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FROM THE EDITOR

Due to quirks in English-language numerology—and perhaps, in part, the splintering of culture in the age of social media—the proper shorthand for referencing the first two decades of the 21st century was never definitively settled. Honorable mention goes to the Aughts, '00s and 2010s—but with these years now in the rear-view mirror, the time for debate has passed. There's no linguistic doubt, however, that we're now living in the Twenties. But here opens a new can of worms: at times, we must specify which Twenties—the 1920s or 2020s.

This summer the Minnesota Orchestra is fully embracing the Twenties past and present by looking back a hundred years and celebrating the music of the Roaring Twenties, a decade of innovation that still echoes today. Pianist Jon Kimura Parker, our creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall, has crafted a festival highlighted by signature piano concertos of Maurice Ravel and George Gershwin, music from Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera*, John Harbison's homage to *The Great Gatsby*, an evening dedicated to music of the Harlem Renaissance and screenings of the classic film *An American in Paris*—made in 1951, but titled after Gershwin's 1928 symphonic poem—among other festival focal points.

It's anyone's guess which popular music and concert hall gems—and perhaps a diss track or two—would fill a 2020s-themed Minnesota Orchestra festival a hundred years from now, but for now we can walk down memory lane and enjoy some familiar and lesser-known sounds of a decade in which music was so central, the era was known as the Jazz Age.

*Carl Schroeder*  
 Carl Schroeder, Editor  
 editor@mnorch.org

ABOUT THE COVER

Jon Kimura Parker—now in his third season as creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall—accepting applause at a Minnesota Orchestra concert in summer 2021. During this year's festival, Parker performs concertos by Gershwin and Ravel, collaborates with guest performers in a Grand Piano Spectacular and provides onstage commentary at several concerts. Photo: Courtney Perry.

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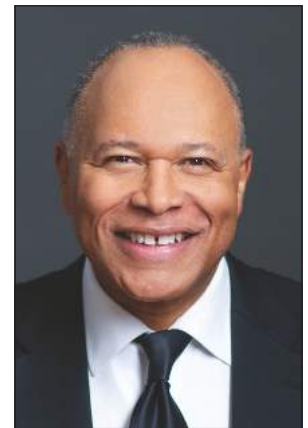
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FROM LEFT: Zoe Prinds-Flash; Karolina Heller; John Abbott

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the Minnesota Orchestral Association  
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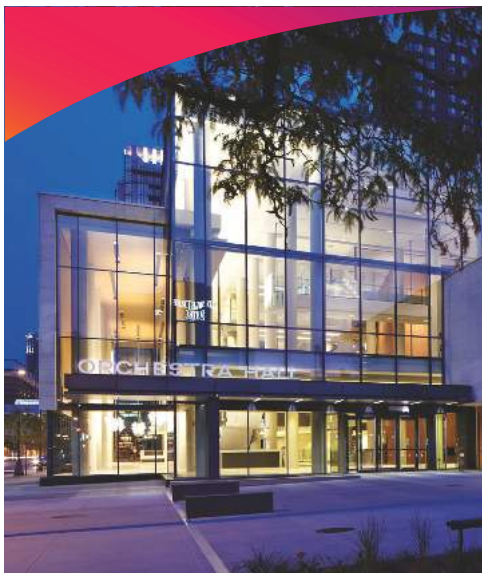
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**PROFILE ————— THOMAS SØNDERGÅRD**

Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who last fall began his tenure as the 11th music director of the Minnesota Orchestra, is 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, 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 2022. Among the highlights of his inaugural season were a continued focus on the music of Richard Strauss, several collaborations with the Minnesota Chorale, a week dedicated to music education, and a season finale concert spotlighting LGBTQ+ composers. In September he will launch the 2024–25 season with concerts featuring pianist Yunchan Lim and violinist Leila Josefowicz.

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, New York 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*



Zoe Prinds/Flash

*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 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.

After launching the Minnesota Orchestra's 2023–24 season last September, Søndergård opened the RSNO's season the following month with piano soloist Lise da la Salle performing concertos by Grieg and Beethoven. His busy slate with both ensembles was complemented by guest engagements with major orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Aalborg Symfoniorkester, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Iceland Symphony Orchestra.

Søndergård is the 2023 recipient of the prestigious honorary award from the Carl Nielsen and Anne Marie Carl-Nielsen Foundation in Denmark. For more information, visit [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).



## SPECIAL FUNDS

### 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**  
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### Artistic Funds

Funds 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.

### 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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Known for his passionate artistry and engaging stage presence, pianist Jon Kimura Parker has performed regularly at the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London’s South Bank, the Sydney Opera House and the Beijing Concert Hall. In 2019 he was appointed the Minnesota Orchestra’s first-ever creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall, a new role in which he is serving as a creative force behind the Orchestra’s summer festival and appearing each summer as a host, performer and personality. He is also artistic director of the Honens International Piano Competition and artistic advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival.

Highlights of Parker’s 2023–24 season included multiple performances of nine different piano concertos, including appearances with the Taiwan National Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Austin (Minnesota) Symphony Orchestra; a solo recital in Los Angeles; performances on the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach, Phoenix Chamber Music Society and Rice University Faculty series; multiple appearances at the Sun Valley Music Festival; and performances with Aloysia Friedmann and Melissa Ousley on an Earthbound Expeditions “April in Paris” Seine River cruise, among numerous other engagements. Next season is highlighted by two engagements playing Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, and here in Orchestra Hall for the Minnesota Orchestra’s New Year’s Celebration concerts.

A collaborator in a wide variety of styles, Parker has performed with Doc Severinsen, Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, Pablo Ziegler, Sanjaya Malakar and Dessa, among many others. As a founding member of Off the Score, he also performed with Stewart Copeland—the legendary drummer of The Police—for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival’s 20th anniversary season, featuring his own arrangements of music by Prokofiev, Ravel and Stravinsky. He has accompanied Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham and Luca Pisaroni in recital.

A committed educator, Parker is professor of piano and keyboard chair at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His students have won prizes in major competitions internationally and given concerto performances in the U.S., Europe, Russia and China. He has also lectured at the Juilliard School and given master classes at Yale and Princeton. Last summer he was featured in a special role coaching the finalists of the Cliburn Junior Competition in their concerto rehearsals.

Parker’s discography of a dozen albums features music ranging from Mozart and Chopin to Barber, Stravinsky and John Adams. His most recent recording *Fantasy*, built around William Hirtz’s *Wizard of Oz Fantasy*, was described by *Musical Toronto* as giving “a big, clear picture window of a rich soul and great artistic depth.” His YouTube channel features a series of *Concerto Chat* videos that explore the piano concerto repertoire. In addition, his *Whole Notes* series, featuring



Josh Kohanek

performances of great composers, is available on Amazon Prime Video. His recent Tonebase video on the 15th Variation of the Rachmaninoff Paganini Rhapsody has over a half million views.

Parker studied with Edward Parker and Keiko Parker, Lee Kum-Sing at the Vancouver Academy of Music and the University of British Columbia, Marek Jablonski at the Banff Centre and Adele Marcus at the Juilliard School. Winner of the Gold Medal at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition, Parker is an Officer of The Order of Canada and has received honorary doctorates from the University of British Columbia and the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto.

Known to friends—new and old—as “Jackie,” Parker is married to violinist/violist Aloysia Friedmann, and their daughter Sophie graduated from Rice University in 2021. For more information, visit [jonkimuraparker.com](http://jonkimuraparker.com).



## AUDIENCE SPOTLIGHT — ORCHESTRA HALL AT 50

— When you think of Orchestra Hall, does an extraordinarily special memory come to mind?

In the 50 years since the Minnesota Orchestra's home in downtown Minneapolis opened in October 1974, generations of audiences, performers and visitors have experienced unforgettable concerts, shared special traditions with families and friends, forged a lifelong passion for music, set in motion a personal dream—and enjoyed the many other ways a trip to the Hall can leave a small or large imprint on a life.

This summer, as we officially began our celebration of the Hall's anniversary in 2024, we invite you to share your special memories of Orchestra Hall by emailing them to [OrchHall50@mnorch.org](mailto:OrchHall50@mnorch.org). A sampling of stories submitted so far begins on page 16, and more will be shared in future issues of *Showcase* magazine and on the Orchestra's website.

When Thomas Søndergård picked up the baton last fall as the Orchestra's 11th music director, he ushered in an era of new musical memories—ones we hope will stick with you long after the last sounds of today's concert have faded from the Hall. We look forward to hearing and sharing your memories as we blow out 50 candles and celebrate the half-century milestone!



The inaugural concert at Orchestra Hall—a performance on October 21, 1974, led by the Orchestra's sixth music director, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski.

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- Jon Kabat Zinn

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## MEET THE VOLUNTEERS

*Behind every great arts organization is a team of dedicated volunteers. And that goes for your favorite hometown band, too: at the Minnesota Orchestra, more than 500 volunteers contribute 5,000 hours of service annually. This spring we asked a few of these behind-the-scenes superstars about why they started volunteering—and, more importantly, what keeps them coming back.*



### ANNA KRUSE

**Years volunteered:** 1

**Day job:** Advertising and PR student at the University of Minnesota

#### Why'd you decide to become a volunteer?

Growing up, I played piano and cello and I really missed being involved with classical music. There's a certain energy you feel when you're in the presence of an orchestra that you can't get anywhere else.

#### What's your favorite thing about volunteering with us?

While I love the music, my favorite thing about volunteering is actually meeting so many different people.

#### What's the best thing you've seen at Orchestra Hall?

So far, the best concert I've seen was Anthony Ross playing Dvořák's Cello Concerto. There are some incredibly fabulous, chic dressers that attend the Orchestra. It's great to see people in their fancy outfits.



### CHARLIE JOHNSON

**Years volunteered:** 43

**Day job:** Food aficionado, avid reader and volunteer

#### Why'd you decide to become a volunteer for the Minnesota Orchestra?

During November of 1979, I moved to Minneapolis from the Twin Ports (Duluth/Superior) for a better job. I had heard the Orchestra long before then on MPR's broadcasts, so I was anticipating hearing the performances live. But my

budget then didn't permit me to match my appetite for great music. In one of the programs booklets I saw an ad for volunteer ushers and realized that could make it easier to indulge my music interest.

#### What's your favorite thing about volunteering with us?

Certainly the amazing variety of music we get to hear remains a significant factor that keeps me coming back. But seeing the smiles and hearing the happy chatter as the audience leaves adds delight that a broadcast can't match.

#### Tell us about your dream concert, classical or otherwise: who's performing, and what are they playing?

First, "movie nights" when the Orchestra performs an entire movie score live with the images projected on a screen at the back of the stage. Second, programs featuring music by living composers, such as the Composer Institute. Third, "big music" programs that display and exploit that immense variety of sounds, colors and textures a world-class ensemble can produce.



### BARB HOLMES

**Years volunteered:** 8

**Day job:** Dedicated volunteer, bookworm and grandmother

#### What's your primary role as a volunteer?

My primary role as a volunteer is to help our patrons feel welcome to Orchestra Hall and to answer any questions that they may have. On occasion I am a lead volunteer and then am responsible to assist the volunteers that are working the event.

#### What's your favorite thing about volunteering with us?

I enjoy greeting the patrons and am always impressed with those that have been attending for a very long time. I feel privileged that, as a volunteer, I am able to sit inside during the concert when I am volunteering.

