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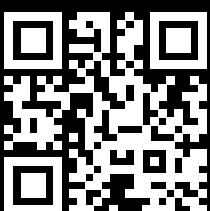
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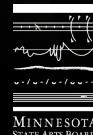
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CONCERTS

19 Beethoven Symphony No. 6
Ameriprise Financial Classical Season

25 Chamber Music with Behzod Abduraimov
Chamber Music in the Hall

27 National Geographic Live: Secrets of the Whales
U.S. Bank Movies & Music

29 Musical Wonders of the World
Relaxed Family Concert

31 Søndergård Conducts Future Classics
Ameriprise Financial Classical Season



19

Bart Barczyk



29

Sonja Gartitsching



8, 31

Chris McDuffie

IN THIS ISSUE

2 Minnesota Orchestral Association

4 Minnesota Orchestra

6 Minnesota Orchestra Staff and Volunteers

8 Profile: Music Director Thomas Søndergård

10 Orchestra News

38 Profiles: The Performers

43 Thank You, Donors!

ORCHESTRA HALL INFORMATION



ABOUT THE COVER: Sarah Hicks, who joined the Orchestra's conducting roster in 2006 and has been principal conductor of the Live at Orchestra Hall series since 2014, this month leads *Secrets of the Whales*.
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PROFILE

THOMAS SØNDERGÅRD

Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who this past fall began his second season as 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 repertoire, and a collaborative approach with the musicians he leads.

Søndergård first conducted the Minnesota Orchestra in December 2021, establishing an immediate rapport with musicians and audiences; he was announced as the next music director in July 2022 and began his tenure in September 2023. Highlights of his 2024–25 season in Minnesota include season opening concerts with Yunchan Lim and Leila Josefowicz, performances of Mozart’s Requiem and Puccini’s *Turandot* and January’s festival of music from Nordic countries.

Since 2018 Søndergård has been music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO). 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,



London Symphony and New York Philharmonic. This season, in addition to a full slate of RSNO concerts, he leads Strauss’ *Elektra* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Grieg’s *Peer Gynt* with Den Norske Opera and Ballet, and appears as guest conductor with the City of Birmingham Symphony and Aarhus Symfoniorkesterlektra.

Søndergård began his music career as a timpanist, joining the Royal Danish Orchestra after graduating from the Royal Danish Academy of Music. He made his conducting debut in 2005, leading the Royal Danish Opera in the premiere of Poul Ruders’ *Kafka’s Trial* to wide acclaim; he has returned subsequently many times to the Royal Danish Opera. His discography 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 works with BBC NOW; and works by Prokofiev and Strauss with the RSNO.

For more information, visit minnesotaorchestra.org.



The Michael Steinberg & Jorja Fleezanis Fund

An Old Story

World Premiere Performance: Sunday, May 4, 2025, 3 pm

Celebrate the premiere of this compelling new chamber work by Stefan L. Smith, inspired by a poem by Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy K. Smith.

Also featured: Schubert's Piano Quintet, *The Trout*

Musicians: Susie Park, violin; Alan Snow, violin; Sabrina Thatcher, viola; Anthony Ross, cello; Kathryn Nettleman, bass; Burt Hara, clarinet;

Timothy Lovelace, piano; and narrator Stephen Yoakam.

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The Michael Steinberg & Jorja Fleezanis Fund was established by the late violinist Jorja Fleezanis to commission new works incorporating literary texts and music by emerging composers.



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MEET A MUSICIAN: LYDIA GRIMES

Zoe Prinds-Flash

**Minnesota Orchestra musician since:** 2022**Section:** Viola**Hometown:** Shoreview, Minnesota**Education:** The Juilliard School**How did you get into music?**

I grew up in a family of musicians. My mother is a pianist, my dad plays trumpet, my older sister Sarah—who joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 2016—is a violinist, my younger brother is a cellist, and our grandma (who would watch us many days a week) is a pianist and choir director. Music was part of life for me, and my grandma used to take us around to nursing homes to sing and play Scandinavian folk songs from a young age.

What led you into the viola world?

I began violin at age 4 because I wanted to be just like my older sister. I'm glad our parents required us to stick with it, because even though I hated practicing as a kid, I really liked playing in Minnesota Youth Symphonies and enjoyed the benefits of learning an instrument. In late high school, I started playing viola because my quartet needed a violist, and it felt like it fit my personality

better. I also sang quite a bit in choirs and solo operatic settings, and viola felt similar since its range is similar to the human voice. Switching to viola made me feel like I was exploring something all my own.

What are the upsides of being in the same Orchestra as your sister Sarah?

From the first day I joined the Minnesota Orchestra, I had someone there to show me the ropes and answer any questions. How do I log in to the benefits website? How do I find rehearsal schedules? Everything was answered and I was never confused! During my first year with the Orchestra, when I was finishing my master's degree in New York City and commuting back and forth, I always had a place to stay with her. Finally, we crack each other up! Making faces at Sarah during rehearsals and concerts that only she will find funny is my favorite pastime. And I get to see my sister every day at work—a pretty great deal!

