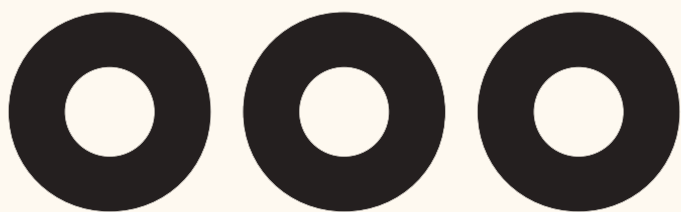


# PHILADELPHIA/ORCHESTRA

Yannick Nézet-Séguin · Music & Artistic Director



*Inspired by a 1932–33 Orchestra program cover*

**PLAYBILL®**

NOVEMBER 2025

# Contents

## November 2025



**Page 2**

### From the President and CEO

**Page 9**

### Marian Anderson Hall

**Page 10**

### Witness to History: Carole Haas Gravagno

Part of a season-long series  
of oral histories

**Page 13**

### *I Knew a Man Who Knew Brahms*

**Page 16**

### Noted in Passing

**Page 19**

### The Program

#### **On the Cover:**

A program book cover from the 1932–33 season that  
was the inspiration for this month's program cover

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# From the President and CEO



Jeffrey

Dear Friends:

The Philadelphia Orchestra celebrates its 125th anniversary on November 16, an incredible milestone that has us reflecting on our rich history. Who better to help us recall the key memories and milestones than the artists, patrons, staff, and supporters who were part of these seminal moments? We have embarked on an oral history project to help us capture, for posterity, the stories of our history. These video anecdotes and blog posts will be featured on a special 125th anniversary section of our website, on social media, and in *Playbill*. It's been fascinating to hear

directly from so many people who had front-row seats to the magic, from stories about Leopold Stokowski to the 9/11 Tribute Concert to the creation of the Kimmel Center. I hope you will find them as enjoyable and eye-opening as I have.

Another topic addressed in the oral histories is the Orchestra's role as a global cultural ambassador, which has been an important part of our identity from the earliest days. This season the ensemble undertakes three tours of America—beginning this month in North Carolina and continuing throughout the season in Florida and the Midwest—not only to celebrate our own birthday but also in honor of the country's upcoming 250th anniversary.

And last month several Orchestra musicians traveled to China for our 2025 Residency, continuing the unique relationship we have built with the people of China for over half a century, starting in 1973 when we became the first American orchestra to perform there. I first traveled to China with the Orchestra in 2012, shortly after joining the staff. The visit marked the start of our residency program there, a concerted effort to connect more deeply with the people of China in their communities, through music lessons in schools, performances in hospitals, master classes, events with diplomats and business leaders, and pop-up performances. It was a tremendous success and has informed every return visit since.

The Orchestra's activities on tour are just a microcosm of everything we do at home through both The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts, from world-class performances that span genres and interests to education and community programs that nurture the next generation of artists and audiences. As we celebrate the diversity of our vibrant community, we are proud to be a convener of creativity and a hub for civic participation—roles that are vital to our existence and our identity.

At the heart of what we do is our mission to share the transformative power of the performing arts with the widest possible audience. We are committed to ensuring that everyone feels welcome, inspired, and connected to the magic that happens here as we build a bright future for Philadelphia and shape the next 125 years of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Fleur".

