The Concerto runs approximately 25 minutes in performance.*

# The Music

## Selections from *Romeo and Juliet*

**Sergei Prokofiev**

**Born in Sontsovka, Ukraine, April 23, 1891**

**Died in Moscow, March 5, 1953**



Many Russian composers of the mid-20th century were compelled to write under the oppressive restrictions of Stalinism. But Sergei Prokofiev lived in the Soviet Union by choice, not by fate. After establishing a youthful reputation as the next Russian *enfant terrible*, then tempering that reputation with more orthodox works like the “Classical” Symphony and the First Violin Concerto, he decided to leave his native Russia in 1918. Even though his Modernism would have been welcomed at first by the post-Revolutionary Communist

government, Prokofiev hoped to pursue a career in the West, moving first to the United States before settling in France. But like his compatriot Rachmaninoff, he felt alienated while abroad, separated from his friends and his culture. He gradually re-established ties with Moscow, and with assurances that he would be given special advantages and privileged treatment, moved back to the Soviet Union in early 1936.

Prokofiev was, however, no communist. Soviet apparatchiks were consistently suspicious of his experiences in the West. He was denounced in the 1948 “purge” at the Union of Soviet Composers, which also humiliated Shostakovich and Khachaturian. And Stalin personally intervened to complicate Prokofiev’s late career. His spirit broken, his health (which was never robust) worsened. It seemed somehow emblematic of his career that Prokofiev died on the same day as Stalin: March 5, 1953. It took almost a week for the news of this great composer’s death to be reported in the Russian newspapers, and even then it was hidden in the middle pages. He was always more highly regarded in the West than in his own country.

Just as Prokofiev’s career path followed an uneasy balance of Western and Russian experiences, his music also wavered between acerbic Modernism and the influence of traditional musical styles, both national and foreign. His compositional style blends the familiar with the abstract; he was able to avoid the cloying simplicity of much Soviet-produced music while largely eschewing the experiments of the Western avant-garde.

One constant thread in Prokofiev’s oeuvre was his interest in music for the stage, and his best-known works tend to be inherently dramatic. From the operas *The Love for Three Oranges* and *War and Peace* to the melodrama of *Peter and the Wolf* and his most famous ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*, he excelled in creating musical narratives.

**An Often-Told Story** The commission for *Romeo and Juliet* began with an inquiry from the Kirov Ballet in 1934, while Prokofiev was still living abroad. This tale of “star-crossed

lovers,” doomed to a tragic end, was already well known not just to theater audiences, of course, but also through its symphonic and operatic treatments over the previous centuries. A German *Singspiel* by Georg Benda in the 18th century paved the way for an 1830 opera by Vincenzo Bellini (*I Capuleti e i Montecchi*) and Charles Gounod’s beloved *Roméo et Juliette* from 1867. Hector Berlioz’s operatically conceived “dramatic symphony” *Roméo et Juliette* was premiered in 1839, and numerous other composers in the 19th and early 20th centuries had translated the story’s impassioned drama and deep tragedy onto the opera and concert stages. But for Prokofiev, and the Kirov audiences, the most significant forerunner was undoubtedly Tchaikovsky’s *Romeo and Juliet* fantasy-overture for orchestra, which was premiered in its third and final version in 1886—well within the memories of older audience members and music administrators in 1934.

The Kirov’s director, Sergei Radlov, had worked with Prokofiev on *The Love for Three Oranges* some years earlier, and asked the composer in 1934 if he might be interested in writing a *Romeo and Juliet* ballet for the following season. It was an important development in Prokofiev’s career, as commissions from Moscow rather than the West would help facilitate the composer’s planned return to Russia. Radlov and Adrian Piotrovsky, the Kirov’s dramaturg, worked on a scenario for the ballet that adhered to the government-imposed precepts of the “*drambalet*,” which replaced the traditional virtuosic displays of classical ballet with pantomime and Russian folk-inspired dance movements intended to highlight a dramatic narrative. Ballet had been co-opted to support the Soviet ideals of unity and hard work. From the Kirov’s point of view, though, *Romeo and Juliet* seemed the perfect vehicle: Tchaikovsky-esque in subject matter, but open to a more “Soviet” treatment.

**From Theater to Theater** Prokofiev worked on this *Romeo and Juliet* project during 1935, fully aware that the Kirov’s audience was probably expecting something a little more traditional than what he had recently been producing. But before the score was complete, the Kirov backed out of the deal, and the composer was compelled to find a new company. He approached the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre, which initially signed a contract (including a clause that Piotrovsky would stay on the project) but then also broke it, declaring the music “undanceable.”

The Bolshoi had also tried to give the work a happy ending, creating (according to the composer) “quite a fuss” among Russian Shakespeare scholars. Believing that it’s easier for dancers to portray living characters than dead ones, the Bolshoi’s choreographers had decided that at the conclusion Romeo should arrive one minute earlier to find Juliet still alive. Prokofiev composed music for this “happy ending,” but had second thoughts when a friend remarked that even this music was not especially joyful. Prokofiev later recalled, “After several conferences with the choreographers, it was found that the tragic ending could be expressed in the dance and in due time the music for that ending was written.” But the ballet was still not performed.

