2024–2025 | 125th Season
Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, December 5, at 7:30
Friday, December 6, at 2:00
Saturday, December 7, at 8:00

Xian Zhang Conductor
Gil Shaham Violin

Dvořák Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 53
I. Allegro ma non troppo—Quasi moderato—
II. Adagio ma non troppo—Più mosso—Un poco tranquillo, quasi tempo I
III. Finale: Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo

Intermission

Prokofiev Symphony No. 6 in E-flat minor, Op. 111
I. Allegro moderato
II. Largo
III. Vivace

This program runs approximately two hours.

These concerts are part of the Peter A. Benoliel Violin Concerts, established in his honor by **Dr. Richard M. Klein**.

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ThePhiladelphiaOrchestra
Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music and Artistic Director

Jeff Fusco

The Philadelphia Orchestra

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

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

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts 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

Benjamin Ealovega

GRAMMY and Emmy Award–winning conductor **Xian Zhang** is in her ninth season as music director of the New Jersey Symphony. She also holds the position of conductor emeritus of the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, where she was music director from 2009 to 2016. The 2024–25 season sees her return to the Metropolitan Opera in New York to conduct David McVicar's acclaimed production of Puccini's *Tosca*, with Aleksandra Kurzak, Lise Davidsen, and Sondra Radvanosky sharing the title role. Starting in 2025–26 she will become the music director of the Seattle Symphony.

Ms. Zhang is in high demand as a guest conductor, appearing regularly with The Philadelphia Orchestra. She made her debut in June 2012 at the Mann Center and her subscription debut in May 2022. In addition to these current performances, other highlights of the season include a return to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and, following a successful collaboration at the Tanglewood Festival 2023, a return to the Boston Symphony. She remains a favored guest of the Orchestra of St. Luke's and recently stepped in to lead it in Brahms's Requiem at Carnegie Hall. Other symphonic appearances include the Montreal, Baltimore, and Milan symphonies and the National Arts Centre and Belgian National orchestras. She continues to enjoy good relationships with many leading orchestras worldwide, including the London, Houston, St. Louis, San Francisco, and National symphonies; the Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo; and the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse.

Under Ms. Zhang's artistic leadership, the New Jersey Symphony won two awards at the Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards in 2022 for its concert films, including *EMERGE*, which was directed by Yuri Alves and co-produced with DreamPlay Films. *Letters for the Future,* her recording released in 2022 on Deutsche Grammophon with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Time for Three, won two GRAMMY awards, for Best Contemporary Classical Composition (for Kevin Puts's *Contact*) and Best Classical Instrumental Solo. The recording also includes Jennifer Higdon's *Concerto 4-3*. Ms. Zhang previously served as principal guest conductor of the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales, the first female conductor to hold a titled role with a BBC orchestra. In 2002 she won first prize in the Maazel-Vilar Conductor's Competition. She was appointed the New York Philharmonic's assistant conductor in 2002, subsequently becoming the ensemble's associate conductor and the first holder of the Arturo Toscanini Chair.

Soloist

Chris Lee

Gil Shaham made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1988 at the Mann Center and has performed regularly with the Philadelphians ever since. He is one of the foremost violinists of our time, sought after throughout the world for concerto appearances with leading orchestras and conductors, regularly giving recitals, and appearing with ensembles on the world's great concert stages and at the most prestigious festivals. Highlights of recent years include the recording and performances of J.S. Bach's complete sonatas and partitas for solo violin. He frequently joins his long-time duo partner, pianist Akira Eguchi, in recitals throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Ensemble appearances include multi-year residencies with the orchestras of Montreal, Stuttgart, and Singapore, and he continues his exploration of "Violin Concertos of the 1930s," including the works of Barber, Bartók, Berg, Korngold, and Prokofiev, among many others.

Mr. Shaham has recorded more than two dozen concerto and solo CDs, earning multiple GRAMMYs, a Grand Prix du Disque, the Diapason d'Or, and *Gramophone* Editor's Choice awards. Many of these recordings appear on Canary Classics, the label he founded in 2004. His 2016 recording *1930s Violin Concertos Vol. 2* and his 2021 recording of Beethoven and Brahms concertos with the Knights were both nominated for GRAMMY Awards.

Born in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, in 1971, Mr. Shaham moved with his parents to Israel, where he began violin studies at the age of seven. In 1981 he made debuts with the Jerusalem Symphony and the Israel Philharmonic. He was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1990 and in 2008 received the coveted Avery Fisher Prize. In 2012 he was named "Instrumentalist of the Year" by *Musical America*. He plays the 1699 "Countess Polignac" Stradivarius and also an Antonio Stradivari violin, Cremona c. 1719, with the assistance of Rare Violins in Consortium, Artists and Benefactors Collaborative.