Ryan Fleur  
President and CEO

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

2025–2026 Season

## Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Music and Artistic

Director

*Walter and Leonore*

*Amnenberg Chair*

## Marin Alsop

Principal Guest Conductor

*Ralph and Beth Johnston*

*Muller Chair*

## Joe Hisaishi

Composer-in-Residence

## Naomi Woo

Assistant Conductor

## Joseph Conyers

Education and

Community Ambassador

*Mark and Tobey Dichter*

*Chair*

## Charlotte Blake Alston

Storyteller, Narrator,

and Host

*Osagie and Losenge*

*Imasogie Chair*

## First Violins

David Kim, Concertmaster

*Dr. Benjamin Rush Chair*

Juliette Kang, First

Associate Concertmaster

*Joseph and Marie Field*

*Chair*

Christine Lim, Associate

Concertmaster

Marc Rovetti, Assistant

Concertmaster

*Dr. James F. Dougherty*

*Chair*

Barbara Govatos

*Robert E. Mortensen Chair*

Jonathan Beiler

Hirono Oka

Richard Amoroso

*Robert and Lynne Pollack*

*Chair*

Yayoi Numazawa

Jason DePue

*Larry A. Grika Chair*

Jennifer Haas

Miyo Curnow

Elina Kalendarova

Daniel Han

Julia Li

William Polk

Mei Ching Huang

## Second Violins

Kimberly Fisher, Principal

*Peter A. Benoliel Chair*

Paul Roby, Associate

Principal

*Sandra and David*

*Marshall Chair*

Dara Morales, Assistant

Principal

*Anne M. Buxton Chair*

Philip Kates

*Peter A. Benoliel Chair*

Davyd Booth

Paul Arnold

*Joseph Brodo Chair; given*

*by Peter A. Benoliel*

Boris Balter

Amy Oshiro-Morales

*Volunteer Committees*

*Chair*

Yu-Ting Chen

Jeoung-Yin Kim

Willa Finck

John Bian

MuChen Hsieh

Eliot Heaton

## Violas

Choong-Jin Chang,

Principal

*Ruth and A. Morris*

*Williams, Jr., Chair*

Kirsten Johnson,

Associate Principal

Kerri Ryan, Assistant

Principal

Burchard Tang

Renard Edwards

Anna Marie Ahn

Petersen

*Piasecki Family Chair*

David Nicastro

Che-Hung Chen

Rachel Ku

Marvin Moon

Meng Wang

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

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Principal

*Carole and Emilio*

*Gravagno Chair*

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Jiayin He

Michael Katz

Eugene Lin

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Joseph Conyers,  
Principal

*Carole and Emilio  
Gravagno Chair*

# Music and Artistic Director



London Neudeman

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).

# 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.



# Witness to History: Carole Haas Gravagno

Part of a season-long series of oral histories

By Judith Kurnick



Kelly & Massa

Carole Haas Gravagno at the opening of the Kimmel Center on December 15, 2001, with Philadelphia Orchestra Music Director Wolfgang Sawallisch (left) and her husband, Philadelphia Orchestra bass player Emilio Gravagno

It would be tough to find someone who has worn more hats at The Philadelphia Orchestra than Carole Haas Gravagno. Officially, she has been a Board member, a major philanthropic supporter, and a tireless advocate for music education. But it was Gravagno's unofficial role as "harmonizer" that led to her least expected hat: that of Orchestra spouse.

Growing up in Philadelphia and North Carolina, music was ever present, Gravagno remembers. Her parents, who sang in a chorus, kept their five kids quiet on long car trips by singing in harmony. Her surgeon father would come home at night, put on the latest recording by Eugene Ormandy and The Philadelphia Orchestra, and conduct along with the music. "He was so excited, the happiest you ever saw," she recalls. A piano student, Gravagno was thrilled when her mother's twin cousins came to visit. "They were concert pianists. They would play our piano and they'd play together and then one would get up and they'd swap places; they'd play the other part. It was such fun. I always got inspired to practice more when they would come to town."

Most important to her later work, "When I lived in Philadelphia, from the first to the fourth grade," she continues, "we had music in school every day. We weren't doing instrumental music, but we sang every single day. There was a piano in the classroom. They would open all the doors between the different classrooms, and we'd all sing together."



When Gravagno married and moved back to Pennsylvania in 1965, she attended Orchestra concerts until children and work kept her too busy. Fast forward to 1989, when a request from a friend set her on a path toward the orchestra world. She was asked to help with a presentation of the American Soviet Youth Orchestra. “They were bringing 50 Soviets and 50 American musicians,” Gravagno explains, “to play together on the Mann Music Center stage. [First ladies] Mrs. Bush and Mrs. Gorbachev were the honorary sponsors. My job was to help raise money and to find placements; they were going to stay in homes, one Soviet and one American in each of the homes. I thought, how am I going to do this? So I called The Philadelphia Orchestra. I don’t even remember who I talked to. I just said, ‘I need somebody to help me.’”

The Orchestra lent a staff member, and the event was successful on multiple levels. “There were 5,000 people in the audience, from all walks of life. It was just the kind of place that I enjoyed being. It was wonderful to see these musicians, Soviets and Americans. Even though they didn’t speak each other’s language, they did speak the music. And you could tell how they used the music to help them communicate.”

After this success, Philadelphia Orchestra Board Chair Peter Benoliel invited Gravagno to join the Board. Unfortunately, her husband, Otto Haas, had recently been diagnosed with prostate cancer, so the answer was “yes, but not now.” Meanwhile, Gravagno had become a performing arts champion. An early project helped create what became the Kimmel Center. “I was asked by Tony Checchia to help the Chamber Music Society buy the Prince Theater. There had been a big fire across the street and that whole block was a mess. So I went to [Philadelphia’s then-mayor] Ed Rendell and said, ‘I’m interested in doing something on Chestnut Street because there is no performing space for a small group, like chamber music, in the city.’ That was just important. And he said, ‘Well, if you’ll give us that money so we can buy the property at Broad and Spruce, I’ll assure you that we will build a space for chamber music.’” After discussing it with her husband, Gravagno went ahead with the gift for the land.

Otto Haas died in January 1994. In 1995, Benoliel repeated his invitation. “He was such a persuasive gentleman,” Gravagno recalls. “And I said, ‘Sure, I’d be happy to do that.’” Naturally, she was asked to serve on the New Hall Committee. But her heart lay in her second assignment. “The Artistic Committee was fascinating,” she recalls. “It was really the Artistic and Education Committee because they were all in one. I did not understand why there weren’t two committees, because artistic took up the whole time and a very little bit of time was devoted to education. Finally, after many years, I convinced [Orchestra President] Joe Kluger that it would be better to have two different committees, one for each. It was a long process to get that moving. Today, I’m so glad that that attitude has changed.”