#### What's the best thing you've seen at Orchestra Hall?

I have yet to attend a concert that I didn't like! Our musicians are amazing to hear and watch.

*Read more volunteer profiles at [minnesotaorchestra.org/stories](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/stories).*





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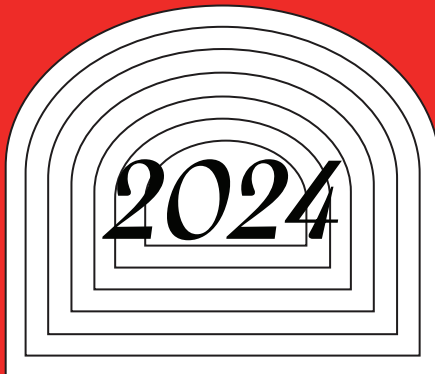
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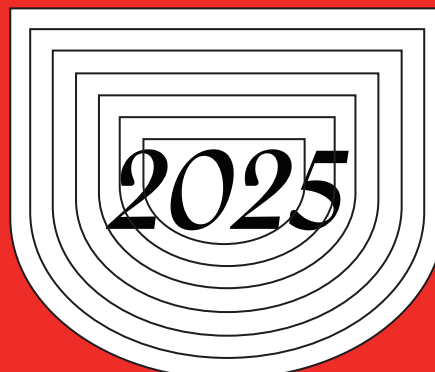
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## NEWS

### MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

## JOIN US FOR THE 2024-25 SEASON

Once the excitement of our 1920s-themed Summer at Orchestra Hall festival subsides, an exciting 2024-25 season is on the horizon. Ticket packages of three or more concerts are now available, and tickets to individual concerts go on sale Monday, July 29, at [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).

Beginning in September 2024, the season will be Thomas Søndergård's second as music director, and will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Orchestra Hall's opening. Classical highlights include an Italian-themed Season Opening; a two-week Nordic Soundscapes festival; vocal-orchestral masterpieces from an opera-in-concert performance of Puccini's *Turandot* to Mozart's Requiem; and the return of the Composer Institute spotlighting contemporary music and composers.

The Live at Orchestra Hall series, conducted primarily by Sarah Hicks, includes programs dedicated to the music of John Williams, John Denver, the Beatles and a fusion of Johannes Brahms and Radiohead, as well as the return of the trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. Five movies will be shown in full as the Orchestra performs the scores live: the final film in the Harry Potter series, the original *Star Wars* movie, *Hocus Pocus*, *Elf* and *Back to the Future*.

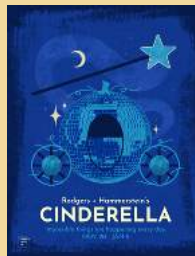
Programs will mark a variety of holidays include Lunar New Year, Juneteenth and New Year's concerts. The chamber music series will move to the Hall's auditorium. Also returning are the Symphony in 60 Sensory-Friendly Concerts, Young People's Concerts and Relaxed Family Concerts—including a family program led by Søndergård for the second consecutive year. We hope to see you back at the Hall often!

# 24/25 SEASON



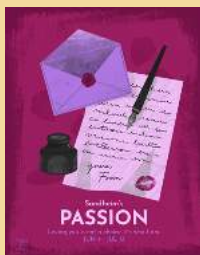
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## NEWS — MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

# CELEBRATING ORCHESTRA HALL'S GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

With the Day of Music on July 27, the Minnesota Orchestra is kicking off an ongoing celebration of 50 years since Orchestra Hall opened in October 1974. We've invited audience members to contribute their reflections on especially memorable Orchestra Hall experiences, and are pleased to share a handful here. More will appear in subsequent months—and there's still time to share yours by emailing them to [OrchHall50@mnorch.org](mailto:OrchHall50@mnorch.org).

### A New Year's Change of Plans

"One very cold and windy New Year's Eve, my wife and I were going to go to Brit's Pub to spend the evening there. We parked in a ramp about a block away and to avoid some of the cold and wind, we decided to cut through Orchestra Hall on the way. When we entered, we saw that the program for the evening was Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and it started in about five minutes. I said to her, 'this is it—forget Brit's.' I wondered if there were any tickets left, and there were. We changed our plans right then and there. The concert and experience were amazing. One I will never forget."

—John Engstrom

### The Proposal

"I proposed to my wife on the south side of Peavey Plaza on August 9, 1983. Fortunately, she said yes! We will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary on August 4. We loved going to Sommerfest when we were first dating and married. We have bought ticket packages throughout the years, and just this year we brought our grandchildren to Orchestra Hall for a family concert. Their eyes lit up when they pulled the bow across the violin and cello strings. They both said, 'we can't wait to play an instrument!'"

—Ronald Lutes

### A Lifelong Connection

"I was fortunate to live in Minneapolis, and our school took children by bus to Orchestra Hall. Many years later when my husband and I moved back to Minneapolis from the Quad Cities, we attended Minnesota Orchestra concerts together in the evening. I now am alone and enjoy the Thursday Coffee Concerts. I never had the opportunity to study an instrument, but sang in choirs all throughout my school years. I treasure the opportunity to attend the Orchestra Hall concerts, and now at age 80-plus I hope to continue this opportunity as long as I can make it down to Orchestra Hall."

—Janet M. Nelson

### Music Passed Through Generations

"My father is what some would call a classical music aficionado. Growing up, the bookshelves of our living room were lined with one classical music CD after another, and a fancy sound system played orchestral music every evening. When I was 10, a full 30 years ago, we drove up from Rochester and had a nice dinner out—followed by my very first Minnesota Orchestra concert. It was a special night, and the tradition has continued ever since. It's a sacred part of my life, both for the experience of spending time with my dad, but also for the music."

"Someday, I too will take my own child, and tell the stories of Orchestra concerts past: the time I got Osmo Vänskä's autograph at Broders' Pasta Bar, and when my dad called out one of the trombone players by name who was passing by after a concert at the Reif Center in Grand Rapids, Minnesota (he was utterly shocked to hear his name called). The Orchestra has not only created a special connection with my dad, but also strengthened my ties with our community."

—Erika Mayerle



### Memories Across the Ocean

“As a native Minnesotan now living in Dublin, Ireland, some of my favorite Orchestra Hall stories stem from opportunities I had to spend significant chunks of time backstage back in my high school and college days. A special part of Orchestra Hall’s story is how it’s a space that’s also open to aspiring younger musicians. I’m not a professional musician by any means now, but I still love thinking back about my memories of playing in Orchestra Hall for three years as part of the Robbinsdale Area Schools Fall Festival, for five years with the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies, and as part of the St. Thomas Symphonic Wind Ensemble during their Christmas concerts—and the growth, lessons, laughter and love that followed me throughout those years and chances to play in such a renowned space.

“As many a musician will hopefully tell you, some of our best ensemble stories come from hanging with friends backstage, passing around friendly gossip, laughing at inside jokes, or ducking out to Caribou between stage time and mass rehearsals of *Jupiter* from *The Planets*. But I have some magical stories from performing onstage in a space as vaunted and special as Orchestra Hall, too. I’ll never forget playing a solo flute line in the ninth movement of *Carmina Burana* alongside my best friends from high school, or being so proud after doing a decent job with the piccolo lines in Copland’s *Buckaroo Holiday* during a GTCYS spring festival—the day after senior prom, no less! I realized the first time I stepped offstage post-performance at Orchestra Hall, way back when I was in 8th grade, that these are not opportunities every student in Minnesota gets. I’ve never felt anything but grateful and lucky that I got to spend even a sliver of time doing something so cool and so meaningful there, with some of my absolute favorite people.”

—Sydney Nolan

### The Blind Date

“In December 1974 I got a call from a man, Dr. Bob Thomasson, asking me on a blind date to the Minnesota Orchestra. He wanted to meet me before the concert, so we had lunch at the Auxiliary cafe at Fairview Riverside Hospital where I was working. That lunch went well and we made plans for Friday evening. I remember I wore a long dress and my sister’s long black opera coat. Bob had two six-concert season tickets and we attended the rest of that season together. We were married in May 1975 and for the last 49 years have attended six Friday night concerts a season, along with added concerts each season. In our 49 years together we raised five children, and sometimes that Friday night concert was our only time alone. This September we will begin our 50th season as concertgoers and donors to the Minnesota Orchestra.”

—Barbara Thomasson

### Meeting the Storyteller

“A couple of years ago, my wife and I attended a holiday season Minnesota Orchestra performance featuring, among others, storyteller Kevin Kling. After the performance we were walking through the lobby to the parking ramp, and I saw Kevin Kling talking with some people in the lobby. The people turned out to be his mother, brother and other assorted relatives. I went up and introduced myself and complimented him on his performance and, in return, he introduced me to his family, one by one, with humorous asides about each of them. It was like a continuation of his onstage performance, but for an audience of one. I won’t soon forget it. (The Orchestra was good that day, too—as it always is!)”

—Jon Anderson



Students entering Orchestra Hall in the 1970s.



Audience members applauding at a June 2024 concert.

Greg Helgeson



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# MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Delyana Lazarova, conductor  
 Natsuki Kumagai, violin

Friday, July 19, 2024, 8PM  
 Saturday, July 20, 2024, 7PM | Orchestra Hall

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Overture to *Don Giovanni*, K. 527 CA. 7'

Joseph Bologne,  
 Chevalier de Saint-Georges Violin Concerto in A major, Opus 5, No. 2 CA. 22'  
 Allegro moderato  
 Largo  
 Rondeau  
*Natsuki Kumagai, violin*

I N T E R M I S S I O N CA. 20'

Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major, Opus 60 CA. 32'  
 Adagio – Allegro vivace  
 Adagio  
 Allegro vivace  
 Allegro ma non troppo

Profiles of Delyana Lazarova and Natsuki Kumagai appear on page 43.

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.



## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

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Vienna, Austria

### Overture to *Don Giovanni*, K. 527

**PREMIERED:** October 29, 1787  
(complete opera)

The overture to the opera *Don Giovanni* was composed in a single night. Mozart was something of a procrastinator, and since the music was always in his head anyhow, he often postponed putting the notes on paper until the last moment. Early on the morning of the final dress rehearsal preceding the premiere on October 29, 1787, the copyists were at his door to retrieve what he had written during the night so that the parts would be ready for the players.

In January of that year Mozart had first visited Prague, where he found the tunes of his opera *The Marriage of Figaro* hummed and whistled wherever he went. The astute manager of the Italian opera company in Prague was quick to commission a new opera from him, and when Mozart returned to Vienna, he put Lorenzo da Ponte to work on a libretto dealing with the legend of Don Juan, whose amorous conquests were far outnumbered by the works ultimately written about him.

The first performance was scheduled for October 14, but as with other Mozart operas, the deadline was not met. The illness of one of the singers further postponed the premiere that had been reset for October 24—when Mozart still had not composed the overture. Five days later, however, the curtain finally rose on Mozart’s remarkable *drama giocosa*—a blend of comedy and tragedy in which, as the subtitle warns us, the libertine is punished. The traditional Don Giovanni (there were at least two others on the opera stage in 1787 before Mozart introduced his) meets his just reward. It remained for the Romantics, notably Lord Byron, to transform the cruel but dashing figure into something of a cult hero, celebrated near the end of the 19th century in Richard Strauss’ seductive tone poem *Don Juan*.

