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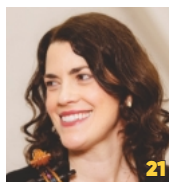
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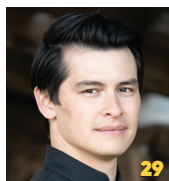
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- 31** Parker, Schumann and Tchaikovsky
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- 37** Rhythm in Motion
Relaxed Family Concert
- 39** Chamber Music in the Hall
Summer at Orchestra Hall
- 41** Grand Piano Spectacular
Summer at Orchestra Hall
- 42** Parker, Grieg and Dvořák
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IN THIS ISSUE

- 2** Minnesota Orchestral Association
- 4** Minnesota Orchestra
- 6** Minnesota Orchestra Staff and Volunteers
- 8** Profile: Creative Partner Jon Kimura Parker
- 10** Orchestra News
- 48** Profiles: The Performers
- 57** Thank You, Donors!

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ABOUT THE COVER: Manny Laureano, who retires this summer after 44 years as the Minnesota Orchestra's principal trumpet, makes a special appearance at the Grand Piano Spectacular on July 31.
Photo: Tony Nelson.

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— Pianist Jon Kimura Parker is known for his charisma, enthusiasm and dynamic performances. He has performed regularly at the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London's South Bank, Sydney Opera House and Beijing Concert Hall. Since 2019 he has been the Minnesota Orchestra's creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall, serving each summer as a creative force, host, performer and personality; this summer the Orchestra celebrates his final season in that role. 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 2024–25 season included performances of five piano concertos and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra, among other ensembles in the U.S., Canada and Italy, as well as appearances on chamber music series and festivals in California, Georgia, Texas, Alberta, British Columbia and Rancho la Puerta, Mexico.

A collaborator in a wide variety of styles, Parker has performed with Doc Severinsen, Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, Stewart Copeland, Pablo Ziegler, Sanjaya Malakar, Dossa, Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham and Luca Pisaroni, among many others. A committed educator, he is professor of piano and the Walter Kris Hubert chair of keyboard at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His students



Josh Kohanek

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.

Parker's discography includes a dozen albums, most recently *Fantasy*, built around William Hirtz's *Wizard of Oz Fantasy*. His YouTube video for Tonebase on Rachmaninoff's Paganini Rhapsody has over 600,000 views, and his *Whole Notes* series, featuring performances of great composers, is available on Amazon Prime Video.

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. More: jonkimuraparker.com.

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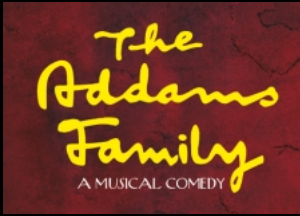
— This summer marks the end of an era at Orchestra Hall as Manny Laureano—who has held the principal trumpet position longer than anyone in Minnesota Orchestra history—retires after a remarkable 44-year career in one of the ensemble's most visible positions. Yet that's just one part of his musical story, which began with an East Harlem upbringing and continued with studies at Juilliard, a career launch as the Seattle Symphony's principal trumpet, countless lives touched as a conductor of youth and adult orchestras, and even prominent appearances on national TV performing *The Star-Spangled Banner* at professional sporting events.

"I am one lucky guy to be able to have been a part of this Minnesota experience for 44 years," reflects Laureano, who turns 70 this summer. "It seemed like a natural time to call it a day and have someone new continue the traditions." That "someone new" is James Vaughn, who in September will take up the principal trumpet position.

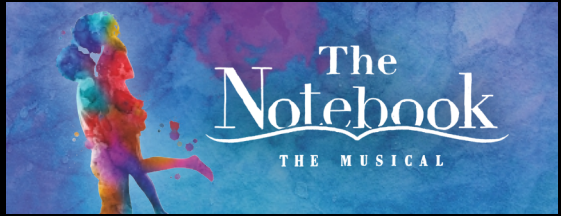
Out of his thousands of Minnesota Orchestra concerts, Laureano names a few standouts. "Playing the late Stephen Paulus' Concerto for Two Trumpets alongside Doc Severinsen was a career highlight. Imagine having a musical hero as a kid and then getting to play a concerto with him?" His other fond memories include performing Beethoven's Ninth under Klaus Tennstedt in 1982—still recalling "incredulity at how he was able to make the Orchestra sound"—and a mid-performance surprise while playing his own cadenza in the Hummel Trumpet Concerto early in his tenure. "In the middle of the cadenza, after I hit and sustained an E over high C, the audience broke out into spontaneous applause! I looked at Sir Neville [Marriner] and just had to wait until the applause was over before I could continue."

In 1986 the Orchestra visited the home territory of Laureano's parents, leading to another favorite memory. "My most memorable

[Continued on page 12](#)



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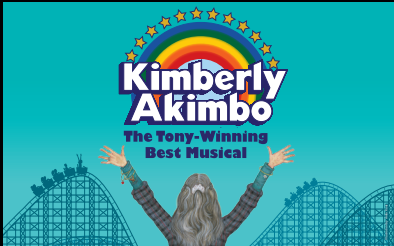


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CELEBRATING MANNY LAUREANO'S 44-YEAR TENURE

Continued from page 10

tour concert was playing Richard Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra* in Puerto Rico with David Zinman," he says. "When David motioned to me to take a solo bow, the ovation was like nothing I'd ever experienced up to that point. Very humbling and poignant for me, being of Puerto Rican heritage."

Although audiences witness Laureano most often in his spot at the head of his section's riser at Orchestra Hall, many local musicians are also familiar seeing him in a different spot—standing on the conductor's podium with baton in hand. For 32 years, he and his wife Claudette were co-artistic directors of Minnesota Youth Symphonies (MYS), and he now serves as music director of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra, among other ensembles he has led. He was also an assistant conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra during the 2005–06 season.

"Conducting was of interest to me since I was in junior high school, and the desire to lead people through great music or even lighter fare has been always present," Laureano says of his complementary career. "The logical step was to pass on the enthusiasm and love I have for great symphonic repertoire to young musicians who were also interested. There's no feeling quite like watching a bunch of young people play the opening bars to

Beethoven's Fifth for the first time and observing how their eyes would widen as they played."