Gravagno threw herself into developing and supporting music education projects. A major one was a collaboration among the Orchestra, Settlement Music School, and the School District of Philadelphia. The goal was to bring musicians to certain schools four times a year to show students what was possible with instruments. If students then wanted lessons, the school music teachers would teach them. When Orchestra musicians hesitated based on past concerns, Gravagno convened a





Carole Haas Gravagno with Philadelphia Orchestra Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin following a rehearsal with students led by Yannick at KIPP West Philadelphia Preparatory Charter School

lunch and pleaded with them. “We used to have one of the most phenomenal music programs in the country,” she said. “A lot of you came from our schools, and then those programs were dismantled because of money. Some places still have music, but the places that really need it do not. You are the star musicians in the city, and if you aren’t doing something to help the people here learn about music, who is?”

The musicians agreed to participate, and the program had some wonderful response but kept facing challenges in the public schools. Gravagno eventually moved it to St. Francis de Sales, a Catholic school, where it thrived for several years.

So, what about that Orchestra spouse hat? It all started in 1996, when the Orchestra musicians were on strike, a miserable experience for everyone involved. After a contentious Board meeting, Gravagno went downstairs to leave and saw the picket line. “It was freezing cold, and these musicians were out there in their parkas. They had their signs, and this nice man walked up to me and said, ‘Would you sign my petition?’” She later learned he was Emilio “Lee” Gravagno, one of the bass players.

It wasn’t until months later that the encounter took on new meaning. “After the strike was over, the tension among the musicians, the staff, and the Board was awful.” Gravagno decided to travel on the upcoming tour and try to “figure out what I could do as a Board member to help heal some of these wounds.” She planned to “just listen,” and ask for any ideas people thought could bring positive change. “I got a tap on my shoulder, and it was Emilio. He said, ‘Would you have lunch with me? There are a few things I could tell you about the Orchestra that I think would be helpful.’ So I had lunch with him. Years later he told me, ‘I had ulterior motives.’”

When they got home, Gravagno debriefed with the musicians after a rehearsal. Emilio was distressed because his car was missing. “I gave him a lift home, and we went to dinner. That was the beginning. After we got married, we had a reception for everybody in the Academy Ballroom: musicians and their spouses, Board members, ushers, staff, everybody connected with the Orchestra. We had dinner, we had a band, we had a wonderful time, all together. We tried to show how opposites could attract, how we could all work and be constructive together.”

Thirty years on, Emilio has passed, but Carole Haas Gravagno is still harmonizing.

*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.

# ***I Knew a Man Who Knew Brahms***

**Nancy Shear's new memoir provides a rare, behind-the-scenes look at the inner workings of The Philadelphia Orchestra and her time as Leopold Stokowski's musical assistant**

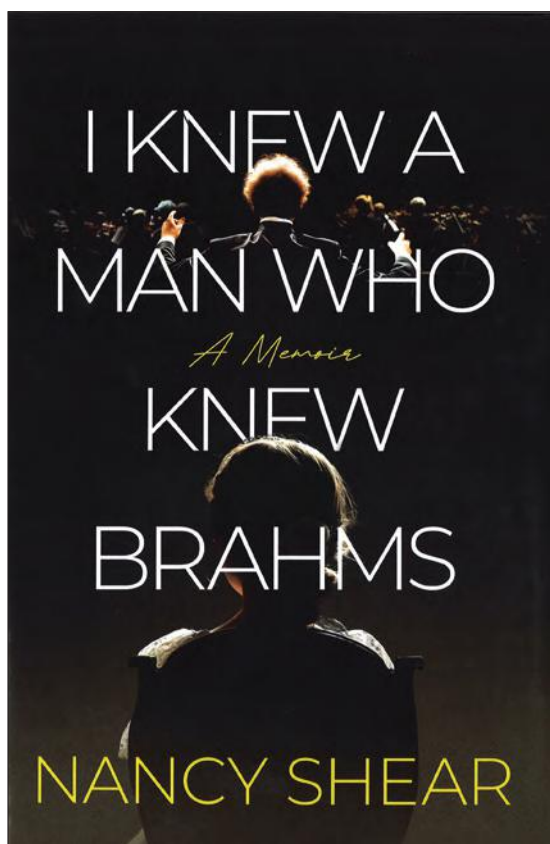
Nancy Shear was only 15 when she began sneaking into Philadelphia Orchestra concerts through the stage door, and 17 when she was hired as a member of the Orchestra's library staff to help prepare the music; one year later, she became Leopold Stokowski's musical assistant. Being young and female, she was a pioneer in both positions.

Her new memoir, *I Knew a Man Who Knew Brahms*, published by Regalo Press this past May, is a vivid personal account of a Golden Age in classical music—the 2nd half of the 20th century. It takes readers into the homes, studios, and minds of legendary artists with whom Shear shared close personal relationships, including Mstislav Rostropovich, Eugene Ormandy, and members of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

"A fascinating, superbly written coming-of-age saga."—Words and Music blog, B.A. Nilsson

"Shear contributes many a keen personal anecdote... [Her] book is as honest and unassuming as [Leopold] Stokowski was evasive and flamboyant."