### A FELLOW COMPOSER’S TRIBUTE

One of the many composers who have paid tribute to Mozart is the Frenchman Charles Gounod (1818-1893), who published a long monograph on *Don Giovanni* that appeared in an English translation in 1895. In the preface, Gounod announced that his goal was “to make known and record the impressions and emotions of a musician who has loved

it unswervingly and admired it unreservedly.” He begins in relatively calm tones, an expert guide to the seven minutes of great music at hand:

“From the beginning of the overture, Mozart is completely in the spirit of the drama, of which it is an epitome. The first chords, so powerful and solemn with their syncopated rhythm, establish at once the majestic and formidable authority of divine justice, the avenger of crime. After the first four bars (which are rendered yet more terrible by the silence which completes the second and the fourth) there commences a harmonic progression, the sinister character of which freezes one with terror, as would the appearance of a spectre. We shall find this same passage recur in the last scene of the drama, when, in response to supper, the statue of the Commandant arrives at the house of the assassin...

“Everything in this tremendous introduction breathes terror and inspires awe: the persistent and unfathomable rhythm of the strings, the sepulchral timbre of the wind instruments, wherein the intervals of an octave from bar to bar resemble the steps of a stone giant, the minister of Death; the syncopations of the first violins, which, starting at the eleventh bar, probe the innermost recesses of this dark conscience; the figure of the second violins, which entwines like an immense reptile around the culprit, whose stubborn resistance struggles blindly and insultingly to the end; the scales, those affrighting scales, ascending and descending, which manifest themselves like the billows of a tempestuous sea; the menace suspended over the head of the criminal by the solemnity of this impressive opening; everything, in fact, in this prodigious page is of the highest tragical inspiration—the force of terror could go no further.”

The remainder of Gounod’s descriptive digest of the overture journeys into even purpler prose and torrents of exclamation points—so to put in simpler terms: a *Molto allegro* breaks out in D major, as vigorous as Don himself, who leaps impetuously into boudoirs with thought neither to heaven nor to the inclinations of the ladies themselves. The strong syncopation of the main theme imparts a feverish eagerness to his quests as the movement proper hits full stride, like a symphonic first movement in miniature. In the opera, Mozart innovatively linked the overture to the comic first scene without a break for applause. For the purpose of concert performances, other composers and arrangers, including Johann André, Jr., and Ferruccio Busoni have provided a suitably cadencing ending to the overture. Today’s performance, however, uses a so-called “urtext” version attributed to Mozart himself.

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN.





**JOSEPH BOLOGNE,  
CHEVALIER DE  
SAINT-GEORGES**

**B:** December 25, 1745  
Baillif, Guadeloupe

**D:** June 9, 1799  
Paris, France

**Violin Concerto in A major,  
Opus 5, No. 2**

**PUBLISHED:** ca. 1775

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, led one of the most remarkable lives of any 18th-century composer, but until recently he has been under-represented in the programming of most major orchestras. In his lifetime he achieved great success not only as a virtuoso violinist, composer and conductor, but also as a champion fencer, and his status in these spheres garnered him considerable societal popularity in Paris and abroad. In 2022, his epic life and legacy were brought to wide audiences through the heavily dramatized biographical film *Chevalier*, starring Kelvin Harrison Jr. in the title role.

**FROM GUADELOUPE TO PARIS**

Saint-Georges was born Joseph Bologne on Christmas Day, 1745, to Georges Saint-Georges, a wealthy French plantation owner, and Nanon, a 16-year-old from Senegal who was enslaved in the service of Georges' wife. Joseph spent the first few years of his life in his birthplace, on the Caribbean island of Baillif, Basse-Terre, in the Guadeloupe archipelago. At the age of 7, Joseph was moved to Paris in order to receive an aristocratic education. At 13, he was enrolled at L'académie royal polytechnique des armes et de l'équitation. His superlative athletic ability quickly allowed him to become one of the academy's top students, and later one of France's best swordsmen, winning high-profile duels against Europe's best. Upon his graduation, he was named a member of the Gendarmes de la Garde du Roi, or the King's guard, which earned him the title Chevalier de Saint-Georges.

In contrast to Saint-Georges' well-documented rise to fame as an outstanding fencer, little is known about the musical training he received. But the caliber at which Saint-Georges wrote and performed his works makes it impossible not to assume that he would have started his violin studies while he was still a young child. Jean-Marie Leclair and Antonio Lolli, violinists who both wrote works dedicated to Saint-Georges, are rumored to have been his violin teachers. François Gossec, a lifelong friend and mentor, is rumored to have given lessons to the young composer.

Saint-Georges stunned the Parisian public in 1769 in his debut as the concertmaster of Gossec's Concert des Amateurs. In 1772, he premiered his first two concertos with

the same ensemble to glowing praise. A year later, Gossec left the Concert des Amateurs in Saint-Georges' capable hands. For eight years, he led that ensemble with the same disciplined approach that catapulted him to stardom in the ring, turning the orchestra into one of the best in Europe. He repeated that success with the Concert de la Loge Olympique, formed after the Concert des Amateurs folded. It was with this orchestra that he premiered Haydn's six *Paris Symphonies* in 1785.

The remainder of Saint-Georges' life was swept up amid the French Revolution. Though he originally commanded a battalion of all-Black soldiers during the war, his association with nobility landed him a place in prison for over a year. Upon his release, he failed to reenter musical life to the level of his previous success, as every facet of French society had been upended by the Revolution. He died in 1799.

**A SUNNY CONCERTO**

The violin concerto on today's program—one of 14 composed by Saint-Georges—was written in the mid-1770s and published by Bailleux sometime around 1775. Saint-Georges would have also given the premiere around this time while he was leader of the Concert des Amateurs. Structurally it follows the traditional fast-slow-fast order of movements for a concerto of this time.

**ALLEGRO MODERATO.** The first movement is bright and sunny, with the lengthy orchestral opening cycling through many themes. This music is gracefully proportioned and designed to charm. Eventually, the soloist enters on a long, sustained note before quickly toppling into nimble passagework that requires a high level of skill to pull off effortlessly. The movement continues with the soloist alternating flashy, fast passages (a French foreshadowing of Niccolò Paganini) with more melodic ideas, always thoughtfully in dialogue with the orchestra. If one listens carefully, it may even be possible to hear how the violin dances about the orchestra with a lightness that evokes the footwork of a master swordsman.

**LARGO.** The middle movement is gentle, songful, glowing and brilliant. There is an ephemeral glimpse of minor key melancholy that only briefly darkens the gentle sonic horizon, before the soloist offers a plaintive cadenza.

**RONDEAU.** An ebullient theme is presented many times and interspersed with several contrasting episodes that further display Saint-Georges' immense command of the violin's technical and expressive qualities. The concerto ends with another brief cadenza and one last presentation of the opening idea.

**Instrumentation:** solo violin and string orchestra

**PROGRAM NOTE BY MICHAEL DIVINO.**



**LUDWIG  
VAN BEETHOVEN**

**B:** December 16, 1770  
Bonn, Germany

**D:** March 25, 1827  
Vienna, Austria

**Symphony No. 4 in B-flat  
major, Opus 60**

**PREMIERED:** March 1807  
(private premiere); April 1808  
(public premiere)

In September 1806, Ludwig van Beethoven accompanied his patron Prince Karl Lichnowsky on a visit to the castle of another nobleman, Count Franz von Oppersdorff. The count was a musical enthusiast almost without equal: he maintained a private orchestra and would hire new staff for the castle only if they played an instrument and could also play in his orchestra. The trip paid musical dividends for Beethoven, as the count commissioned him to write a new symphony.

**REMOVED FROM THE FURIES**

The Fourth Symphony has inevitably been overshadowed by the titanic symphonies on either side of it. Although the Fourth does seem at first a relaxation, far removed from the furies that drive the *Eroica* and Fifth Symphony, we need to be careful not to underestimate this music.

**ADAGIO–ALLEGRO VIVACE.** The symphony’s originality is evident from its first instant: the key signature says B-flat major, but the symphony opens instead in B-flat minor. This introduction keeps us in a tonal fog, but those mists blow away at the *Allegro vivace*. Huge chords lash out, and when the main theme leaps out brightly, we recognize it as a sped-up version of the slow introduction.

**ADAGIO.** Violins sing the main theme, marked *cantabile*. Hector Berlioz spoke effusively of the *Adagio*: “The being who wrote such a marvel of inspiration as this movement was not a man. Such must be the song of the Archangel Michael.”

**ALLEGRO VIVACE.** The third movement is a scherzo in all but name: its outer sections are full of rough edges and blistering energy, and its witty trio is built on a rustic woodwind tune spiced with saucy interjections from the violins.

**ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO.** The finale goes like a rocket from its first instant. This movement may be in sonata form, but it feels like perpetual-motion on a pulse of racing 16th-notes that hardly ever lets up.

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

**CODA**

The Minnesota Orchestra, then known as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, first performed **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Overture to *Don Giovanni*** on November 1, 1940, at Northrop Memorial Auditorium, with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting. Although the ensemble performed the overture frequently during the remainder of the 1900s, including on multiple tours, it has not appeared on an Orchestra program since 2004. The Orchestra has presented the complete opera *Don Giovanni* on one occasion—as the grand finale of the 1996 Sommerfest, under the baton of David Zinman.

These concerts mark the first time the Orchestra has performed the entirety of **Chevalier de Saint-Georges’ A-major Violin Concerto**, although the work’s third movement was featured at a series of Young People’s and Family Concerts at Orchestra Hall in October 2019. On that occasion, First Associate Concertmaster Susie Park was the soloist and Music Director Osmo Vänskä conducted. Under Vänskä’s direction, the Orchestra presented two major works by Saint-Georges in the first half of 2021, a period when concerts were performed for broadcast and livestream only due to the pandemic: the Symphony No. 1 and the Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 3, No. 1, with Karen Gomyo as soloist in the latter work.

The Orchestra added **Ludwig van Beethoven’s Fourth Symphony** to its repertoire as part of the ensemble’s first foray into a new decade: a concert on January 7, 1910, at the Minneapolis Auditorium, with founding Music Director Emil Oberhoffer on the conductor’s podium. That same concert featured Teresa Carreño—a Venezuelan pianist, soprano, composer and conductor—in her second and final appearance with the ensemble, as soloist in a piano concerto by Edward MacDowell.