In 1937 the Leningrad School of Choreography also signed a production contract only to later renege. In the meantime, Piotrovsky had been denounced in *Pravda* as a “degenerate modernist” and the as-yet unproduced ballet had been tainted by that association. Despite these setbacks, Prokofiev revised the music into two orchestral suites and 10 piano pieces,

which were well-received in 1936 and 1937. (Prokofiev also published a third orchestral suite in 1946.) He recorded some of the ballet's music in 1938 with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra.

**Finally, a Ballet Premiere** The world premiere of *Romeo and Juliet* as a fully staged ballet was given at the provincial theater in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in December 1938. (Prokofiev was denied permission to leave the Soviet Union and did not attend.) But it was the Soviet premiere by the Kirov in January 1940, with a significantly revised score, that established the work as a classic. The production was awarded a Stalin Prize, and the 1955 film version of the ballet was nominated for the Palm d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Now a staple in the ballet repertoire, Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* has been choreographed by dozens of dance luminaires over the years, including Frederick Ashton, John Cranko, Kenneth MacMillan, and Rudolf Nureyev.

Outside of the concert hall and ballet theater, Prokofiev's music for *Romeo and Juliet* continues to find a wide audience through cinema and television, with the "Dance of the Knights" (titled "Montagues and Capulets" in the orchestral suites) emerging as a popular excerpt in contexts ranging from *The Simpsons* and *Caligula* to a long-running television commercial for perfume. Though this single excerpt provides a rather limited sampling of the full drama of Prokofiev's entire score, it serves as a familiar point of entry into this vivid and remarkable composition.

—Luke Howard

*Luke Howard is associate director of the School of Music at Brigham Young University, and for many years wrote program notes for The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Aspen Music Festival, and Utah Opera. His research focuses on classical music in popular culture and the reception histories of well-known concert works.*

*Romeo and Juliet was composed from 1935 to 1936.*

*Pierre Monteux was on the podium for the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of music from Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet, in January 1945 (in a performance of the First Suite). Most recently on subscription Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducted excerpts in April 2019 with Brian Sanders' JUNK.*

*The Orchestra recorded several movements from the ballet in 1981 for EMI, under Riccardo Muti's direction.*

*The score for the excerpts heard today includes piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, cornet, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, maracas, orchestra bells, snare drum, tambourine, triangle, xylophone), harp, piano, celesta, and strings.*

*The excerpts on today's concert run approximately 40 minutes in performance.*

# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

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

**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

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

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

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

**Divertimento:** A piece of entertaining music in several movements

**Fantasy:** A composition free in form and more or less fantastic in character

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

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

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

**Intermezzo:** A short connecting instrumental movement in an opera or other musical work

**Invention:** A short vocal or instrumental piece with no special definite characteristics apart from novelty of material or form

**Lydian:** The common name for the fifth of the eight church modes

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

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

**Modernism:** A consequence of the fundamental conviction among successive generations of composers since 1900 that the means of musical expression in the 20th century must be adequate to the unique and radical character of the age

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

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

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

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

**Singspiel:** A type of German opera established during the 18th century; usually light and characterized by spoken interludes

**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

**Tonic:** The keynote of a scale

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Allegretto:** A tempo between walking speed and fast

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Barbaro:** Fierce

**Mosso:** Moved

**Presto:** Very fast

**Religioso:** Sacred, devout

**Vivace:** Lively

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Più:** More

**Poco:** Little, a bit

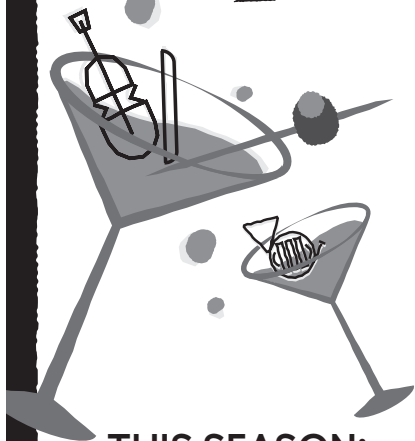
## DYNAMIC MARKS

**Forte (f):** Loud

**Pianissimo (pp):** Very soft

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*For more information, please contact Ruth Auslander, managing director of institutional giving, at 215.790.5829 or rauslander@ensembleartsp Philly.org.*

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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.

*For more information about the Volunteer Committees for The Philadelphia Orchestra, please contact Samantha Noll, assistant director of development events and volunteer relations, at 215.893.1956 or [snoll@philorch.org](mailto:snoll@philorch.org).*

*List complete as of July 23, 2025*

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Individuals who have included The Philadelphia Orchestra in their estate plans are recognized through membership in the Frances Anne Wister Society. Miss Wister made a long-lasting mark on the Orchestra through decades of volunteerism and by leaving a major portion of her estate in support of its continued excellence. We gratefully acknowledge the generosity and foresight of those who have joined the Wister Society, and we welcome others to follow their example and make the Orchestra the beneficiary of a bequest or other form of planned gift.

*If you would like more information about how to make a planned gift to the Orchestra, please contact Helen Escaravage, managing director of philanthropic engagement, at 215.893.1819 or [hescav@philorch.org](mailto:hescav@philorch.org).*

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