—*The Wall Street Journal*



# Noted in Passing

The Philadelphia Orchestra mourns the passing of former assistant head usher Antoinette DuBiel on September 8, former Orchestra violinist Yumi Ninomiya Scott on September 10, and former Orchestra violinist Vladimir Shapiro on August 19.



**Antoinette DuBiel** was born into a music-loving Italian-American family in South Philadelphia and grew up in Chestnut Hill. She started taking piano lessons at a young age and said that “music was like part of breathing.” She first attended a Philadelphia Orchestra concert around the age of 12. Life took her down a non-musical path for a time, working in real estate, getting married, and having a family. But music continued to be a big part of her life, and she decided to enroll at Chestnut Hill College where she graduated with a performance degree. The opportunity to usher presented itself in 1994. Both her husband and daughter were ushers at the Academy of Music. One day she went with them to hear a Philadelphia Orchestra concert and it turned out they were hiring. With her love of music and her people skills, it was a natural fit.

With over 30 years of dedicated service first at the Academy of Music and then at the Kimmel Center, Antoinette was a fixture at concerts. She took her job seriously, not wanting anything to interfere with the audience’s enjoyment of the performance. Over the course of her long tenure, she became friends with audience members, musicians, and staff. Her devotion to her job and to the Orchestra was unparalleled. As she said back in 2018 when asked how she felt about being an usher: “It makes my heart wiggle just talking about it; it’s just where I need to be!”

**Yumi Ninomiya Scott** began playing the violin at the age of four in her native Japan. After several years of study at the Toho Conservatory in Tokyo, she was accepted, in 1961, as a pupil of Ivan Galamian at the Curtis Institute of Music. She made her solo debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra as a winner of its Senior Student Competition (later renamed the Albert M. Greenfield Competition) in 1966, playing Bruch's First Violin Concerto. She joined The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1984 and performed frequently on its chamber music series before retiring in 2016. She was concertmaster of the Main Line Symphony from 1981 to 2013 and was a participant in the Casals Festival for many years starting in 1994. She was also a member of the Chamber Symphony of Philadelphia, the Curtis String Quartet, and the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia (now the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia). She was on the faculties of the Curtis Institute of Music, Temple University, and Temple Music Prep.

Yumi was a beloved member of the second violin section. She was married to former Orchestra bass player Henry Scott, with whom she had two sons, Kenji and Kohji.

**Vladimir Shapiro** was born in Odesa, Soviet Union (now Ukraine), in 1952, and received his training at the Leningrad State Conservatory. He played with the Leningrad State Philharmonic Orchestra under Chief Conductor Evgeny Mravinsky from 1974 to 1978 and with the Leningrad Chamber Orchestra from 1974 to 1977. He emigrated to the United States in 1978 and joined The Philadelphia Orchestra the following year. He left the Orchestra in 2006.



Justin Griffin



Joan Brenkner



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

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Saturday, November 1, at 8:00

Sunday, November 2, at 2:00

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Conductor

**Emanuel Ax** Piano

## **Still** *Wood Notes*

- I. Singing River
- II. Autumn Night
- III. Moon Dusk
- IV. Whippoorwill's Shoes
- V. Theophany

**Beethoven** Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Largo
- III. Rondo: Allegro—Presto

## **Intermission**

**Brahms** Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Andante
- III. Poco allegretto
- IV. Allegro—Un poco sostenuto

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

These concerts celebrate the 50th anniversary of Emanuel Ax's Philadelphia Orchestra debut.

These concerts are part of the **Dr. Alan Cohen and Ms. Michele Langer Visiting Pianist Fund**.

The November 2 concert is sponsored by **Lila and Vincent Russo**.

William Grant Still's *Wood Notes* is a highlight of the Marian Anderson Artistic Initiative. The Marian Anderson Artistic Initiative showcases composers and artists who embody Ms. Anderson's passion for increasing inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access in the performing arts, contributing to the advancement of a more representative art form.

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.

# PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA/125

Yannick Nézet-Séguin  
Music & Artistic Director

## 125 YEARS. COUNTLESS MOMENTS.

*Share Yours.*



@philorch

#PhilOrch125



Photo: Pete Checchia





## 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).

# Soloist



Nigel Parry

Born to Polish parents in what is today Lviv, Ukraine, pianist **Emanuel Ax** moved to Winnipeg, Canada, with his family when he was a young boy. He made his New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series and in 1974 won the first Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. He won the Michaels Award of Young Concert Artists in 1975, the same year he made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut. Four years later he was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize. These current performances, along with a concert at Carnegie Hall, are in recognition of the 50th anniversary of Mr. Ax's first appearance with The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Fall highlights of Mr. Ax's current season also include a tour of Asia that will take him to Tokyo, Seoul, and Hong Kong. Following the world premiere of the concerto written for him by John Williams at Tanglewood in summer 2025, the piece will have its Boston Symphony subscription debut in January with the New York premiere one month later with the New York Philharmonic. He will also return to orchestras in Dallas, St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Charleston, Madison, Naples, and New Jersey. In recital he can be heard in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Santa Barbara, Des Moines, Cedar Falls, Schenectady, and Princeton. An extensive European tour will include concerts in Munich, Prague, Berlin, Rome, and Torino. Recent highlights include a continuation of the "Beethoven for Three" touring and recording project with partners violinist Leonidas Kavakos and cellist Yo-Yo Ma, which took them to European festivals including Dresden, Hamburg, Vienna, Luxembourg, and the BBC Proms. He also appeared as guest soloist during the New York Philharmonic's opening week in 2024, 47 years after his debut with that orchestra, and made returns to the Cleveland Orchestra; the National, San Diego, Nashville, and Pittsburgh symphonies; and the Rochester Philharmonic.