Several MYS alumni have gone on to musical careers, including Minnesota Orchestra violinists Sarah Grimes, Hanna Landrum and Nora Scheller, as well as violist Lydia Grimes. "I have 'graduates' who play in Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco...everywhere," he notes. "I feel like a proud Papa every time I hear of their musical successes."

Laureano expresses equal admiration for the Minnesota Orchestra's home audiences. "Their applause and recognition give us something my colleagues and I look forward to receiving after working hard during the week and then presenting the results at our concerts," he says. "Playing without those faithful people is just a rehearsal. Those folks are essential to completing the circle of communication music creates. They follow us, grow older with us, celebrate our triumphs and mourn our losses with us. We are a family held tight by sound and what it does to the heart."

Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/stories for an extended interview with Laureano. His story is also told in the new biography *Agradecido, A Life of Gratitude: The Manny Laureano Story* by Christina M. Cavitt and Geni Cavitt—available now at online booksellers and in the Orchestra Hall lobby.

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IN MEMORY: CELLIST AREK TESARCZYK

The Minnesota Orchestra family mourned in May when Orchestra cellist Arek Tesarczyk passed away at age 59 after an illness that he faced with great dignity. Across two decades with the Orchestra, he was known among colleagues for his wry wit, kind nature and gorgeous cello sound.

Tesarczyk joined the Orchestra in 2004 after serving as principal cello of the Winnipeg Symphony for 11 years. He made his Minnesota Orchestra solo debut in 2006, won a McKnight Fellowship in 2008, and in 2010 gave the world premiere of Rautavaara's Cello Concerto No. 2, *Towards the Horizon*, jumping in when Truls Mørk bowed out due to illness. He joined the Orchestra on tours to Europe, South Africa, Cuba and across Minnesota. Throughout his career he presented a full range of concerto repertoire, including works by Dvořák, Elgar, Saint-Saëns and Haydn.

Born in Poland, Tesarczyk loved chamber music and won three consecutive first prizes in Poland's National Cello and Chamber Music competitions before graduating from Katowice's Karol Szymanowski School of Music. In the U.S., he earned degrees from the Peabody Conservatory and subsequently played in chamber music festivals in Europe, Canada and the U.S. He and his wife, pianist Claudia Chen, were frequent recital partners.

Respectful and gentlemanly, Tesarczyk was an unfailingly supportive



Joel Larson

colleague who made a point of warmly welcoming new musicians into the Orchestra. Principal Cello Anthony Ross describes him as “the rock of the cello section who created a lush pillow of sound that enhanced the whole section.”

“Arek had a wonderful sense of humor and never took himself too seriously,” adds trombone player Kari Sundström. “His name translates to ‘Brave and Strong,’ and that’s how I remember him, brave and strong.”

The Orchestra family shares its profound condolences with Claudia and children Viktor and Katia. Speaking at a June concert dedication to Tesarczyk, Ross summarized: “music and family were Arek’s great loves.”



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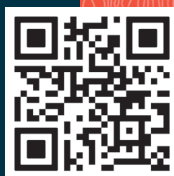
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SALUTING OUR STAFF: MICHAEL BLACK RETIRES

— In July the Minnesota Orchestra celebrates its longest-tenured full-time staff member, Michael Black—manager of development operations—on his well-earned retirement after 41 years of service.

Black, who began working for the organization in 1984 as assistant gift accountant, has held many roles over the decades. Among them are managing corporate sponsor events, working on several major software and technology updates, onboarding many new staff members and even appearing on the Orchestra Hall stage twice, dressed in full historical costume behind the musicians during summer chamber music performances. Most recently he has led efforts to keep Orchestra donor data infrastructure running smoothly—a crucial backbone of the Orchestra’s fundraising work.

“I remain in awe of the generous support of our donors and the tremendous dedication of the staff, musicians and Board members in support of great music,” Black reflects. “I’m proud and humbled to know that I played a part in raising money for over 40 years—for the annual Guaranty Fund and Symphony Ball, endowment funds, the renovation of the Hall, and education programs, tours, commissions and fellowships.”

Orchestra connections have also been part of Black’s personal life, as he



recalls attending a party decades ago and seeing an Orchestra colleague, the late John Swanson, arrive with his friend Steve Norquist. “I figured that friendship with John was a pre-qualifier as a good guy to know,” says Black. “Steve and I hit it off and have been together for 32 years.” Black’s handiwork as a LEGO hobbyist can be seen in the Orchestra Hall lobby: a LEGO model of the Hall, created from scratch.

Rob Nygaard, interim vice president of advancement, reflects: “Michael has always embodied what it means to be a true colleague: good-humored, flexible, hardworking, dedicated, and willing to go the extra mile for other team members and the organization. He has added immeasurably to the Development team, and we all wish him lots of joy in his next chapter.”



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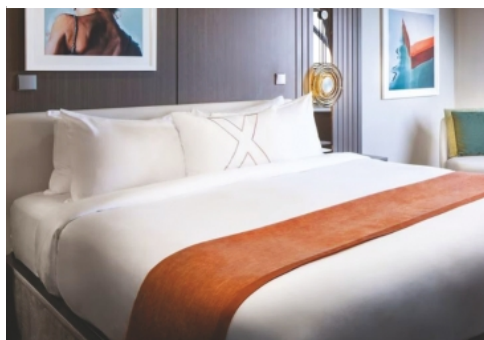
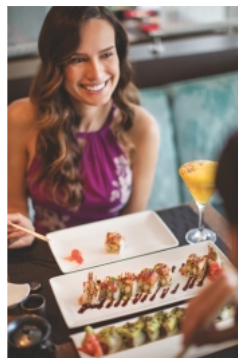
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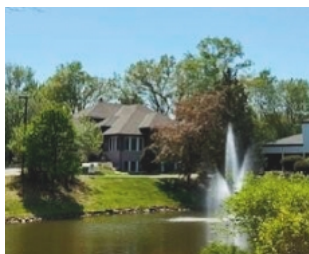
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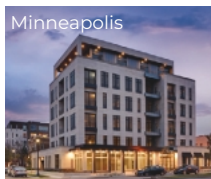
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BEETHOVEN AND BRAHMS