Continued on page 12

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Continued from page 10

What are your favorite memories so far of being in the Orchestra?

Most of my favorite memories come from shenanigans in the viola section. While of course it is important to be professional, we have fun and joke around when the time is right. I love my section and all our inside jokes!

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I played soccer my entire childhood and love it more than anything, so I play on two leagues at the moment, which has been incredibly fun. And sometimes I play with Gabi [Campos Zamora], our principal clarinetist! I've also been enjoying learning to play chess lately, and am taking lessons in that and in Spanish. And of course, I've been watching *The White Lotus*.

MUSICIANS AROUND TOWN

When they're not at Orchestra Hall, Minnesota Orchestra musicians often perform concerts around the Twin Cities and beyond. Among them are two at Westminster Presbyterian Church in downtown Minneapolis. On **Sunday, April 13**, the Bakken Ensemble, including violinist **Sarah Grimes**, violist **Lydia Grimes** and cellist **Pitnarry Shin**, performs a chamber music program. On **Sunday, May 4**, the Michael Steinberg and Jorja Fleezanis Fund presents a concert celebrating the legacy of the late former Concertmaster Jorja

What movies and music would you like to see on the Orchestra's calendar?

A group of us in the Orchestra meet once in a while to watch period dramas. I'm sure we'd love to play a movie like *Pride and Prejudice*—although I don't know how well that would sell! I also love playing the Romantics: Brahms and Rachmaninoff, among many others. But since I'm still early in my orchestral career, I'm enjoying playing pieces I've never done before and expanding my knowledge of general repertoire as well as contemporary works. Our programming committee does a great job finding a balance, and I love the variety we get to perform!

Fleezanis and her late husband, musicologist Michael Steinberg. The concert features the premiere of *An Old Story* by Stefan L. Smith with text by Tracy K. Smith. First Associate Concertmaster **Susie Park**, Principal Cello **Anthony Ross**, Associate Principal Bass **Kathryn Nettleman** and former Principal Clarinet **Burt Hara** are among the performers.



Learn more about these and other performances at minnesotaorchestra.org/aroundtown.

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SUMMER AT ORCHESTRA HALL: ROMANTIC MASTERPIECES, MAGIC AND MORE

Sweeping Romantic melodies, piano fireworks and an intro to the wizarding sport of Quidditch are just a few highlights in store for 2025's Summer at Orchestra Hall—the fan-favorite festival led for the fifth year by pianist and Creative Partner Jon Kimura Parker, running from July 10 to August 1.

This summer's festival showcases gorgeous Romantic-era piano concertos by Robert Schumann and Edvard Grieg, both with Parker at the keyboard; a pair of touching Beethoven Romances featuring Assistant Principal Second Violin Cecilia Belcher in her solo debut with the Orchestra; four screenings of the franchise-launching 2001 film *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, with the Orchestra playing John Williams' Oscar-nominated score live-to-picture; a matinee Family Concert featuring dancers from Los Alegres Bailadores; an intimate evening of chamber music with Parker and Orchestra musicians; and a show-stopping Grand Piano Spectacular starring Parker and three additional pianists, playing four pianos simultaneously. Guest conductors include Kensho Watanabe, Samuel Lee, Norman Huynh and former Associate Conductor Akiko Fujimoto.

As in past years, audiences are invited to arrive early and enjoy pre-concert entertainment from a variety of local performers in the Target Atrium, as well as special dining and cocktail options. Tickets for Summer at Orchestra Hall concerts go on sale Tuesday, April 8, at minnesotaorchestra.org—where you can also find full details on the Orchestra's recently announced 2025-26 season.

In addition, the summer fun moves beyond Orchestra Hall via a round of four free outdoor Symphony for the Cities concerts (June 30-July 5), with conductor Jason Seber and the Orchestra bringing patriotic tunes and blockbuster film music to Excelsior, Plymouth, Winona and Hudson, Wisconsin. Unforgettable melodies and warm weather are on the way—so mark your calendars and join us often!



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HAROLD FANG WINS YPSCA COMPETITION

It was a Groundhog Day that will be long remembered: on February 2, 12 young finalists of the 68th annual YPSCA Young People's Concerto Competition performed on the Orchestra Hall stage before an appreciative crowd and a panel of judges. The musicians, chosen from a pool of applicants living in Minnesota and surrounding states, each delivered stellar musicianship—and the top prize went to pianist Harold Fang of Plymouth, Minnesota, who performed a movement from Grieg's Piano Concerto.

Fang, a 9th-grader at Wayzata High School who studies piano with Denis Evstuhin, follows in the footsteps of past Competition top-prize recipients such as Grammy Award-winning guitarist Sharon Isbin and the two most recent winners, violinist Jane Story and oboist Izaiah Cheeran. With the award comes a special invitation to perform as a soloist at a future set of Minnesota Orchestra Young People's Concerts.

Second prize went to pianist André Peck, a 10th-grader from Logan High School in La Crosse, Wisconsin, while cellist Sophia Alexander, an 11th-grade student at the Blake School in Minneapolis, took home the award for top string performance. All 12 finalists were awarded cash prizes, and their performances were judged by Dr. Ivan Konev, piano faculty at UW-River Falls; Rui Di, assistant concertmaster of the Minnesota Orchestra; and Andrew Chappell, the Orchestra's bass trombonist.

