2024–2025 | 125th Season Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, November 21, at 6:30

Orchestra After 5

Stéphane Denève Conductor Tristan Rais-Sherman Host

Berlioz Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14

- I. Daydreams, Passions (Largo—Allegro agitato e appassionato assai)
- II. A Ball (Valse. Allegro non troppo)
- III. In the Meadows (Adagio)
- IV. March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)
- V. Dream of a Witches' Sabbath (Larghetto—Allegro)

This program runs approximately 60 minutes and will be performed without an intermission.

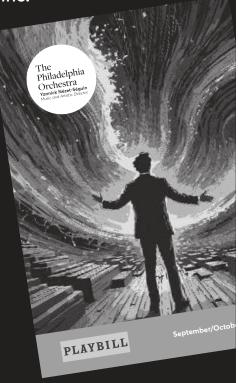
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ThePhiladelphiaOrchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music and Artistic Director



The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives. a commitment to its diverse communities. and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united. Today, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts brings the greatest performances and most impactful education and community programs to audiences in Philadelphia and beyond.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community. In addition to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers, Yannick and the Orchestra are committed to performing and recording the works of previously overlooked composers.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and around the community, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. The Kimmel Center has been the ensemble's

home since 2001, and in 2024 Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides: PopUP concerts: Our City. Your Orchestra Live; the free annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concert; School Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; All City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 14 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award—winning Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1& 3. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Conductor

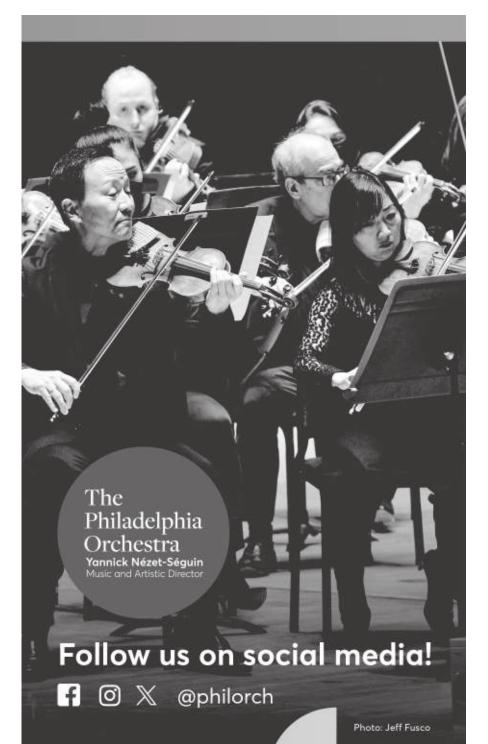


Stéphane Denève is music director of the St. Louis Symphony, artistic director of the New World Symphony, and principal guest conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic. He recently concluded terms as principal guest conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra (with which he made his debut in November 2007) and music director of the Brussels Philharmonic, and previously served as chief conductor of the Stuttgart Radio Symphony and music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Recognized internationally for the exceptional quality of his performances and programming, he regularly appears at major concert venues with the world's greatest orchestras and soloists. He has a special affinity for the music of his native France and is a passionate advocate for music of the 21st century.

Mr. Denève's recent and upcoming engagements include appearances in Europe with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, the Bavarian and Finnish radio symphonies, the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic (with which he was invited to conduct the 2020 Nobel Prize concert), the BBC Symphony at the BBC Proms, the Orchestre National de France, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Orchestre National de Lyon, the Czech and Rotterdam philharmonics, the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, the Vienna Symphony, the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, and the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne; in Australasia with the Sydney and New Zealand symphonies; in South America with the São Paulo Symphony; and in Asia with the NHK Symphony, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, and the Saito Kinen Orchestra at the Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival.

In North America Mr. Denève made his Carnegie Hall debut with the Boston Symphony. He regularly conducts the Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras, the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics, and the San Francisco, Chicago, Dallas, Pittsburgh, and Toronto symphonies. In 2022 he was the conductor for John Williams's official 90th Birthday Gala at the Kennedy Center with the National Symphony. Mr. Denève has won critical acclaim for his recordings of the works of Poulenc, Debussy, Ravel, Roussel, Franck, and Connesson. He is a triple winner of the Diapason d'Or of the Year, was shortlisted for *Gramophone's* Artist of the Year Award, and won the prize for symphonic music at the International Classical Music Awards. A gifted communicator and educator, he is committed to inspiring the next generation of musicians and listeners, working with young people at the Tanglewood Music Center, the European Union Youth Orchestra, and the Music Academy of the West. For further information, please visit www.stephanedeneve.com.



