

# showcase

MARCH 2023



MINNESOTA  
ORCHESTRA



**PLAYBILL**

from the editor

Although the Minnesota Orchestra has achieved many things so far this century, it has yet to inaugurate a new music director in the age of social media—as Osmo Vänskä settled into his role in 2003 at a time when the words “face” and “book” were rarely conjoined. Music Director Designate Thomas Søndergård begins his tenure next fall, and a variety of social posts will figure in the long “hello” of his celebratory first season.

In recent years, the Orchestra’s most popular online posts have reached a larger number of people than will attend an entire season’s worth of live concerts. Among them are a blazing clip of former Associate Conductor Roderick Cox leading Tchaikovsky at a 2017 concert and Principal Tuba Steven Campbell’s fascinating but far more calm demonstration of the lowest brass instrument. Earlier this year, a rehearsal video of guest performer Yiwen Lu playing Fritz Kreisler’s *Tambourin Chinois* went viral, as viewers around the world marveled at her dexterity in playing the music on the two-stringed erhu rather than the four-stringed violin for which it was written. A typical comment: “That should not be possible on that instrument,” followed by a fire emoji.

Still, the best way to appreciate the Orchestra’s music is right here at Orchestra Hall, where today you’ll hear other musical sounds that once weren’t possible, but are achieved through advancements in instrument design, composers’ innovative ideas and the performers’ masterful technique that rises higher each generation. We invite you to share your experience of today’s concert online, widening the music’s reach across your social circle in ways that weren’t possible centuries—or even two decades—ago.

*Carl Schroeder*  
 Carl Schroeder, Editor  
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about the cover

Associate Principal Cello Silver Ainomäe with his section colleague Pitnarry Shin in the background. Ainomäe and First Associate Concertmaster Susie Park, who will appear on next month’s cover, will perform Brahms’ Double Concerto together in June. Photo: Josh Kohanek.

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 Photo: Josh Kohanek

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## Minnesota Orchestra SHOWCASE

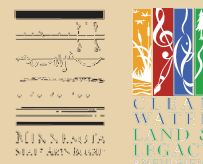
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**d**anish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who in summer 2022 was announced as the 11th music director of the Minnesota Orchestra, is serving as music director designate for the 2022-23 season before beginning his inaugural season in September 2023. A highly regarded conductor in both the orchestral and opera spheres, he has earned a reputation for incisive interpretations of works by composers from his native Denmark, a great versatility in a broad range of standard and modern repertoire, and a collaborative approach with the musicians he leads.

Søndergård first conducted the Minnesota Orchestra in December 2021 performances of Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* and Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23 with soloist Ingrid Fliter, establishing an immediate rapport with musicians and audiences; he was quickly reengaged for an April 2022 concert and then announced as the next music director in July. His most recent visit to the Orchestra Hall podium came in October 2022 concerts featuring Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

Since 2018 Søndergård has been music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), a role he will continue alongside his Minnesota appointment. Prior to joining the RSNO, he served as principal conductor and musical advisor to the Norwegian Radio Orchestra and then as principal conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (BBC NOW). As a guest conductor he has led major European and North American orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Gewandhaus Orchestra, Houston Symphony, London Philharmonic and the symphonies of London, Montreal and Toronto.

Søndergård began his music career as a timpanist, joining the Royal Danish Orchestra after graduating from the Royal Danish Academy of Music. He made his conducting debut in 2005, leading the Royal Danish Opera in the premiere of Poul Ruders' *Kafka's Trial* to wide acclaim; he has returned subsequently many times to the Royal Danish Opera. His discography on the EMI, Dacapo, Bridge Records, Pentatone and Linn



Zoe Prinds-Flash

Records labels includes Vilde Frang's debut recording of violin concertos by Sibelius and Prokofiev with the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne; numerous works by Poul Ruders; the Lutosławski and Dutilleux concertos with cellist Johannes Moser and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra; Sibelius symphonies and tone poems with BBC NOW; and works by Prokofiev and Strauss with RSNO.

Søndergård's 2022-23 season began with two RSNO performances at the BBC Proms that included Wynton Marsalis' Violin Concerto with soloist Nicola Benedetti. Highlights of that ensemble's main season include a Brahms symphony cycle, Britten's *War Requiem* and further European touring. In the U.S., he debuts with the Baltimore Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra and Cincinnati Symphony, and returns to the Houston Symphony and Chicago Symphony. On the operatic stage, following his Reumert Award-winning appearance in early 2022 for Wagner's *Die Walküre*, he conducts the Royal Danish Opera in Strauss' *Elektra*. He returns to the Danish National Symphony Orchestra to lead the world premiere of Rune Glerup's violin concerto with Isabelle Faust.

In January 2022, Søndergård was decorated with a Royal Order of Chivalry – the Order of Dannebrog by Her Majesty Margrethe II, Queen of Denmark. For more information, visit [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).

**Accelerator Funds**

The funds below support the research, development and implementation of new projects and initiatives at the Minnesota Orchestra and allow the Orchestra to seize on opportunities that will greatly benefit our audiences and community.

**Artistic Excellence Accelerator Fund**

Bob and Carolyn Nelson

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Catherine R. and Steven Webster

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Accelerator Fund**

Laurie and Ed Greeno

**Artistic Funds**

The funds below support the Minnesota Orchestra's ability to attract and program phenomenal guest artists as part of its classical concert series, ensuring outstanding musical experiences for our audiences each season.

**Guest Conductor Fund**

Roma Calatayud-Stocks and Thomas Stocks, M.D.

**Major Restricted Funds**

The major restricted funds below are dedicated to supporting an array of initiatives, artistic collaborations, education and outreach programs, Orchestra musicians, and guest artists and conductors.

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Chair for Education

The Minnesota Orchestra ranks among America's top symphonic ensembles, with a distinguished history of acclaimed performances in its home state and around the world. Founded in 1903, it is known for award-winning recordings as well as for notable radio broadcasts and educational engagement programs, and a commitment to new orchestral repertoire. Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård is the ensemble's music director designate, with his inaugural season set to begin in fall 2023.

### great women in Minnesota Orchestra history: The Concertmasters

■ The Minnesota Orchestra made history in 1989 when it named violinist Jorja Fleezanis as its first female concertmaster. A native of Detroit, Fleezanis came to Minnesota from the San Francisco Symphony, where she had served as associate concertmaster.

■ A high point of Fleezanis' 20-year tenure was her solo role in the 1994 premiere of John Adams' Violin Concerto. She left the Orchestra in 2009 to become a professor of violin and orchestral studies at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, and was memorialized by the classical music world after she passed away last September.

■ After Fleezanis left Minnesota, First Associate Concertmaster Sarah Kwak became acting concertmaster while a permanent search was undertaken. Kwak, a Boston native who joined the Orchestra in 1988, left the ensemble in 2012 to become concertmaster of the Oregon Symphony, where she remains today.

■ In 2011 the Orchestra welcomed Erin Keefe as concertmaster, continuing a decades-long trend of women serving in this post. Highlights of her tenure thus far have included tours to Cuba and South Africa and the Orchestra's first Grammy Award. Last month she was soloist in Bernstein's *Serenade after Plato's "Symposium."* A native of Northampton, Massachusetts, she is also a dedicated chamber musician and has performed often with the local chamber ensemble Accordo.



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| <b>Maundy Thursday, April 6</b>           | 7.00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with footwashing   |
| <b>Good Friday, April 7</b>               | 7.00 p.m. Proper liturgy and adoration of the cross   |
| <b>The Great Vigil of Easter, April 8</b> | 7.00 p.m. Fire artists begin the celebrations of Christ's resurrection at 6:30 p.m., music for organ and choir; |
| <b>Easter Sunday, April 9</b>             | 8 and 10.30 a.m.; 10.30 a.m. Choral Eucharist   |



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# Westminster Performing Arts Series Spring 2023

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## March 24 | Julian of Norwich

The Rev. Linda Loving will perform in a one-woman show about female mystic, Julian of Norwich.

## May 19 | Uptown Swing

First a swing dance lesson, and then dance to music from a local all-star band of musicians.

Performances take place in Westminster Hall, named "Best New Music Venue" by the *Star Tribune*. Free parking available in the underground ramp.

Learn more at [westminstermpls.org/wpas](https://westminstermpls.org/wpas)

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news

Minnesota Orchestra

## meet a musician: Hanna Landrum

Minnesota Orchestra musician since: **2019**

Section: **Second Violin**

Hometown: **Frontenac, Minnesota**

Education: **Cleveland Institute of Music**



Josh Kohanek

### What were your first connections and experiences with the Minnesota Orchestra?

As a kid I was lucky enough to be part of both of our fantastic local youth orchestras—I worked with many of the Minnesota Orchestra's violinists including Michael Sutton, Cathy Schubilske and Aaron Janse (who later became my mentor), as well as having [Principal Trumpet] Manny Laureano as a conductor in Minnesota Youth Symphonies for several years. It was in working with these phenomenal musicians and people that I first realized I could only ever be satisfied dedicating my life to an orchestral career. I can't tell you what an honor it is to now call them my colleagues!

### With your passion for contemporary music, what is one recently composed work you're looking forward to performing this season?

Without a doubt, *Duo Ye* by Chinese-American composer Chen Yi. She happens to be one of my favorite living composers, and I'm thrilled any time a piece of hers graces my stand—this one is no exception! A lot of her music is based around concepts of fire, flames or lava, and you can hear it in the rich intermingling of playfulness, color, complexity and driving force. We'll perform it alongside several other personal favorites of mine as part of our fantastic season finale program in June (and hopefully many times in the future)!

### Do you have any advice for aspiring musicians?

Too much to ever fit in one issue of *Showcase* magazine! But to name a few: expose yourself to as much music as you can, and not just classical—I've learned so much about being a sensitive musician from listening to Paul McCartney's isolated bass lines and Prince's guitar solos. Work with the mirror regularly, and if something in your playing looks strange or awkward to you, ask why! Keep a practice journal, especially when you're working towards a big goal—it can be frustrating to feel like the work you're putting in isn't cumulative, and tracking your progress can really change that. And finally, get addicted to your own progress! It's easy to get caught up in comparing yourself to some ideal of perfection and not realize how far you've already come. The more you can appreciate what you've already proven yourself capable of, the farther you'll go!

## a flute entrance: Patrick Tsuji

In early January, the Minnesota Orchestra's flute section welcomed a new member for the first time in 14 years when Patrick Tsuji joined the section, filling a position that opened after last year's retirement of longtime member Wendy Williams. His arrival is a notable piece of Orchestra history, as his appointment is the first of Music Director Designate Thomas Søndergård's tenure. Tsuji previously held the position of assistant principal flute with the Omaha Symphony from 2019 to 2022. A native of New York, he has also been a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and has participated in music festivals such as the Aspen Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, National Repertory Orchestra, Pacific Music Festival, Spoleto Festival USA and Yellow Barn. He was a top prizewinner of the 2016 National Flute Association Young Artist Competition and earned degrees from Rice University and Carnegie Mellon University. His teachers include Jeanne Baxtresser and Leone Buyse.