YPSCA, the Young People's Symphony Concert Association, is a part of the Minnesota Orchestral Association and one of the longest-standing organizations of its kind in the nation. It was founded in 1911 to support the Orchestra's Young People's Concerts, and now provides volunteer ushers and annually funds tickets, bus transportation and pre-concert in-school previews to prepare over 2,000 Twin Cities-area students, among other initiatives. Learn more about YPSCA and the Concerto Competition at minnesotaorchestra.org/ypsca.



Harold Fang



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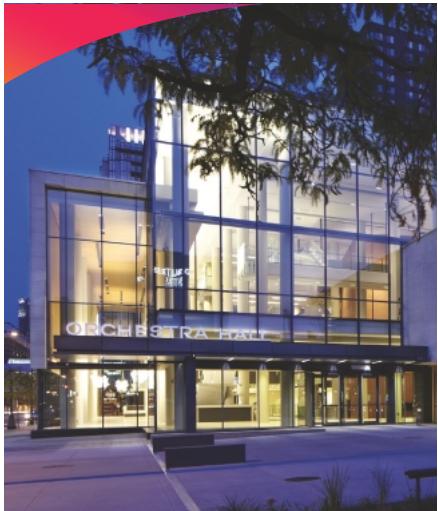
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BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 6

Marta Gardolińska, conductor
Behzod Abduraimov, piano

THU APR 3 11AM | FRI APR 4 8PM

Grażyna Bacewicz	Overture for Orchestra	CA. 6'
Frédéric Chopin	Concerto No. 2 in F minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 21 Maestoso Larghetto Allegro vivace	CA. 30'

Behzod Abduraimov, piano

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

CA. 20'

Ludwig van Beethoven	Symphony No. 6 in F major, Opus 68, <i>Pastoral</i> Allegro ma non troppo (Awakening of happy feelings on getting out into the country) Andante molto moto (By the brookside) Allegro (Merry gathering of the country folk) Allegro (Thunderstorm) Allegretto (Shepherds' Song; Happy and thankful feelings after the storm)	CA. 40'
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Conductor and soloist profiles appear on pages 38 and 39.
Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/pre for details about pre-concert activities.

THANK YOU

The 2024-25 Classical season is presented by Ameriprise Financial.

Friday night Classical concerts air live on [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](http://YourClassical.MN).

**GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ****B:** February 5, 1909
Łódź, Poland**D:** January 17, 1969
Warsaw, Poland**Overture for Orchestra****PREMIERED:**
September 1, 1945

Grażyna Bacewicz, often referred to as “the first lady of Polish music,” is cemented in her country’s history as a cultural icon and advocate for Poland’s musical legacy. Her catalog of more than 200 compositions emerged despite her experience living through both World Wars, raising a family during societal upheaval, nursing an injured family member and navigating the oppression of women in musical careers through the early 20th century.

Bacewicz was born in 1909, enrolled in a local music conservatory by the age of 10 and began her advanced studies at the Warsaw Conservatory at age 15, focusing on violin performance, composition and piano. While there, she became acquainted with composer-pianist Karol Szymanowski, who urged his students to study abroad in order to expand their artistic horizons. With this encouragement, Bacewicz traveled to Paris after graduation to study composition with Nadia Boulanger; she then performed her violin compositions throughout Spain.

Bacewicz returned to Warsaw in 1936, becoming concertmaster of the Polish Radio Orchestra just before World War II broke out across Europe. She and her husband had their only child in 1942, and throughout the war, despite displacement and artistic censorship, Bacewicz was able to compose several works, including the Overture for Orchestra, which this week receives its first performance by the Minnesota Orchestra. In the decades since her death in 1969, Poland has memorialized Bacewicz through street names and school names, a statue at Philharmonic Hall and a burial plot in a special section for cultural heroes of Warsaw.

AVOIDING REPETITION

Bacewicz often fought back when anyone labeled her music with certain genres or categories.

Instead she spoke intently about the need for music to evolve over time during a composer’s career, stating: “Every composition completed

today will belong to the past tomorrow. A progressive composer should not repeat herself.” Today, though, her music is generally categorized as neoclassical—a musical ethos that focuses on simplicity of lines, balance and symmetry, music for music’s sake, rather than the storytelling so prevalent in the Romantic era.

Bacewicz’s Overture for Orchestra is blazing, brilliant and optimistic, defying the dark times surrounding its composition. Frenzied passages of racing notes, shared by each family of instruments, are set into perpetual motion over the course of the six-minute work. Only in the central adagio section is there a slight release of momentum, where winds lead the melody with the rich support of strings and horns. Strings quickly revive the original tempo and power through to the end, passing the energy through brass and woodwinds and percussion until they all come together as one. Although the piece isn’t meant to tell a particular story, Bacewicz incorporated the Morse code rhythm for the letter V—dot-dot-dot-dash, a shorthand for Victory for the Allies during World War II—into the percussion and brass parts, a nod to her relentless hopefulness of war’s end.