Host



Tristan Rais-Sherman maintains a close relationship with The Philadelphia Orchestra following his tenure as assistant conductor, which ended in August. A three-time consecutive recipient of the Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award, he is dedicated to communicating the expressive power of orchestral music to new audiences and ensuring a vibrant future for the art form. Highlights of his 2024–25 season include a highly anticipated debut with the Inner

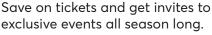
Mongolia Symphony and a return to the podium of the San Diego Symphony. He will also serve as assistant conductor to James Gaffigan for a production of Massenet's *Manon* at Les Arts Valencia.

A gifted communicator, Mr. Rais-Sherman played a pivotal role in launching The Philadelphia Orchestra's award-winning Orchestra After 5 series, earning praise as an "amiable host" (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*). He notably participated in The Philadelphia Orchestra's 2023 residency in China in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the ensemble's first performance in the country, debuting at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing with members of The Philadelphia Orchestra and the China National Symphony. During his tenure as assistant conductor he appeared numerous times on the stage of Marian Anderson Hall, leading the ensemble in programs including School Concerts, Family Concerts, and special events. He recently made his debut at the Mann Center with the Philadelphians in a concert featuring American music with the Marcus Roberts Trio, leading the Orchestra's first performance of Adolphus Hailstork's *An American Port of Call*. He has enjoyed close collaboration with Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, former Principal Guest Conductor Nathalie Stutzmann, and many more of classical music's top artists.

Mr. Rais-Sherman's past season highlights include a last-minute step-in to lead a performance of Brahms's A German Requiem with the Billings Symphony and debuts with the Baltimore and San Diego symphonies. He has collaborated with orchestras across the world, including the New York Philharmonic, the Bamberg and St. Louis symphonies, the Dartington Festival Orchestra, the Aurora Festival, the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic, and the Berlin Sinfonietta. Deeply committed to mentoring the next generation of musicians, he has led the World Youth Symphony Orchestra at Interlochen, conducted master classes at the Philadelphia International Music Festival, and led educational programs with ensembles and institutions including The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony, and New England Conservatory.



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Photos: Allie Ippolito, Jessica Griffin, Jeff Fusco, Pete Checchia



Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1830 BerliozSymphonie fantastique

MusicBellini I Capuleti e i Montecchi

Literature

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than play to the expectations of his audience by casting it in the traditional four movements and identifying the work with a number, key, and opus number, he called it: Épisode de la vie d'un artiste, Symphonie fantastique en cinq parties (Episode in the Life of an Artist: Fantastic Symphony in Five Movements). Berlioz not only indicated titles for its movements but also devised an elaborate semi-autobiographical program that he wanted audiences to read. The result is a truly fantastic symphony that deploys a large orchestra to spectacular effect.

At age 27 Hector Berlioz premiered one of the most

remarkable first symphonies ever composed. Rather

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The Philadelphia Orchestra

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The Philadelphia Orchestra does not perform on the Spotlight Series.

Photos: Dario Acosta, Olaf Heine, Chris Lee



The Music

Symphonie fantastique

Hector Berlioz Born in La Côte-Saint-André, France, December 11, 1803 Died in Paris, France, March 8, 1869



When a New York newspaper in 1868 described the *Symphonie fantastique* as "a nightmare set to music," it was meant to be an insult. Yet this was exactly what Hector Berlioz intended: not that the critic should have a miserable evening, but that he should grasp, even dimly, the agonies of the composer's own experience. Of Berlioz's real sufferings there can be no doubt. One has only to read the letters of 1829 (when he was 25 years old) to glimpse the torment of a composer whose

mind was bursting with musical ideas and whose heart was bleeding.

Romantic Passion The object of his passion was an Irish actress, Harriet Smithson, whom Berlioz had seen on the stage two years before in the roles of Juliet and Ophelia. How was this unreal passion to be expressed? Berlioz's first thought, naturally enough, was a dramatic work, perhaps Scenes from Romeo and Juliet, for which he may have composed a few movements. He then set several of Thomas Moore's Irish Melodies, which at least evoked the land of her birth. He would have liked to be writing a Beethovenian symphony—except that the customary triumphant ending had no counterpart in his own world.

The dilemma was resolved early in 1830 when Berlioz picked up the fake news that Harriet was free and easy with her favors and in no way worthy of the exalted passion that consumed him day and night. Now, he suddenly realized, he could represent this dramatic episode in his life as a symphony, with a demonic, orgiastic finale in which both he and she are condemned to hell.