Mr. Ax has been a Sony Classical exclusive recording artist since 1987. Following the success of the Brahms Trios with Mr. Kavakos and Mr. Ma, the trio launched an ambitious, multi-year project to record all the Beethoven trios and symphonies arranged for trio. The first three discs have been released. Mr. Ax has received GRAMMY awards for the second and third volumes of his cycle of Haydn's piano sonatas. He has also made a series of GRAMMY-winning recordings with Mr. Ma of the Beethoven and Brahms sonatas for cello and piano. In the 2004–05 season he contributed to an International Emmy Award-winning BBC documentary commemorating the Holocaust that aired on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. In 2013 his recording *Variations* received the Echo Klassik Award for Solo Recording of the Year (19th-Century Music/Piano). Mr. Ax is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and holds honorary doctorates of music from Skidmore College, the New England Conservatory of Music, Yale University, and Columbia University. For more information about his career, please visit [EmanuelAx.com](http://EmanuelAx.com).

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

1802

**Beethoven**

Piano Concerto  
No. 3

**Music**

Cimarosa  
*I due baroni*

**Literature**

Chateaubriand  
*René*

**Art**

Canova  
*Napoleon  
Bonaparte*

**History**

Herschel  
discovers  
binary stars

1883

**Brahms**

Symphony No. 3

**Music**

Chabrier

*España*

**Literature**

Maupassant  
*Un Vie*

**Art**

Cézanne  
*Rocky Landscape*

**History**

Brooklyn Bridge  
opened to traffic

1947

**Still**

*Wood Notes*

**Music**

Barber

*Knoxville:*

*Summer of 1915*

**Art**

Giacometti  
*The Pointing Man*

**Literature**

Mann  
*Doktor Faustus*

**History**

India proclaims  
independence

William Grant Still was inspired by the poems of Joseph Mitchell Pilcher for his five-movement *Wood Notes*. He said that the work “has a social significance because it is a collaboration between a Southern white man and Southern-born Negro composer, in which both of the participants were enthused over the project.”

Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3 is a transitional composition that he worked on for several years. The piece bridges his early Classical style, in this instance emulating Mozart, to his mature middle period and the “heroic” struggles associated with a work like the “Eroica” Symphony, written around the same time.

None of Johannes Brahms’s four symphonies has programmatic titles or tells overt stories, although there are often elements that suggest personal significance. His Third Symphony is saturated with the notes F-A-F, a musical motif he used in various pieces representing his personal motto “Frei aber Froh” (free but happy). The opening theme of the first movement, as well as other moments in the piece, seems to allude to the “Rhenish” Symphony of his mentor Robert Schumann. Brahms composed the Symphony during the summer of 1883, while staying on the Rhine, just after the death of Richard Wagner, the other leading figure in German music at the time.

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

## Wood Notes

**William Grant Still**

**Born in Woodville, Mississippi, May 11, 1895**

**Died in Los Angeles, December 3, 1978**



With the moniker “Dean of African-American Composers,” it is easy to be drawn to the works of William Grant Still that explicitly reference Black culture and experiences: his Symphony No. 1 (1930), better known as his “Afro-American” Symphony; his indictment of racial violence in the operatic orchestral work *And They Lynched Him on a Tree* (1940); his Suite for Violin and Piano (1943), each movement of which was inspired by an artwork by Richmond Barthé, Sargeant Johnson, and August Savage.

Yet that is just part of a larger picture. Still was long a pastoralist, a creative thread arguably longer than his self-defined “racial” period. The works composed during this “racial” period sometimes overlapped with his interest in evoking locations, geographies, and the people embedded there. There is *Kaintuck’* (1935), a work for piano and orchestra; his Symphony No. 5 (“Western Hemisphere”; 1945), *Lenox Avenue* (1935, rev. 1937); *The American Scene* (1958); his operas *Blue Steel* 1934–35) and *Highway 1, USA* (1963); and the work we hear today, *Wood Notes* (1947).