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.



FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

B: March 1, 1810
Żelazowa Wola, Poland
D: October 17, 1849
Paris, France

Concerto No. 2 in
F minor for Piano and
Orchestra, Opus 21

PREMIERED: March 3, 1830

Frédéric Chopin’s extraordinary gifts were evident early. One of his teachers described him in two words in an end-of-term evaluation: “Musical genius.” His parents, however, were careful not to exploit the boy or to push him into a career as a prodigy. Chopin did not give an official public concert in Warsaw until March 1830, a few weeks after his 20th birthday. In the fall of 1829, knowing that occasion was coming, Chopin had set to work on a piece worthy of the event: a piano concerto.

"SUBTLE RAPTURE"

On March 3, 1830, a small orchestra crowded into the Chopin home in Warsaw as young Frédéric gave the premiere before invited friends. Two weeks later, on March 17, he played the public premiere at the National Theatre in Warsaw, and the reviews were rhapsodic. Wrote one critic just after the concert: "He plays with such certainty, so cleanly that his Concerto might be compared to the life of a just man: no ambiguity, nothing false....His music is full of expressive feeling and song, and puts the listener into a state of subtle rapture, bringing back to his memory all the happy moments he has known."

This work, however, did not become known as Chopin's First Piano Concerto. Later that year Chopin wrote another piano concerto, in E minor. That fall, on his way to Paris, he mislaid the orchestral parts of the F-minor concerto, and they had to be completely reconstructed. The E-minor concerto was published in 1833 as Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 1, and when the F-minor concerto finally appeared in 1836, it was listed as his Piano Concerto No. 2. These two are the only piano concertos he wrote.

A FOCUS ON THE PIANO

Chopin's predecessors Mozart and Beethoven had transformed the piano concerto into a great form, a symphonic argument in which soloist and orchestra were equal protagonists. Chopin might have respected such music, but it was not for him: he was interested, first and foremost, in the piano. In his concertos the musical interest lies in the piano part, and the orchestra functions only as a framework for the soloist. While Chopin can create a Romantic fullness of sound in the Concerto No. 2, he scores it for a smaller ensemble, essentially Mozart's orchestra increased by just one instrument, a trombone.

MAESTOSO. The Concerto No. 2 is in the conventional three movements. Chopin marks the first movement *Maestoso* (majestic), but the opening impulse is lyric, as the orchestra launches the concerto with a graceful falling idea that will shape much of the movement. With the entrance of the soloist, however, the orchestra retreats to the shade, and the pianist will dominate the remainder of the movement.

LARGHETTO. When Chopin wrote the second movement, he had, like many other teenagers, fallen in love, in this case with a young singer, Constantia Gladkowska. He wrote to his friend Titus Woyciechowski: "I have—perhaps to my misfortune—already found my ideal, which I worship faithfully and sincerely. Six months have elapsed, and I have not yet exchanged a syllable

with her of whom I dream every night. While my thoughts were with her I composed the *Adagio* of my concerto.” In ternary form, this movement has been compared to opera music, particularly to the music of Bellini, a great favorite of young Chopin. The quiet opening recalls *bel canto*, while the middle section grows more dramatic, as the piano declaims its animated song over rustling strings.

This movement has been much admired. Schumann exclaimed “What are ten editorial crowns compared with one such slow movement!” and Liszt said: “The whole of this piece is of a perfection almost ideal; its expression, now radiant with light, now full of tender pathos.”

ALLEGRO VIVACE. Solo piano leads off the concluding *Allegro vivace*, and Chopin marks its opening theme *semplice ma graziosamente* (simple but graceful). Some have heard folk tunes in this movement, but all the material appears to have been original with Chopin. A great fanfare from the horns leads to a properly spirited conclusion.

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

B: December 16, 1770
Bonn, Germany

D: March 26, 1827
Vienna, Austria

**Symphony No. 6 in F major, Opus 68,
*Pastoral***
PREMIERED:
December 22, 1808

— The Sixth Symphony is unique among Ludwig van Beethoven’s symphonies because it appears to be programmatic—instrumental music intended to evoke specific images or convey a narrative. Beethoven himself gave it the nickname *Pastoral* and further headed each movement with a descriptive title that seems to tell a story: the arrival in the country, impressions beside a brook, a peasants’ dance which is interrupted by a thunderstorm, and a concluding hymn of thanksgiving once the storm has passed.

Some have claimed that Romantic music begins with the *Pastoral* Symphony—they see it as a precursor of such examples of musical painting as Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*, Mendelssohn’s fairyland scenes and

Liszt's tone poems, while others have tried to stage this music, complete with characters, costumes and scenery. In a famous segment from Disney's *Fantasia*, the music plays atop a mythological backdrop complete with cupids, centaurs and other imaginary characters.

Beethoven would have been astonished. He had no use for program music or musical portraiture, which he considered cheap trickery. His Sixth Symphony is in classical symphonic forms throughout. Even its “extra” movement, the famous thunderstorm, can be understood as a brief transition between the scherzo and the rondo-finale. And while this symphony refers to something outside the music itself, Beethoven wanted it understood as “an expression of feelings rather than painting.”

