

2025–2026 | 126TH SEASON
MARIAN ANDERSON HALL

THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

Tuesday, April 7, at 7:30

A Benefit Concert for the Musicians’ Retirement Fund

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor
Lang Lang Piano

Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58
I. Allegro moderato
II. Andante con moto—
III. Rondo: Vivace

Intermission

Brahms Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73
I. Allegro non troppo
II. Adagio non troppo—L’istesso tempo, ma gizioso
III. Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)—Presto ma non assai—Tempo I—
Presto ma non assai—Tempo I
IV. Allegro con spirito

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

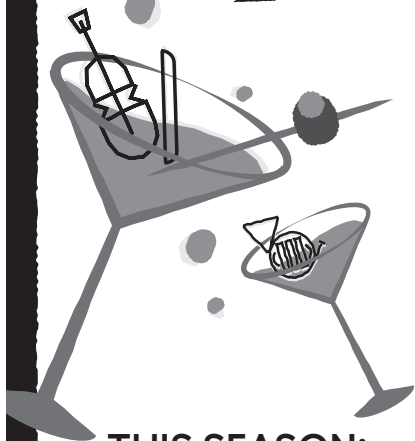
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Lang Lang’s appearance is sponsored by the **Robert Heim and Eileen Kennedy Visiting Artist Fund**.

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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.

The 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.

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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.

MUSIC AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Landon Nordeman

Canadian-born conductor and pianist **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** is currently in his 14th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. An inspired leader, Yannick is both an evolutionary and a revolutionary, developing the mighty “Philadelphia Sound” in new ways. His collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* has said that under his baton the Orchestra is “at the top of its considerable form”; the Associated Press has called it “a premier orchestra at its peak”; and *The New York Times* wrote, “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.”

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling and sought-after talents of his generation. He became the third music director of New York’s Metropolitan Opera in 2018. In addition, he has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000. In 2017 he became the third-ever honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He served as music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick has shown a deep commitment to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today’s composers and by performing and recording the music of underappreciated composers of the past, including Florence Price, Clara Schumann, William Dawson, Lili Boulanger, Louise Farrenc, and William Grant Still. In 2018 he signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with 15 releases on that label, including *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*, which won a GRAMMY® Award for Best Orchestral Performance in 2022.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductors, most notably Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; Companion to the Order of Arts and Letters of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Quebec; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; an Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres; *Musical America’s* 2016 Artist of the Year; ECHO KLASSIK’s 2014 Conductor of the Year; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada’s National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; the Oskar Morawetz Award; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, the University of Montreal, the University of Pennsylvania, Laval University, and Drexel University.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit philorch.org/conductor.

SOLOIST

Sonja Mueller



As a pianist, educator, and philanthropist, **Lang Lang** has become one of the world's most influential and committed ambassadors for the arts in the 21st century. Equally at home performing for billions of viewers at the 2008 Olympic Opening Ceremony in Beijing, the 2024 reopening of Notre Dame in Paris, the 2026 Milan Olympic Opening Ceremony, or for just a few hundred children in public schools, he is a master of communicating through music. He has performed sold-out concerts all over the world; formed ongoing collaborations

with conductors including Simon Rattle, Gustavo Dudamel, Daniel Barenboim, and Christoph Eschenbach; and played with all the world's top orchestras. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2001. He frequently steps into different musical worlds. His performances at the GRAMMY Awards with Metallica, Pharrell Williams, and Herbie Hancock were watched by millions of viewers.

Lang Lang's passion for innovation has led him to partnerships beyond classical music. He has worked with global pop icons such as Ed Sheeran, John Legend, Rosé from BLACKPINK, and Jay Chou, bringing classical music to new and diverse audiences. He has also collaborated with Disney. For the past decade he has contributed to musical education worldwide. In 2008 he founded the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, aimed at cultivating tomorrow's top pianists, championing music education at the forefront of technology, and building young audiences. In 2013 he was designated by the secretary general of the United Nations as a "Messenger of Peace" focusing on global education. His influence extends into the luxury world, where he is a global ambassador for Dior, Hublot, and Hennessy. He has also designed a limited-edition Steinway Black Diamond piano.