**Inspired by Poetry** Still was inspired by the poems of Joseph Mitchell Pilcher (1896–1979), a poet and social worker based in Alabama. A native of Woodville, Mississippi, Still remarked in his program notes that *Wood Notes* “has a social significance because it is a collaboration between a Southern white man and Southern-born Negro composer, in which both of the participants were enthused over the project.” Still and Pilcher maintained a correspondence, and *Wood Notes* premiered in 1948 with Artur Rodziński and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Still originally composed *Wood Notes* as a five-movement orchestral work. Sometime after the premiere, however, his publisher decided it functioned “better” as a four-movement piece for a smaller ensemble. While researching the composer’s archives, former Philadelphia Orchestra Assistant Conductor Austin Chanu observed that Still arranged the work for chamber orchestra, omitting the fifth movement, to ensure the work would be published. For over 70 years, this has been the version performed and recorded.

Today, thanks to the research and preparation by Chanu and Principal Librarian Nicole Jordan, with assistance from Still’s daughter, Judith Anne; the Library of Congress; and materials preserved in Still’s archive at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, the original five-movement *Wood Notes* is available as the composer intended.

**A Closer Look** The first movement, **Singing River**, is quintessential Stillian orchestral writing. The languid pulsing of the cellos supports the lyrical call-and-response between violins, flute, and oboe, building to a dramatic, percussive theme driven by trumpets and trombones. This is Still evoking Pilcher's poetry about the Coosa riverbank that runs through Wetumpka, a town on the outskirts of Montgomery, Alabama.

Flutes, clarinets, and strings pass around triplet figures in **Autumn Night**. The effect is effervescent and gossamer, as the melody, a subtle call, appears and folds back into the texture. **Moon Dusk** has more dimension, its theme solemn and hinting at something uncertain yet majestic. Like the previous movements, Still utilizes the strings, woodwinds, and brass in very deliberate ways: Strings respond to winds and brass layer with the strings, sometimes to support, sometimes to lead; the introduction of brass to increase the drama and tension.

**Whippoorwill's Shoes** speaks to an under-referenced aspect of Still's aesthetic: uses of juba and cakewalk rhythms and upbeats, which his contemporary Florence Price made a core part of her compositions. It is understandable that publishers saw this as a fitting conclusion, as it is upbeat, cute, and irreverent.

But then we have **Theophany**, the intended final movement. Chanu has provided the following description:

Theophany is different from how one might expect the final movement of an orchestral suite to end. It is slow, lyrical, intimate, as well as grand. ... The term theophany represents a visual manifestation of God to humans, and Pilcher's poem depicts that manifestation as nature. Still uses Theophany as a climax of the entire work, honoring God through nature and his depiction of that honoring through music, which is delicate yet intense and imbued with optimism and adoration.

Theophany is composed in a large A-B-A structure where the A sections are lush and focus on a lyrical, vocal-like melody led by the strings and winds. .... The middle B section is faster and acts as a development where Still utilizes more atonal and extended harmonies as well as interjections from the brass and percussion. The B section also showcases many different orchestral combinations that create a kaleidoscope of colors.

The melody Still composes is quite intimate in its initial statements from the strings and woodwinds at the beginning of the movement. The shape and phrasing of the melody is incredibly beautiful and sounds like a musical prayer or hymn. As a melodist, Still is able to weave the theme and allow for a natural build to a final grand climax. This climax is Still rejoicing in both his love of nature and of God's representation through nature. It's quite powerful and an intense end to the suite.

I had the opportunity to conduct the full suite last summer in the premiere of the new edition with The Philadelphia Orchestra. It was really special to hear Theophany come to life.

—Alexandra Kori Hill

*Alexandra Kori Hill is a musicologist, editor, and freelance writer based in Cincinnati, Ohio. She is co-editor and a contributor to The Cambridge Companion to Florence B. Price (Spring 2026).*

*Wood Notes was composed in 1947.*

*The first Philadelphia Orchestra performance was in June 2024 at Temple Performing Arts Center at Temple University; Austin Chanu conducted. Most recently, the fourth and fifth movements were performed on the 2025 Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concert with Damon Gupton on the podium.*

*The score calls for three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, bell in F, crash cymbal, snare drum, suspended cymbals [small and large], vibraphone), harp, celesta, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 25 minutes.*

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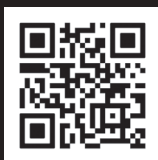
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# The Music

## Piano Concerto No. 3

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born in Bonn, probably December 16, 1770

Died in Vienna, March 26, 1827



The fifth of April 1803 was a hectic day for those involved in mounting the premiere of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 at Vienna's Theater an der Wien. On the morning of the concert, the composer was still copying out the trombone parts for his oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, one of the other pieces to be premiered that evening. The ink had barely dried before the grueling day-long rehearsal began, a musical marathon made all the more challenging by the amount of music that needed to be practiced: Beethoven's first two

symphonies were scheduled to be performed, along with the oratorio and Third Concerto.

For Ignaz von Seyfried, the newly appointed conductor of the theater, perhaps the most trying part of the concert came when he turned pages for Beethoven, who played the Concerto's solo part. As Seyfried later recalled:

I saw almost nothing but empty leaves; at the most, on one page or another a few Egyptian hieroglyphs wholly unintelligible to me were scribbled down to serve as clues for him; for he played nearly all of the solo part from memory since, as was so often the case, he had not had time to set it all down to paper. He gave me a secret glance whenever he was at the end of one of the invisible passages, and my scarcely concealable anxiety not to miss the decisive moment amused him greatly.