Peter A. Benoliel Violin Concerts

A passionate violinist from early childhood, Peter A. Benoliel joined the Philadelphia Orchestra Board of Directors in 1980 and served as chair from 1995 to 2000. His huge contributions to the Orchestra as a leader and philanthropist are paralleled only by his deep love for the violinists who help bring the famous Philadelphia Sound to the world.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1879	**Music**	
Dvořák	Tchaikovsky	
Violin	*Eugene Onegin*	
Concerto	**Literature**	
	Ibsen	
	A Doll's House	
	Art	
	Rodin	
	John the Baptist	
	History	
	British Zulu War	
1945	**Music**	
Prokofiev	Strauss	
Symphony	*Metamorphosen*	
No. 6	**Literature**	
	Orwell	
	Animal Farm	
	Art	
	Moore	
	Family Group	
	History	
	World War II ends	

Antonín Dvořák composed his Violin Concerto for Joseph Joachim, for whom Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Max Bruch, and others also wrote beloved concertos. Despite its various Czech inflections, the work fits securely within a larger European musical tradition of his fellow Romantics, featuring both dramatic and lyrical moments.

Sergei Prokofiev's Symphony No. 6 dates from the immediate wake of the Second World War and after the composer experienced a serious personal health crisis. Unlike his celebratory Fifth Symphony, the work is reflective. The composer put it this way: "Now we are rejoicing in our great victory, but each of us has wounds that cannot be healed. One has lost those dear to him, another has lost his health. This must not be forgotten." The slow movement alludes to the "Grail-motif" from Wagner's *Parsifal.*

The Music

Violin Concerto

Antonín Dvořák
Born in Nelahozeves, Bohemia, September 8, 1841
Died in Prague, May 1, 1904

Although at various points in his life Dvořák looked approvingly toward Wagner, the most lasting influence on his career was the example of Johannes Brahms, his friend and mentor who first pressed European publishers to promote the music of this artistic giant among Bohemians. The musical influence from Brahms's style found its most concrete expression in Dvořák's Seventh Symphony of 1885, called "Brahms's Fifth" by some. Before that, however, Dvořák composed a Violin Concerto on the heels of his mentor's own masterpiece in that genre: Brahms conducted the premiere of his D-major Concerto in Leipzig in January 1879, and Dvořák began his Concerto in July of that year.

A Collaboration with Joachim The point of contact between the two works was the violinist Joseph Joachim (1831–1907), the extraordinary Hungarian virtuoso whose playing style influenced many prominent composers of the era. A complex character whose virtuosity on the violin was only one facet of a wide-ranging musicality, Joachim has become immortalized partly for the influence he exerted over composers writing violin pieces for him; those who were the least bit unsure of themselves often sought out his advice on specifics of violin technique, advice he was all too happy to offer.

Like Max Bruch two decades before (who had rewritten his famous G-minor Violin Concerto several times on Joachim's advice), Dvořák sought Joachim's counsel during the composition of his Concerto, and the resulting changes were rather drastic. Dvořák wrote the work with characteristic speed during the summer of 1879 and sent it to Joachim, with a dedication, in November. The violinist, who had already promoted Dvořák's chamber music in public performances, said that he would look at the Concerto carefully. When Dvořák visited him in Berlin the next April they worked on revisions together. As the composer reported to his publisher Fritz Simrock, "According to the wishes of Mr. Joachim I have revised the entire Concerto and have not left a single bar untouched. This will certainly please him. I put the greatest effort into it, and the Concerto has been completely transformed. I've retained the themes and added a few new ones. The entire conception of the work, however, is new. The harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation are new."

Dvořák sent the revised version to Joachim, who did nothing for two years. During this period the composer himself moved on to other projects, such as his opera *Dimitrij* and the Sixth Symphony. When Joachim finally responded he expressed further reservations and urged that Dvořák continue tinkering with the piece. "Although the work proves that you know the violin well," he wrote to Dvořák, "certain details make it clear that you have not played it yourself for some time. While working on this revision, I was struck by the many beauties of your concerto, which it will be a pleasure for me to perform. I confess that I still do not think the Violin Concerto in its present shape to be ripe for the public, especially because of its orchestral accompaniment, which is still rather heavy. I should prefer you to find this out for yourself by playing the piece with me." And so Dvořák returned to Berlin in the fall of 1882 to work again with Joachim. As promised, the Concerto was played in the presence of the composer, accompanied by the orchestra of a music conservatory of which Joachim was the director. Yet further revisions and cuts resulted.