Kensho Watanabe, conductor
Cecilia Belcher, violin

THU JUL 10 11AM | FRI JUL 11 8PM | SAT JUL 12 7PM

Carl Maria von Weber	Overture to <i>Der Freischütz</i>	CA. 10'
Ludwig van Beethoven	Romance No. 2 in F major for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 50 <i>Cecilia Belcher, violin</i>	CA. 9'
Ludwig van Beethoven	Romance No. 1 in G major for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 40 <i>Cecilia Belcher, violin</i>	CA. 7'
I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20'
Johannes Brahms	Symphony No. 2 in D major, Opus 73 Allegro non troppo Adagio non troppo Allegretto grazioso (Quasi andantino) Allegro con spirito	CA. 39'



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**CARL MARIA
VON WEBER****B:** November 18, 1786
Eutin, Germany**D:** June 5, 1826
London, England**Overture to
*Der Freischütz*****PREMIERED:**
June 18, 1821
(complete opera)

ONE-MINUTE NOTE *Weber's Der Freischütz revolutionized German Romantic opera in a milestone tale infused with folk elements and supernatural drama. Its overture, packed with tunes from the opera, embodies the timeless struggle between good and evil.*

— To be related to Mozart, if only by marriage, was as much of a prize two centuries ago as it would be now. Carl Maria von Weber, the celebrated German composer, conductor and pianist, was the son of a substantial musical amateur, Franz Anton von Weber, who was the uncle of Mozart's wife, Constanze Weber. Thus it happened that the composers of the two stage works that won the cause for Romantic opera—*The Magic Flute* in 1791, and *Der Freischütz* exactly 30 years later—were first cousins by marriage.

A MILESTONE OPERA

In November 1800, the 14-year-old Weber's first opera, *Das Waldmädchen*, was given its premiere in Freiburg. As his career progressed across the next two decades, Weber became the director of opera houses in Prague and Dresden. In 1817 he approached the German lawyer and litterateur Friedrich Kind with the idea to create a libretto based on a German Romantic subject. They agreed on the legend of *Der Freischütz*—"The Free Marksman"—which was geared perfectly to the Romantic penchant for the magical. *Der Freischütz* was first brought to the stage in Berlin on June 18, 1821, with the composer conducting.

Weber's milestone opera caught on like wildfire, and ultimately struck a blow against the Italian opera that had dominated German-speaking countries, setting the country's Romantic opera on its steady course to Richard Wagner. All the major European opera houses soon produced *Der Freischütz*, which incorporated elements of folk music as no European composer since Mozart had done. But Weber, in his glorification of his people's dances and songs, took the folk element much further, thereby becoming a pioneer of the nationalism of the Romantic era.

THE STORY AND THE OVERTURE

Der Freischütz tells of Max, a marksman who sells his soul to the Wild Huntsman Samiel in exchange for bullets guaranteed not to miss their target. When the bargainers meet by moonlight at the Wolf's Glen, in a scene famous for its Romantic shudder, Max is allowed to peer into the abyss of evil. It remains for Agathe, a heroine of the purest style, to save her beloved from the snares of Satan.

Except for the stirring horn theme that evokes the woodland landscape of the story, the overture consists entirely of melodies from the opera. But this is no medley, for the tunes are woven into an impeccable first-movement symphonic form. More than abstract musical motifs, they are symbols of the conflict of good and evil that is the essence of the plot. At least half of the opera is played in dark shadows, as the overture portends.

The mystery and terror that engulf the tale are already struck in the gloomy colors of the introduction: low strings, the clarinet in its deepest register, mournful tones from the bassoons and a hollow drum roll. In contrast with this scary imagery, the folk-like call of the horns signals the carefree life of the forester and huntsman. Agathe's radiant song, which soars over all obstacles at the close of the opera, brings the overture to a glowing conclusion, promising a happy ending.

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

B: December 17, 1770
Bonn, Germany

D: March 26, 1827
Vienna, Austria

Romances No. 1 and 2 for Violin and Orchestra, Opuses 40 and 50

COMPOSED:
ca. 1801 (Romance No. 1),
1798 (Romance No. 2)

ONE-MINUTE NOTE *Beethoven's Romances highlight the violin's lyrical beauty. Today's soloist, the Minnesota Orchestra's own Cecilia Belcher, loves "how both Romances are gentle and flowing, and each has a middle section which reveals more excited energy before returning to the familiar sweet melody."*

— Beethoven's piano playing may have been the talk of Vienna in the early years of his career, but he was also a considerably accomplished violinist. Like the young Mozart, he had been badgered by his father from

the age of 5 to spend more time practicing the violin, but his passion for the piano superseded string playing. He would produce only one violin concerto compared to his five for the piano.

Beethoven's ten sonatas for violin, like the gems of his chamber music, reveal his preoccupation with everything the violin could do. Above all, he recognized that it is the nature of the instrument to sing. That is the essence of the two Romances for Violin, works of undiluted beauty. Composed around the turn of the century, probably 1798-1801—though the exact dates are unclear—these pieces focus on the compelling lyricism of the violin, precisely the quality that makes his Violin Concerto stand out from all others.

The title Romance is virtually synonymous with the word Lied—in other words, these Romances are pure instrumental song from beginning to end. They also remind us that great music can be simple. No master of Western classical music better attests to this than Mozart, but Beethoven likewise understood the eloquence of simplicity.

THE SOLOIST'S VIEW

Cecilia Belcher, the Minnesota Orchestra's assistant principal second violin, joined the ensemble more than a decade ago and is making her debut as soloist with the Orchestra this week. "I'm so proud to be a member of this Orchestra, and it is an absolute treat to be surrounded by my amazing colleagues as I take on this different role as soloist for a week," she says. "Since joining this Orchestra, it has been such an important and meaningful 10-plus years of my life, both musically and personally. In this decade I've started a family, which has opened up a whole new perspective on life and music for me. I believe that so many of someone's life experiences add to what can be said musically, and I'm excited to be able to share those experiences through this music."

Speaking on the Beethoven Romances—which she performed last year with the St. Paul Civic Symphony—Belcher offers some guideposts for the audience. "I love how both Romances are gentle and flowing, and each has a middle section which reveals more excited energy before returning to the familiar sweet melody," she says. "The F-major melody in the Second Romance returns throughout the piece in such comforting ways—like seeing a special friend after missing them for some time."