Drawn in places from music he had written for other purposes, the symphony was speedily written down in little more than three months and performed for the first time later that year. Berlioz issued a printed program explaining the work's narrative. Although it is about an "artist" and his "beloved," it was equally about Romeo and Juliet, and more specifically Hector and Harriet. Even after Berlioz, by a strange irony, had met and married Harriet Smithson three years later, the work's dramatic program remained. There can be few parallels to this extraordinary tale of love blooming in real life after it had been violently exorcized in a work of art

A Closer Look All five movements of the *Symphonie fantastique* contain a single recurrent theme, the *idée fixe* ("obsession"), which represents the artist's love and is transformed according to the context in which the artist finds his beloved. The first movement (**Daydreams, Passions**) opens with a slow introduction depicting "the sickness of the soul, the flux of passion, the unaccountable joys and sorrows he experienced before he saw his beloved," after which the *idée fixe* is heard as the main theme of the Allegro, the violins and flute lightly accompanied by sputtering lower strings. The surge of passion is aptly described in the volcanic first movement.

In the second movement, **A Ball**, the artist glimpses her in a crowd of whirling dancers. In the third, **In the Meadows**, two shepherds call to each other on their pipes, and the music depicts the stillness of a summer evening in the country, and the agitation caused by the beloved's appearance. At the end the lone shepherd's pipe is answered only by the rumble of distant thunder.

In his despair the artist has poisoned his beloved and is condemned to death. The fourth movement is the **March to the Scaffold**, as he is led to the guillotine before the raucous jeers of the crowd. In his last moments he sees the beloved's image (the *idée fixe* in the clarinet's most piercing range) before the blade falls. Finally, in the **Dream of a Witches' Sabbath**, the artist finds himself a spectator at a sinister gathering of spectres and weird, mocking monsters of every kind. The *idée fixe* appears, horribly distorted, bells toll, the *Dies irae* is coarsely intoned by tubas and bassoons, and the witches' round-dance gathers momentum. Eventually the dance and the *Dies irae* join together and the Symphony ends in a riot of brilliant orchestral sound.

The Symphonie fantastique has remained to this day a classic document of the Romantic imagination and a great virtuoso piece for orchestra. Berlioz introduced harps into the symphony orchestra for the first time, and the finale calls for bells and the squeaky, high-pitched E-flat clarinet. The composer's grasp at so early an age of the orchestra's potential charge is truly uncanny.

-Hugh Macdonald

Hugh Macdonald is Avis H. Blewett Professor Emeritus of Music at Washington University, St. Louis. He has published books on Scriabin, Berlioz, Bizet, and Saint-Saëns. His Music in 1853: the Biography of a Year recounts the stimulating interactions of Berlioz, Liszt, Brahms, and Wagner. He has been a regular pre-concert speaker for the St. Louis, Cleveland, and Boston symphonies and has provided singing translations of opera for companies in London, Leeds, Glasgow, Los Angeles, and St. Louis.

Berlioz composed the Symphonie fantastique in 1830.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the work were conducted by Fritz Scheel in March 1903. Most recently on a subscription series it was led by Yannick Nézet-Séquin in May 2023.

The Orchestra has recorded the Symphonie four times: with Eugene Ormandy in 1950 and 1960 for CBS; with Ormandy in 1976 for RCA; and with Riccardo Muti in 1984 for EMI. A live recording from 2007 with Christoph Eschenbach is also available as a digital download.

Berlioz scored the piece for two flutes (II doubling piccolo), two oboes (II doubling English horn), two clarinets (II doubling E-flat clarinet), four bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, two ophicleides, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, cymbals, snare drum), two harps, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 55 minutes.



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Yannick Nézet-Séguin
Music and Artistic Director

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Photos: Concertmaster David Kim in front of the Woodside Park Dentzel Carousel at the Please Touch Museum. Photo by Neal Santos. Principal Harp Elizabeth Hainen on Broad Street. Photo by Neal Santos. The Student Circle program is funded in part by the Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust and an anonymous donor "Must be 14 years of age to register



Musical Terms

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

Cadence: The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

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

Dissonance: A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution **Dies irae:** Literally, day of wrath. A

medieval Latin hymn on the Day of Judgement sung in Requiem Masses. **Harmonic:** Pertaining to chords and to

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

the theory and practice of harmony

progressions

Idée fixe: A term coined by Berlioz to denote a musical idea used obsessively **Legato:** Smooth, even, without any

break between notes

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of

musical rhythms

Modulate: To pass from one key or

mode into another

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.

Polyphony: A term used to designate music in more than one part and the style in which all or several of the musical parts move to some extent independently

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

Timbre: Tone color or tone quality **Tonality:** The orientation of melodies
and harmonies toward a specific pitch
or pitches

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Agitato: Excited

Allegretto: A tempo between walking

speed and fast **Allegro:** Bright, fast

Appassionato: Passionately **Larghetto:** A slow tempo

Largo: Broad

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Assai: Much

Non troppo: Not too much

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The Philadelphia Orchestra Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music and Artistic Director

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