**From Performer to Composer** Beethoven's audience was familiar with his remarkable pianistic skills by this point, as he had been living in Vienna for more than a decade and had firmly established his reputation as a virtuoso. He was not content, however, to work as a "mere" performer and was hoping to earn a living as a composer. He had studied theory and counterpoint with several Viennese composers, including Haydn, and was now grappling with the challenge of forging a compositional voice that would be heard as distinct from those who came before him, especially the much-loved Mozart.

Mozart's piano concertos were well known to many Viennese concertgoers by the time the 32-year-old Beethoven took the stage to premiere his third mature essay in the genre. He knew this, and deliberately used one of his predecessor's concertos, No. 24, also in C minor, as a model. This was a common practice for many composers in the early stages of their career as a means of paying respect to those who came before while also signaling their intent to surpass. When the orchestra played the opening C-minor arpeggio of Beethoven's

concerto, it probably would not have escaped many in the audience that it was a paraphrase of the beginning of Mozart's concerto in the same key from almost 20 years earlier.

**A Closer Look** Despite its allusions to Mozart, the main theme of the first movement (**Allegro con brio**) is typically Beethovenian in its elemental simplicity. As with many other themes Beethoven would write during his career, the musical interest lies not necessarily in the material itself, but in how it is developed. The cadenza at the end of this movement, written out years later, is particularly arresting in the way it reworks the opening material in a kaleidoscopic array of stormy moods.

In the words of one of the audience members present on the night of the premiere, the opening of the **Largo** second movement is “a holy, distant, and celestial Harmony.” Its otherworldly quality is derived in part from the harmonic contrast between the previous movement's close in C minor and this movement's hymn-like beginning in E major. In addition, the theme is played extremely softly and with the sustain pedal pressed down, which allows the pitches to resonate and almost shimmer.

The Rondo finale (**Allegro**) alternates between the simple opening theme and several contrasting melodies, including a short fugato in the middle of the movement. The onset of the coda is a particularly dramatic moment of melodic contrast, as the key modulates to C major and the meter changes into a bouncy triple grouping. This move from minor to major, from darkness to light, prefigures many similar transitions in Beethoven's later works, particularly in the Fifth and Ninth symphonies.

—Sean Colonna

*Sean Colonna is the associate director of the Language and Thinking Program at Bard College, where he also teaches courses in music history and philosophy and serves as associate editor for The Musical Quarterly.*

*Beethoven composed his Piano Concerto No. 3 from 1796 to 1803.*

*The Third Concerto was first performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra in December 1914, with pianist Leonard Ormandy; in 1953 for CBS with Rudolf Serkin and Ormandy; in 1971 for RCA with Van Cliburn and Ormandy; and in February 2020, with Karina Canellakis conducting.*

*The Philadelphia Orchestra has recorded the Concerto four times: in 1947 for CBS with Claudio Arrau and Eugene Ormandy; in 1953 for CBS with Rudolf Serkin and Ormandy; in 1971 for RCA with Van Cliburn and Ormandy; and in 2021 for BIS with Haochen Zhang and Nathalie Stutzmann.*

*The score calls for solo piano, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.*

*Performance time is approximately 35 minutes.*

# The Music

## Symphony No. 3

Johannes Brahms

Born in Hamburg, May 7, 1833

Died in Vienna, April 3, 1897



The meaning of Johannes Brahms's Symphony No. 3 in F major has stumped connoisseurs for years. Hans Richter, who conducted the premiere in Vienna on December 2, 1883, called it Brahms's "Heroic" Symphony because of the big Beethovenian brass opening. Clara Schumann, Brahms's muse and editor, focused instead on the pastoral qualities, likening it to a forest idyll. Joseph Joachim, Brahms's virtuoso violin friend, said the final movement represented the myth of Hero and Leander, lovers who meet a tragic end after their light goes out and Leander drowns in a dark sea. Modern scholars have written

about the Symphony's Wagnerian chromaticism, suggesting that the piece is an homage to Brahms's rival, who had died earlier that year. Some argue that the sweet middle movements represent Brahms's passion for the soprano Hermine Spies, who was with him in Wiesbaden, Germany, in the summer of 1883 when he composed the work. Even Frank Sinatra found love in the Symphony, co-writing lyrics to the third movement melody for his 1950 hit "Take My Love."

A clue to the Symphony's clashes of emotions is found in a letter from the Herzogenbergs, Brahms's friends who took a special interest in the work's completion. Their letter, dated October 1, 1883, to the composer reads: "I can't believe—until I hear it from your own lips—that your enthusiasm for the Niedervald monument is leading you to settle in Wiesbaden for good, in spite of the fact that you are not the composer of 'Die Wacht am Rhein.'" It seems that his friends were concerned that Brahms would not return to Vienna because of the political and artistic climate that appeared to favor Dvořák and Liszt. The letter continues, "Is the great Croatian monarchy too much for you, with its leanings to Dvořák rather than to yourself, or—ambition makes me giddy!—do you aspire to the dictatorship of the Wiesbaden Court Orchestra?"