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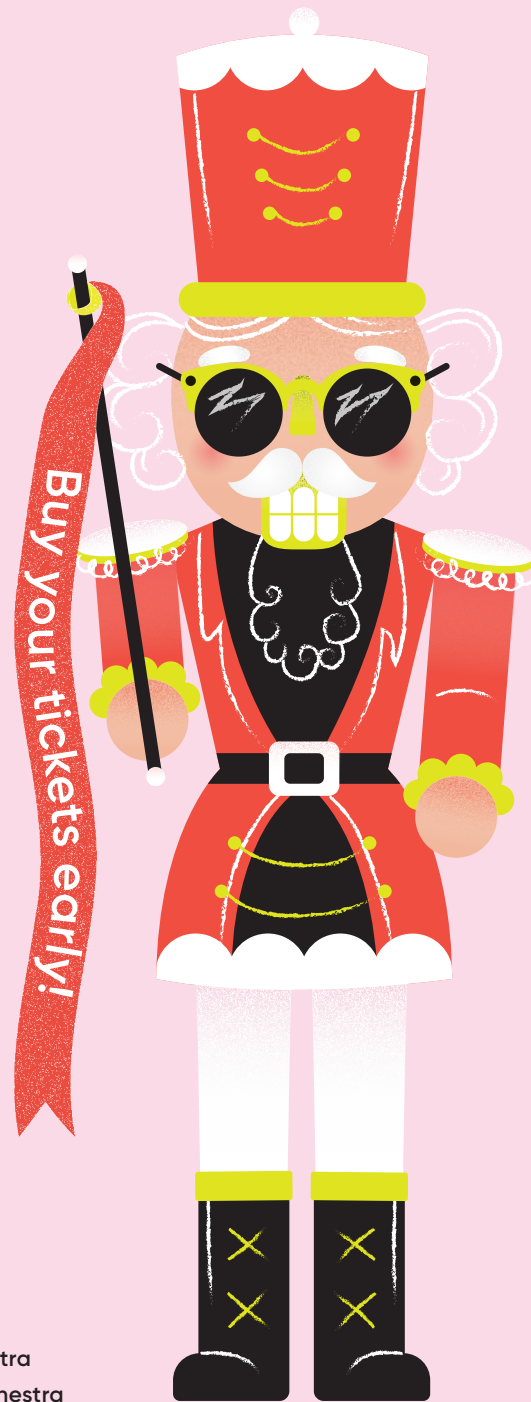


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# MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Stephanie Childress, conductor

Jon Kimura Parker, piano

Friday, July 26, 2024, 8PM | Orchestra Hall

Kurt Weill	<i>Little Threepenny Music</i> , for Wind Ensemble Overture   The Moritat of Mack the Knife The Instead-Of Song   The Ballad of the Easy Life Polly's Song   Tango-Ballad Cannon Song   Threepenny Finale	CA. 22'
Maurice Ravel	Concerto in G major for Piano and Orchestra Allegremente Adagio assai Presto <i>Jon Kimura Parker, piano</i>	CA. 21'
I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20'
Francis Poulenc	Suite from <i>Les Biches</i> Rondeau Adagietto Rag-Mazurka Andantino Finale	CA. 16'
Sergei Prokofiev	Suite from <i>The Love for Three Oranges</i> , Opus 33bis The Ridiculous People The Magician Celio and Fata Morgana Play Cards March Scherzo The Prince and the Princess Flight	CA. 15'

Stephanie Childress' profile appears on page 42, Jon Kimura Parker's on page 10.

## PRE-CONCERT

Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/soundsandbites](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/soundsandbites) for information about free pre-concert activities.

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**KURT WEILL**

**B:** March 2, 1900  
Dessau, Germany

**D:** April 3, 1950  
New York City

*Little Threepenny Music,*  
for Wind Ensemble

**PREMIERED:** February 27, 1929

In 1728 London, opera lovers were accustomed to seeing characters from mythology or medieval and ancient history. But with the premiere of *The Beggar's Opera*, they saw Londoners, contemporary and disreputable Londoners at that: thieves, gangsters, jailers, receivers and sellers of stolen goods, and street courtesans and their handlers. They loved it, and they loved that it was all in English.

The first *Beggar's Opera* was a confection of ballads, popular songs and music borrowed from classical sources, including Handel and Purcell. John Gay invented new texts for these songs; their harmonization and orchestration has traditionally been attributed to Johann Christoph Pepusch, a German-born London composer.

The work's success was immense. By the end of the century it had crossed the Atlantic, and since then it has never gone away. Twentieth-century versions include one mounted in London in 1920 with the score newly arranged by Frederic Austin, one reworked by Benjamin Britten in 1948, and one with punk rock additions, produced in London in 1982. More recently, in 2009 the British theater company Vanishing Point created a modern production set in a near-future apocalypse world.

**AN INSPIRED COLLABORATION**

Word of the 1920 London production reached Berlin, and in 1927, the German dramatist, playwright and theater reformer Bertolt Brecht had Gay's songs translated into German, with additional texts by François Villon and one by Rudyard Kipling. Kurt Weill was the obvious choice of composer: the two young men—Brecht was 30, Weill 28—had worked together with considerable éclat on the *Mahagonny* "Songspiel" for the 1927 Baden-Baden Festival, a project they would expand into their full-length opera in 1930.

The Brecht-Weill collaboration was brilliant and inspired—although Weill could not have done it without Igor Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale*. The economy and virtuosity of the scoring—seven musicians played 33 instruments—are Stravinskian, as are the delight in parody and the technical brilliance. The aesthetic, the cunning mixture of sweetness and irony, is like something from another planet.

Weill composed *The Threepenny Opera* in 1928, and the first performance took place on August 31 of that year in Berlin. It hit audiences with a force comparable to that with which the original *Beggar's Opera* captivated London exactly two centuries earlier. Brecht missed no opportunity of showing his prosperous bourgeois audience how alike were Gay's London and contemporary Berlin, that fascinating hub of extraordinary cultural vitality, its National Socialist undercurrents studiously ignored for the time being, but so soon as to send Brecht, Weill, Klemperer and many others into exile.

Otto Klemperer, who had gone to see *The Threepenny Opera* ten times, commissioned a concert suite for wind ensemble—an orchestra sans strings—which the composer called *Little Threepenny Music*. This version, which we hear tonight, was first performed under Klemperer's direction at the Berlin State Opera on February 7, 1929.

**THE STORY**

The principal characters in *The Threepenny Opera* are Jonathan Jeremiah Peachum, who is in the business of outfitting the poor in rags designed to melt the hearts of potential donors of alms; his wife, Celia; their daughter Polly; Macheath, murderer and adroit chief of a gang of street-robbers, and Polly's lover; Tiger Brown, chief of police and excellent at not looking where it pays not to look; and Jenny, a prostitute with fantasies of vengeance. In due course, Macheath is betrayed by the prostitutes from whom he cannot stay away. Even Tiger Brown is helpless to rescue him, and he is condemned to death, unable to bribe himself out of death row.

But the tale has a happy ending: a royal messenger arrives on horseback with news that the Queen has pardoned Macheath, raised him to the peerage, and gifted him with a castle and an annual pension of £10,000 for life. In a last reprise of the famous *Mack the Knife* tune, the ballad singer/master of ceremonies/narrator tells us that "if necessary cash is on hand, all usually ends well" and, as the curtain falls, reminds us that "some are in darkness and some are in the light. And you see those who are in the light, but never the ones in the dark."

**THE MUSIC**

The *Little Threepenny Music* begins with the Overture, described by German musicologist Theodor Adorno as a "Handel Overture from the perspective of an all-night café." Next comes the murder-ballad, *The Moritat of Mack the Knife*, a two-for-one deal that combines the famous tune with Peachum's *Song of the Inadequacy of Human Striving*. The two songs are cousins: the same tempo fits both, and the musical cells from which they grow are



related. Here and throughout, Weill sets dismaying texts and sentiments to most agreeable music.

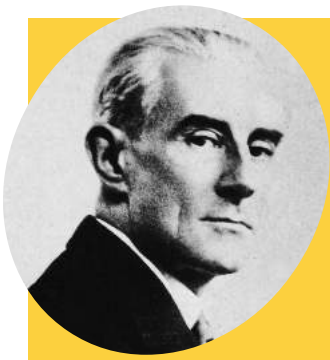
In their *Instead-Of Song*, the elder Peachums complain about the young—that instead of doing something sensible they want fun and that they sink into that “damned ‘See the moon over Soho?’ and ‘Can you feel my heart beating?’ and ‘I’ll follow you to the ends of the earth, Johnny’ mode.” These clichés offer great moments for the trombone and the saxophones.

The point of the *Ballad of the Easy Life* is that only the prosperous live well: “Stay away from me with your stories of great spirits content to live with a book, but nothing in their bellies.” In *Polly’s Song*, Miss Peachum laments that her lover has abandoned her. The melody is one of Weill’s sweetest, and he follows it with the beautiful closing phrase of Macheath and Polly’s love duet: “Love lasts, or it doesn’t, here or there.” In the sensual *Tango-Ballad* Macheath and Jenny reminisce about the days, so happy in retrospect, when they kept house together. In the *Cannon Song* Macheath and Police Chief Tiger Brown recall their army days.

For the *Threepenny Finale*, Weill omits the bright part of the opera’s conclusion, concentrating on the muted and dark music as the terrified Macheath sits in jail, awaiting execution. The chorale is led by Mr. Peachum: “Don’t persecute injustice too much, for it is cold and will freeze to death on its own. Think about the dark and the great chill that reigns in this vale of tears.” And so, having begun with pseudo-Handel, Weill ends with pseudo-Bach.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 clarinets, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone (doubling soprano saxophone), 2 bassoons, 2 trumpets, trombone, tuba, banjo, guitar, small accordian, timpani, snare drum, tenor drum, bass drum, cymbals, tom-tom, triangle, wood block, glockenspiel and piano

PROGRAM NOTE BY MICHAEL STEINBERG.



## MAURICE RAVEL

**B:** March 7, 1875  
Ciboure, France

**D:** December 28, 1937  
Paris, France

### Concerto in G major for Piano and Orchestra

**PREMIERED:** January 14, 1932

— Maurice Ravel was 54 before he wrote any concertos, and then, in the fall of 1929, he set to work simultaneously

on two. His Piano Concerto for the Left Hand, dark and serious, was for the pianist Paul Wittgenstein, and the other, the much lighter Piano Concerto in G major, was intended for the composer’s own use. But by the fall of 1931, when the G-major Concerto was complete, failing health prevented the composer from performing this music himself. Instead, he conducted the premiere in Paris on January 14, 1932; the pianist was Marguerite Long, to whom Ravel dedicated the concerto, and who had also given the first performance of Ravel’s *Le Tombeau de Couperin* in 1919.

## BRILLIANT, TRANSPARENT AND SULTRY

Ravel described this work as “written in the spirit of Mozart and Saint-Saëns,” but listeners would hardly make those associations. What strikes audiences first are the concerto’s virtuoso writing for both piano and orchestra, the brilliance and transparency of the music, and the influence of American jazz. It is possible to make too much of the jazz influence, but Ravel had heard jazz during his tour of America in 1928 and found much to admire. When asked about its influence on this concerto, he said: “It includes some elements borrowed from jazz, but only in moderation.” Ravel was quite proud of this music and said that in it, he had expressed his thoughts as he had wished.

**ALLEGRAENTE.** The first movement opens with a whipcrack, and immediately the piccolo plays the jaunty opening tune, picked up in turn by solo trumpet before the piano makes its sultry solo entrance. Some of the concerto’s most brilliant music occurs in this movement, which is possessed of a sort of madcap energy, with great splashes of instrumental color, strident flutter-tonguing by the winds, string glissandos and a quasi-cadenza for the harp.

**ADAGIO ASSAI.** In a three-minute solo that opens the *Adagio assai*, one of Ravel’s most beautiful slow movements, the pianist lays out at length the haunting main theme, which later returns to great effect with the English horn heard over delicate piano accompaniment. Despite its seemingly easy flow of melody, this movement gave Ravel trouble, and he later said that he wrote it “two bars at a time.”

**PRESTO.** The finale explodes to life with a five-note riff that recurs throughout, functioning somewhat like the ritornello of the Baroque concerto. The jazz influence shows up here in the squealing clarinets, brass smears and racing piano passages. The movement comes to a sizzling conclusion on the phrase with which it began.