Lang Lang began playing the piano at age three and gave his first public recital before he was five. He entered Beijing's Central Music Conservatory at nine and won First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians at 13. He subsequently came to Philadelphia to study with Gary Graffman at the Curtis Institute of Music. He was 17 when his big break came, substituting for André Watts at the Gala of the Century, playing Tchaikovsky's First Concerto with the Chicago Symphony. He was presented with the 2010 Crystal Award in Davos and was named one of the 250 Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum. He is the recipient of honorary doctorates from the Royal College of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and New York University. He has received many of the highest civilian honors awarded by countries around the world, including the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, the Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, and France's Légion d'honneur. In 2016 he was invited to the Vatican to perform for Pope Francis. He has also performed for numerous other international dignitaries, including four United States presidents and monarchs from many nations. For further information visit www.langlang.com and www.langlangfoundation.org.

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Piano Concerto
No. 4

Music

Spontini

La vestale

Literature

Chateaubriand

René

Art

Turner

Shipwreck

History

Victory at

Trafalgar

1877

Brahms

Symphony No. 2

Music

Saint-Saëns

Samson and

Delilah

Literature

James

The American

Art

Rodin

The Age of Bronze

History

Edison invents

the phonograph

Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto is unusual among his works in the genre not only because of its marvelous opening for solo piano, but also for the dramatic qualities of the brief middle movement. The tension between the soloist and string orchestra, in which the pianist eventually triumphs, has been likened to the mythic struggle of Orpheus as he tries to tame the furies and enter the underworld to retrieve his wife, Eurydice. A spirited Rondo concludes the Concerto.

After taking decades to complete a first symphony, which finally premiered in 1876 at age 43, Johannes Brahms wrote his next one easily the following summer and it too won immediate success. If the First Symphony in C minor is initially dark and brooding, the Second in D major is largely bright and joyful. Brahms once remarked concerning another pair of his orchestral pieces, "one weeps, the other laughs," an apt description of his first two symphonies as well.

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THE MUSIC

Piano Concerto No. 4

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born in Bonn, probably December 16, 1770

Died in Vienna, March 26, 1827



The first decade of the 19th century was a difficult period for Beethoven—personally, politically, financially, relationally, and, with the increasing severity of his deafness, musically. But the middle of the decade was a remarkably prolific time for the composer, a kind of “sweet spot” in his career. In an especially productive burst, he completed and revised his opera *Fidelio*, along with the *Leonore* Overtures Nos. 1 and 3, the Fourth Symphony, the three “Razumovsky” string quartets, a piano sonata (the “Appassionata”), the Triple Concerto, the Violin Concerto, the Piano Concerto No. 4, and various smaller compositions.

Triumphs and Challenges While all these middle-period works represent innovative developments in form and musical language, the Fourth Piano Concerto is also something of a poignant conclusion within Beethoven’s still-developing career. As his deafness intensified, he found public performance increasingly difficult, and this Concerto was the last keyboard work he wrote for his own public use. His final concerto (No. 5, the “Emperor”) would be premiered by another pianist.

The Fourth Concerto actually enjoyed two premieres, both of them part of legendary concerts, and both with the composer directing from the keyboard. A private premiere took place in March 1807 in the home of Prince Lobkowitz, one of Beethoven’s principal patrons, in a concert that also included the premieres of the *Coriolan* Overture and the Fourth Symphony. The second, public premiere took place during an infamous four-hour concert in December 1808, on a program with the first performances of the Fifth and Sixth (“Pastoral”) symphonies, portions of the Mass in C, and the “Choral” Fantasy, along with assorted shorter works.

This public concert was painfully under-rehearsed and not well received. But fellow-composer Johann Friedrich Reichardt, who was in the audience, noted that Beethoven played the Concerto “with astounding cleverness and skill,” and the Andante was “a masterly movement of beautifully developed song.” Another reviewer declared this work to be “the most admirable, singular, artistic, and complex Beethoven concerto ever.”

A Closer Look The Fourth Concerto opens not with the traditional orchestral exposition of the main themes, but with the soloist, unaccompanied (**Allegro moderato**). This switching of roles wasn’t entirely unprecedented; Mozart had allowed the piano to enter

“early” in his Piano Concerto No. 9 (K. 271). But the effect here is quite new and laid the groundwork for the solo piano cascades that open Beethoven’s “Emperor” Concerto.