Finally the work was complete to the satisfaction of both men. In the end it was clear that Joachim had invested quite a bit of effort into the piece. And although Dvořák retained the Concerto's dedication to him, the actual first performance fell to another. It received its premiere instead at the hands of František Ondříček, an aspiring young Czech, in Prague in October 1883. Since then it has maintained—like the composer's Piano Concerto—a quiet but steady presence in the repertory.

A Closer Look The fiercely dramatic first movement (**Allegro ma non troppo—Quasi moderato**) is formed of a two-part thematic statement, consisting of a resolute orchestral subject of a thunderous and vaguely Brahmsian drama, which is contrasted with a deliciously lyrical second section. This first movement is linked by a bridge passage to the second (**Adagio ma non troppo**), a poignant and folk-like reflection in F major, of simple "Bohemian" charm. (Dvořák was urged to separate these movements but held firm: "The first movement would be too short and cannot be complete in itself: it would be necessary to add a third part and to this—sincerely speaking—I am not inclined.") The finale (**Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo**) is formed of a series of vigorous folk dances, including the famous *dumka*—which then builds to a bracing, brilliant close.

—Paul J. Horsley/Christopher H. Gibbs

Paul J. Horsley is performing arts editor for The Independent *in Kansas City. Previously he was program annotator and musicologist for The Philadelphia Orchestra and music and dance critic for* the Kansas City Star.

Christopher H. Gibbs is James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and has been the program annotator for The Philadelphia Orchestra since 2000. He is the author of several books on Schubert and Liszt, and the co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition.

Dvořák composed his Violin Concerto from 1879 to 1882.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Concerto were in October 1905, with soloist Emile Sauret and Fritz Scheel on the podium. Since then it has been heard approximately once each decade, the most recent subscription performances being in May 2015 with Sarah Chang and Cristian Măcelaru.

The Orchestra has recorded the work twice: for CBS in 1965 with Isaac Stern and Eugene Ormandy and for EMI in 1988 with Kyung-Wha Chung and Riccardo Muti.

The Concerto is scored for solo violin, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 30 minutes.

The Music

Symphony No. 6

Sergei Prokofiev
Born in Sontsovka, Ukraine, April 23, 1891
Died in Moscow, March 5, 1953

In January 1945, with world war still swirling about him, the 53-year-old Prokofiev conducted the premiere of his extroverted Fifth Symphony in Moscow. It was a phenomenal success, one of the outstanding moments of his public career. But this triumph quickly turned to pain and melancholy, for a few weeks later, during a dinner party at his home, the composer took a fall. Seized by dizziness brought on by high blood pressure, he fell down a flight of stairs and sustained a severe concussion. Despite partial recovery over the next three years, he would never again regain his full health.

A Reflection of Lost Loved Ones and Lost Health It was during the long, slow convalescence from this injury that Prokofiev worked out the first design for his Sixth Symphony; such trying and painful circumstances might help explain the work's pensive melancholy. Where the Fifth is forthright and even warlike, the Sixth is the mellow statement of one reflecting on the imponderables of life. One is tempted to say that Prokofiev's recovery—which took place first at a sanatorium near Moscow (where doctors forbade him from composing) and later in the nearby village of Nikolina Gora—provided him with the opportunity to absorb the tragedy of the war that was winding down. "Now we are rejoicing in our great victory," Prokofiev remarked on the Sixth and on the period that spawned it, "but each of us has wounds that cannot be healed. One has lost those dear to him, another has lost his health. This must not be forgotten." Composed mostly during the latter half of 1945, the piece was "worked out" and orchestrated very slowly, over the next year and a half.

Other projects occupied him, including the rousing *Ode to the End of the War* for eight harps, four pianos, and ensemble (whose scoring has hindered widespread dissemination), the Ninth Piano Sonata, and the second part of the film score for Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible.* Furthermore, the preparations for his opera *War and Peace* were an added source of anxiety; its cancellation in 1947, arising from political uncertainty, was a major blow to the ailing composer, who had poured his heart into the piece.

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But the Symphony was completed, and the great Evgeny Mravinsky conducted its highly successful premiere on October 11, 1947, with what was then known as the Leningrad Philharmonic. Initial reviews waxed ecstatic ("one of the most beautiful, most exalted of his works … a great landmark in the whole history of the Soviet symphony"), then turned stolid as Prokofiev's political position became less certain. By the time of the first Moscow performance in December, official opinion had become restrained; within a year, Prokofiev's Sixth was being singled out as "formalist" by Stalin's petty bureaucrats, under the aegis of the notorious Andrei Zhdanov. In February 1948 the works of Prokofiev and several other major composers were branded as "perversions … alien to the Soviet people." The grim cultural freeze that lasted until Stalin's death in March 1953 precluded further performances of the Sixth Symphony until after Prokofiev's death. (Stalin and Prokofiev died the same day.)