Commenting on Tsuji's arrival, Principal Flute Adam Kuenzel stated: "Patrick distinguished himself at the audition last September. Although it's common practice to ask the winning candidate to play a trial week with the Orchestra before offering the position, the audition committee and Thomas Søndergård were enthusiastic enough about Patrick's playing to forgo that step and offer him the job right away. We're very happy that he accepted and joined the Orchestra."



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## a magical Symphony Ball: previewing the gala event of the year

Music, magic, dancing and much more: you're invited to join a truly magical evening full of surprises and musical wonder at the Minnesota Orchestra's 2023 Symphony Ball. "Experience the Magic" is the theme of the gala event, held on Saturday, June 10. Ball Chairs Roma Calatayud-Stocks and Thomas Stocks promise "an evening filled with surprise, awe and wonder. Magical illusions throughout the evening will point to the magic that unites us—music. The Orchestra's musicians and the magical power of music will center the gala celebration as we spotlight stories of how the Minnesota Orchestra brings magic to our community and you."

The evening begins at the Minneapolis Hilton, adjacent to Orchestra Hall, where attendees will enjoy a gourmet dinner and a program highlighting the impact Orchestra donors make by fueling the Orchestra's mission to enrich, inspire and serve our

community. Silent and live auctions, a nationally known magician and a special video appearance by Music Director Designate Thomas Søndergård are just a few highlights in store for the Ball's first portion.



Pianist-songwriter Chan Poling

Moving to the second half of the evening, guests will make a short walk through the skyway to Orchestra Hall, where a fantastic performance awaits, featuring the Minnesota Orchestra under the baton of Sarah Hicks, principal conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall. The program features enchanting works by Mozart, Ponce, Strauss and Stravinsky. Special musical guest and pianist extraordinaire Chan Poling will then curate an after-party guaranteed to delight and get the crowd dancing.

Ballgoers have the option to take part in the entire evening or to attend the Orchestra Hall portion only. Tickets are available at [minnesotaorchestra.org/symphonyball](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/symphonyball). Get yours now before they disappear!

## YPSCA's Concerto Competition spotlights the next generation

For 66 years, YPSCA—the Young People's Symphony Concert Association—has held a Young People's Concerto Competition for advanced student musicians in grades 7 through 12. The top prizewinner is invited to perform with the Minnesota Orchestra in a set of Young People's Concerts, and cash prizes are awarded to all finalists. Each finalist prepares a portion of a concerto or other major work, and the Competition's final round is held at Orchestra Hall, where performances are judged by professional musicians including members of the Minnesota Orchestra.

At the 66th annual Concerto Competition finals on January 15, 17-year-old oboist Izaiah Cheeran took home the top prize with a stunning performance of the second movement of Bohuslav Martinů's Oboe Concerto. Audiences will hear his virtuoso skills at a future season's Minnesota Orchestra Young People's Concert. Cheeran, who is from Apple Valley, Minnesota, studies oboe with Philippe Tondre at the Curtis Institute of Music while pursuing academics at Minnesota Connections Academy. Join us in congratulating all the finalists, and in thanking the judges and generous donors of this year's awards!



Finalists and judges of the 2023 YPSCA Concerto Competition's final round in mid-January.

Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/ypsca](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/ypsca) for more on the Competition's finalists, judges and prizes.

## Tales from Cuba

The ongoing ripple effects of the Minnesota Orchestra's 2015 Cuba tour will be felt in a chamber music concert in Orchestra Hall's Target Atrium on Sunday, March 26, featuring Cuban composer Javier Iba Rodríguez's trio *Pilgrim Tales*. The programming of this piece came about through the initiatives of the Cuban American Youth Orchestra (CAYO), which was founded in the wake of the tour by Rena Kraut, a regular substitute clarinetist with the Orchestra.

Orchestra clarinetist Timothy Zavadil, who will play the work alongside Orchestra violinist Sarah Grimes and guest pianist Mary Jo Gothmann, explained that Rodríguez is one of many Cuban composers that CAYO has connected with through its mission to build musical diplomacy—much as the Minnesota Orchestra did while in Havana—by bringing young Cuban and American musicians together. “We first played *Pilgrim Tales* in the spring of 2021 for CAYO's Music Publishing Services, which started as a way to bring more Cuban music into the hands of American musicians,” said Zavadil, adding that CAYO's publishing service focuses on younger Cuban composers to help build their recognition beyond Cuba. In 2021 *Pilgrim Tales* was only recorded, not performed, but this month it will be shared on the Minnesota Orchestra's chamber music series. Tickets to the concert are available at [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).

Zavadil offered this description of *Pilgrim Tales*: “It consists of three movements, all with titles from Gabriel García Márquez's collection of short stories *Twelve Pilgrim Tales* [published in English as *Strange Pilgrims*]. *The Light is like the Water* musically explores the similarities between those two elements and paints a picture using a flowing ostinato. *The Saint* tells a story of a father's devotion to his daughter, who died in childhood, through a musical dialogue between the clarinet and violin. Finally, *The Sleeping Beauty and the Airplane* is a rollicking musical depiction of a chance encounter on a plane, exploring how the randomness of life contributes to its fullness.”

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news Minnesota  
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## Common Chords in Austin, Minnesota

A dozen years ago, the Minnesota Orchestra initiated a new way of connecting with various communities throughout Minnesota. In a departure from its long history of multi-city tours across the state, the Orchestra would focus on one Minnesota city or community each season, spending an entire week there in residency as the culmination of many months of collaborative planning with a diverse group of leaders from the host community. Called Common Chords and launched in Grand Rapids in October 2011, the program features the full Orchestra in performance as well as appearances by smaller sets of the Orchestra's musicians and conductors playing, teaching and engaging throughout the community. Since 2011, the Orchestra has held Common Chords weeks in Bemidji, Detroit Lakes, Hibbing, Mankato, Willmar and, in 2019, the first Twin Cities-area edition, taking place in North Minneapolis.

This spring the Orchestra will hold its first Common Chords week since the pandemic's arrival, visiting the southeastern Minnesota city of Austin from May 1 to 6. The week's marquee event will be a concert by the full Orchestra conducted by Sarah Hicks on the night of Saturday, May 6, at Austin High School's Knowlton Auditorium. Earlier in the week, the Orchestra's musicians will perform at more than two dozen events in and around Austin. A full schedule of events will be available via the Orchestra's website as the Common Chords week approaches. Tickets for the May 6 concert event are available now in Austin through Hy-Vee, Coffee House on Main and Austin ArtWorks Center—so please join us, spread the word to your Austin-area acquaintances or follow the week's happenings via the Orchestra's social media channels.



Anthony Roth Costanzo, Philip Glass's *Akhmaten*. The Metropolitan Opera.  
Photo: Karen Almond/Met Opera

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Minnesota Orchestra  
 Dima Slobodeniouk, conductor  
 Kari Kriikku, clarinet

Friday, March 3, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall  
 Saturday, March 4, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

|                |   |         |
|----------------|---|---------|
| George Walker  | <i>Icarus in Orbit</i>  | ca. 7'  |
| Kaija Saariaho | <i>D'OM LE VRAI SENS</i> for Clarinet and Orchestra<br>L'Ouïe (Hearing)<br>La Vue (Sight)<br>L'Odorat (Smell)<br>Le Toucher (Touch)<br>Le Goût (Taste)<br>À mon seul Désir (To my only desire)<br><i>Kari Kriikku, clarinet</i> | ca. 35' |
|                | I N T E R M I S S I O N   | ca. 20' |
| Antonín Dvořák | Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Opus 70<br>Allegro maestoso<br>Poco adagio<br>Scherzo: Vivace<br>Finale: Allegro   | ca. 38' |

## pre-concert

Discussion and Demonstration of Extended Playing Technique with Minnesota Orchestra musicians  
 Friday, March 3, 7:15 pm, Target Atrium  
 Saturday, March 4, 7:15 pm, Target Atrium

## thank you

This concert is co-sponsored by Vicki and Chip Emery.

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#), including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.





### Dima Slobodeniouk, conductor

Dima Slobodeniouk, one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation, has earned praise from musicians and audiences alike for his exhilarating approach and energetic leadership. From 2013 to 2022 he served as music director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia. A frequent guest of the Minnesota Orchestra since his debut in 2019, he appeared at Orchestra Hall most recently in February 2022, leading performances that featured violin soloist Baiba Skride. His conducting schedule this season includes debuts with the BBC Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Vienna Symphony and Danish National Symphony, as well as returns to the Boston Symphony, Netherlands Philharmonic and London Philharmonic, among many other ensembles. In past seasons he has led such distinguished orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic,

Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Concertgebouw Orchestra, New York Philharmonic and Tokyo's NHK Symphony Orchestra. From 2016 to 2021 he was principal conductor of Finland's Lahti Symphony, with which he recorded works by Kalevi Aho for an album that won the 2018 BBC Music Magazine Award. More recently he led an acclaimed recording of Esa-Pekka Salonen's Cello Concerto with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and soloist Nicolas Altstaedt. Born in Moscow, Slobodeniouk originally studied violin before taking up conducting while a student at Helsinki's Sibelius Academy. More: [dima-slobodeniouk.com](http://dima-slobodeniouk.com).



### Kari Kriikku, clarinet

A champion of contemporary music, Finnish clarinetist Kari Kriikku is renowned for his interpretations of virtuosic new works written for him by

composers such as Michel van der Aa, Unsuk Chin, Magnus Lindberg, Kimmo Hakola, Kaija Saariaho and Jukka Tiensuu. This week's performances mark his Minnesota Orchestra debut, an engagement rescheduled from the 2021-22 season. This season he is also performing Saariaho's *D'OM LE VRAI SENS* with the Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España and the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra; with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra he performs Kimmo Hakola's Clarinet Concerto. Kriikku premiered the Saariaho work with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra in 2010 and has introduced several other major works, including Unsuk Chin's Clarinet Concerto with the Gothenburg Symphony in 2014 and Magnus Lindberg's Clarinet Concerto with BBC Symphony Orchestra at the 2007 BBC Proms. He has appeared with many additional top orchestras around the globe including the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Seoul Philharmonic and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. In addition to his career as an award-winning recording artist of many works he has premiered, Kriikku was the 2009 recipient of the prestigious Nordic Council Music Prize for his work as soloist, commissioner and artistic director of the Avanti! chamber ensemble. More: [kdschmid.de](http://kdschmid.de).

## one-minute notes

### Walker: *Icarus in Orbit*

In vivid musical colors, George Walker illustrates the ancient Greek myth of Icarus—the mortal who famously flew too close to the sun, melting his suit of wings—in music that ends with a falling flute line representing the protagonist's fatal plummet.

### Saariaho: *D'OM LE VRAI SENS*, Clarinet Concerto

Kaija Saariaho's unique six-movement clarinet concerto, dedicated to this week's soloist Kari Kriikku, explores the five well-known senses and a mysterious sixth sense—possibly emotion or love—as the soloist traverses the concert hall in a variety of locations on and offstage.