At the outset, the piano plays a gentle precursor of the “fate” motif of the Fifth Symphony, which was still two years away from completion. Here it is a chorale, dignified but ruffled by an elusive rhythmic unevenness. The orchestra then enters in B major, a surprisingly distant key, to continue the exposition. It is the most intimate concerto opening Beethoven ever wrote, foreshadowing the pastoral quality of the Sixth Symphony.

Throughout this movement the piano rarely asserts itself, but gains quiet authority through reserve, frequently pulling back from the brink of exuberance and retreating carefully into filigree passagework. But this endows it cumulatively with an independence that it will assert in the famous second movement.

Beethoven scored the second movement (**Andante con moto**) for strings and piano only, a reduction in ensemble that belies the intensification of the drama. A Beethoven slow movement is often an opportunity for utopian repose—delicate, soothing, and restorative—but famed pianist Arthur Schnitger described this movement as having been “written by a man in mortal fear.” Beethoven’s pupil Carl Czerny suggested it was a mythological drama, which the composer’s biographer Adolf Bernhard Marx refined into a possible representation of Orpheus (the piano) taming the Furies (denoted by the forceful unison string passages). This interpretation, often attributed to Liszt, was also reiterated by the renowned English novelist E.M. Forster, who wrote that the piano’s Orphic song, unaffected by the insolent interruptions, eventually lulls the serpentine strings into submission. The movement closes in a quiet E minor that leads without a pause into the rondo finale.

After such drama, Beethoven takes a light, Haydnesque approach to the finale (**Vivace**). The movement’s main theme, which begins in the “wrong” key of C before coming around to G major, is rife with waggishness and even a little mischief. The trumpets and timpani, which have been sitting silent through the first two movements, add their emphatic accents to the carefree celebration. And the pianist also gets to show off some of the sparkling virtuosity that was absent from the Concerto’s opening as it brushes aside the soberness of the middle movement.

—Luke Howard

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

Beethoven composed his Fourth Piano Concerto from 1805 to 1806.

The piece was first performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra in January 1905, with pianist Eugene d’Albert and Fritz Scheel. The most recent subscription performances were in March/April 2022, with pianist Emanuel Ax and Nathalie Stutzmann.

The Orchestra has recorded the Concerto four times, all for CBS: in 1947 with Robert Casadesu and Eugene Ormandy; in 1955 and 1962 with Rudolf Serkin and Ormandy; and in 1966 with Eugene Istomin and Ormandy. A recording of the Fourth Concerto from 1938 with Josef Hofmann and Ormandy can also be found in The Philadelphia

Orchestra: The Centennial Collection (Historic Broadcasts and Recordings from 1917–1998).

The Concerto is scored for solo piano, one flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 35 minutes.

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THE MUSIC

Symphony No. 2

Johannes Brahms

Born in Hamburg, May 7, 1833

Died in Vienna, April 3, 1897



“All you need to do is sit down, place your little feet alternately on both pedals, and strike an F-minor chord for a good while, alternately low and high ... then you will gradually gain the most accurate picture of the ‘latest.’” With typical heavy-handed facetiousness, Johannes Brahms announced the existence of his Second Symphony to his friend Elisabet von Herzogenberg. In a letter sent to her a few days later, he continued by writing that the musicians were wearing black armbands to perform the Symphony because “it sounds so very mournful; it will also be printed with a black border.” He similarly told his publisher, Fritz Simrock, that the score “is so melancholy that you will not be able to bear it.”

A Cheerful Work Although Brahms was joking in his ponderous way, his statements about his Second Symphony in D major, Op. 77, reveal how starkly the work differs from his First Symphony that premiered the previous year. While the latter work has a portentous introduction complete with throbbing timpani, the Second begins immediately without introduction. The First Symphony’s tense opening movement was clearly composed under Beethoven’s shadow. By contrast, the first movement of the Second Symphony evinces Schubert’s beneficent and liberating influence. The First is in the somber key of C minor, while the Second is cast in a radiant D major.