The Orchestra has performed Beethoven's music extensively during Belcher's tenure in Minnesota—particularly the symphonies and piano concertos—but this week's performances of the Romances are

the ensemble's first since 2002. "No matter how many times I play a piece written by Beethoven, there's always something new to hear and something new to explore," Belcher comments. "There is a very real and grounded quality about Beethoven's music, and I think it's those aspects that keep me inspired and always wanting to come back for more."

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN AND CARL SCHROEDER.



JOHANNES BRAHMS

B: May 7, 1833
Hamburg, Germany
D: April 3, 1897
Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Opus 73

PREMIERED:
December 30, 1877

ONE-MINUTE NOTE *Brahms' Second Symphony contrasts his stormy First with warmth, lyricism and pastoral charm, unfolding melodic richness and subtle unity across four expressive, beautifully orchestrated movements.*

— "Suffused with the sunshine and the warm winds playing on the water"—these are the words Austrian musicologist Richard Specht used a century ago in describing Johannes Brahms' Second Symphony. British scholar John Horton responded a few decades later, calling it "Bathed in a mellow glow of instrumental sound of which Brahms alone had the secret."

After the grandeur and severity of Brahms' First Symphony, the idyllic, pastoral Second, with its wealth of singable melodies, won immediate popular appeal. Whereas Brahms had toiled for 20 years over his First Symphony, the Second was written in the space of a mere three months. In its pastoral quality, many listeners find a parallel to Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, which, like Brahms' Second, followed a serious and heroic symphony in the key of C minor.

THE MUSIC: PASTORAL AND MELODY-RICH

ALLEGRO NON TROPPO. From the very first notes, the listener is caught up in the symphony's gentle, relaxed mood. The initial two bars also provide the basic motivic seeds of the entire movement, as well as for much of the material in the subsequent movements. The three-note motto in the cellos

and basses and the following arpeggio in the horns are heard repeatedly in many guises—slowed down, sped up, played upside down, buried in the texture or featured prominently. All the principal themes of the movement are derived from these short melodic building blocks. The second theme is one of Brahms' most glorious, sung by violas and cellos as only these instruments can sing.

ADAGIO NON TROPPO. The second movement has a darker hue and more profound sentiment. The form is basically an A-B-A structure, with a more agitated central section in the minor mode. Throughout the movement, the listener's attention is continually focused as much on the densely saturated textures as on the themes.

ALLEGRETTO GRAZIOSO (QUASI ANDANTINO). The genial, relaxed character returns in the third movement, not a scherzo as Beethoven would have written, but a sort of lyrical intermezzo, harking back to the gracious 18th-century minuet. The forces are reduced almost to chamber orchestra levels, and woodwinds often brought to the fore. This movement proved so popular at its premiere that it had to be repeated.

ALLEGRO CON SPIRITO. The forthright and optimistic finale derives heavily from the melodies of the first movement, though as usual with Brahms, this material is so cleverly disguised that one scarcely notices. The coda calls for special comment. Brahms seldom used the trombones and tuba, yet on occasion he wrote stunning passages for them. One such moment occurs in the Second Symphony's coda, a passage as thrilling for audiences as it is for trombonists, every one of whom looks forward to a role in bringing this joyous work to its blazing D-major conclusion.

PROGRAM NOTE BY ROBERT MARKOW.

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Written by STEVE KLOVES

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Starring

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RUPERT GRINT as Ron Weasley

EMMA WATSON as Hermione Granger

JOHN CLEESE as Nearly Headless Nick

ROBBIE COLTRANE as Rubeus Hagrid

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RICHARD GRIFFITHS as Vernon Dursley

RICHARD HARRIS as Albus Dumbledore

IAN HART as Quirinus Quirrell

JOHN HURT as Garrick Ollivander

ALAN RICKMAN as Severus Snape

FIONA SHAW as Petunia Dursley

MAGGIE SMITH as Minerva McGonagall

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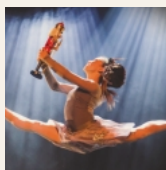
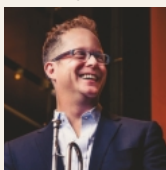
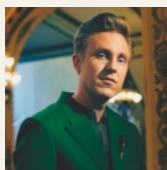
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Samuel Lee, conductor
Jon Kimura Parker, piano

FRI JUL 25 8PM

Felix Mendelssohn *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* CA. 13'

Robert Schumann Concerto in A minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 54 CA. 31'
Allegro affettuoso
Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso
Allegro vivace
Jon Kimura Parker, piano

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

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky Suite from *Swan Lake*, Opus 20a CA. 31'
Scène
Valse
Dance of the Swans
Scène
Hungarian Dance: Czardas
Finale



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**FELIX MENDELSSOHN**

B: February 3, 1809
Hamburg, Germany

D: November 4, 1847
Leipzig, Germany

***Calm Sea and
Prosperous Voyage***

PREMIERED:
December 1, 1832

ONE-MINUTE NOTE *Felix Mendelssohn's Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage blends poetic inspiration, youthful brilliance and innovation—bridging Goethe's words and music in a vivid orchestral journey.*

— In his brief 38 years of life, Felix Mendelssohn made contributions to the musical world that had a profound effect on German society and far beyond. Among his most lasting contributions are almost single-handedly re-popularizing the works of Bach and Handel, as well as Beethoven's late symphonies, and elevating the reputation of German Lied and oratorio.

While Mendelssohn was socially German through and through, not once commenting on his Jewish familial background and never using traditional Jewish music in his compositions, Hitler and the Nazi regime tarnished Mendelssohn's reputation and symbolically burned his scores because of his heritage. Mendelssohn's legacy was preserved not by German efforts, but rather by British music scholars and enthusiasts. The composer's ten visits to England solidified this fruitful symbiotic relationship, which is largely responsible for his beloved status in the classical musical landscape today.

Showing both musical and intellectual curiosity at a young age, Mendelssohn began piano lessons at 4 and composition lessons at 8. One of the most profound moments of his childhood came when his music teacher, Carl Friedrich Zelter, took the 12-year-old to visit the writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. During this extended visit, Mendelssohn played piano between four and eight hours a day for Goethe and various guests. He also presented some of his own compositions as well as works by his sister Fanny, whom Goethe considered an equally gifted musician. This meeting marked the beginning of a long relationship between Mendelssohn and Goethe, lasting until the latter's passing in 1832.