THE SYMPHONY IN BRIEF

The first movement (“Cheerful impressions on arriving in the country”) is built on two completely relaxed themes; these do not offer the contrast that lies at the heart of sonata form, but instead create two complementary “Cheerful impressions.” The second movement (“Scene by the Brook”) is also in a sonata form built on two themes. Over murmuring lower strings, with their suggestion of bubbling water, the two themes sing gracefully. The movement concludes with three brief bird calls, which Beethoven names specifically in the score: nightingale (flute), quail (oboe) and cuckoo (clarinet). The scherzo (“Peasants’ merrymaking”) is a portrait of a rural festival; its vigorous trio echoes the heavy stamping of a peasant dance.

Just as the scherzo is about to repeat, it suddenly veers off in a new direction. Tremulous strings and distant murmurings lead to the wonderful storm. Gradually the storm moves off, and the music proceeds directly into the last movement, where solo clarinet and horn outline the tentative call of a shepherd’s pipe in the aftermath of the storm. Beethoven then magically transforms this call into his serene main theme, given out by the violins. If ever there has been music that deserved to be called radiant, it is this singing theme, which unfolds like a rainbow spread across the still-glistening heavens.

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

CHAMBER MUSIC IN THE HALL WITH BEHZOD ABDURAIMOV

SAT APR 5 2PM

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

Igor Stravinsky	Suite from <i>The Soldier's Tale</i> The Soldier's March The Soldier's Violin Pastorale Royal March The Little Concert Three Dances: Tango, Waltz, Ragtime The Devil's Dance The Great Chorale Triumphant March of the Devil <i>Rui Dui, violin</i> <i>Kyle Sanborn, bass</i> <i>Gabriel Campos Zamora, clarinet</i> <i>Fei Xie, bassoon</i> <i>Douglas C. Carlsen, trumpet</i> <i>R. Douglas Wright, trombone</i> <i>Kevin Watkins, percussion</i>	CA. 26'
Bowen York	Fantasia for Four Violas <i>Rebecca Albers, viola Lydia Grimes, viola</i> <i>Jude Park, viola Marlea Simpson, viola</i>	CA. 11'
I N T E R M I S S I O N		
Antonín Dvořák	Piano Trio No. 4 in E minor, Opus 90, <i>Dumky</i> Lento maestoso – Allegro, quasi doppio movimento Poco adagio – Vivace non troppo Andante – Vivace non troppo Andante moderato (Quasi tempo di marcia) Allegro Lento maestoso <i>Susie Park, violin</i> <i>Anthony Ross, cello</i> <i>Behzod Abduraimov, piano</i>	CA. 30'

* In remembrance

A profile of Behzod Abduraimov appears on page 38.

Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/musician for profiles of Minnesota Orchestra musicians performing in this afternoon's concert.

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Wed, Mar 18, 2026 • 7:30 PM
Thu, Mar 19, 2026 • 10:30 AM

Roderick Williams, *baritone*
Iain Burnside, *piano*
Thu, Nov 13, 2025 • 7:30 PM

Jordi Savall & Hespèrion XXI
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Thu, Apr 16, 2026 • 7:30 PM

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Sarah Hicks, conductor

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A profile of conductor Sarah Hicks appears on page 40.

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PHOTO Darrell Owens.

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Molly Turner, conductor and host

Rui Du, violin

Maria Dively, American Sign Language interpreter

SUN APR 13 2PM

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

Ferde Grofé	On the Trail, from <i>Grand Canyon Suite</i>	CA. 6'
Alexander Borodin	Selection from <i>In the Steppes of Central Asia</i>	CA. 5'
Benjamin Britten	Storm: Presto con fuoco, from <i>Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes</i>	CA. 5'
He Zhanhao/ Chen Gang	Selection from <i>The Butterfly Lovers</i> Violin Concerto <i>Rui Du, violin</i>	CA. 5'
Bedřich Smetana	Selection from <i>The Moldau</i> , No. 2 from <i>Má vlast</i> (My Homeland)	CA. 4'
George Gershwin	Selection from <i>An American in Paris</i>	CA. 4'
Aaron Copland	Selection from <i>Appalachian Spring</i>	CA. 3'

Conductor, soloist and interpreter profiles appear on pages 38, 39 and 41.

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Ingrid Fliter, piano

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THU MAY 15 11AM

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Chamber Music in the Hall with James Ehnes

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Thomas Søndergård, conductor

Kevin Puts, host and Composer Institute director

FRI APR 25 8PM

Kevin Puts	<i>Heartland</i>	CA. 7'
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Benjamin Webster	<i>Autumn Movement</i>	CA. 10'
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Elise Arancio	<i>Bite Your Tongue</i> for Orchestra and Tape	CA. 7'
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I N T E R M I S S I O N

CA. 20'

Soomin Kim	<i>star / ghost / mouth / sea</i> star ghost mouth sea	CA. 9'
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Andrew Faulkenberry	<i>portrait through a prism</i>	CA. 9'
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Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/moci for information about the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute, the program's history and notable alumni.