Musicologists point to a number of reasons why the Second Symphony is more cheerful than the First. The success of the Symphony No. 1 had undeniably lifted a great weight from Brahms’s shoulders by helping to establish him as a worthy successor to the Beethovenian symphonic tradition. Commentators have also noted that Brahms wrote the Symphony No. 2 during a protracted summer holiday in the idyllic Austrian village of Pörschach on the banks of the Wörthersee in the Carinthian Alps. While the natural beauty of this locale certainly contributed to the Symphony’s warmth and lyricism, an equally important reason for Brahms’s good mood during 1877 was largely the result of gaining complete financial independence, which allowed him to concentrate exclusively on composition. The year ended on a triumphant note with the first performance of the Second Symphony by the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Hans Richter on December 30. The premiere was a complete success; the Symphony’s piquant scherzo had to be encored.

A Closer Look The opening measures of Brahms’s Second Symphony are unforgettable: Four quiet notes are played by the cellos and basses and then the French horns intone a

theme that is reminiscent of alphorns heard from the distance. By the time he wrote the work, the composer, who had settled in Vienna in 1863, had been seduced by Austrian *Gemütlichkeit*, an untranslatable word with connotations of winsome charm and coziness. Cast in a meter of three beats to a measure, this movement (**Allegro non troppo**) recalls both the waltz and its predecessor, the Austrian folk dance known as the *Ländler*. Many commentators have noticed the resemblance of the second theme to the composer's own "Wiegenlied," Op. 49, No. 4 (1868), best known in Anglophone countries as "Brahms's Lullaby." As is characteristic of Brahms, however, this music is not an expression of undiluted happiness: Troubled passages redolent of darkness and even pain pass over the surface of the music like clouds across a verdant landscape.

The slow movement that follows (**Adagio non troppo—L'istesso tempo, ma grazioso**) is introverted and somber. This movement puzzled early listeners. The Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick, usually one of Brahms's partisans, quipped that this Adagio was "more conspicuous for the development of the themes than the themes themselves." In fact, the eloquent opening theme is one of the composer's finest achievements, at once complex and memorable. This deeply introspective movement is an example of what Arnold Schoenberg called "developing variation"—thematic materials that are constantly developed—while also using an ingenious adaptation of sonata form.

The charming scherzo with its two trios, **Allegretto grazioso (quasi andantino)—Presto ma non assai**, banishes the brooding seriousness of the preceding movement with a burst of musical sunshine. Even here in this lighthearted movement, however, Brahms deploys his ingenuity, subjecting each section to constant variation. He finishes off the Symphony with a rambunctious final movement (**Allegro con spirito**), some of the most joyous music of his career. Only the finale of his Violin Concerto rivals the last movement of the Second Symphony for extroverted high spirits. The finale is yet another example of sonata form, and it is a study in the skillful contrast of exuberance with mystery. The movement concludes with an exultant coda that hurtles forward to its conclusion.

—Byron Adams

Byron Adams is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Musicology at the University of California, Riverside. Both composer and musicologist, he specializes in French and British music of the 19th and 20th centuries. Among his publications are two edited volumes, Edward Elgar and His World (2007) and Vaughan Williams and His World (2023), which he co-edited with Daniel M. Grimley.

Brahms composed his Symphony No. 2 in 1877.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's first performance of the Symphony was in December 1900, under Fritz Scheel's direction. The most recent appearance on the Orchestra's subscription concerts was in October 2019, with Nathalie Stutzmann on the podium.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has recorded Brahms's Second Symphony four times: with Leopold Stokowski in 1929 for RCA Victor; with Eugene Ormandy in 1939 for RCA Victor; with Ormandy in 1953 for CBS; and in 1988 with Riccardo Muti for Philips. A live recording from 1995 with Wolfgang Sawallisch is also available by digital download.

The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings.

The Symphony runs approximately 40 minutes in performance.

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MUSICAL TERMS

GENERAL TERMS

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

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

Ländler: An Austrian folk dance in triple time

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.

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.).

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. Also an instrumental piece of a light, piquant, humorous character.

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.

Trio: A division set between the first section of a minuet or scherzo and its repetition, and contrasting with it by a more tranquil movement and style

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Andantino: Slightly quicker than walking speed

Con moto: With motion

Con spirito: Spirited, lively

Grazioso: Graceful and easy

Li'istesso tempo: At the same tempo

Moderato: A moderate tempo, neither fast nor slow

Presto: Very fast

Vivace: Lively

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Ma non assai: But not much

Non troppo: Not too much

Quasi: Almost

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