A COLORFUL JOURNEY

Mendelssohn's orchestral overture *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* is an early example of a tone poem—and in this regard, it was quite ahead of its time. The piece uses two poems by Goethe as its thematic foundation. These contrasting poems were not published as companion texts; however,

both Beethoven and Mendelssohn paired the poems in their eponymous compositions. Where Beethoven's cantata presents the text in a grand vocal setting, Mendelssohn's overture is solely musical, evoking the journey of the two poems in a colorful sonic journey. Additionally, both of these poems were quite popular during the time Mendelssohn's piece was premiered; thusly audiences would have easily been able to follow Mendelssohn's musical realization of the text.

The overture opens with an adagio, rich with sustained music representing the beautiful-yet-dangerous calm seas. Why dangerous? Without wind, a sea vessel cannot move. Eventually, the wind arrives, starting the prosperous journey. Mendelssohn depicts this wind through an introduction and merry themes in the winds and horns. The *joie de vivre* continues to the end of the overture, where a rousing orchestral celebration of the arrival—punctuated by the timpani—settles down into the soft and safe landing on the shore, with music reminiscent of the introductory adagio.

A COMPLEX PATH

Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage had a complicated history. After beginning work on the piece in 1828 and previewing it at home later that year, Mendelssohn planned on sending the original manuscript to a Swedish friend, but it was stolen. The composer used this theft as an opportunity to improve the piece over the next two years, and a new version was rehearsed in 1830. The piece received its official public premiere in Berlin on December 1, 1832, nine months after Goethe's death. More revisions were made before the piece was published in 1835, the year that the final version was performed with Mendelssohn conducting—with a baton, which was a relatively new practice at that time in Leipzig.

PROGRAM NOTE BY ANTHONY R. GREEN.



ROBERT SCHUMANN

B: June 8, 1810
Zwickau, Germany

D: July 29, 1856
Bonn, Germany

Concerto in A minor for
Piano and Orchestra,
Opus 54
PREMIERED:
December 4, 1845

ONE-MINUTE NOTE *Solo and orchestral parts are intimately entwined in this concerto. At the core of the opening movement is a tender discourse between piano and clarinet; the understated Intermezzo leads to a celebratory finale.*

Robert Schumann's Piano Concerto had one of the most difficult births of any great work in this genre. The composer had already made three attempts to write a piano concerto when, in 1841, he brought forth a single-movement work he called *Phantasie*, which was destined to become the first movement of the Piano Concerto in A minor. The exuberance, freshness and poetry of this *Phantasie* all reflect Schumann's great personal happiness in life with his new wife, Clara. Its deeply lyrical impulses may also be seen as an extension of his outpouring of songs, well over a hundred, the previous year.

EXPANDING THE MUSIC

But publishers were not interested in printing this single-movement work. Flashy concertos were in vogue; subtle, poetic Fantasies were not. Four years later Schumann wrote two additional movements, and the world premiere of the three-movement work took place on December 4, 1845. Clara, a superb pianist, was of course the soloist, and the Schumanns' friend Ferdinand Hiller, to whom the concerto was dedicated, conducted.

ALLEGRO AFFETUOSO. Schumann dispenses with the traditional orchestral exposition found in classical concertos. Instead there is a peremptory "shout" from the full orchestra, followed by a cascade of chords from the soloist. A wistful, plaintive theme from the solo oboe—as tenderly lyrical and poetic an idea as any Schumann ever conceived—is taken up immediately by the piano, indicating at this early stage the close relationship that will prevail between soloist and orchestra.

One can find "sonata form" in the movement, but the *feel* is more that of an extended fantasia, or rhapsody, in which a single theme is worked out in a succession of moods, colors and textures. Where the second theme of a traditional sonata-form movement would have occurred, Schumann reuses his beautiful first theme in the "proper" key of C major for a movement in A minor. The piano initiates the C-major episode, but thereafter it is the clarinet, and later the oboe, which figures prominently while the piano assumes more of an accompanying role. A magical moment arrives when the theme becomes an even gentler, dreamy reverie in the key of A-flat, as the intimate dialogue between piano and clarinet takes a new turn. The cadenza ruminates further on the theme, while the coda assumes the mood of a breathless march to still another re-incarnation of the same theme.

INTERMEZZO: ANDANTINO GRAZIOSO. Schumann also used the first movement's pervasive theme as the basis of the following two movements. The coy, playful, four-note idea that figures prominently in the opening section of

the *Intermezzo* is really no more than a cleverly disguised fragment of the familiar first-movement theme. One of the most ravishing passages in the whole concerto is this movement's central episode, featuring cellos in a theme of soaring lyricism and romantic passion.

ALLEGRO VIVACE. A short bridge passage contains the embryo of the finale's main theme, which also is generated by the fertile theme from the first movement. The recurring second theme, with its tricky syncopations, is heard by some as a peg-legged march, whose rhythmic ambiguity is created through a quick two-step set against a slower pulse of three beats. A lengthy coda brings the concerto to a radiantly happy conclusion.

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



**PETER ILYICH
TCHAIKOVSKY**

B: May 7, 1840
Votkinsk, Russia

D: November 6, 1893
St. Petersburg, Russia

**Suite from *Swan Lake*,
Opus 20a**

PREMIERED:
March 4, 1877 (complete
ballet)

ONE-MINUTE NOTE *In Swan Lake, Prince Siegfried triumphs over an evil sorcerer, rescuing his beloved Odette and other maidens who had been transformed into swans. This suite includes the famous Waltz marking the Prince's birthday celebration, the delicate Dance of the Swans and a Hungarian Czardas, among other evocative movements.*

Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* is such a favorite of audiences that it comes as something of a surprise to learn that the ballet was an abject failure at its premiere. Tchaikovsky, then a young composition teacher at the Moscow Conservatory, had been commissioned by the Imperial Theater to write music for a production of this new ballet at the Bolshoi, and he worked on the score from August 1875 until April 1876. The first performance, on March 4, 1877, was a disaster: it had poor scenery, costumes and dancing, and—worst of all—it had a conductor so alarmed by Tchaikovsky's striking music that he cut large sections of it, substituting “safe” music by other composers in their place.