### Dvořák: *Symphony No. 7*

In Dvořák's Seventh Symphony—lesser-known than his Ninth, but equally masterful—dark sonorities dominate the opening melody, yielding in the second movement to gentle, then bolder, themes. The *Scherzo* abounds with rhythmic vitality, and the *Finale* alternately builds and releases tensions before concluding with drama and brilliant harmonies.





### George Walker

**Born:** June 27, 1922,  
Washington, D.C.

**Died:** August 23, 2018,  
Montclair, New Jersey

### *Icarus in Orbit*

**Premiered:** June 6, 2004

Although the music that begins today's concert came from the pen of an octogenarian composer, we have young people to thank for its existence—namely, the students of the New Jersey Youth Symphony. At a June 2004 concert celebrating the organization's 25th birthday, the Youth Symphony's orchestras and flute ensembles premiered six new commissioned works by New Jersey-based composers. The crown jewel of this set was the Greek mythology-based *Icarus in Orbit* by then 81-year-old George Walker, winner of the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Music. One would be remiss not to acknowledge an additional young—though apocryphal—person central to the creation of this drama-filled music: none other than Icarus himself.

### the boy who flew too high

If you've ever been told "don't fly too close to the sun," then you have been given the same advice as Icarus, the teenager from the ancient Greek myth whose story inspired Walker's *Icarus in Orbit*. The legend of Icarus has served as a moral lesson for millennia. In the story, Icarus was the son of a talented craftsman named Daedalus. The father-and-son pair found themselves trapped on the island of Crete as a punishment from King Minos after a complex series of events that included the birth of the first half-man, half-bull minotaur by the King's wife and the creation of an elaborate labyrinth by Daedalus and Icarus.

To escape the island and the wrath of the King, Daedalus crafted two sets of wings using bird feathers and beeswax. The father and son plotted to fly across the sea to safety together, but only by following Daedalus' rules very carefully: Fly too low and the moisture of the sea would weigh down the feathers; fly too high and the sun would heat the wax. The only way to survive the flight was to travel between the two extremes. Unfortunately, Icarus' hubris and defiance of his father's commands led to his literal downfall—the melting of his wings and fatal plummet.

In more modern times, Icarus has been an inspiration for visual art—such as a famous painting by Henri Matisse—as well as

theater and film, where he has made pop-culture appearances as a Nintendo video game character and factors in the storyline of a recurring Marvel Comics character named Ikaris, most recently played by Richard Madden in the 2021 Marvel Cinematic Universe film *The Eternals*.

### the music

Walker's *Icarus in Orbit* opens with a single accented *fortissimo* note in the brass, percussion and strings. Then, softly, woodwind chords build, depicting the beginning of Daedalus and Icarus' journey as they first catch the wind and feel the sensations of flight. Rapid and agitated 16th notes signal an increase in speed and energy, traveling from the string section upward into the winds and back down again. Strings lead this forward motion, accompanied by scattered, edgy figures throughout the rest of the ensemble. Percussion also plays a key role in this short ride, with xylophone, glockenspiel, glass chimes, vibraphone, marimba and celesta all adding bright punctuations that seem to illustrate the swerves in direction or obstacles encountered as the pair navigates the open sky. It's a treacherous adventure to maintain a steady position in the middle zone, not too close to the water or to the sun.

Walker's music ascends to a sustained high note in the woodwinds just two minutes into the piece. This is the moment when Icarus soars too high, disregarding his father's directions, empowered by the transcendence of flight. From here, things move quickly. The sun's heat melts the wax that holds Icarus' wings together and they begin to fall apart. A solo flute cadenza spirals downward note by note, depicting Icarus' long descent, and the final aggressive notes from the orchestra mark his crash into the sea. A long, low, *fortissimo* chord concludes the tragic tale.

### the composer

George Theophilus Walker—whose middle name is the same as one of three on Mozart's birth ledger—started piano lessons at age 5 and enrolled at Oberlin College at age 14 with the goal of becoming a concert pianist. Four years later he continued his studies at the Curtis Institute, earning artist's diplomas in both piano and composition. Walker was immediately a success story on the piano, performing as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra at age 21 and giving a New York Town Hall recital at age 23.

However, he determined early on that piano was not the only thing he wished to do with his musical career. In a 2012 interview, Walker explained: "when I went to the Curtis Institute and decided to study composition with Rosario Scalero, it was primarily because I had so much energy and the idea of spending just 5 hours practicing piano...what else am I going to do?"


In 1946, one year after his Philadelphia debut as a pianist, Walker composed a string quartet whose second movement became



his most famous work for string orchestra, the Lyric for Strings. He subsequently earned his doctorate in composition from the Eastman School of Music in 1955 and, 41 years later, received a Pulitzer Prize for his soprano-and-orchestra work *Lilacs*—becoming the first Black composer to earn this prestigious honor. He continued generating new works well into his 90s and died in 2018 at age 96 in Montclair, New Jersey. It was in this state where a new work for youth orchestra flowed graciously from his pen and now makes its way to the Minnesota Orchestra's music stands for the first time.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, piccolos, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 3 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, suspended cymbal, glass chimes, maracas, tambourine, tamtam, temple block, timbales, triangle, vibraphone, wood block, xylophone, marimba, glockenspiel, chimes, harp, celesta and strings

Program note by *Emma Plehal*.



**Kaija Saariaho**  
**Born:** October 14, 1952,  
 Helsinki, Finland

---

**D'OM LE VRAI SENS for  
 Clarinet and Orchestra**  
**Premiered:** September 8, 2010

This week's Minnesota Orchestra concerts offer evidence that good things come to those who wait, as a work by contemporary Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho originally slated for performance in fall 2021 finally makes its way to the Orchestra Hall stage (and, in fact, to the whole auditorium—more on that later). Saariaho's six-movement clarinet concerto *D'OM LE VRAI SENS*, a musical meditation on a beguiling series of six French medieval tapestries relating to the human senses, was swapped out of that 2021 program, and a flute concerto by Saariaho took its place.

Between then and now, the composer celebrated a personal milestone with an extended artistic triumph: her native country's classical music community came together to celebrate her 70th birthday. Soloists, ensembles, educational institutions and the Finnish National Opera offered more than two dozen concerts in the latter months of 2022 featuring music from throughout her career—including the first revival of her earliest stage work *Study*

for *Life* since its 1981 premiere and the Finnish premiere of her newest opera *Innocence*. Several concerts also featured new works written by other composers who cite Saariaho as an inspiration.

Born in 1952 in Helsinki, Saariaho studied composition in Helsinki, Freiburg and Paris, where she has lived since 1982. Although many of her works are for chamber ensembles, in the past three decades she has produced several works for larger forces, including the operas *L'Amour de loin*, *Adriana Mater*, *Emilie* and *Only The Sound Remains*, as well as the oratorio *La Passion de Simone*, portraying the life and death of the philosopher Simone Weil. In 2003 she was awarded one of the highest honors for classical composers, the Grawemeyer Award, one of her many honors. She is also an active educator who was recently in residence at the University of California, Berkeley.

### a note from the composer

Saariaho's inspiration and subject matter varies greatly from work to work. Her 2018 opera *Innocence* is of the here-and-now, addressing the aftermath of a school shooting, but the clarinet concerto *D'OM LE VRAI SENS* turns the clock back to Paris circa 1500 and a set of thematically linked tapestries that have come to be known as *The Lady and the Unicorn*.

The first thing to note about *D'OM LE VRAI SENS*—which was composed for this week's soloist Kari Kriikku, who premiered it with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra in September 2010—is its unusual name. It is the composer's only composition title that is rendered in all-capital letters, and one that comes from medieval French, translating as “Man's True Sense,” a phrase that has multiple meanings. Wordplay is at work here, specifically the rearranged letters of an anagram, and the composition's inspiration is complex and fascinating.

Saariaho describes her composition in this detailed program note:

“The idea of a clarinet concerto for Kari Kriikku had been going round in my mind for some years. While I was composing my second opera (*Adriana Mater*, 2006) the clarinet part began to be increasingly soloistic, and I found the instrument was speaking to me in a new way. I set about planning a concerto but did not begin actually composing it until autumn 2009.

“The form was inspired by six medieval tapestries, *The Lady and the Unicorn*, in which each tapestry depicts, with rich symbolism, the five senses and a ‘sixth sense’—whatever that is (emotion? love?). I had already seen the tapestries in the Musée national du Moyen Age (the Medieval Museum) in Paris while seeking material for my first opera, *L'Amour de loin*, and their richness also inspired the exhibition *La Dame à Licorne* I held with [the artist] Raija Malka in 1993.

“The tapestries are named after the five senses, and I have titled the movements of my concerto accordingly: *L’Ouille* (Hearing), *La Vue* (Sight), *Le Toucher* (Touch), *L’Odorat* (Smell), *Le Goût* (Taste) and the ambiguous *À mon seul Désir*, which could be translated as “To my only desire.” The name and subject matter of the sixth tapestry have been widely interpreted and examined. What interested me in particular was an article about the meanings hidden in the letters of the name of the sixth tapestry. One of these [an anagram of *À mon seul Désir* from a time when u and v were the same letter] is D’OM LE VRAI SENS. This is medieval French and alludes both to the senses and to the true meaning of humankind.

“All this was, of course, just the initial impetus for composition. Using the names of the different senses as the headings for the movements gave me ideas for how to handle the musical material and for the overall drama. In the first movement (*Hearing*) the calmly breathing orchestra is interrupted by a call from the clarinet. *Sight* opens up a more mobile landscape in which the orchestra gets into position behind the solo instrument to develop the musical motifs this supplies. *Smell* is color music. I associate the harmony with scent; it is immediately recognizable intuitively and the impression is too quick for thought. The clarinet languidly spreads its color over the orchestra, where it hovers, transforming as it passes from one instrument to another.

“In *Touch* the soloist arouses each instrumental section in turn from the pulseless, slightly dreamy state of the previous movement. This is the concerto’s liveliest movement, and the most virtuosic in the traditional sense, and the clarinet and orchestra engage in a dialogical relationship. The fifth movement (*Taste*) is dominated by rough surfaces, tremolos and trills, which the clarinet serves to the orchestra around it.

“While composing the last movement (*À mon seul désir*) I experienced a sense of entering a new, intimate and timeless dimensionality. The end of a work is always the last chance to discover its quintessence. I often approach it by stripping the music down to its most ascetic elements. Here, too.

“It came as a surprise even to me that the work began to come alive in its space, and that the clarinet—itself a unicorn—plays only some of its music in the soloist’s position. This appropriation of space became an inherent element of the work at the composition stage.

“D’OM LE VRAI SENS is dedicated to Kari Kriikku, whose vast experience and frequent consultations were invaluable to me in composing the solo part.”