**Instrumentation:** solo piano with orchestra comprising flute, piccolo, oboe, English horn, clarinet, E-flat clarinet, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, trumpet, trombone, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, slap stick, tamtam, triangle, wood block, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



## FRANCIS POULENC

**B:** January 7, 1899  
Paris, France

**D:** January 30, 1963  
Paris, France

### Suite from *Les Biches*

**PREMIERED:** January 6, 1924  
(complete ballet)

In much music by the Frenchman Francis Poulenc, we hear a deep religiosity—but it was a mischievous streak that first brought him fame with *Les Biches*—the ballet unveiled at Monte Carlo on January 6, 1924, by Diaghilev’s Ballet Russes. It marked a turning point in the composer’s career, and he wrote three more ballets and a comic opera. The theater, along with the Catholic Church, were the foundational elements of this contradictory Parisian. In both sacred and secular music, Poulenc projected every ounce of his personality, from the droll and roguish to the pious and sincere.

## A LESS TROUBLESOME REBEL

Poulenc was born in 1899, on the threshold of a new century, and he turned out to be one of its less troublesome rebels. He was born to a wealthy family that nurtured his infatuation with music and the theater; his mother was a pianist who had studied with a pupil of Franz Liszt. Poulenc’s ideal was Igor Stravinsky, and after serving in World War I, he aligned himself with a group of progressive French composers dubbed “The Six.” In the words of their spokesman Jean Cocteau, they were reacting to music of “the kind one listens with one’s head in one’s hands.”

In addition to Poulenc, the circle included Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Germaine Tailleferre and Darius Milhaud, who recalled of their meeting with Parisian poets and artists: “Many fruitful artistic collaborations may be traced back to these gatherings, and also certain works illustrating what amounted to the new music-hall aesthetic.” What they rejected was the supercharged romanticism of Richard Wagner and the Germans as well as the hedonism of Claude Debussy, and they were not averse to absorbing popular idioms in their music, as you will hear in the saucy suite from *Les Biches*. This was the age of Arnold Schoenberg and his pioneering atonal aesthetic, but a composer such as Poulenc never wavered from his commitment to traditional diatonic music.

## THE COMPOSER’S BREAKTHROUGH

The big change for Poulenc came in 1923 when the impresario Serge Diaghilev asked him to collaborate on a production with the painter Marie Laurencin. There would

be no plot. What Diaghilev wanted was an “atmospheric ballet” in which 16 young girls (the “does” of the title *Les Biches*, French slang for coquettes) are gathered in a pure white salon dominated by a single piece of furniture—a large, blue, provocative couch. Enter three handsome young men in bathing suits—for it is a warm summer afternoon—and subtle innuendos begin. The premiere production of *Les Biches* at Monte Carlo was a triumph, and Poulenc, hitherto a composer of songs, moved into larger forms.

Though *Les Biches* was Poulenc’s first orchestral work, it reveals a composer with a sophisticated ear for instrumental color. Between May 1939 and the following January he completely reorchestrated the score, retaining the tonal palette of the original with all its solo work. Five numbers of the complete ballet were selected for the concert suite; the overture and three choral songs were omitted.

## SPIRITED RONDEAU TO JOYOUS FINALE

**RONDEAU.** The curtain parts upon a shrill call that passes from piccolo to oboe to clarinets before the brassy, syncopated *Rondeau* tune takes wing. The exuberance does not diminish even when it slips into the minor mode, focusing on low winds and horns. Themes are playfully volleyed about the orchestra. A tender interlude, marked *Très calm*, offers brief respite in mellow chords. Reminiscent of circus music, a snare drum bristles at the cadence.

**ADAGIETTO.** A solo oboe sets the lyrical mood of the *Adagietto*, surely a *pas de deux*; the caressing melody is equally at ease in the trumpet and the other instruments to which it migrates. In these bright strokes of Poulenc’s orchestration resides the fascination of the work.

**RAG-MAZURKA.** There is even more to the *Rag-Mazurka* than its entertaining title suggests. Cast in a brisk 3/8 meter, it sounds like a whirling tarantella as it gets underway. When the rag flavor comes to the fore, we find that the composer is completely at home in the imported pop idiom. The images are almost Chaplin-esque, and the variety of musical action rather cinematic. Suddenly the form seems familiar, as the opening materials are revived almost in the manner of symphonic scherzo.

**ANDANTINO.** Winds offer a wistful transition to the *Andantino*, which alternates the genteel artifice of an 18th-century *fête galante* with more bumptious materials.

**FINALE.** The *Finale* is a breathless *Presto*, joyous and comic. Even a non-dancer will easily relate these musical images to body movement.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, military drum, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, triangle, glockenspiel, harp, celesta and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN.





## SERGEI PROKOFIEV

**B:** April 23, 1891  
Sontsivka, Ukraine  
**D:** March 5, 1953  
Moscow, Russia

### Suite from *The Love for Three Oranges*, Opus 33bis

**PREMIERED:** November 29, 1925

In 1918, 27-year-old Sergei Prokofiev set out eastward across Russia en route to America via Vladivostok and Yokohama. That fall his concert tour landed him in Chicago, where he was commissioned to write a new opera, *The Love for Three Oranges*.

## A THOROUGHLY ZANY PLOT

The opera's plot, derived from a story by the 18th-century Italian satirist Carlo Gozzi, is just as zany as the title—"merrily lunatic," in the words of historian Donald Grout. Comedy, fairy tale and satire all combine in the story of a melancholy young Prince who is fated to die unless he can somehow be made to laugh. All kinds of outlandish tricks are attempted, but nothing works until, in the best manner of fairy tales, the one character who is conspiring to ensure the Prince's death, the evil Fata Morgana, inadvertently trips and falls in a ridiculous heap during her entry to the palace. The Prince is cured, but Fata curses him by declaring he must now find and fall in love with three magic oranges. After a series of bizarre adventures, he finds them. Inside each is a princess: all three are dying of thirst, but one of them is revived with a bucket of water and—no surprise to opera aficionados—falls in love with the Prince!

"The theatrical aspect of the opera interested me tremendously," wrote Prokofiev. "The way in which the action developed on three distinct planes—the fairy tale characters, the creatures from the underworld, and the comic characters belonging to the theater itself—was absolutely novel." In fact, though, something quite similar had been done in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, an opera Prokofiev certainly must have known, as well as in two he had probably not yet encountered: Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

Prokofiev himself conducted the first performance—a qualified success—on December 30, 1921. He wrote: "The Chicago audience was both proud and bewildered. Proud of having first produced a 'modern opera,' and bewildered by the unusual music and by the fact that this enterprise should have cost some \$250,000, as was reported in the newspapers. One person said: 'Those oranges were the most expensive in the world.'"

The opera's New York debut was less fruitful, and *Three Oranges* went into hiding until it was revived in 1949 by the City Center Opera Company in New York. In 1923, however, Prokofiev prepared the six-movement suite heard in these concerts, which was premiered in Paris on November 29, 1925. The music is full of the acerbic harmonies, droll tunes, rhythmic angularity, grotesque sounds and satirical twists characteristic of Prokofiev's early style.

## THE MUSIC: AN IMAGINATIVE SUITE

The suite opens with *The Ridiculous People*, depicting one of the oddball groups who in the opera serve as an onstage audience. They attempt to make the Prince laugh; they also argue, comment on and even try to interfere with the story. The second movement brings a *Game of Cards* between the sorceress Fata Morgana and the magician Celio, with power hanging in the balance. The sorceress wins.

Next comes the well-known *March*, to which the court jester Truffaldino enters with the morose Prince. (Some listeners may recognize it as the theme music to an old radio show, *The FBI in Peace and War*.) During the *Scherzo*, scurrying strings suggest the fleet progress of the Prince and Truffaldino in search of the three oranges.

*The Prince and the Princess* embodies the tenderly romantic love duet, with the vocal lines given over to instruments in the orchestra. This music occurs just after the prince liberates the third dehydrated princess from her orange tomb. Finally, *The Flight* portrays the chaotic shuffling about as Fata Morgana and her minions attempt to escape retribution.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, tambourine, tamtam, triangle, xylophone, glockenspiel, 2 harps and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

# MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA



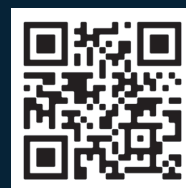
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# MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Stephanie Childress, conductor

Terryann Nash, American Sign Language interpreter

Saturday, July 27, 2024, 1PM | Orchestra Hall

*This afternoon's concert lasts approximately 45 minutes and is performed without an intermission.*

Hector Berlioz	<i>Roman Carnival Overture</i>	CA. 9'
Anna Clyne	<i>Masquerade</i>	CA. 5'
Igor Stravinsky	<i>Infernal Dance of King Kashchei, from The Firebird Suite (1919 revision)</i>	CA. 4'
Jessie Montgomery	<i>Strum</i>	CA. 7'
Francis Poulenc	<i>Rag-Mazurka and Finale, from Suite from Les Biches</i>	CA. 10'

Stephanie Childress' profile appears on page 42, Terryann Nash's on page 44.

## PRE- AND POST-CONCERT

Arrive early and stay after the concert to try instruments, make art, dance and meet Minnesota Orchestra musicians. Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/dayofmusic](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/dayofmusic) for information about other free pre- and post-concert activities.

## THANK YOU

The Relaxed Family Concert series is made possible by PNC.

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Angel Bat Dawid and Sojourner Zenobia, Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall. Photo by Jennifer Taylor.

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# MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Stephanie Childress, conductor

Saturday, July 27, 2024, 8PM | Orchestra Hall

*This evening's concert lasts approximately one hour and is performed without an intermission.*

Hector Berlioz	<i>Roman Carnival Overture</i>	CA. 9'
Anna Clyne	<i>Masquerade</i>	CA. 5'
Igor Stravinsky	<i>Infernal Dance of King Kashchei, from The Firebird Suite (1919 revision)</i>	CA. 4'
Jessie Montgomery	<i>Strum</i>	CA. 7'
Sergei Prokofiev	Suite from <i>The Love for Three Oranges</i> , Opus 33bis The Ridiculous People The Magician Celio and Fata Morgana Play Cards Scherzo The Prince and the Princess Flight	CA. 13'
Jean Sibelius	<i>Finlandia</i> , Opus 26, No. 7	CA. 8'

Stephanie Childress' profile appears on page 42.

## PRE- AND POST-CONCERT

Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/dayofmusic](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/dayofmusic) for information about free pre- and post-concert activities.

# GRAND PIANO SPECTACULAR

Jon Kimura Parker, piano | Gabriela Martinez, piano  
Osip Nikiforov, piano | Szuyu Su, piano

Thursday, August 1, 2024, 7PM | Orchestra Hall

Astor Piazzolla/ arr. Kyoko Yamamoto	<i>Libertango</i>	CA. 4'
Claude Debussy/ arr. Léon Roques	<i>Arabesque No. 1</i>	CA. 5'
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart/ arr. Arcadi Volodos	<i>Rondo alla Turca, from Piano Sonata No. 11 in A major, K.331/300i Osip Nikiforov, piano</i>	CA. 4'
Darius Milhaud/ arr. Jon Kimura Parker	<i>Scaramouche</i> Vif Modère Brazileira	CA. 11'
Adam Schoenberg	Selections from <i>Picture Etudes</i> Olive Orchard Miro's World <i>Gabriela Martinez, piano</i>	CA. 6'
Gustav Holst/ arr. Ahmed Al Abaca	<i>Jupiter, from The Planets</i>	CA. 8'
I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20'
Nikolai Kapustin	Variations, Opus 41 <i>Szuyu Su, piano</i>	CA. 6'
George Gershwin/ arr. Adam Stern	<i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>	CA. 18'
Scott Joplin	<i>Solace</i> <i>Jon Kimura Parker, piano</i>	CA. 4'
George Gershwin/ arr. Gregory Stone	<i>Cuban Overture</i>	CA. 10'

Jon Kimura Parker's profile appears on page 10, Gabriela Martinez's on page 44 and Osip Nikiforov and Szuyu Su's on page 45.