The reviews were scathing, one critic declaring: “I must say that I have never seen a poorer presentation on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre. The costumes, decor and machines did not hide in the least the emptiness of

the dances.” The same critic conceded that the music showed “the hand of the true master,” but that did Tchaikovsky little good: he never heard the music again and died believing that it would always be a failure. To the contrary: a revival in January 1895—14 months after the composer’s death—launched *Swan Lake* on its way to the acclaim it enjoys today.

A STORY OF ETERNAL CHARM

Swan Lake tells a story of eternal charm: Prince Siegfried discovers a flock of beautiful white swans on the lake in a forest. Their queen Odette tells him that they are all maidens who have been transformed by the evil sorcerer Von Rothbart. Though deceived by Von Rothbart and his daughter Odile (the black swan) during the climactic ball in Act III, Siegfried eventually triumphs over the sorcerer and is united with Odette.

Because Tchaikovsky never arranged the music from *Swan Lake* into orchestral suites, conductors are free to make their own selections. Tonight’s performance features six excerpts, drawn from all four acts of the ballet and performed out of their chronological order.

First comes an excerpt from Act II. The *Scene* that opens this act, with its plangent and wistful oboe solo, has become some of the most characteristic music of this ballet, and it sets the complex mood here perfectly. The famous *Waltz* from Act I is danced as part of the celebration of Prince Siegfried’s birthday. This is followed by Act II’s *Dance of the Swans*, during which Siegfried and his fellow hunters discover the swans on the forest lake. The *Scene* that comes next in both the ballet and this suite, for Odette and the Prince, begins with a long harp passage, followed by a deservedly famous duet for solo violin and harp. We next hear one of the favorite national dances from Act III, the Hungarian *Czardas* that builds to a fiery ending, before concluding with music from the very end of Act IV. In this *Finale*, the prince enters and the ballet comes to its grand conclusion.

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

RELAXED FAMILY CONCERT

RHYTHM IN MOTION

Samuel Lee, conductor | Christina Baldwin, host
Los Alegres Bailadores, Rebecca Moran Cusick, artistic director
Maria Dively, American Sign Language interpreter

SAT JUL 26 2PM

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

Johann Strauss, Jr.	Overture to <i>Die Fledermaus</i>	CA. 4'
Antonín Dvořák	Slavonic Dance in G minor, Opus 46, No. 8	CA. 3'
Manuel de Falla	<i>Ritual Fire Dance</i> , from <i>El amor brujo</i>	CA. 4'
José Pablo Moncayo	<i>Huapango</i> <i>Los Alegres Bailadores</i>	CA. 8'
Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky	Selections from <i>Swan Lake</i> Suite Scène Valse	CA. 10'
Alberto Ginastera	<i>Final Dance (Malambo)</i> , from <i>Estancia</i>	CA. 4'

Profiles of today’s conductor, host and American Sign Language interpreter, as well as a profile and roster of Los Alegres Bailadores, appear on pages 48, 49, 52 and 55.

PRE- AND POST-CONCERT

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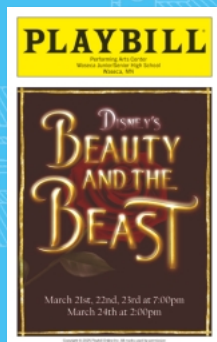
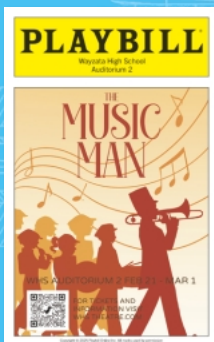
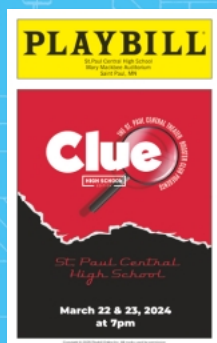
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CHAMBER MUSIC IN THE HALL

WITH JON KIMURA PARKER

SAT JUL 26 7PM

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

Lera Auerbach

Trio No. 1 for Violin, Cello and Piano, Opus 28
Prelude
Andante lamentoso
Presto
*Milana Elise Reiche, violin
Pitnarry Shin, cello
Jon Kimura Parker, piano*

CA. 13'

Rebecca Clarke

Dumka
*Sophia Mockler, violin
Marlea Simpson, viola
Susan Billmeyer, piano*

CA. 11'

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

CA. 20'

Johannes Brahms

Quintet in F minor for Piano and Strings,
Opus 34
Allegro non troppo
Andante, un poco adagio
Scherzo and Trio: Allegro
Finale: Poco sostenuto – Allegro non troppo
*Nora Scheller, violin
James Garlick, violin
Lydia Grimes, viola
Lukas Goodman, cello
Jon Kimura Parker, piano*

CA. 40'

A profile of Jon Kimura Parker appears on page 8.
Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/musicians for profiles of Minnesota Orchestra musicians performing in this evening’s concert.
* In remembrance.

M N — O

2025/26 Season

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Joyce DiDonato, mezzo

Season Opening
Weeks with
Søndergård,
DiDonato
and Ross
SEP 18–19, 26–27

Luke Skywalker,
Jedi-in-training



Star Wars: The
Empire Strikes
Back in Concert
SEP 30, OCT 3–5



Leonidas Kavakos,
conductor and violin

Kavakos,
Mozart and
Shostakovich
OCT 10–11

The Goonies
in Concert
OCT 24–25



Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra

Jazz at Lincoln
Center Orchestra
with Wynton
Marsalis
NOV 1

Thomas Søndergård, conductor

Søndergård
Conducts
Brahms Requiem
NOV 21–22



GRAND PIANO SPECTACULAR

Jon Kimura Parker, piano | Artem Kuznetsov, piano
Ayane Nakajima, piano | Chelsea de Souza, piano

Special guest: Manny Laureano, trumpet

THU JUL 31 7PM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart/ arr. Adam Stern	Overture to <i>The Magic Flute</i>	CA. 7'
Sergei Prokofiev/ arr. Stern	<i>Romance</i> , from <i>Lieutenant Kijé</i>	CA. 5'
Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky/ arr. Stern	Overture to Act III of <i>Swan Lake</i>	CA. 3'
Maurice Ravel/ arr. Ravel	<i>La Valse</i> Artem Kuznetsov Ayane Nakajima	CA. 12'
Georges Bizet/ arr. Stern	<i>Minuet and Farandole</i> , from <i>L'Arlésienne</i> Suite No. 2	CA. 8'