## throughout the hall

Saariaho’s score further directs that the solo clarinetist is to play each movement at a different position in the concert hall, with a general description to be adapted for each specific space. In the opening movement, the clarinetist “is somewhere in the hall, among the audience or behind it, not to be seen, only heard.” In the second movement the clarinetist approaches the stage, while in the third, the soloist plays behind the orchestra, optionally on a podium. The fourth movement calls for the clarinetist to continue playing behind the orchestra, then approach the stage. The penultimate movement calls for the soloist to sit in the middle of the orchestra or in front, while the final movement directs the clarinetist to stand in front of the orchestra, then leave the stage. Saariaho notes that “the violin parts have also been written so that the musicians can leave their places, if wanted.”

**Instrumentation:** solo clarinet and orchestra comprising  
 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo and 1 doubling alto flute),  
 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets (1 doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, bassoon (doubling contrabassoon),  
 4 horns, trumpet, timpani (with cymbal), tenor drum, bass drum,  
 4 suspended cymbals, frame drum, guiro, mark tree, tamtam,  
 3 tom-toms, triangle, marimba, glockenspiel, crotales,  
 vibraphone, chimes, glass chimes, shell chimes,  
 wood chimes, harp, celesta and strings

Program note by **Carl Schroeder**, with movement descriptions by **Kaija Saariaho**.



### Antonín Dvořák

**Born:** September 8, 1841,  
 Nelahozeves, Bohemia  
 (now Czech Republic)

**Died:** May 1, 1904,  
 Prague

### Symphony No. 7 in D minor, Opus 70

**Premiered:** April 22, 1885

Success came late to Dvořák. After years of obscurity, during which he supported his family by giving music lessons and playing the viola in orchestras, Dvořák achieved almost instant fame when, at the age of 37, his first set of Slavonic Dances took his name around the world. Now he found his music in demand—a sure sign of which came in June 1884: the Philharmonic Society of London nominated him for membership and invited him to compose a symphony that he would conduct in London.

**“to shake the world”**

Shortly after beginning work on the score in December 1884, Dvořák wrote to a friend: “Now I am occupied with my new symphony (for London), and wherever I go I have nothing else in mind but my work, which must be such as to shake the world, and God grant that it may!”

Dvořák completed the symphony on March 17, 1885, and journeyed to London to conduct the premiere on June 22. It was a tremendous success. “The enthusiasm at the close of the work was such as is rarely seen at a Philharmonic concert,” wrote one critic.

Yet the new symphony, the second of Dvořák’s symphonies to be published but today numbered as his Seventh, came as a surprise. The composer of the snappy, exhilarating Slavonic Dances had written a dark and dramatic symphony, and critics ever since have been at pains to discover the source of this new gravity in the details of Dvořák’s own life. Some hear an intensified Czech nationalism in this symphony, some hear signs of an artistic crisis, others feel that the symphony represents an effort to please his friend Brahms, still others feel that it reflects Dvořák’s reaction to the death of his mother in 1882.

But it is better simply to take the Seventh Symphony for what it is: the effort by a powerful creative imagination to expand the scope and dimensions of his art. There can be little doubt that he succeeded: the Seventh is regarded by many not just as Dvořák’s finest symphony, but as one of his greatest achievements.

This symphony has been called Dvořák’s most “Brahmsian” work, but that term needs to be understood carefully. It is not to say that this is an imitative work—every bar of the Seventh Symphony is unmistakably the music of Dvořák. Rather, it acknowledges that this music has the same grandeur, seriousness of purpose and dark sonority that we associate with the symphonies of Brahms, who would remain a close friend of Dvořák throughout his life.

**the music: beginning in darkness**

**allegro maestoso.** Those dark sonorities are evident from the work’s first instant: over a deep pedal D, violas and cellos sound the brooding opening idea. We also hear the violins’ rhythmic “kick,” a sharply-rising figure, and a turn-figure first spit out by violins and eventually taken over by the solo horn. The second subject (if it can be called that, after such a dizzying parade of ideas in the opening moments) arrives as a gently rocking melody for flutes and clarinets that Dvořák marks *dolce* (sweetly), but quickly this section too begins spinning off subordinate ideas. Though the development begins quietly, it soon turns dramatic, and the movement builds to a grand climax, then falls away to an

impressive close as two horns sound the dark opening theme one last time.

**poco adagio.** The second movement stays in D minor. Woodwinds, singly or as a choir, announce most of the melodic material here. The music may be gentle on its first appearance, but this movement too grows to a series of great climaxes. It is left to the cellos to sing the relaxed reprise of the main theme as the music makes its way to the quiet close.

**scherzo: vivace.** The real fun of the *Scherzo* (and this movement is fun) lies in its rhythmic vitality. Dvořák sets it in the unusual meter 6/4 and marks it vivace, but then complicates matters by placing accents where we don’t expect them: sometimes this meter is accented in two, sometimes in three, sometimes both simultaneously. The music dances madly into the trio section, which seems to begin quietly and simply (some have heard the sound of birdcalls here) but soon introduces complexities of its own; Dvořák makes a powerful return to the scherzo proper and drives the movement to a resounding close.

**finale: allegro.** The *Finale* returns to the ominous mood that opens the first movement. The cellos’ arching-and-falling opening idea will shape much of this movement, which is launched on its way as Dvořák winds tensions tight and then releases them with a timpani salvo. Cellos eventually provide relief with one of those wonderfully amiable and flowing themes that only Dvořák could write, and from this material he builds another extremely dramatic movement. In fact, Dvořák stays relentlessly in D minor as the movement nears its climax, and it is only in the final seconds that he almost wrenches it into D major for a conclusion that truly does—as Dvořák hoped—“shake the world.”

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger.**



mar 10, 11

National Geographic Live: Symphony for Our World



with the Minnesota Orchestra  
Sarah Hicks, conductor

Friday, March 10, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall  
Saturday, March 11, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

## Symphony for Our World

Opening  
Seas  
Shores  
Plains  
Desert

I N T E R M I S S I O N

ca. 20'

Rivers  
Forest  
Mountains  
Skies  
Closing  
End Credits

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Today's program, which runs approximately one hour and 55 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission, is a presentation of the film *National Geographic: Symphony for Our World* with a live performance of the film's score composed by Bleeding Fingers Sound, including music played by the Orchestra during the end credits.

Please remain seated until the conclusion of the performance.

thank you

The Movies & Music series is presented by U.S. Bank.





**Sarah Hicks**, conductor

Sarah Hicks, the Minnesota Orchestra's principal conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall, has led a broad range of programs since joining the Orchestra as assistant conductor in 2006. Her notable projects here have included co-creating the Inside the Classics series and Sam & Sarah series with Orchestra violist Sam Bergman, and leading original productions with collaborators such as PaviElle French, Kevin Kling, Peter Rothstein, Robert Elhai and The Moving Company. She has been an artistic leader in concerts featuring artists from Minnesota's popular music scene—including shows with The New Standards, multiple sold-out performances with Dessa and a live-in-concert recording with her on Doomtree Records, and collaborations with Cloud Cult. Later this season she conducts programs featuring Minnesota Orchestra trumpeter Charles Lazarus and Dessa. She also continues her role as an on-camera host and writer of the Emmy Award-winning broadcast and livestream series *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*.

A specialist in film music and the film in concert genre, Hicks premiered Pixar in Concert and Disney-Pixar's *Coco* in Concert; her live concert recording of "A Celebration of the Music of *Coco* at the Hollywood Bowl" can be seen on Disney+ and her work on *Little Mermaid Live* was broadcast on ABC. With the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, she recorded film music for an album titled *The Morricone Duel*, which has been broadcast around the world and has garnered over 150 million views on YouTube. She has earned national and international acclaim as a guest conductor both in the U.S. and abroad,

leading such ensembles as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Pops, RTÉ (Dublin) Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic and Malaysian Philharmonic, among many others. More: [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).



BLEEDING FINGERS MUSIC

**Bleeding Fingers Music** is a composer collective founded in 2013 by Hans Zimmer and Extreme Music to create original film and television scores. In that short time, Bleeding Fingers has become the leading custom scoring company in the industry, earning multiple Emmy and BAFTA nominations. This talented team has scored music for several National Geographic favorites, including *Diana: In Her Own Words*, *Savage Kingdom* and *Apollo: Missions to the Moon*. More: [bleedingfingersmusic.com](http://bleedingfingersmusic.com).

 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LIVE

CONCERTS

pre-concert

Pre-concert Performance by 29:11 International Exchange  
Friday, March 10, 7:15 pm, Roberta Mann Grand Foyer  
Saturday, March 11, 7:15 pm, Roberta Mann Grand Foyer



# Upcoming Concerts & Events

AT ORCHESTRA HALL

## MUSIC & MINDFULNESS WITH MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS

THU APR 13 7PM

Explore music and mindfulness through engaging dialogue led by wellbeing instructor Mariann Johnson and performances by a small ensemble of Minnesota Orchestra musicians.

## AFKHAM CONDUCTS LA MER\*

FRI APR 14 8PM

SAT APR 15 8PM

David Afkham, conductor  
Emily Magee, soprano

## STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS IN CONCERT WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

FRI APR 21 7:30PM

SAT APR 22 7:30PM

SUN APR 23 2PM

Sarah Hicks, conductor

## SENSORY-FRIENDLY CONCERT IN THE TARGET ATRIUM\*

TUE APR 25 11AM

This Sensory-Friendly small ensemble concert is an inclusive experience for patrons of all ages, including individuals with autism or sensory sensitivities.

## GARRICK OHLSSON PLAYS BEETHOVEN\*

FRI APR 28 8PM

SAT APR 29 8PM

Juanjo Mena, conductor  
Garrick Ohlsson, piano

HALL PASS | Free Tickets for  
Young Listeners Ages 6 to 18.\*

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\*Choose the Hall Pass price type when buying online to receive free tickets for young listeners ages 6-18. More information at [minnesotaorchestra.org/hallpass](http://minnesotaorchestra.org/hallpass). All artists, programs, dates and prices subject to change. PHOTOS Afkham: Gisela Schenker; Hicks: Courtney Perry; Ohlsson: Dario Acosta.

The Movies & Music series is presented by 

The Sensory-Friendly Concert series is made possible by 

## Minnesota Orchestra

Michael Francis, conductor

Johannes Moser, cello

Thursday, March 16, 2023, 11 am | Orchestra Hall

Friday, March 17, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

|  |  |         |
|--|--|---------|
| <b>Ludwig van Beethoven/</b><br>ed. Rainer Cadenbach | <i>Grosse Fuge</i> in B-flat major, Opus 133   | ca. 17' |
| <b>Dmitri Shostakovich</b>                           | Concerto No. 1 in E-Flat major for Cello and Orchestra, Opus 107<br>Allegretto<br>Moderato<br>Cadenza<br>Allegro con moto<br>[The final three movements are played without pause.]<br><i>Johannes Moser, cello</i> | ca. 28' |
|  | I N T E R M I S S I O N  | ca. 20' |
| <b>Jessie Montgomery</b>                             | <i>Strum</i>   | ca. 7'  |
| <b>Wolfgang Amadè Mozart</b>                         | Symphony No. 41 in C major, K. 551, <i>Jupiter</i><br>Adagio - Allegro molto<br>Largo<br>Molto vivace<br>Allegro con fuoco   | ca. 37' |

## pre-concert

Pre-concert Performance by Duo Avila

Thursday, March 16, 10:15 am, Roberta Mann Grand Foyer

Friday, March 17, 7:15 pm, Roberta Mann Grand Foyer

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#), including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.