## PRE-CONCERT

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# MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Lina González-Granados, conductor

Jon Kimura Parker, piano

Friday, August 2, 2024, 8PM | Orchestra Hall

John Harbison      *Remembering Gatsby*, Foxtrot for Orchestra      CA. 7'

George Gershwin      Concerto in F for Piano and Orchestra      CA. 29'

Allegro  
Adagio - Andante con moto  
Allegro agitato  
*Jon Kimura Parker, piano*

I N T E R M I S S I O N      CA. 20'

Darius Milhaud      *Le Bœuf sur le toit*, Opus 58      CA. 15'

George Gershwin      *Catfish Row Suite*, excerpts arranged from *Porgy and Bess*      CA. 20'

Catfish Row  
Porgy Sings  
Fugue  
Hurricane  
Good Morning, Sistuh

Lina González-Granados' profile appears on page 42, Jon Kimura Parker's on page 10.

## PRE-CONCERT

Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/soundsandbites](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/soundsandbites) for information about free pre-concert activities.

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**JOHN HARBISON**

**B:** December 20, 1938  
Orange, New Jersey

*Remembering Gatsby,*  
*Foxtrot for Orchestra*

**PREMIERED:** September 11, 1986

The Minnesota Orchestra’s celebration of the Roaring Twenties picks up this evening with music by contemporary American composer John Harbison inspired by one of the most famous novels of the 1920s: F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald’s cautionary portrait of the Jazz Age—a term the author himself helped popularize—was published in 1925 and has been adapted in other mediums many times, including the 2013 film version directed by Baz Luhrmann and starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

Harbison’s musical reimagining dates from the mid-1980s and brings to the fore the foxtrot. This is a natural choice in some ways, since the style was a dance of choice during the famous novel’s setting, but less intuitive in that the foxtrot is mentioned by name just once in *The Great Gatsby*—in reference to a dance shared by the millionaire Jay Gatsby and his former lover, Daisy Buchanan.

**AN OPERA’S PROTOTYPE**

The Minnesota Orchestra performed *Remembering Gatsby* most recently in 2018 on New Year’s Eve, during a season in which the ensemble celebrated Harbison as the year’s featured composer and premiered his major work *What Do We Make of Bach?* for orchestra and organ. Harbison, the 1987 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Music who is still an active composer at age 85, composed *Remembering Gatsby* in 1985 as part of a project that took several twists and turns. The music grew out of a projected opera based on *The Great Gatsby*, which at the time was left unfinished—but happily, resurrected years later and premiered in 1999 by the Metropolitan Opera.

*Remembering Gatsby*, the composer says, “begins with a *cantabile* passage for full orchestra, a representation of Gatsby’s vision of the green light on Daisy’s dock. Then the foxtrot begins, first with a kind of call to order, then a twenties tune I had written for one of the [opera’s] party scenes, played by a *concertino* led by soprano saxophone. The tune is then varied and broken into its components, leading to an altered reprise of the call to order, and an intensification of the original *cantabile*. A brief coda combines some of the motives and refers to the telephone bell and the automobile horns, instruments of Gatsby’s fate.”

**Instrumentation:** 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet and soprano saxophone), 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, 4 suspended cymbals, drum set, flexatone, 2 triangles, xylophone, glockenspiel, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



**GEORGE GERSHWIN**

**B:** September 26, 1898  
Brooklyn, New York  
**D:** July 11, 1937  
Beverly Hills, California

*Concerto in F for Piano*  
*and Orchestra*

**PREMIERED:** December 3, 1925

The success of *Rhapsody in Blue* in February 1924 propelled George Gershwin overnight from a talented Broadway composer to someone taken seriously in the world of concert music. When conductor Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony Society asked Gershwin to compose a piano concerto the following year, the young composer accepted eagerly—the commission, signed in April 1925, would pay him \$500 for the new concerto.

**YOUTH AND ENTHUSIASM**

There is no truth to the story, told many times, that Gershwin left the meeting with Damrosch and went straight to a bookstore to buy a book on musical form so that he would know what a piano concerto was. But this story does point to a larger truth: Gershwin was entering an unfamiliar musical world. Ferde Grofé had orchestrated *Rhapsody in Blue* for Gershwin, but now the composer was anxious to do that work himself. He wanted to be taken seriously as a classical composer.

Gershwin had at first planned to call the piece *New York Concerto*, but his desire for respectability won out, and he settled on Piano Concerto in F (it may be a mark of the breezy spirit of this music that it is always called that, rather than the more formal Piano Concerto in F major). F. Scott Fitzgerald nicknamed the 1920s “The Jazz Age” (*The Great Gatsby* was published in the same year Gershwin wrote this concerto), and jazz was very much in the air in 1925—but Gershwin insisted that the Concerto in F was not a jazz piece. Though the concerto employs Charleston rhythms and a blues trumpet, Gershwin wanted it taken as a piece of concert music in the Western classical tradition,

one intended to represent “the young, enthusiastic spirit of American life.”

### THE CONCERTO IN BRIEF

The Concerto in F takes the basic form of the classical concerto: a sonata-form first movement, a lyrical second movement and a rondo-finale.

**ALLEGRO.** The *Allegro* opens with a great flourish of timpani followed by the characteristic Charleston rhythm. Solo bassoon introduces the first theme, gradually taken up by the full orchestra, and the piano makes its entrance with the wonderful second subject, sliding up from the depths on a long glissando into the syncopated tune. Gershwin was willing to bend classical form for his own purposes, and he described this first movement: “It’s in sonata-form—but.” It concludes with a *grandioso* restatement by full orchestra of the piano’s opening tune and an exciting coda based on the Charleston theme.

**ADAGIO-ANDANTE CON MOTO.** Gershwin said that the slow movement “has a poetic nocturnal atmosphere which has come to be referred to as the American blues...” He contrasts the trumpet’s bluesy opening with the piano’s snappy entrance on a variant of the same tune and then alternates these ideas across the span of the movement.

**ALLEGRO AGITATO.** Gershwin described the *Allegro agitato* finale as “an orgy of rhythm,” and the opening plunges the pianist and orchestra into a perpetual-motion-like frenzy. At the end, Gershwin brings back the *grandioso* string tune from the first movement, and the Concerto in F rushes to a knock-out close.

**Instrumentation:** solo piano with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, gong, slapstick, triangle, wood block, xylophone, glockenspiel and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



### DARIUS MILHAUD

**B:** September 4, 1892  
Marseille, France

**D:** June 22, 1974  
Geneva, Switzerland

*Le Bœuf sur le toit*,  
Opus 58

**PREMIERED:** February 21, 1920

Early in the 20th century, Paris was a hub for artists working in various fields, many of them coming together to create revolutionary ballets—none looming larger than Igor Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*. It therefore comes as no surprise that the young Darius Milhaud, freshly returned to Paris in 1919 after a period serving as secretary to the French ambassador to Brazil, would try his hand at the ballet form. However, his first major success in the field, *Le Bœuf sur le toit* (The Ox on the Roof), was originally envisioned for quite a different purpose: to accompany the silent films of Charlie Chaplin. When that vision proved unworkable, the music instead found its way to the ballet stage, and its premiere in February 1920 became one of the composer’s early-career triumphs.

### MOVING TO PLAN B

Milhaud’s initial idea wasn’t entirely far-fetched, since so-called silent films were often accompanied by music from a live pianist, organist or ensemble. Chaplin, however, exercised near-total creative control over his films, and was content to await advancements in synchronized sound technology rather than, as he stated in 1926, relying on “feeble vamping on a piano or the excruciating efforts of an incompetent or ill-led orchestra.” Thus, it seems unlikely he would sanction a concept like Milhaud’s, and there is no record that the filmmaker knew of the composer’s intent. In any event, it became clear that a plan B was needed in order for Milhaud’s new work to reach audiences.

The alternate plan came courtesy of Jean Cocteau, a versatile artist who was central to the avant-garde scene in Paris of the day. After convincing Milhaud that his music was a better fit for the ballet, Cocteau created a cast of eccentric characters and a surrealist plot for the new production, which premiered at the Comédie des Champs-Élysées in Paris on February 21, 1920. The ballet’s success opened new opportunities for Milhaud, who composed 17 more pieces with choreography during his lengthy career, including one of his best-known works, the ballet *La création du monde* of 1923. Nowadays, *Le Bœuf sur le toit* is heard most often in the concert hall. The music also has a physical legacy in the form of the celebrated Parisian



cabaret-bar *Le Bœuf sur le toit*, which opened in 1921 and became a gathering place for the avant-garde arts scene during the period between the world wars.

### IMPORTED FROM BRAZIL

Milhaud had more than just Charlie Chaplin's films in mind while composing *Le Bœuf sur le toit*. The music's high-spirited style and many of its melodies stemmed from Milhaud's time in Brazil, where he was immersed in that country's musical culture and its dance forms of samba and maxixe, among others. Some critics and musicologists have bandied about words like "pastiche" and even "plagiarism" in describing the music, while others have perceived a blending of French and Brazilian musical elements reflective of Milhaud's ability to transcend cultural boundaries.

Spanning about 15 minutes, *Le Bœuf sur le toit* is in the form of a rondo, in which a recurring theme alternates with a series of contrasting episodes. Along the way, we hear at least 20 Brazilian popular tunes and dance melodies, along with several themes that are apparently of Milhaud's own invention. The catchy main theme immediately sets a festive and syncopated tone, while the subsequent episodes introduce a variety of moods, often as whimsical as the antics in a Chaplin film. To close, an extended coda brings together many of the themes.

Throughout *Le Bœuf sur le toit*—and in many of his other works—Milhaud employs bitonality, a technique in which two different musical keys are used simultaneously. The orchestration, rich and colorful, further enhances the work's lively character, with a guiro and tambourine contributing to the music's Brazilian flavor.

Regardless of the composer's original intent, and now separated from the surrealist ballet scenario, the music's vibrant energy and playful spirit continue to captivate audiences more than a century since the ballet's premiere. Few listeners will manage to suppress a smile along the way.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), oboe, 2 clarinets, bassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, bass drum, cymbals, guiro, tambourine and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.

## GEORGE GERSHWIN

### *Catfish Row Suite*, excerpts arranged from *Porgy and Bess*

PREMIERED: January 21, 1936

Historically, many orchestral composers who feared their works might not achieve their desired success would write a suite of selections to be performed more simply, and hopefully more frequently, than the original work. Think Prokofiev's and Bernstein's movie scores *Alexander Nevsky* and *On the Waterfront*, respectively, and Richard Strauss' opera *Der Rosenkavalier*.