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

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart/ arr. Stern	Overture to <i>The Impresario</i>	CA. 4'
John Adams	<i>Hallelujah Junction</i> Chelsea de Souza Jon Kimura Parker	CA. 16'
Giacomo Puccini/ arr. Stern	<i>Nessun dorma</i> , from <i>Turandot</i> Manny Laureano	CA. 4'
Kevin Olson	<i>A Scott Joplin Rag Rhapsody</i> , based on themes by Scott Joplin	CA. 7'
Aaron Copland/ arr. Stern	<i>Hoe-Down</i> , from <i>Four Dance Episodes</i> from <i>Rodeo</i>	CA. 4'

'Romance' from *Lieutenant Kijé*, Op. 60
Composed by Sergey Prokofiev
© 1936 Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd
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'Hoe-Down' from *Four Dance Episodes* from *Rodeo*
Composed by Aaron Copland
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Profiles of today's performers appear on pages 8, 51, 52 and 53.
Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/pre for details about pre-concert activities.

PARKER, GRIEG AND DVOŘÁK

Akiko Fujimoto, conductor
Jon Kimura Parker, piano

FRI AUG 1 8PM

Johannes Brahms

Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Opus 56a
Chorale St. Antoni: Andante
Variation I: Poco più animato
Variation II: Più vivace
Variation III: Con moto
Variation IV: Andante con moto
Variation V: Vivace
Variation VI: Vivace
Variation VII: Grazioso
Variation VIII: Presto non troppo
Finale: Andante

CA. 19'

Edvard Grieg

Concerto in A minor for Piano
and Orchestra, Opus 16
Allegro molto moderato
Adagio
Allegro moderato molto e marcato
[No pause before the final movement.]
Jon Kimura Parker, piano

CA. 30'

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

CA. 20'

Antonin Dvořák

Symphony No. 8 in G major, Opus 88
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Allegretto grazioso
Allegro ma non troppo

CA. 36'



Scan the QR code for instrumentation details
on this month's concerts.

Conductor and soloist profiles appear on pages 8 and 49.
Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/pre for details about pre-concert activities.

THANK YOU

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

This concert airs live on [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#).

**JOHANNES BRAHMS**

B: May 7, 1833
Hamburg, Germany

D: April 3, 1897
Vienna, Austria

**Variations on a Theme
by Haydn, Opus 56a**

PREMIERED:
November 2, 1873

ONE-MINUTE NOTE *Brahms' Haydn Variations transforms a simple melody into a masterful showcase of elegance, invention and homage across eight variations and a finale overflowing with yet more ideas.*

Johannes Brahms spent the summer of 1873 in a place he loved: the village of Tutzing, a resort town on the western shore of the Starnberger See south of Munich. He was still at work on his First Symphony, that most imposing of Western classical forms (with its inevitable comparison to Beethoven)—which had occupied him since he was in his 20s. He was still plagued by self-doubt. And at Tutzing he planned to write a brief work that would give him practice composing for orchestra.

A THEME BY HAYDN, OR...?

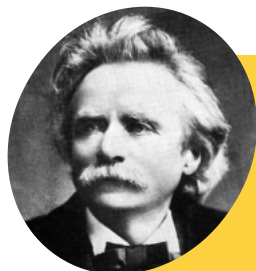
Wonderful touches in music may be regarded as experiments that worked. For example, Brahms clearly remembered the sound of the eighth variation when he composed the finale of his Third Symphony nine years later. And for his first statement of the theme, Brahms tried to preserve the slightly archaic sound of the original *Feldpartita*, replacing the long-obsolete serpent (an ancient bass wind instrument in the shape of an S) with the contrabassoon and pizzicato lower strings.

The structure of the Haydn Variations, the name we continue to use, is simplicity itself: a theme, eight variations, and a finale that itself is a further series of variations. The original theme falls first into two five-bar phrases, followed by a series of phrases of irregular length, and the variations stretch it ingeniously.

The first variation (*Poco più animato*) features long string lines over pedal-points in the low winds; the second (*Più vivace*) opens with an orchestral explosion based on the first three notes of the theme; the third (*Con moto*) moves smoothly on a steady flow of eighth-notes, while the somber fourth (*Andante con moto*) slips into B-flat minor and has the theme proceed gravely along a slow 3/8 meter. The next two variations (both marked *Vivace*) are fast: the fifth opens with chattering woodwinds, while the sixth offers horn fanfares and some exciting writing for the entire orchestra. The

seventh variation (*Grazioso*) dances elegantly on the lazily-dotted rhythms of a *siciliano*, while the eighth (*Presto non troppo*) drives steadily forward on the sound of muted strings and solo winds.

For the finale, Brahms derives a five-measure theme from the original theme and uses it as a ground bass, which repeats 17 times as Brahms spins out a series of further variations in the upper voices. All builds to a brilliant close, full of swirling runs—and one final, powerful restatement of the original theme.



EDVARD GRIEG

B: June 15, 1843
Bergen, Norway

D: September 4, 1907
Bergen, Norway

Concerto in A minor for
Piano and Orchestra,
Opus 16

PREMIERED:
April 3, 1869

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

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

A "SPLENDID" SUCCESS

Several years after the premiere, the Griegs traveled to Rome, where they visited Franz Liszt in his villa. Liszt sat down at his piano and sight-read this difficult concerto from Grieg's manuscript. Grieg reported that while Liszt played the first movement too fast, his reading of the cadenza was magnificent, and the older master was so taken with the music at one point that he got up and strolled away from the piano with his arms upraised,

“literally roaring out the theme.” Best of all, Liszt recognized the way Grieg had amended one of the principal themes of the finale when it comes back for a triumphant reappearance at the end. He shouted out: “G-natural! G-natural! Not G-sharp! Splendid!” Liszt played that ending one more time, then told Grieg: “Keep on, I tell you. You have what is needed, and don’t let them frighten you.”

Liszt’s judgment was sound: the Grieg Piano Concerto has become one of the most popular ever written. Its combination of good tunes alternating with stormy, dramatic gestures, all stitched together with brilliant writing for piano, has made it virtually irresistible to audiences. In a way, this music has become a victim of its own success: by the middle of the last century it had become almost too popular, but over the past generation or so it has appeared much less often in concert halls. Which makes a fresh performance all the more welcome.