**Michael Francis**, conductor

British conductor Michael Francis has quickly established himself internationally as one of today's leading conductors. Appointed music director of the Florida Orchestra in 2014, he is now in the eighth season of a contract that has been extended through the 2024-25 season. He has also served as music director of the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego since 2014 and is in his fourth season as chief conductor of Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz. This week's concerts mark the second time Francis has collaborated with the Minnesota Orchestra and a cello soloist; in his 2018 debut here, he led Daniel Müller-Schott in Schumann's Cello Concerto. This season he also returns to the Cincinnati Symphony, Toronto

Symphony and London Philharmonia. Highlights of previous seasons include engagements with the Cleveland Orchestra, London Symphony, Royal Philharmonic and NHK Symphony, among many other top ensembles around the world. Francis is passionate about sharing the hidden truths in music with audiences worldwide through his acclaimed podium talks. His discography will soon expand with a cycle of Mahler's symphonies and overtures recorded with the Staatsphilharmonie. More: [arabella-arts.com](http://arabella-arts.com), [michaelfrancisconductor.com](http://michaelfrancisconductor.com).



**Johannes Moser**, cello

Acclaimed as one of his generation's finest virtuoso cellists, German-Canadian

Johannes Moser has performed with the world's leading orchestras such as the Berlin, New York and Los Angeles philharmonics, the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras, the London and Chicago symphonies, the BBC Philharmonic at the Proms and Tokyo's NHK Symphony. His Minnesota Orchestra debut came in March 2019, when he performed Lutosławski's Cello Concerto. Highlights of his current season include a tour with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields; engagements with the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Orchestre National d'Ile de France, Atlanta Symphony, Nashville Symphony Orchestra and numerous other orchestras; and a tour with his chamber trio partners: pianist Andrei Korobeinikov and violinist Vadim Gluzman. His discography has been recognized with prestigious honors such as the Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik and the Diapason d'Or. Recently he has been heavily involved in commissioning works by composers Jelena Firsowa, Johannes Kalitzke, Andrew Norman, Thomas Agerfeld Olesen, Ellen Reid and Julia Wolfe. A committed educator, he holds a professorship at the Cologne Hochschule fuer Musik und Tanz. More: [askonasholt.com](http://askonasholt.com), [johannes-moser.com](http://johannes-moser.com).

### one-minute notes

#### Beethoven/Cadenbach: *Grosse Fuge*

Heard here in a string-orchestra expansion of the original string quartet version, Beethoven's *Great Fugue* is full of surprises and contradictions, with dissonant counterpoint, complex rhythms and unexpected silences giving way to powerful moments of clarity.

#### Shostakovich: *Cello Concerto No. 1*

A thread of darkness runs through this concerto, which begins with nervous energy underscored by rumbling contrabassoon. The *Moderato* draws on a plaintive Jewish folk tune; a lengthy cadenza leads to a ferocious *Allegro*.

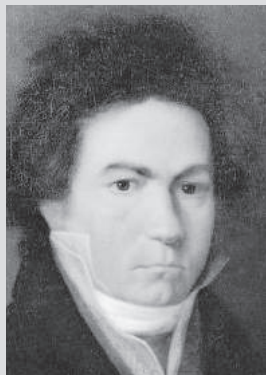
#### Montgomery: *Strum*

Originally conceived for string quintet, this contemporary work for string orchestra, according to the composer, draws on "American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement" and "has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration."

#### Mozart: *Symphony No. 41, Jupiter*

Mozart wrote his last symphony when he was destitute, yet it is a work of Olympian grandeur, with lyrical and martial themes, turbulent and gentle subjects—and a spectacular contrapuntal finale.





## Ludwig van Beethoven

**Born:** December 15, 1770,  
Bonn, Germany

**Died:** March 26, 1827,  
Vienna, Austria

### ***Grosse Fuge (Great Fugue)* in B-flat major, Opus 133, arranged for String Orchestra by Rainer Cadenbach**

**Premiered:** March 21, 1826  
(original string quartet version)

After completing his Ninth Symphony early in 1824, Ludwig van Beethoven devoted the rest of his life to composing string quartets. He had been exploring ways of breaking away from the standard three- and four-movement design for sonatas and quartets, and his Quartet in B-flat, Opus 130, is a most adventurous such piece. It is in six movements, the first, expansive one being followed by four shorter, exceedingly diverse character pieces. The sequence is then capped by an uncompromisingly difficult, dissonant fugal finale that accounts for more than a third of the length of the entire quartet—and that finale has found fame as a standalone work called *Grosse Fuge* (Great Fugue) and given the Opus number 133.

Some early listeners had been excited, exalted by the fugue; more were bewildered. Some professionals called it incomprehensible. Beethoven himself seems to have had some doubts, for he was eventually talked into writing, late in 1826, a new finale for his Opus 130 quartet in his most amiable, noncontroversial vein. What Beethoven doubted about the fugue—or at least what he was persuaded to question—was its appropriateness as a finale. It was published as a separate work for string quartet (Opus 133), and Beethoven himself wrote an arrangement for piano four-hands, a setting both illuminating and exceedingly difficult (Opus 134).

### Beethoven's greatest fugue

The title pages of each of these versions describe them as “Great Fugue, in part free, in part worked.” The beginning, which Beethoven calls *Overtura*, is as “free” as can be: here is music of extreme disjunction, its gestures separated by unmeasured silences, and in its 30 measures changing tempo twice and character more often than that. Beethoven hurls scraps of material about, all related to what has been heard earlier in the quartet, and it is up to the rest of the piece to demonstrate the coherence of what is presented here in so violently dissociated a manner. After five beginnings, the fugue proper, the “worked” part, gets under way. It is a double fugue, the theme of the *Overtura*

played by the violas, the first violins adding a leaping figure of ungainly and totally captivating energy. Beethoven develops this music in a series of variations of growing rhythmic and textural complexity, unrelieved in ferocious energy, bold without limits in harmony. There is a softer interlude, from which leaps forth a new movement, quicker than anything we have heard so far. The disjunctions and the violence of the leaps also surpass anything we have encountered up to this point, with interruptions and reappearances of earlier passages, both sometimes so startling that we might think we are dealing with a copyist's error. The interference of the free with the worked is fierce and outrageous. The resolution is surprising and touching, a mixture of the exalted and the humorous that only Beethoven could have invented.

### versions for string orchestra

Hans von Bülow seems to have been the first conductor to have a full string orchestra play the work; that was in the early 1880s, when it had the reputation of being a mad extravagance, impossible to execute and hardly ever attempted by quartets. To make a string orchestra version means primarily to make decisions about when the basses should double the cellos an octave below. Felix Weingartner, the first to publish such an edition, did a good job on the whole, but he filled the score with sentimentalizing changes of tempo and dynamics. The version used in these performances was prepared by German musicologist Rainer Cadenbach, who lived from 1944 to 2008.

**Instrumentation:** string orchestra

*Excerpted from a program note by the late Michael Steinberg, used with permission. Steinberg is among the many who have prepared their own string orchestra version of Grosse Fuge; the Minnesota Orchestra performed that version most recently in July 2022.*





### Dmitri Shostakovich

**Born:** September 25, 1906,  
St. Petersburg, Russia

**Died:** August 9, 1975,  
Moscow, Russia

### Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major for Cello and Orchestra, Opus 107

**Premiered:** October 4, 1959

**m**stislav Rostropovich was just 16 years old when, already a brilliant cellist, he became friends with Dmitri Shostakovich, his composition teacher at the Moscow Conservatory. Some 15 years later the composer wrote a concerto for his former student. Rostropovich premiered the Cello Concerto No. 1, dedicated to him and conceived with his phenomenal abilities in mind, on October 4, 1959, with Yevgeny Mravinsky conducting the Leningrad Philharmonic. (The premiere came two years to the date after the Soviet Union's surprising leap to space supremacy with the launch of the Sputnik satellite.) Since then it has become one of the most frequently performed and recorded of all cello concertos.

The work has an unusual structure: Shostakovich intended to write a concerto in the standard three movements, but completed a total of four, the last three of which are played without pause. Another striking feature is its exceptionally lean scoring, for the orchestra consists of a string section with only 11 additional instruments. One, a horn, repeats and develops themes so prominently that at times it rivals the solo cello in importance.

#### the music: saucy, wistful, athletic

**allegretto.** Shostakovich described the opening *Allegretto* as “a scherzo-like march,” and in another original touch he dispenses altogether with the usual orchestral exposition: the solo cello itself opens the concerto with the four-note figure that will form the melodic basis of the first movement. The cello also announces the firm and driving second subject, and in the course of the active development the solo horn repeats both these ideas. This saucy, slightly sardonic movement comes to a sudden close on its opening theme.

**moderato.** The mood changes completely with the second movement, *Moderato*. Muted strings introduce the wistful main idea, quickly repeated by the solo horn. The cello, though, enters with different material, its simple tune singing, almost innocent. The development grows gnarled and complex, but the horn leads

to a haunting conclusion: Shostakovich has the cello play the final pages entirely in artificial harmonics and accompanies it with the softly ringing sound of the celesta.

**cadenza.** On this lean and icy sound the movement flows directly into the third movement, the lengthy *Cadenza* that develops themes from the second movement and makes virtuoso demands on the cellist—who at times must bow with the right hand and simultaneously pluck double-stopped pizzicatos with the left.

**allegro con moto.** There is something almost grotesque about the skirling woodwind tune that opens the athletic finale, *Allegro con moto*. As it proceeds, the opening theme of the first movement begins to emerge from the busy texture. Pushed on by prominent horn calls, the concerto rushes to its close on the theme with which it began.

**Instrumentation:** solo cello with orchestra comprising 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), horn, timpani, celesta and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.



### Jessie Montgomery

**Born:** December 8, 1981,  
New York City

#### Strum

**Premiered:** April 2006 (original string quintet version)

**h**ailed by *The New York Times* for her “often personal yet widely resonant music—forged in Manhattan, a mirror turned on the whole country,” and praised by the *Chicago Tribune* for her “refreshing and recognizable voice,” Jessie Montgomery and her music are enjoying well-deserved attention from ensembles, musicians, critics and audiences around the world. Montgomery’s innovative approach combines classical language with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, spoken language and social-historical concerns.