George Gershwin originally intended his folk opera *Porgy and Bess* to open at the Metropolitan Opera, but he decided against it. He told *The New York Times*, "The reason I did not submit this work to the usual sponsors of opera in America was that I hoped to have developed something in American music that would appeal to the many rather than to the cultured few." The long-standing debate of whether *Porgy and Bess* is an opera is primarily the realm of scholars rather than audiences. The late Stephen Sondheim once told me that "If it runs on 45th and Broadway, it's a play. If it runs 20 blocks north, it's an opera."

*Porgy and Bess* is set in Jim Crow-era Charleston, South Carolina. In a Black neighborhood called "Catfish Row" the vicious bully Crown murders a resident and deserts his lover Bess when he flees. Porgy, who has a mobile disability, shelters Bess, whose dubious reputation is further complicated by her use of cocaine supplied by the character Sportin' Life. The Gershwin Estate mandates that the Black characters in *Porgy and Bess* be portrayed by performers of the same racial background. The opera thus offered opportunities for Black performers, but some of the opera's characters have roots in demeaning stereotypes.

Much has been made of two Jewish brothers from lower Manhattan—George and his lyricist brother, Ira, both White—taking on a story set in the American South with Black lead characters. The physical and cultural gap was bridged in part through DuBose Heyward, a White Charleston native, who wrote the 1925 novel *Porgy* and, together with his wife Dorothy, adapted the novel into a play that opened on Broadway in 1927. As such, Heyward, rather than the Gershwins, was the source of *Porgy and Bess*'s characters and plot. He also wrote some of the lyrics. To prepare for the opera's creation, George Gershwin made an extended visit to Heyward in the summer of 1934, to experience Charleston and the Sea Islands, and observe and sometimes participate in African American church services and local customs.

The opera's distinctively Gullah-sounding text was inspired by their experience that summer, although Ira Gershwin explained: "It didn't matter too much if dialect was exact or not, considering the stylized and characteristic music. All that was required was a suggestion of regional flavor." The music's jazz elements are apt for several reasons; although jazz originated in the African American musical tradition, George Gershwin played a major role in its popularization to wide audiences and authored many jazz standards.

## DISTILLING THE OPERA

*Porgy and Bess* opened on Broadway in 1935 and, with 124 performances, was a moderate success. When the Broadway run closed, Gershwin composed a suite from the production, and conducted it in several cities. But after his untimely death in 1937 at age 38, it was virtually forgotten until rediscovered in Ira Gershwin's library in 1958. Meanwhile, in 1942, the accomplished Broadway orchestrator Robert Russell Bennett was spurred by the conductor Fritz Reiner to create a "Symphonic Picture," which for years was the definitive distillation of the show.

However, once Gershwin's own suite was found, and given the name *Catfish Row* by Ira to differentiate it, it overtook Bennett's. Leonard Slatkin, who founded the Minnesota Orchestra's Sommerfest, noted that "Gershwin's suite takes the orchestration scoring from the actual opera, as opposed to the full symphony palette. This gives the music a leaner, and more original sound. Perhaps it is not as sweeping as the Bennett, but it is good to learn the composer's own thoughts on what he believed audiences should hear." JoAnn Faletta, music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, who recorded the suite for the Naxos label, sums it up: "Gershwin's *Catfish Row* is a more complete expression of the complicated tapestry of the composer's masterpiece."

## THE MUSIC

Unlike Bennett's suite, Gershwin's generally—though not entirely—follows the opera's plot, beginning with the overture, Jazzbo Brown's out-of-tune piano, and the opening chorus. Listen for the xylophone, wood block and timpani as Gershwin forcefully segues to the show's most popular hit, Serena's "Summertime," first in the strings and then in the reeds. One can almost feel Charleston's heat and humidity.

The mood changes as we hear the percussion's rolling of the dice in a heated game. The brilliant banjo plays Porgy's "I Got Plenty of Nuttin'" sung in the opera as Porgy falls for Bess. (Not so coincidentally, both suites use the banjo for the same passage.) "Porgy change since that woman come to live with he," the women observe. The mood changes again as he encourages Bess to join the others for the picnic on Kittiwah Island, a fateful mistake, since Crown is hiding

there. Confidently, but naively, Porgy declares, "Bess, You Is My Woman." Gershwin's strings are simply luscious, but they belie reality.

A fugue follows as an accompaniment to the fight where Porgy, who is confined to a goat cart, fatally chokes Crown, the stevedore bully. We hear distorted suggestions of Bess' earlier plea to Crown, "What you want wid Bess," sung during the encounter on Kittiwah Island where she ultimately submits to him. The segment ends with thunderous chords signifying Crown's violent death literally at the hands of the strengthened Porgy. The chimes announce a bright new day on Catfish Row, but the sounds of the hurricane, including the unheeded fishermen's warning bell, overtake the score.

In the final movement, the light-hearted street sounds of "Good Morning, Sistuh," are followed by the children's charming "Sure to go to Heaven." The suite concludes with the optimistic "Oh, Lawd, I'm On My Way." Released from jail, Porgy learns that Sportin' Life has convinced Bess to run off with him to New York. Porgy asks the way to New York and sets out in his cart to find her. Excerpts from the overture return briefly, with echos of Porgy's "I Got Plenty of Nuttin'," Bess' "What you want wid Bess," and, ironically, his "Bess, You Is My Woman." We are painfully aware that Porgy will never see Bess again.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 4 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet), bassoon, 3 horns, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, wood block, tamtam, tom-tom, xylophone, glockenspiel, chimes, timpani, banjo and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY PHILLIP GAINSLY.

# UPTOWN NIGHTS

## WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Byron Stripling, conductor and trumpet  
Carmen Bradford, vocals  
Leo Manzari, tap dancer

Saturday, August 3, 2024, 7PM | Orchestra Hall

*The program for tonight's concert will be announced from the stage. There will be one intermission.*



### BYRON STRIPLING, CONDUCTOR AND TRUMPET

With a contagious smile and captivating charm, conductor, trumpet virtuoso, singer and actor Byron Stripling dazzles audiences across the globe. In 2020 he was named principal pops conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. In May 2024 he was appointed principal pops conductor of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. He also currently serves as artistic director and conductor of the highly acclaimed Columbus Jazz Orchestra. He has led countless orchestras throughout the U.S. and Canada including the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood and the orchestras of San Diego, St. Louis, Virginia, Toronto, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Fort Worth, Rochester, Buffalo, Florida, Portland and Sarasota, to name a few. This summer marks the 25th anniversary of his debut with the Minnesota Orchestra.

As a soloist with the Boston Pops, Stripling has performed frequently under the baton of Keith Lockhart, as well as being the featured soloist on the PBS television special *Evening at Pops* with conductors John Williams and Lockhart. Since his Carnegie Hall debut with Skitch Henderson and the New York Pops, Stripling has become a pops orchestra favorite throughout the country, soloing with over 100 orchestras around the world. He has been a featured soloist at the Hollywood Bowl and performs at festivals around the world. He earned his stripes as lead trumpeter and soloist with the Count Basie Orchestra under the direction of Thad Jones and Frank Foster.

An accomplished actor and singer, Stripling was chosen, following a worldwide search, to star in the lead role of the Broadway-bound musical *Satchmo*. Many will remember his featured cameo performance in the TV movie *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* and his critically acclaimed virtuoso trumpet and his comedic performance in the 42nd Street production of *From Second Avenue to Broadway*. TV viewers have also enjoyed his work as soloist on the worldwide telecast of the Grammy Awards. Millions have heard his trumpet and voice on television commercials, TV theme songs including *20/20* and for CNN, and soundtracks of favorite movies. In addition to multiple recordings with his quintet, Stripling has worked with artists from Tony Bennett to Whitney Houston, and his prolific recording career includes hundreds of albums with great pop, Broadway, soul and jazz artists. More: [byronstripling.com](http://byronstripling.com).

Carmen Bradford's profile appears on page 42, Leo Manzari's on page 44.

#### PRE-CONCERT

Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/soundsandbites](http://minnesotaorchestra.org/soundsandbites) for information about free pre-concert activities.



# AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

## WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Sarah Hicks, conductor

Friday, August 9, 2024, 7PM

Saturday, August 10, 2024, 7PM

Orchestra Hall

### A SYMPHONIC NIGHT AT THE MOVIES AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

#### Cast

GENE KELLY   JERRY MULLIGAN  
LESLIE CARON   LISE BOUVIER  
OSCAR LEVANT   ADAM COOK  
GEORGES GUÉTARY   HENRI BAUREL  
NINA FOCH   MILO ROBERTS

Story and Screenplay by ALAN JAY LERNER

Directed by VINCENTE MINNELLI

Produced by ARTHUR FREED

Music by GEORGE GERSHWIN

Lyrics by IRA GERSHWIN

Choreography by GENE KELLY

Film Courtesy of Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc.

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## PRODUCTION CREDITS

Producer: John Goberman

Live orchestra adaptation by John Wilson Technical Supervisor: Pat McGillen

Music Preparation: Larry Spivack and Constantine Kitsopoulos

The producer wishes to acknowledge the contributions and extraordinary support of John Waxman (Themes & Variations).

*A Symphonic Night at the Movies* is a production of PGM Productions, Inc. (New York) and appears by arrangement with IMG Artists. Today's performance lasts about 2 hours and 15 minutes, including one 20-minute intermission.

Sarah Hicks' profile appears on page 43.

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**CARMEN BRADFORD,**  
VOCALS

Born in Austin, Texas, and raised in Altadena, California, Grammy nominee Carmen Bradford grew up with music in her home and in her heart. It was only natural that she would follow in the footsteps of her great family legacy, being the daughter of legendary trumpeter-composer Bobby Bradford and world-renowned vocalist-composer Melba Joyce. Her grandfather Melvin Moore sang with Lucky Millender and Dizzy Gillespie's Big Band in the 1940s and sang with the Ink Spots, making Bradford the third generation of incredible musicians. Bradford was discovered and hired by William "Count" Basie, and was the featured vocalist in the legendary Count Basie Orchestra for nine years. She has since performed and/or recorded with Wynton Marsalis, Shelly Berg and John Clayton, among numerous other artists and ensembles. She performed on two Grammy Award-winning albums with the Basie band in the 1980s and later collaborated on a third Grammy Award-winning album, *Big Boss Band*, with guitarist George Benson in 1991. In 2016 Bradford was asked by South African trumpeter Darren English to be a part of his new critically acclaimed CD *Imagination Nation*. She is the resident professor of jazz voice and director of vocal jazz studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. More: [carmenbradford.com](http://carmenbradford.com).



**STEPHANIE CHILDRESS,**  
CONDUCTOR

Strong ideas, lucid communication and intensely focused energy are among the qualities that define Stephanie Childress among today's most compelling young musicians. Recently appointed principal guest conductor of the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, she is known for her musicianship and command of a broad scope of repertoire that have led her to establish herself on both sides of the Atlantic. She began her 2023-24 season making her Hamburg Staatsoper debut and returning to Glyndebourne's autumn season. She also made her conducting debut with Detroit Opera this season in Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves*. On the orchestral podium, Childress continues to be reinvented internationally and this season returned to the Barcelona and North Carolina symphonies, and debuted with the Cleveland Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, National Arts Centre Ottawa, Ulster Orchestra and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, among other ensembles. She previously served as assistant conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and music director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. A passionate advocate for amplifying the role of music within today's world, Childress previously undertook an artistic residence at the Villa Albertine, a network for arts and ideas spanning France and the U.S. More: [harrisonparrott.com](http://harrisonparrott.com), [stephaniechildress.com](http://stephaniechildress.com).