Profiles of the conductor and host appear on pages 8 and 40.

THANK YOU

The 2024-25 Classical season is presented by Ameriprise Financial.

The 2025 Minnesota Composer Institute includes a new partnership with Universal Music Publishing Classics & Screen and Ricordi New York as a part of the launch of their RicordiLab US Program, designed to support the careers of young composers.

This concert will be recorded for later broadcast on [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](http://YourClassicalMinnesotaPublicRadio.org).



KEVIN PUTS

B: January 3, 1972
St. Louis, Missouri

Heartland

PREMIERING: April 25, 2025

Although Kevin Puts hails from St. Louis, Missouri, the Twin Cities have loomed large in his award-winning career. Puts won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Music for his opera *Silent Night*, which was commissioned and premiered by Minnesota Opera, and in 2014 he was named director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute. The Orchestra commissioned his 2006 work *Sinfonia concertante* and has played seven of his orchestral pieces to date. This week bring the eighth: the world premiere of *Heartland*—a retooled version of Puts' work *Heartland Canons*, which was commissioned by the Des Moines Symphony and premiered by that ensemble on September 24, 2022.

Heartland is actually the third link in a chain of pieces that began with *Millennium Canons*, composed by Puts for the Boston Pops in 2001. “In both works, I adopt the ages-old practice of contrapuntal imitation to create active textures that dance along the top of broad, hymn-like melodies,” he explains about *Heartland Canons*, which he connects to his childhood experiences in Missouri and Michigan. “I live on the East Coast now, but the Midwest is still in my blood and very much a part of who I am. I believe this is reflected quite unmistakably in both the harmonic flavor of *Heartland Canons* and in its expansive phraseology.” The new iteration of the music is now titled simply *Heartland*.

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

Now that *Heartland* is complete, Puts is moving on to other major projects, including a violin concerto for Joshua Bell and a new piece to commemorate the reopening of St. Louis' Powell Hall in September. The latter work is based on Khalil Gibran's poetry collection *The Prophet* and will feature mezzo Joyce DiDonato along with a chorus and the St. Louis Symphony. His opera *Silent Night* continues to receive prominent performances, including new productions at Houston Grand Opera and the Metropolitan Opera in the next two seasons. A more extensive profile of Puts appears on page 40.

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



BENJAMIN WEBSTER

B: March 3, 1997
Wrentham, Massachusetts

Autumn Movement

PREMIERED:
December 8, 2022

Benjamin Webster's music explores the beauty and fragility of sound and gesture. His works construct large-scale musical narratives from simple materials, themselves often emergent from instrumental timbre and performance technique.

Webster's music has been performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Lyris Quartet, Yale Philharmonia, Indiana University Jacob's School Chamber Orchestra, Transient Canvas and Passepartout Duo, among others. It has been heard at the Bowdoin Music Festival, Yale School of Music's Norfolk New Music Workshop, Alba Music Festival, Oregon Bach Festival and Ciclo de Música Contemporánea de Oviedo. He holds degrees from the University of Miami and the University of Southern California, and he is currently a doctoral candidate at the Yale School of Music studying with Katherine Balch—who is a 2017 alumnus of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute.

THE COMPOSER'S NOTE

While not specifically about the season of the work's namesake, *Autumn Movement* is a piece that does ask questions about the concept of change. Personal change, natural change and societal change were all subjects that I was thinking about as I developed this piece. While it does not address any one of these directly, the materials and form of the work were shaped by my emotional reactions to a season of both internal (personal) and external (social and political) transformation. Trees and their longevity are an additional important image in the music, as I see the double bass and its prominent role throughout the work as being a sort of musical "trunk" out of which the materials of the piece branch off.

Autumn Movement received its world premiere performance on December 8, 2022, by the Yale Philharmonia in New Haven, Connecticut, with Samuel Hollister conducting.

PROGRAM NOTE BY BENJAMIN WEBSTER.



ELISE ARANCIO

B: September 16, 2000
Tucker, Georgia

Bite Your Tongue
for Orchestra and Tape
PREMIERING: April 25, 2025

Elise Arancio's musical language is driven by conversation. She is a lover of words, and much of her music draws inspiration from poetry and literature. Her orchestral and chamber works have been performed across the country and internationally by ensembles including the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Curtis Symphony Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of the USA and PRISM saxophone quartet, and in 2024 she received an American Academy of Arts and Letters Charles Ives Scholarship. She graduated with a bachelor of music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, and she is currently pursuing her master's degree at the Juilliard School as a recipient of a Kovner Fellowship.

THE COMPOSER'S NOTE

Bite Your Tongue illustrates an individual being silenced by both internal and external forces. Broken syllables and the fragments of the beginnings of words are projected in the pre-recorded track, which interrupts the orchestra's material that represents the collection of thoughts that are trying to break free. This piece attempts to illustrate the struggle that takes place as a voice attempts to articulate messages in the face of its suppression. The only words formed in the piece are "shudder" which forms into "shut her" as the orchestra aligns with the speaker in a final expression of urgency and frustration.