#### a leading classical figure

Over the past few years, Montgomery has been commissioned by a number of prominent ensembles and institutions, including the New York Philharmonic, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Saint

Paul Chamber Orchestra and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; the Grammy Award-winning Catalyst String Quartet; the Sphinx Virtuosi; and the Grant Park Music Festival, among others. She has received several prestigious awards, including the ASCAP Foundation's Leonard Bernstein Award, and her name was mentioned twice from the stage at the 2023 Grammy Awards in early February when the New York Youth Symphony's recording of works by Montgomery, Valerie Coleman and Florence Price won the award for Best Orchestral Performance—marking the first time a youth orchestra has ever won the award.

Since 1999, Montgomery has been affiliated with the Sphinx Organization, which supports young Black and Latinx string players, and has served as composer in residence for the Sphinx Virtuosi, the Organization's flagship professional touring ensemble. Last year that group performed the premiere of her cello concerto *Divided* at Carnegie Hall with Thomas Mesa as soloist. In 2019, the New York Philharmonic selected Montgomery as one of the featured composers for its Project 19, which marked the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, prohibiting laws that denied the right to vote on the basis of sex. In May 2021, she began a three-year appointment as the Mead Composer in Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which is commissioning three works from her, the first of which, *Hymn for Everyone*, premiered last April. An accomplished violinist, Montgomery also maintains an active career as a performer.

Montgomery's busy slate of current and upcoming projects include a work for orchestra and violin for premiere by Joshua Bell, a quartet for percussion, a solo work for cellist Alisa Weilerstein's FRAGMENTS project, and works for some of the nation's leading orchestras, including those of Baltimore, Buffalo, Dallas, Detroit, New Jersey, New York and Seattle. She also continues to maintain several major artistic residence and teaching positions: she is currently artist in residence at the Vanderbilt University Blair School of Music, composer in residence at Bard College, and professor of violin and composition at The New School in New York City.

### "from a place of whimsy"

*Strum* is an early work, written when Montgomery was 25, is her most frequently performed composition to date, and was the title track of her 2016 debut album on the Azica label, *Strum: Music for Strings*. The Minnesota Orchestra's string section has performed it once already in an October 2020 performance that, due to pandemic restrictions, was performed for broadcast and livestreaming only without a live audience in the auditorium. This week, listeners can finally enjoy the work in person.

A New York native, Montgomery began composing at age 11, but didn't begin to explore composition seriously as a career path until her mid-20s; prior to *Strum*, Montgomery thought of herself primarily as a violinist. "*Strum* was the first piece I wrote on commission for Community MusicWorks and the Providence String Quartet," Montgomery recalled in an interview. "They asked me to write this piece for a concert that included the Schubert Cello Quintet. *Strum* emerged naturally; I didn't have a purpose in mind, but I started with that pizzicato riff that goes all the way through, which I came up with during a rehearsal of Dvořák's *American* Quartet...when you are in rehearsal, you're not supposed to be fiddling around with your instrument, but I happened to be fiddling around and I thought, 'That's kind of cool!' *Strum* was meant to be something fun; I think it's important to approach writing from a place of whimsy and not really knowing what's going to come, and to find an expression of release. *Strum* was like that because I really didn't know what I was doing and it took me a long time to write—six months."

The wide-open sound of *Strum* evokes both joy and possibility. In her own program notes, Montgomery wrote, "*Strum* is the culminating result of several versions of a string quintet I wrote in 2006. It was originally written for the Providence String Quartet [in Rhode Island] and guests of Community MusicWorks Players, then arranged for string quartet in 2008 with several small revisions. In 2012 the piece underwent its final revisions with a rewrite of both the introduction and the ending for the Catalyst Quartet in a performance celebrating the 15th annual Sphinx Competition." The original string quintet version received its premiere in April 2006; this week's Minnesota Orchestra concerts feature the string orchestra version that dates from 2012.

Describing the work, Montgomery continues: "Originally conceived for the formation of a cello quintet, the voicing is often spread wide over the ensemble, giving the music an expansive quality of sound. Within *Strum* I utilized texture motives, layers of rhythmic or harmonic ostinati that string together to form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out. The strumming pizzicato serves as a texture motive and the primary driving rhythmic underpinning of the piece. Drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, the piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration."

**Instrumentation:** string orchestra

Program note by **Elizabeth Schwartz** © 2023.





## Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

**Born:** January 27, 1756,  
Salzburg, Austria

**Died:** December 5, 1791,  
Vienna, Austria

**Symphony No. 41 in  
C major, K. 551, Jupiter**  
Composed: 1788

The summer of 1788 was an exceptionally difficult time for Mozart, and what must have been particularly dismaying for the composer was the suddenness of his fall from grace. Two years earlier, at the premiere of *The Marriage of Figaro*, he had been at the summit of the musical world. But an indifferent reception to *Don Giovanni* and evolving musical fashions in Vienna changed this. Mozart's audience nearly disappeared: he was unable to mount new concerts or sell music by subscription.

He found his financial condition straitened, and he began to borrow heavily. The composer moved his family to a smaller apartment in a suburb of Vienna, where there was at least the consolation of a garden and lower rent, but he remained despondent about his situation.

### an Olympian symphony

Through that bleak summer, Mozart worked with incredible speed. He finished the Symphony No. 39 on June 26, the Symphony No. 40 on July 25, and a bare 16 days later the Symphony No. 41. The question remains: why did Mozart write these works? He usually wrote music when performances were planned, but there is no record of any subscription concerts during this period. Evidence suggests that he heard the Symphony No. 40 at a concert in April 1791, but at the time of his death eight months later he had likely not heard a note of the Symphony No. 39 or the Symphony No. 41.

The Symphony in C major was his last, though there is no reason to believe that he knew when writing it that it would be his final symphony. The nickname "Jupiter," which was in use by the early 19th century, was not Mozart's. But in this instance, the inauthentic nickname makes sense: if ever there were Olympian music, this is it.

**allegro vivace.** The first movement is music of genuine grandeur, built on a wealth of thematic material, and we feel that breadth from the first instant, when the opening theme divides into two

quite distinct phrases. The first phrase is an almost stern motto of repeated triplets, but the second is lyric and graceful, and the fusion of these two elements within the same theme suggests by itself the emotional scope of the opening movement. The array of material in this movement ranges from an almost military power to an elegant lyricism. One theme is derived from an aria Mozart had written a few months earlier, which dominates in the brief development and is later brought back in a minor key. The movement's martial spirit prevails at its stirring close.

**andante cantabile.** Mozart stipulates *cantabile* for the second movement, which sounds as if it too might be an aria from an opera. Muted first violins introduce both themes of this sonata-form movement. The opening seems at first all silky lyricism, but Mozart jolts this peace with unexpected attacks. The second subject is turbulent: over quiet triplet accompaniment, the violin line rises and falls in a series of intensely chromatic phrases.

**allegretto.** The third movement is in minuet-and-trio form, brisk music whose fluid lines are spiced by attacks from brass and timpani. The trio section is dominated by the solo oboe, though near its end strings break into a gentle little waltz that suddenly stops in mid-air.

**molto allegro.** The finale is not simply one of Mozart's finest movements: it is one of the most astonishing pieces of music ever written. It begins with a four-note phrase heard immediately in the first violins, yet this figure is hardly new: Mozart had used it in his *Missa Brevis* in F major of 1774, his String Quartet in G major of 1782, and elsewhere. In fact, he had subtly prepared us for the finale by slipping this opening phrase into the trio section of the third movement. The finale is not a fugue, but a sonata-form movement that puts that opening four-note phrase and other material through extensive fugal treatment, giving this week's performances fitting bookends—both Beethoven and Mozart pushing tools of the fugue to their furthest limits.

However dazzling Mozart's treatment of his material is in the development section, nothing can prepare the listener for the coda. Horns sound the opening motto, and in some of the most brilliant polyphonic writing to be found anywhere, Mozart pulls all his themes together in magnificent five-part counterpoint—as the symphony hurtles to its close in a blaze of brass and timpani.

**Instrumentation:** flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns,  
2 trumpets, timpani and strings

Program notes by **Eric Bromberger**.

# Minnesota Orchestra

Michael Francis, conductor

Saturday, March 18, 2023, 6 pm | Orchestra Hall

|                       |  |         |
|-----------------------|--|---------|
| Jessie Montgomery     | <i>Strum</i>   | ca. 7'  |
| Wolfgang Amadè Mozart | Symphony No. 41 in C major, K. 551, <i>Jupiter</i><br>Allegro vivace<br>Andante cantabile<br>Allegretto<br>Molto allegro | ca. 37' |

Join us onstage for a reception with Minnesota Orchestra musicians following the concert.

A profile of Michael Francis appears on page 32. Program notes on *Strum* and the *Jupiter* Symphony appear on pages 34 through 36.

## one-minute notes

### Montgomery: *Strum*

Originally conceived for string quintet, this contemporary work for string orchestra, according to the composer, draws on “American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement” and “has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration.”

### Mozart: *Symphony No. 41, Jupiter*

Mozart wrote his last symphony when he was destitute, yet it is a work of Olympian grandeur, with lyrical and martial themes, turbulent and gentle subjects—and a spectacular contrapuntal finale.

pre-concert

Pre-concert Performance by Duo Avila  
Saturday, March 18, 5:15 pm, Roberta Mann Grand Foyer





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   #mnorch

Minnesota Orchestra  
 Christoph König, conductor  
 Olga Kern, piano

Thursday, March 23, 2023, 11 am | Orchestra Hall

Friday, March 24, 2023, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

|                 |  |         |
|-----------------|--|---------|
| Hannah Kendall  | <i>The Spark Catchers</i>  | ca. 10' |
| Edvard Grieg    | Concerto in A minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 16<br>Allegro<br>Adagio<br>Allegro moderato molto e marcato<br>[There is no pause before the final movement.]<br><i>Olga Kern, piano</i> | ca. 30' |
|                 | I N T E R M I S S I O N  | ca. 20' |
| Robert Schumann | Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Opus 97, <i>Rhenish</i><br>Lebhaft<br>Scherzo: Sehr mässig<br>Nicht schnell<br>Feierlich<br>Lebhaft  | ca. 35' |

pre-concert

Concert Preview with Valerie Little and guests  
 Thursday, March 23, 10:15 am, Auditorium  
 Friday, March 24, 7:15 pm, Auditorium

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#), including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.





### Christoph König, conductor

Celebrated for his clarity, precision and elegant approach, Christoph König is in high demand as a guest conductor all over the world. He has been principal conductor and music director of the Solistes Européens Luxembourg since 2010, and this week makes his first appearance with the Minnesota Orchestra. Since his U.S. debut in 2010, he has conducted many major North American symphony orchestras including those of Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, New Jersey, Houston, Oregon and Toronto, as well as the Los Angeles Philharmonic. His other engagements include concerts with the Rochester Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Staatskapelle Dresden, Orchestre de Paris and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra,

whom he led on a highly successful tour of China in 2008. He previously held conducting positions with the Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música, Malmö Symphony Orchestra and l'Orquesta Filarmonica de Gran Canaria, and has been affiliated with many leading opera houses. A recent highlight of his discography is his 2020 recording of the complete Beethoven symphonies on the British label RUBICON. Born in Dresden, König studied conducting, piano and singing at the Musikhochschule Dresden. More: [arabella-arts.com](http://arabella-arts.com), [christophkoenigconductor.com](http://christophkoenigconductor.com).