**LINA GONZÁLEZ-GRANADOS,**  
CONDUCTOR

Praised for her rhythmic vitality and the raw power of her conducting, Colombian-American Lina González-Granados has distinguished herself as a powerful interpreter in the classical music field. Named part of Bloomberg Línea's "100 Influential Latinos of 2022," González-Granados is a recipient of the 2021 Sphinx Medal of Excellence (third prize), the ECHO Special Award of La Maestra Competition, the 2020 and 2021 Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award, among many other honors. In the fall of 2022, she was appointed resident conductor by the LA Opera, a post she will hold through June 2025. Her 2024-25 season highlights include an extensive tour across Colombia with Filarmónica Joven de Colombia, debuts with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and the Phoenix, New Jersey and National Dublin symphonies and the National Arts Center Ottawa. Recent highlights include debuts with Opera Philadelphia, the Orchestre Métropolitain, and the Indianapolis, Atlanta and New World symphonies. Born and raised in Cali, Colombia, she made her conducting debut with the Youth Orchestra of Bellas Artes. She holds a master's degree in conducting, a graduate diploma in choral conducting from New England Conservatory and a doctor of musical arts degree in orchestral conducting from Boston University. More: [linagonzalezgranados.com](http://linagonzalezgranados.com).



**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, and has earned wide acclaim as a guest conductor in the U.S. and abroad. Her notable projects here have included co-creating the Inside the Classics series and Sam & Sarah series with Orchestra violist Sam Bergman and leading new productions with collaborators such as Nur-D, Dessa, Cloud Cult, The New Standards, PaviElle French, Kevin Kling, Peter Rothstein, Robert Elhai and The Moving Company. A specialist in film music and the film-in-concert genre, Hicks premiered Pixar in Concert and Disney and Pixar's *Coco* in Concert; her live concert recording of *A Celebration of the Music from Coco* at the Hollywood Bowl can be seen on Disney+ and her work on *The Little Mermaid Live!* was broadcast on ABC. In the Minnesota Orchestra's 2024-25 season she will lead U.S. Bank Movies & Music performances of *Star Wars: A New Hope*, *Hocus Pocus*, *Back to the Future* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, as well as tributes to film composer John Williams and the Beatles, among other performances. More: [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).



**NATSUKI KUMAGAI,**  
VIOLIN

Natsuki Kumagai joined the Minnesota Orchestra's second violin section in 2017 and won a position in the first violin section in 2019. With her performances this summer of a violin concerto by Chevalier de Saint-Georges, she makes her concerto solo debut with the Orchestra. Born and raised in Chicago, she has served in numerous concertmaster positions at orchestras including the New World Symphony, New York String Orchestra Seminar and Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, where she was awarded the Jules C. Reiner Violin Prize. She was also a member of the Verbier Festival Orchestra. She is an active chamber musician, winning prizes at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, Saint Paul Chamber Music Competition and Society of American Musicians Competition. She was a member of the New Fromm Players, the quartet in residence for contemporary music at the Tanglewood Institute, performing world and U.S. premieres of works by renowned composers Marc Neikrug and Joseph Phibbs. Kumagai attended the New England Conservatory in Boston, where she studied with Boston Symphony Orchestra's concertmaster Malcolm Lowe. She received her master's degree at the Juilliard School, studying with Ida Kavafian. Her previous teachers include Almita and Roland Vamos and Marko Dreher at the Music Institute of Chicago's Academy program. More: [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).



**DELYANA LAZAROVA,**  
CONDUCTOR

As a conductor, Delyana Lazarova thinks of herself as a musician among musicians. Collaboration, openness and sensitivity to the specific sound and character of every orchestra are the foundation of her work. In the 2023-24 season, she debuted at the Enescu Festival Bucharest, opened the season of the Tiroler Sinfonieorchester Innsbruck, and made her debut with the Orchestre National de Bordeaux, BBC Symphony, BBC Scottish Symphony, Dresdner Philharmonie and Deutsches Sinfonieorchester Berlin. She celebrated the New Year with Sinfonieorchester Basel and brought the Bulgarian composer Pancho Vladigerov's Violin Concerto to the Elbphilharmonie with the Hamburger Camerata. She also made her debut with the Oregon Symphony, led the Sofia Philharmonic and Bulgarian National Radio Symphony, and continued her close relationship with the Hallé Orchestra. Born in Bulgaria, Lazarova won the inaugural Siemens Hallé International Conductors Competition, then served as assistant conductor at the Hallé Orchestra and music director of the Hallé Youth Orchestra from 2020 to 2023. She also assisted Cristian Măcelaru at the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln and the Orchestre National de France. In 2020 she won the prestigious James Conlon Conducting Prize at the Aspen Music Festival. More: [delyanalazarova.com](http://delyanalazarova.com) or [kdschmid.de](http://kdschmid.de).





**LEO MANZARI,**  
TAP DANCER

Originally from Washington, D.C., Leo Manzari is a Lucille Lortel Award-nominated tap dancer, headlining in various productions such as the touring and off-Broadway productions of *Maurice Hines is Tappin' Thru Life*, and being featured as a guest artist on *So You Think You Can Dance*, the Kennedy Center's concert celebrating the 50th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's inauguration and a Marvin Gaye tribute, Dorrance Dance's *Nutcracker Suite*, *The Mo'nique Show*, *The Kate TV*, *TEDMED*, *PBS News Hour*, Jerry Lewis Telethon and ABC's *The View*. Manzari has also been featured as a solo tap dancer in Hozier's music video *Almost (Sweet Music)* and guest starred with Anderson Paak's band the Free Nationals for various virtual events. Now residing in Los Angeles, Manzari currently headlines alongside Byron Stripling and Grammy-nominated jazz vocalist Carmen Bradford, collaborating with multiple pops orchestras around the world including the Winnipeg Orchestra, Florida Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and Philly Pops—as well as the Minnesota Orchestra this August. More: [leomanzari.com](http://leomanzari.com).



**GABRIELA MARTINEZ,**  
PIANO

Venezuelan pianist Gabriela Martinez has a reputation for the lyricism of her playing, her compelling interpretations, and her elegant stage presence. She has a vast repertoire and a deep commitment to expanding the canon through new commissions and multi-disciplinary collaborations. She also has a strong belief in the importance of arts education and bringing classical music to younger audiences, as well as to people and places that might not normally experience it. Gabriela made her orchestral debut at age 6, and has performed with over 100 orchestras since including the San Francisco, Chicago and Houston symphonies; Germany's Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, and Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra in Venezuela. Her debut album, *Amplified Soul*, was released on the Delos label, and was recognized with a Grammy Award for Producer of the Year David Frost. She has performed at such venues as Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Merkin Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York City and at numerous major festivals. She was the First Prize winner of the Anton G. Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Dresden. She then attended the Juilliard School, where she earned her bachelor and master of music degrees as a full scholarship student of Yoheved Kaplinsky. More: [gabrielamartinezpiano.com](http://gabrielamartinezpiano.com).



**TERRYANN NASH,**  
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE  
INTERPRETER

Terryann Nash, MAPL, is an American Sign Language (ASL) performance artist and CEO of Nashinspired LLC. She has been an interpreter for productions of *The Miracle Worker*; Sounds of Blackness' *The Night Before Christmas* and *Songs for Martin*; *Black Nativity 2022*; and the 2017 National Day of Prayer at U.S. Bank Stadium. She has also been an ASL performing member in several performances by Sweet Honey in the Rock. She works closely with Nashinspired ASL consultant Rebecca Demmings. More: [nashinspired.com](http://nashinspired.com).



**OSIP NIKIFOROV,**  
PIANO

Osip Nikiforov is a Russian pianist who studied under the tutelage of two world-renowned pianists: Yefim Bronfman at Manhattan School of Music and Jon Kimura Parker at Rice University. Born in Siberia to a family of musicians, he started studying piano with his father at age 6. While still living in Russia, he participated and won numerous awards in national and international competitions. At just 14 years of age, he performed a movement from Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Minnesota Orchestra as part of the e-Piano Junior Competition. Since 2010 he has resided in the United States. This past February he was part of the recording project Folk Classics from Across the Globe at Minnesota Public Radio, where he recorded a series of folk tale-inspired piano pieces for children by the Ukrainian composer Aida Isakova. In 2023 Nikiforov performed a series of all-Rachmaninoff solo programs in Texas and Minnesota, dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the composer. He is regularly invited to perform at festivals and concert series including the Schubert Club Courtroom Concert Series in St. Paul. In fall 2021 his first piano solo album, *Russian Elegie*, was released by Orpheus Classical Label. More: [osipnikiforov.com](https://osipnikiforov.com).



**SZUYU SU,**  
PIANO

Born in Tainan City, Taiwan, Szuyu Su began to learn the piano at the age of 4. She earned a bachelor's degree from the Curtis Institute of Music and a master's degree from the Juilliard School. She is currently pursuing her doctorate degree in piano performance at Rice University under the instruction of Jon Kimura Parker, the creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall. Su is the winner of the 2023 Solo Piano Competition at the Music Academy of the West. She is also a recipient of the CHIMEI Arts Award and the second prize winner at the 2022 Mieczyslaw Munz Piano Competition. In 2019 she won second prize and best mazurka performance at the Beijing Chopin Piano Competition. She participated in the 2021 Warsaw Chopin International Piano Competition and advanced to the second stage. Since then she has been invited to play with orchestras and give recitals in major venues. Besides performing, she is interested in teaching. Her appearance at the Grand Piano Spectacular marks her Orchestra Hall debut.

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The Minnesota Orchestra community is very important to me. Currently in my fourth decade of working with the Orchestra, I cherish the relationships made when I'm speaking about music, performing, or after every concert when I meet the most important people in the room: our audience.

The quality of this exceptional Orchestra comes from the musicians, and their commitment to making great music. And the spirit and generosity of supporters like you gives the Orchestra the freedom to be everything that they can be: musicians, artists, educators—creating experiences for all to connect to their inner humanity.

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— Jon Kimura Parker,  
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Cello soloist Sterling Elliott  
performing Tchaikovsky's Variations  
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Photo: Courtney Perry.

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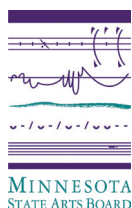
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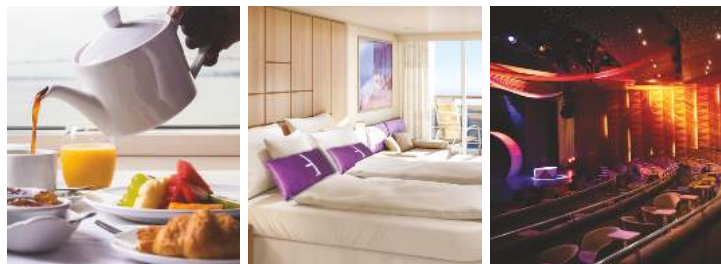


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Clockwise from left: Sophie's Surprise 29th. Photo: Heather Gersthorowitz, Josephine. Photo: David Morieth-Hodge; Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Photos: Heather Gersthorowitz; Rebekah Hinds and Bronie Barbi, Kathy and Dabla Soker a Murder. Photo: Mikaela Bodovic; What Genu Are Made Of: Rose Material | Traverse Theatre. Photo: Mikaela Bodovic.

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