This poem "for we who keep our lives in our mouths" by Nayyirah Waheed serves as an epitaph.

my whole life

i have

ate my tongue.

ate my tongue.

ate my tongue.

i am so full of my tongue

you would think speaking is easy. but it is not

—for we who keep our lives in our mouths.

Although tonight's performance of *Bite Your Tongue* is the first in a live concert setting, the music was first heard in its entirety in spring 2021—at a time when large audiences could not gather safely due to the COVID-19 pandemic—as part of an online documentary recorded by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra with Jerry Hou conducting.

PROGRAM NOTE BY ELISE ARANCIO.



SOOMIN KIM

B: August 24, 1995
Anyang, South Korea

star / ghost / mouth /

sea

PREMIERED:

December 9, 2021

Composer and singer Soomin Kim has garnered numerous major awards and opportunities in recent years. She received Morton Gould Young Composer Awards from the ASCAP Foundation in 2019, 2020 and 2022. In 2024 she won the University of Florida call for scores by women composers. During the 2023-24 season, she was a Sounding Ground composer in residence with the Minnesota-based new music ensemble Zeitgeist. In 2023 she was the guest artist at the annual Art Festival at NLCS Jeju in Seogwipo, South Korea. In 2022 her orchestration of Helen Hagan's Piano Concerto in C minor was premiered by pianist and musicologist Samantha Ege and the Yale Philharmonia under direction of Peter Oundjian. In 2018 she was selected to write for the Cleveland Chamber Symphony as part of their Young & Emerging Composers Project.

Kim's music has been featured at the Ravinia Festival, Sydney Festival, Liquid Music, Aspen Music Festival, Bowdoin International Music Festival and Norfolk New Music Workshop, among many other institutions. She is currently a visiting assistant professor of composition at her alma mater, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Born in 1995 in Anyang, South Korea, she grew up in Uljeongbu, South Korea.

THE COMPOSER'S NOTE

In the beginning of Franny Choi's book of poetry *Soft Science*, the author lists four keywords—star, ghost, mouth and sea—that she uses repeatedly

throughout her work, in which she explores the themes of identity, technology, gender and violence, among others. These keywords are used not literally, but metaphorically; “star,” for example, stands for “bright, ancient wound I follow home”; “sea” means “cold ancestor; bloodless womb.”

star / ghost / mouth / sea is a set of four miniatures for orchestra that explore these four metaphors. The miniatures are not literal translations, but my interpretation of Franny’s words. Her poems not only inspired me but comforted me in times when I struggled to make sense of what it means to look like me, to sound like me, and to be me in this world, in this country.

The premiere of *star / ghost / mouth / sea* was given on December 9, 2021, by the Yale Philharmonia in New Haven, Connecticut, with Ryan Tani conducting.

PROGRAM NOTE BY SOOMIN KIM.



ANDREW
FAULKENBERRY

B: 1999
New Brunswick, New Jersey

portrait through a prism

PREMIERE: October 19, 2022

New Jersey native Andrew Faulkenberry is a composer of emotionally evocative works that pose questions about the human experience. His music addresses topics such as philosophy, politics, religion and art itself. Pulitzer Prize-winning composer William Bolcom offered praise for his music’s “mature tone...[and] considerable spiritual depth.”

Faulkenberry’s pieces have been performed and recorded by artists including the Albany Symphony Orchestra, International Contemporary Ensemble, Parker Quartet, Brevard Music Center Orchestra, Peabody Symphony Orchestra and Rutgers Wind Ensemble. His works have also been read by groups such as the Albany Symphony and the JACK Quartet.

Faulkenberry received a bachelor of music degree in composition from Rutgers University in 2021, where he studied with Robert Livingston

Aldridge and graduated summa cum laude. He then earned a master's in composition from Peabody Conservatory in 2023, where he studied with Kevin Puts. Currently, he teaches private lessons in Baltimore, Maryland, and works with the publisher Just a Theory Press.

THE COMPOSER'S NOTE

My piece *portrait through a prism* is inspired by the image of light through a prism—how the original image is destroyed, but in the process is transfigured into a beautiful kaleidoscope of color. We are much like that light—impermanent, bound to be destroyed. This fact inspires many contradictory emotions in me: powerlessness, fear, awe, reverence, transcendence. *portrait through a prism* is my meditation on these feelings.

The Peabody Symphony Orchestra performed the world premiere of *portrait through a prism* on October 19, 2022, under the direction of Chi-Yuan Lin.

PROGRAM NOTE BY ANDREW FAULKENBERRY.



BEHZOD ABDURAIMOV, PIANO

Behzod Abduraimov's performances combine an immense depth of musicality with phenomenal technique and breathtaking delicacy. He performs with many of the world's leading orchestras and conductors, and his critically acclaimed recordings have set a new standard for the piano repertoire. The 2024-25 season sees him performing with the Bamberger Symphoniker, Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, NDR Radiophilharmonie, Atlanta Symphony, Detroit Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Singapore Symphony and Tokyo Philharmonic. His recordings have won numerous international awards, and his newest recital album is *Shadows of My Ancestors*. Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Abduraimov began the piano at age 5 as a pupil of Tamara Popovich at Uspensky State Central Lyceum in Tashkent. In 2009 he won first prize at the London International Piano Competition. He is artist in residence at the International Center for Music at Park University. More: harrisonparrott.com, behzodabduraimov.com.