### Olga Kern, piano

With a vivid stage presence, passionately confident musicianship and extraordinary

technique, Olga Kern is widely recognized as one of the great pianists of her generation. Welcomed this week for her Minnesota Orchestra debut, she appears this season with numerous orchestras including the Baltimore Symphony, Dallas Symphony, National Philharmonic Orchestra in Hungary, Orquestra Filarmónica de Gran Canaria in Spain and Orquestra de São Paulo in Brazil. Additional highlights of recent seasons include tours with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of China. She is also an active recitalist and chamber musician. Her many accolades include first prize at the Gold Medal at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2001—when she became the first woman in more than 30 years to take the honor—a 2008 Grammy nomination for her disc of Rachmaninoff's *Corelli Variations* and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2017. Born in Moscow and now an American citizen, she is artistic director of the Olga Kern International Piano Competition, founded in 2016. In 2012 she and her brother Vladimir Kern co-founded the Aspiration Foundation, which provides assistance to musicians throughout the world. More: [olgakern.com](http://olgakern.com).

## one-minute notes

### Kendall: *The Spark Catchers*

Inspired by Lemn Sissay's evocative poem commemorating a Victorian-era match factory workers' strike, *The Spark Catchers* comprises four contrasting sections that summon moods of liveliness, darkness, suspense and delicacy.

### Grieg: Piano Concerto

This virtuosic keyboard showcase, written when its composer was only 25, reveals its heritage in evocations of traditional Norwegian song and dance, and contains a wealth of themes and dramatic gestures.

### Schumann: Symphony No. 3, *Rhenish*

This five-movement symphony, named for the German Rhineland the composer had just happily journeyed to, opens with energy, syncopations and rhythmic displacements. The charming second and third movements segue to a solemn fourth that brings the symphony's first appearance of trombones, and the finale is a joyful return to sunlight







### Hannah Kendall

**Born:** 1984,  
London, United Kingdom

### *The Spark Catchers*

**Premiered:** August 30, 2017

Six years ago, Hannah Kendall's *The Spark Catchers*, which was inspired by events of the late 1880s, received its premiere at a music festival whose history extends nearly that far back—the BBC Proms in London. *The Spark Catchers* was commissioned by BBC Radio 3 and premiered by Chineke! at a Proms concert under the baton of Kevin John Edusei on August 30, 2017. Chineke!—Europe's first Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) orchestra—was given a 10:15 p.m. concert time on a Wednesday night for its debut concert at the Proms. Despite such an awkward day and time, Royal Albert Hall was packed with an enthusiastic crowd to witness history.

The evening delivered top-quality performances of works spanning a long history. *The Spark Catchers* was the most recently-written work on the program, and one of two works performed that evening by a composer who was still living (the other work being *Lyric for Strings* by George Walker, who passed away the following year). With its high energy, captivating sound world, intriguing narrative and powerful ending, *The Spark Catchers* illuminated Royal Albert Hall that evening and has continued to intrigue audiences since its 2017 premiere, both through digital recordings and in concert halls.

### a blossoming career

Hannah Kendall was born in 1984 in London. Her parents, both from Guyana, encouraged her musical and artistic pursuits, resulting in successful matriculations from the University of Exeter, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Royal College of Music in London. In 2015, Kendall was featured by *The Telegraph* newspaper in partnership with BBC Radio 3 as one of five composers featured that week who are “brilliant female composers under the age of 35.” After this recognition, Kendall's accolades and projects have blossomed.

In 2016, Kendall completed a chamber opera, *The Knife of Dawn*, concerning the 1953 imprisonment of Martin Carter—a political activist in what was then British Guiana. This dramatic work, directly relating to her own cultural heritage, received critical

acclaim. The following year marked her BBC Proms debut with Chineke! and *The Spark Catchers*, and in 2020 she returned to the Proms for the premiere of *Tuxedo: Vasco 'de' Gama*. Kendall's *Tuxedo* series, which thus far includes 10 entries, is named after a work of visual art by Jean-Michel Basquiat. She notes that Basquiat's “eponymous piece provides one of many graphic scores that [I have] used as inspiration throughout [my] career,” and adds that her music doesn't create musical representations of the images—rather, the artwork sparks her creative process.

Kendall's important and fascinating contributions to the orchestral repertoire place her solidly within the history of Black female orchestrators and symphonists such as the British composers Shirley Thompson OBE and Errollyn Wallen CBE and the American composers Margaret Bonds, Margaret Rosezarian Harris, Julia Perry and Florence Price. Kendall is currently based in New York City, where she is studying composition in the doctor of musical arts program at Columbia University as a Dean's Fellow.

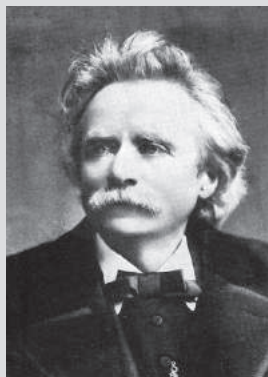
### music from poetry: stopping the sparks

To compose *The Spark Catchers*, Kendall used a beloved British poem as a foundational inspiration. That poem, which bears the same title as Kendall's composition, was written by the British-Ethiopian poet Lemn Sissay, and was commissioned for a permanent poetry installation in the London Olympic Park in 2012. At the time, Sissay was the official poet of the London Olympics. His text pays homage to the women and girls who worked in deplorable conditions at the Bryant and May match factory. In 1888, these workers created the first non-unionized strike, which revolutionized labor in Britain. The poem imagines these women and girls practicing, at night, how to catch a spark in the air. In the match factory, these workers were surrounded by highly combustible material, and stopping a spark was necessary to protect property, their employment and, most importantly, their lives.

Kendall's enchanting orchestral fantasy encapsulates both the urgency of this spark-catching tactic and the need to improve labor conditions. The music achieves this mainly through an abundance of repeated notes, syncopation (accenting unexpected rhythms to create a feeling of surprise and vibrance), and a sophisticated use of harmony and dissonance. Kendall's bright sonic color palette highly exaggerates the idea of “spark”; while listening to the music, one can imagine the spark of flint, the spark of an idea, the spark of anger or even the spark of a revolution. Kendall's vivacious orchestral experience pushes aside romanticism, opting rather for power. This power, however, is not a pounding or a screaming power. No—the power in *The Spark Catchers* is a fire birthed from the sparks created by surviving oppressive situations and demanding justice.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, cymbals, tambourine, triangle, glockenspiel, harp and strings

Program note by **Anthony R. Green**.



### Edvard Grieg

**Born:** June 15, 1843,  
Bergen, Norway

**Died:** September 4, 1907,  
Bergen, Norway

### Concerto in A minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 16

**Premiered:** April 3, 1869

In June 1867 Edvard Grieg, then a struggling 24-year-old composer, married his first cousin Nina Hagerup, a soprano. The following summer, wishing for a break from the busy musical life of Norway, the Griegs went to Denmark, where they hoped the milder climate would benefit the composer's often frail health. They rented a two-room garden cottage a few miles outside Copenhagen, and there Grieg began his Piano Concerto in A minor. He completed the score early the following year, and Edmund Neupert gave the first performance in Copenhagen on April 3, 1869. The concerto was an immediate success, but Grieg continued to revise it across the rest of his life: he made the final revisions in 1907, only a few months before his death.

#### a "splendid" success

Several years after the premiere, the Griegs traveled to Rome, where they visited Franz Liszt in his villa. Liszt sat down at his piano and sight-read this difficult concerto from Grieg's manuscript. Grieg reported that while Liszt played the first movement too fast, his reading of the cadenza was magnificent, and the older master was so taken with the music at one point that he got up and strolled away from the piano with his arms upraised, "literally roaring out the theme." Best of all, Liszt recognized the way Grieg had amended one of the principal themes of the finale when it comes back for a triumphant reappearance at the end. He shouted out: "G-natural! G-natural! Not G-sharp! Splendid!" Liszt played that ending one more time, then told Grieg: "Keep on, I tell you. You have what is needed, and don't let them frighten you."

Liszt's judgment was sound: the Grieg Piano Concerto has become one of the most popular ever written. Its combination of good

tunes alternating with stormy, dramatic gestures, all stitched together with brilliant writing for piano, has made it virtually irresistible to audiences. In a way, this music has become a victim of its own success: by the middle of the last century it had become almost too popular, but over the past generation or so it has appeared much less often in concert halls. Which makes a fresh performance all the more welcome.

#### the music: from a grand opening to a folk finale

**allegro molto moderato.** Grieg greatly admired the music of Robert Schumann, and the similarity between the beginnings of their respective piano concertos is striking: each opens with a great orchestral chord followed by a brilliant passage for the solo piano that eases gently into the movement's main theme. Grieg makes his opening even more dramatic by beginning with a long timpani roll that flares up like a peal of thunder; the piano's entrance then flashes downward like a streak of lightning.

The movement's march-like main theme, shared on its first appearance by winds and strings, is only the first of many attractive ideas. (One observer has counted seven different themes in this movement, and these range from a melting lyricism to heaven-storming violence.) The cadenza that Liszt sight-read so well is particularly effective. Though it begins quietly, the concerto soon unleashes great torrents of sound from hammered octaves and brilliant runs. It is altogether typical of this movement that Grieg should introduce a new theme after the cadenza. The piano's pounding, driving chords propel the music to its exciting close.

**adagio.** The mood changes completely in the *Adagio*. Grieg mutes the strings here and moves to the key of D-flat major, which feels soft and warm after the powerful opening movement. A long orchestral introduction leads to the entrance of the piano, which sounds utterly fresh after the dark, muted strings. But this entrance is deceiving. The piano part soon turns dramatic and drives to its own climax; the music subsides and continues without a break into the finale.

**allegro moderato molto e marcato.** After an opening flourish, the piano introduces the main theme, a dancing 2/4 idea that sounds as if its roots must be in Norwegian folk music. Once again, this movement is built on a wealth of ideas. At the coda Grieg moves into A major and ingeniously recasts his main theme in 3/4 meter, and the movement drives to its powerful close.

**Instrumentation:** solo piano with orchestra comprising 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.



## Robert Schumann

**Born:** June 8, 1810,  
Zwickau, Germany

**Died:** July 29, 1856,  
Bonn, Germany

### Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Opus 97, *Rhenish*

**Premiered:** February 6, 1851

**O**n the evening of September 2, 1850, Robert Schumann and his family arrived in Düsseldorf, where he had agreed to take up the position of the orchestra's music director. It was a much-needed fresh start: Schumann had spent the previous six years in Dresden, in various stages of depression, and now he was delighted to escape a city he associated with creative blockage and begin anew. In Düsseldorf he and Clara were feted with a flurry of concerts, dinners and dances, and four weeks later they traveled 30 miles up the Rhine river for the enthronement of Archbishop Geissel of Cologne as a Cardinal. Though the Schumanns were not Catholic, this solemn ceremony in the still-unfinished cathedral made a deep impression on the composer.