**Comparison to a Famous Monument** Brahms's biographer Max Kalbeck first suggested that the last movement of the Third Symphony represented the Niedervald monument, the work mentioned in the Herzogenbergs's letter. A kind of German statue of liberty, the behemoth *Germania* was sculpted by Johannes Schilling beginning in 1871 to celebrate the formation of Germany. It was unveiled in September 1883 to musical fanfare, including four military bands playing the chorale "Nun danket alle Gott" (Now Thank We All Our God). It sits overlooking the Rhine valley and has inscribed on it the words of the patriotic fight song "Die Wacht am Rhein" (The Guardian of the Rhine).

It is tantalizing to compare the monument to Brahms's Third Symphony. The work's four movements stand firmly like *Germania*'s enormous four-sided platform decorated with four bas-reliefs. Beside the primary figure of *Germania* are two contrasting bronze statues, War and

*Peace*. *War* holds a trumpet in its hand, and those trumpets blaze at the beginning of Brahms's first movement. What Richter hears as heroic, one can hear as war and Clara's pastoral as peace. One bas-relief represents the picturesque Rhine and Meuse rivers. A second bas-relief captures the King of Prussia being proclaimed Emperor of Germany—probably what Kalbeck referred to as representing Brahms's last movement. The two remaining reliefs are scenes of soldiers going to, and returning from, war. In the Third Symphony, we hear conflict and resolution, the final movement quietly concluding in peace and prosperity.

The Symphony enjoyed a triumphant premiere in Vienna and was equally well received in Berlin, with some critics calling it the best thing Brahms had ever produced. He was quite enthusiastic about the work, promising the Herzogenbergs a copy of it: "In about a week I hope to send you the too, too famous F major, in a two-piano arrangement, from Wiesbaden. The reputation it has acquired makes me want to cancel all my engagements." Clara Schumann said in 1884 that "all the movements seem to be of one piece, one beat of a heart," a monument to a united Germany from one of its most famous expatriates.

**A Closer Look** The shortest of Brahms's four symphonies, the Third lasts about 35 minutes, brief by late-19th-century orchestral standards. The straightforward and compact movements, however, are saturated with his exhausting syncopations. He chose the limpid key of F major for the outer movements (**Allegro con brio** and **Allegro—Un poco sostenuto**), while the middle movements (**Andante** and **Poco allegretto**) are in simple C major and curmudgeonly C minor, respectively. He included the motto F—A-flat—F in the opening notes of the first-movement sonata form, making the Symphony "cyclic" because all movements employ that motif. The middle sections are translucent and shimmering. A fiery Finale (**Allegro**) ensues, which Karl Geiringer called a "tremendous conflict of elemental forces," before concluding with a calm coda.

—Aaron Beck

*Aaron Beck is a professor emeritus of musicology at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. He has published widely on the subject of Italian medieval and Renaissance music and art, including his latest book, Boccaccio and the Invention of Musical Narrative.*

*Brahms composed his Symphony No. 3 in 1883.*

*Fritz Scheel conducted the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work, in November 1901. Most recently on a subscription series it was led by Joshua Weilerstein, in February 2019.*

*The Orchestra has recorded the complete Third Symphony three times: in 1928 for RCA with Leopold Stokowski, in 1946 for CBS with Eugene Ormandy, and in 1989 for Philips with Riccardo Muti. The third movement only was recorded in 1921 for RCA with Stokowski. Yannick Nézet-Séguin's performance from 2014 is also available by digital download.*

*The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, three bassoons (III doubling contrabassoon), four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.*

*The Symphony runs approximately 35 minutes in performance.*

# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

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

**Atonality:** Music that is not tonal, especially organized without reference to key or tonal center

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

**Cakewalk:** A pre-Civil War dance originally performed by slaves, popularized and diffused through imitations of it in blackface minstrel shows and later, vaudeville and burlesque.

Although no specific step patterns were associated with the dance, it was performed as a grand march in a paradelike fashion by couples strutting arm-in-arm, bowing and kicking, and saluting to the spectators. Originally known as the “prize walk”; the prize was an elaborately decorated cake.

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

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

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

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

**Counterpoint:** The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

**Fugato:** A passage or movement consisting of fugal imitations, but not worked out as a regular fugue

**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

**Juba dance:** An African-American style of dance that involves stomping as well as slapping and patting the arms, legs, chest, and cheeks

**Meter:** The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

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

**Oratorio:** Large-scale dramatic composition originating in the 16th century with text usually based on religious subjects. Oratorios are performed by choruses and solo voices with an instrumental accompaniment, and are similar to operas but without costumes, scenery, and actions.

**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

**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

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

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

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

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Andante:** Walking speed

**Con brio:** Vigorously, with fire

**Largo:** Broad

**Presto:** Very fast

**Sostenuto:** Sustained

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Poco:** Little, a bit



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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 September 10, 2025*

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*List complete as of September 10, 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 [hescap@philorch.org](mailto:hescap@philorch.org).*

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