A Closer Look "The first movement is agitated in character, at times lyrical, at times austere," wrote the composer about the Sixth, in a brief, rather understated summary of the work. "The second movement is brighter and full of song. The finale, in a major key, is rapid and buoyant and close in character to my Fifth Symphony, save for the austere reminiscences of the first movement." Austerity is indeed the primary impression left by the Sixth, but this is offset by ravishingly beautiful thematic material and an almost decadent richness of scoring. Denser and subtler than the lengthy, obstreperous Fifth, the Sixth makes its mark in three concise and clearly structured movements.

A deep melancholy pervades the initial **Allegro moderato.** Its striding first theme, in flowing 6/8 meter, conveys a sense of purpose that has sorrow at its core. This sadness is expressed even more overtly in the second theme (Moderato), sounded initially in octaves by the oboes. Piano and bassoon begin the more forthright development section (Andante molto—Allegro), with its echoes of the composer's wartime march-music. This is not a joyous march, though; it is more like the weary walk home of the ragged, bloody troops after a battle that has been won but only through sustaining huge losses. The recapitulation (Moderato), beginning with a pointed horn solo full of *tristesse,* returns to the gloomy, reflective mood of the opening.

A long-breathed theme for solo trumpet opens the extraordinary central slow movement (**Largo**). More than one writer has noticed a similarity between the closing bars of this melody and those of the "Grail-motif" from Wagner's *Parsifal.* Prokofiev's intent and indeed his whole milieu could not be further removed from Wagner's, but one cannot help reflecting on that opera's sense of lost innocence, not to mention the underlying idea of the "wound that will not heal," which ties in nicely with Prokofiev's comment cited above. The composer probably could not have known, at the time he was composing the Sixth, of the full enormity of human loss of this war; but the whole world was already aware of the extent to which its wounds would never entirely heal. The movement's climax is achieved

through an outburst of the composer's complete contrapuntal and textural capabilities; the opening material returns, imbued with a new sense of purpose, but dies again into tranquil oblivion.

The third and last movement (**Vivace**) is both scherzo and finale; its bright 2/4 meter (which recalls the scherzo movement of the Fifth Symphony), and its move to the cheerful key of E-flat major, create a mood that is almost bucolic in its earthy vigor and charm. Flute, oboe, and clarinet sing the expansive second theme of this truncated rondo-structure; this is followed by a reiteration of the opening theme. A cheerful if somewhat nervous development section ensues; Prokofiev's full brilliance is apparent in this passage, in which the enormous instrumental complement is made to sound astonishingly transparent. Alas, this cheer is suddenly revealed as an ephemera; an abrupt return to the melancholy of the opening movement (Andante tenero) reminds us of the desperation of war, and of the importance of remembering its pain and tragedy so as not to have to live them all over again.

—Paul J. Horsley

Prokofiev composed his Symphony No. 6 from 1945 to 1947.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the Sixth Symphony were in January 1950, with Eugene Ormandy. The work has been performed only a handful of times since, the most recent being in February 2011, with Vladimir Jurowski conducting.

The Symphony has been recorded twice by the Orchestra, both with Ormandy and both for CBS; in 1950 and in 1961.

Prokofiev scored the work for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tam-tam, tambourine, triangle, wood block), harp, celesta, piano, and strings.

The Symphony runs approximately 45 minutes in performance.

Musical Terms

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
Contrapuntal: See counterpoint
Counterpoint: The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines
Development: See sonata form
Diatonic: Melody or harmony drawn primarily from the tones of the major or minor scale
Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output
Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions
Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms
Octave: The interval between any two notes that are seven diatonic (nonchromatic) scale degrees apart. Two notes an octave apart are different only in their relative registers.
Recapitulation: See sonata form
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 semitonic steps
Scherzo: Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.
Sonata: An instrumental composition in three or four extended movements contrasted in theme, tempo, and mood, usually for a solo instrument
Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.
Tonic: The keynote of a scale

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)
Adagio: Leisurely, slow
Allegro: Bright, fast
Andante: Walking speed
Giocoso: Humorous
Largo: Broad
Moderato: A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow
Mosso: Moved
Tenero: Tenderly, delicately
Tranquillo: Quiet, peaceful, soft
Vivace: Lively

TEMPO MODIFIERS
Ma non troppo: But not too much
Molto: Very
Più: More
Quasi: Almost
Un poco: A little


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