### a rejuvenated composer

His spirits revived, Schumann plunged into work, quickly composing his Cello Concerto and beginning to conduct the Düsseldorf orchestra. In the midst of this, he set to work on a new symphony. This would be listed as his Third, even though it was the last of the four he composed: he sketched the first movement between November 2 and 9, made another quick visit to Cologne, and had the entire work complete on December 9. The composer led the successful premiere of the Third Symphony in Düsseldorf on February 6, 1851. Things happened faster in those days: from the time Schumann sat down before a blank sheet of manuscript paper until he led the premiere, only 96 days had passed.

Schumann himself contributed the nickname *Rhenish* for the new symphony, but that name needs to be understood carefully. This music paints no scenes and tells no story; it does not set out to translate the fabled Rhine into sound. Rather, it is music inspired by a return to the river on which Schumann had spent happy student days 20 years earlier and which was now the setting for his new job and, he hoped, a return to health. Several movements originally had descriptive titles, but Schumann excluded these from the completed score: he wanted this symphony understood purely as music. To his publisher, Schumann explained simply that the symphony “perhaps mirrors here and there something of Rhenish life.”

### energy, charm, grandeur

**lebhaft.** The structure of the symphony is unusual: it opens with a huge and dramatic sonata-form movement, which is then followed by four relatively short movements. The opening *Lebhaft* (lively) has no introduction—Schumann plunges directly into this music with a theme that swings and thrusts its way forward. The Rhine has become a slow flatland river by the time it reaches Düsseldorf, and one inevitably feels that the Rhine of Schumann's first movement is the river upstream as it rolls through the deep gorges and past the fabled castles of the mountains of western Germany.

The opening is full of a resounding energy that carries all before it, but this music is also remarkable for its syncopations and rhythmic displacements: the effort to beat the downbeats will quickly end in confusion, so skillfully has Schumann written against the expected pattern of the measures. The second subject is a delicate, waltz-like tune introduced by the woodwinds, but it is the opening material that dominates this movement, and—pushed on by some terrific horn calls—this theme drives the movement to a splendid close.

**scherzo: sehr mäsigt-nicht schnell.** The next two movements, melodic and charming, function as interludes. The Scherzo, “very moderate,” is like a comfortable country dance that flows along the easy swing of its main theme; the trio section turns a little darker, and Schumann ingeniously combines these themes in the reprise. The third movement, marked simply *Nicht schnell* (not quickly), alternates the clarinets' delicate opening idea with the violas' expressive second subject.

**feierlich.** The atmosphere changes completely in the fourth movement, marked *Feierlich* (solemn). Silent until now, three trombones darkly intone the somber main idea in E-flat minor, which Schumann treats to some impressive polyphonic extension, developing this idea in tight imitative canon. In his manuscript Schumann had originally headed this movement “In the character of the accompaniment to a solemn ceremony,” and surely this music was inspired by the ceremonial enthronement of Cardinal Geissel in the vast Cologne Cathedral. This solemn movement drives to a grand close on a series of ringing chords.

**lebhaft.** Out of their echoes, the finale bursts to life. Commentators have universally been unable to resist comparing this moment to stepping from out of a dark cathedral into the sunlight—and they may well be right. This music leaps to life, but it is worth noting that Schumann marks this beginning *dolce*: “gentle, sweet.” Like the first movement, also marked *Lebhaft*, the finale overflows with energy, and Schumann drives it to a climax that recalls the solemn trombone theme from the fourth movement, now played so loudly that it should shake the hall, and a quick reference to the grand



swing of the opening of the first movement. A brisk coda drives this wonderful music to a close fully worthy of its nickname.

### the darkness returns

Despite Schumann's enthusiastic return to the Rhineland, things did not go well in Düsseldorf. He proved an indifferent conductor, soon there were intrigues against him, and periods of black depression inevitably returned. In a sad irony, Schumann attempted suicide by throwing himself into the Rhine in Düsseldorf in 1854; he was rescued by fishermen but placed in an asylum from which he never emerged. Many critics feel that the music of Schumann's final years shows a decline, yet everyone who hears the *Rhenish* Symphony knows that this is an exception to that bleak rule—its power and happiness and assured technique make this the finest work of Schumann's final period. How sad it is that a work written at age 40 should have to be from a composer's "final period."

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings

Program note by **Eric Bromberger**.



The Minnesota Orchestra has performed **Hannah Kendall's** *The Spark Catchers* on one prior program—the only past time the ensemble has performed her music—at New Year's Eve and Day concerts at Orchestra Hall marking the arrival of 2020. On that occasion the Orchestra was led by Osmo Vänskä, and the program had a distinctly British flavor: in addition to Kendall's music, the concert featured works by English-born composers Benjamin Britten, Edward Elgar, Peter Maxwell Davies and Thomas Arne.

The Orchestra gave its first performance of **Edvard Grieg's** *Piano Concerto* on March 9, 1906, at the Minneapolis Auditorium, with founding Music Director Emil Oberhoffer conducting and Raoul Pugno as soloist in the French pianist-composer's sole appearance with the ensemble. The most recent soloist to play the concerto with the Orchestra is Juho Pohjonen, who performed it in September 2019 to open the Orchestra's 2019-20 season and reprised it during the Orchestra's January 2020 visit to Indiana University. Earlier in 2019 the concerto's final movement was played at a series of Young People's and Family concerts with Minnesota native Emma Taggart, winner of the 2018 YPSCA Young People's Concerto Competition, at the keyboard.

The Orchestra's initial performance of **Robert Schumann's** *Rhenish Symphony* came on March 13, 1936, in a performance at Northrop Memorial Auditorium led by Eugene Ormandy. That same concert featured famous violinist Jascha Heifetz as soloist in Brahms' Violin Concerto and was one of the last performances Ormandy led before concluding his six-year term as the Orchestra's third music director and beginning a 44-year tenure at the head of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

## Chamber Music with Musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra

Sunday, March 26, 2023, 4 pm | Target Atrium, Orchestra Hall

*The Minnesota Orchestra's Chamber Music series is  
generously sponsored by Dr. Jennine and John Speier.*

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Paul Hindemith</b>          | <p>Sonata for Bass and Piano <span style="float: right;">ca. 13'</span></p> <p>Allegretto<br/>Scherzo - Allegro Assai<br/>Molto adagio - Recitativo<br/>Lied - Allegretto grazioso<br/><i>Kathryn Nettleman, bass   Susan Billmeyer, piano</i></p>  |
| <b>Samuel Coleridge-Taylor</b> | <p>Five Fantasy Pieces for String Quartet <span style="float: right;">ca. 20'</span></p> <p>Prelude<br/>Serenade<br/>Humoresque<br/>Minuet and Trio<br/>Dance<br/><i>Rui Du, violin   Cecilia Belcher, violin<br/>Kenneth Freed, viola   Pitnarry Shin, cello</i></p>   |
| <b>Javier Iba Rodríguez</b>    | <p><i>Pilgrim Tales</i> for Violin, Clarinet and Piano <span style="float: right;">ca. 13'</span></p> <p>Light is like water<br/>The Saint<br/>Sleeping Beauty and the airplane<br/><i>Sarah Grimes, violin   Timothy Zavadil, clarinet<br/>Mary Jo Gothmann, piano</i></p>   |
|                                | <p style="text-align: center;">I N T E R M I S S I O N <span style="float: right;">ca. 20'</span></p>   |
| <b>Felix Mendelssohn</b>       | <p>Octet in E-flat major for Strings, Opus 20 <span style="float: right;">ca. 32'</span></p> <p>Allegro moderato con fuoco<br/>Andante<br/>Scherzo - Allegro leggierissimo<br/>Presto<br/><i>Rui Du, violin   Cecilia Belcher, violin<br/>Céline Leathead, violin   Rebecca Corruccini, violin<br/>Kenneth Freed, viola   Megan Tam, viola<br/>Silver Ainomäe, cello   Sonia Mantell, cello</i></p> |

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### \*In Remembrance

These listings are current as of January 23, 2023. Every effort has been made to ensure their accuracy. If your name has been inadvertently omitted or incorrectly listed, please accept our apology, and contact the Development department at 612-371-5600 or at [support@mnorch.org](mailto:support@mnorch.org).

For information on giving at these or other levels, please call Bonnie Marshall at 612-371-7122 or visit our website at [minnesotaorchestra.org/waystogive](http://minnesotaorchestra.org/waystogive).

## Sensory-Friendly Concerts help music belong to everyone

Experiencing the joy of a live Minnesota Orchestra concert is something many people take for granted. For audience members with autism or sensory sensitivities, attending a conventional concert may feel overwhelming and intimidating. One way the Orchestra is living its mantra of "Music Belongs to Everyone" for these listeners is through our Sensory-Friendly Concerts—a curated environment featuring individual musicians or small ensembles for all to experience the magic of a live concert.

Sensory-Friendly Concerts were originally initiated by the Minnesota Orchestra's musicians in partnership with Lyndie Walker, MT-BC, from Toneworks Music Therapy Services. Now presented as an official Orchestra series, the concerts provide an inclusive and relaxed space for all to come be who they are while enjoying music together with family and friends. Before guests arrive, a pre-concert story document outlines how the event will feel and what will happen from start to finish. At the concert, attendees are provided with materials to help provide a comfortable and safe environment. The concerts feature performances by Orchestra musicians and young people with disabilities, sometimes playing side-by-side. Audience members are welcome to get up close to the instruments or experience the performance in a quieter space.

An attendee at a November 2022 Sensory-Friendly Concert shared the following comment: "The Orchestra paid amazing attention to detail to make the environment friendly for my autistic son. The fidgets, floor seating, quiet area and general acceptance of whatever may happen while he was enjoying the concert."

Since their inception, Sensory-Friendly Concerts have reached thousands of audience members, spreading the joy of live music to members of the community who may rarely experience it otherwise. Generous donations from music lovers like you are allowing us to continue and even expand this important work! Your gift will help the Orchestra to use music as a tool for healing and connection and help ensure this critical work reaches more of our neighbors—creating even more personal interactions between audience members and Orchestra musicians.

With gratitude,

Brian Newhouse  
Associate Vice President of Individual Giving



Conductor Mei-Ann Chen making her Minnesota Orchestra debut as the ensemble performs a celebratory concert in the waning hours of 2022. Photo: Nayelie Avalos

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### The Laureate Society

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- Invitation to the annual Laureate Society Luncheon with Minnesota Orchestra musicians
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- Communications about Minnesota Orchestra news and special updates
- VIP ticket services for Laureate members who also donate to the Guaranty Fund at the Maestro's Circle level

If you have included the Minnesota Orchestra in your estate plans, please let us know so we can thank you and recognize you personally for your generosity. We will respect your wishes to remain anonymous if you so choose.

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