MARIA DIVELY, AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

Maria Dively has been an American Sign Language interpreter for nine years in Minnesota and California. A NIC/Trilingual Interpreter, she is a graduate of North Central University in Minneapolis. She was born and raised in Puerto Rico and has been involved personally and professionally in the Deaf community since college. From a young age, she has been involved with music as a woodwind player, percussionist and steel drums player, among other roles.

**RUI DU,**
VIOLIN

Rui Du, the Minnesota Orchestra's assistant concertmaster since 2015, has been featured at Orchestra Hall twice as soloist—in Chen Gang and He Zhanhao's *The Butterfly Lovers* Violin Concerto and Alyssa Weinberg's *in somnis*. He was previously a member of the Baltimore Symphony and concertmaster of the Annapolis Symphony, among other positions, and has also been a regular guest concertmaster of China's Qingdao Symphony Orchestra. With his wife Hanna Hyunjung Kim, principal pianist of the New York City Ballet Orchestra, he co-founded Ensemble Muzén, a mixed chamber ensemble featuring renowned musicians from the Twin Cities. As an enthusiastic educator, he has given numerous masterclasses and lectures to conservatories and festivals throughout the U.S. and China. Born and raised in Heifei in China's Anhui Province, he studied at the Shanghai Conservatory, National University of Singapore's Yong Siew Toh Conservatory and Peabody Conservatory. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.

**MARTA GARDOLIŃSKA,**
CONDUCTOR

Marta Gardolińska is music director of Opéra National de Lorraine and principal guest conductor of Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona. She came to international attention in 2018 as Young Conductor in Association at the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, which led to a Dudamel Fellowship with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and an invitation to be second conductor to Gustavo Dudamel for its Grammy-winning live Deutsche Grammophon recording of Ives' Symphony No. 4. She then returned to make her debut with the Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl. This season she debuts with the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Toronto Symphony and Minnesota Orchestra and joins the Stavanger Symphony, RAI Torino Orchestra and Hallé Orchestra. She will also conduct *Eugene Onegin* at the Opéra National de Lorraine. Recent highlights include debuts with the London Symphony, Swedish Radio Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony and Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse. More: askonasholt.com, martagardolinska.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 former Orchestra violist Sam Bergman and leading original productions with collaborators such as PaviElle French, Kevin Kling, Peter Rothstein, Robert Elhai and The Moving Company. She has been an artistic leader in concerts featuring artists from Minnesota's popular music scene, including shows with Nur-D, The New Standards, Cloud Cult and Dessa—with whom Hicks and the Orchestra made a live-in-concert recording on Doomtree Records and will collaborate again in November 2025. Next season she will lead film music concerts of *The Goonies*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, among other performances. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



KEVIN PUTS, HOST AND COMPOSER INSTITUTE DIRECTOR

The music of Pulitzer Prize- and Grammy-winning composer Kevin Puts has been commissioned and performed by leading organizations around the world such as the Metropolitan Opera, Philadelphia Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, Opera Philadelphia and Minnesota Opera. This year marks the tenth anniversary of his first year directing the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute. Recent performances include the premiere of his fourth opera, *The Hours*, by the Philadelphia Orchestra, and subsequent stagings by the Metropolitan Opera as well as the West Coast premiere of *The Brightness of Light*, featuring Renée Fleming and Rod Gilfry with the Los Angeles Opera Orchestra. His many accolades include the 2023 Grammy for Best Contemporary Classical Composition for his orchestral work *Contact* and the 2012 Pulitzer for his opera *Silent Night*. He is a member of the Peabody Institute's composition faculty and is serving this year as Distinguished Visiting Composer at the Juilliard School. More: kevinputs.com.



MOLLY TURNER, CONDUCTOR AND HOST

American conductor Molly Turner is an exceptional talent who directs with fervor and imagination. She is the current conducting fellow of New World Symphony as well as a 2024-25 Dudamel Fellow with Los Angeles Philharmonic. In 2024-25 Turner twice serves as cover conductor for New York Philharmonic. Her recent highlights include concerts with the Orchestre de Paris, San Francisco Symphony's SoundBox Series, Gstaad Festival Orchestra, Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn, Juilliard Orchestra, Dallas Opera Orchestra and Tanglewood's Festival of Contemporary Music. In 2019 she was the youngest conductor invited for a residency at the Dallas Opera's Hart Institute for Women Conductors. She is also the first recipient of the Judy Rodin Fellowship for an Outstanding Woman Musician. Turner has conducted contemporary works by Wynton Marsalis, Jessie Montgomery and Caroline Shaw, among others. She is a composer herself and recently led her orchestral work *Open Doors*. More: harrisonparrott.com, mollyxiturner.com.

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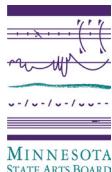
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