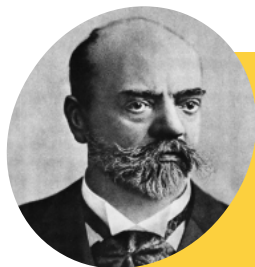
FROM A GRAND OPENING TO A FOLK FINALE

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

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

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

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



ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

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

D: May 1, 1904
Prague, Bohemia
(now Czech Republic)

**Symphony No. 8 in
G major, Opus 88**

PREMIERED:
February 2, 1890

ONE-MINUTE NOTE *Dvořák's Eighth is full of luminous melodies and unexpected harmonic shifts. The second movement alludes to the funeral march of Beethoven's Eroica Symphony, but lighter elements prevail in a whirlwind finale that is delightfully Czech.*

— In the summer of 1889, Antonin Dvořák took his family to their summer retreat at Vysoka in the countryside south of Prague. There, amid the rolling fields and forests of his homeland, he could escape the pressures of the concert season, enjoy the company of his wife and children, and indulge one of his favorite pastimes: raising pigeons.

"MELODIES POUR OUT OF ME"

Dvořák also composed a great deal that summer. On August 10 he completed his Piano Quartet in E-flat major, writing to a friend that "melodies pour out of me," and lamenting: "If only one could write them down straight away! But there—I must go slowly, only keep pace with my hand, and may God give the rest."

A few weeks later, on August 25, he made the first sketches for a new symphony, and once again the melodies poured out. The orchestration was completed on November 8, and Dvořák himself led the triumphant premiere of his Eighth Symphony in Prague on February 2, 1890.

HARMONIC SURPRISES AND VARIATIONS

ALLEGRO CON BRIO. "Symphony in G major," says the title page, but the beginning of this work is firmly in the "wrong" key of G minor. It is

also a gorgeous beginning, with the cellos singing their long wistful melody. But—another surprise—this theme will have little to do with the actual progress of the first movement. We soon arrive at what appears to be the true first subject, a flute theme of an almost pastoral innocence, and suddenly we have slipped into G major. There follows a wealth of themes; one observer counted six separate ideas in the opening minutes of this symphony. Dvořák develops these across the span of the opening movement, and the cellos' somber opening melody returns at key moments, beginning the development quietly and later blazed out triumphantly by the trumpets at the stirring climax.

ADAGIO. The two middle movements are just as free. The *Adagio* is apparently in C minor, but it begins in E-flat major with dark and halting string phrases; the middle section flows easily on a relaxed woodwind tune in C major in which some have heard the sound of cimbalom and a village band. A violin solo leads to a surprisingly violent climax before the movement falls away to its quiet close.

ALLEGRETTO GRAZIOSO. The third movement opens with a soaring waltz in G minor that dances nimbly along its 3/8 meter; the charming center section also whirls in 3/8 time, but here its dotted rhythms produce a distinctive lilt. The movement concludes with nice surprises: a blistering coda, *Molto vivace*, whips along a variant of the lilting center section tune, but Dvořák has now transformed its triple meter into a propulsive 2/4. The movement rushes on chattering woodwinds right up to its close, where it concludes suddenly with a hushed string chord.

ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO. The finale is a variation movement—sort of. It opens with a stinging trumpet fanfare, an afterthought on Dvořák's part, added after the rest of the movement was complete. Cellos announce the noble central theme (itself derived from the flute theme of the first movement), and a series of variations follows, including a spirited episode for solo flute. But suddenly the variations vanish: Dvořák throws in a Turkish march full of rhythmic energy, a completely separate episode that rises to a great climax based on the ringing trumpet fanfare from the opening. Gradually things calm down, and the variations resume as if this turbulent storm had never blown through. Near the end comes lovely writing for strings, and a raucous, joyous coda—a final variation of the main theme—propels this symphony to its rousing close.

PROGRAM NOTES BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



CHRISTINA BALDWIN,
HOST

Christina Baldwin is a director, writer, adapter, producer, performer and frequent collaborator with the Minnesota Orchestra as a soloist, actor and recording artist. An advocate of new work, she develops new plays, musical theater and opera with the likes of the Ojai Playwrights Conference, The Playwrights' Center, Nautilus Music-Theater and The Moving Company. A longtime collaborator with the Tony Award-winning Theatre de la Jeune Lune, including serving as artistic director, she co-adapted and performed the title role in their critically acclaimed touring production of *Carmen*. She also writes, adapts and directs operas. In recent years she has been the librettist for *In the Midst of Things* with An Opera Theatre and directed the virtual work *Everything Comes to a Head* with Lyric Opera of the North and the Decameron Opera Coalition, which was selected to be a part of the Performing Arts COVID-19 Response Collection in the Library of Congress. More: christina-baldwin.com.



CECILIA BELCHER,
VIOLIN

Violinist Cecilia Belcher joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 2014 and was named assistant principal second violin in 2017. She was recently a featured soloist with the Minnesota Bach Ensemble, of which she is concertmaster. She performed with the St. Louis Symphony from 2008 to 2014 and also performed often with the Houston Symphony and the New York City chamber orchestra The Knights in New York and throughout Germany. She has been principal second violin of ROCO in Houston and, as concertmaster, has led the New World Symphony, Reno Philharmonic, Aspen Music Festival Opera Orchestra and Mississippi Valley Orchestra. She has traveled the world for many festivals and performances, including Aspen, Tanglewood and Verbier. A St. Louis native, she began violin studies at age 3 and was a student of the renowned Suzuki pedagogue Winifred Crock. She earned degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music studying with Paul Kantor and the Shepherd School of Music with Kathleen Winkler. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



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 drum player, among other roles.



AKIKO FUJIMOTO,
CONDUCTOR

Akiko Fujimoto is music director of the Mid-Texas Symphony, where she has led a period of unprecedented growth since her appointment in 2019. Known for evoking dynamic performances, she has earned praise for her “powerhouse performance” from the *San Francisco Chronicle*. From 2017 to 2020, she served as associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra, working closely with Osmo Vänskä. She also served as a cover conductor at the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Esa-Pekka Salonen, Zubin Mehta and Susanna Mälkki. Fujimoto has guest conducted orchestras across the country, including the San Francisco Symphony, National Symphony, Houston Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Charlotte Symphony, Hawaii Symphony and Florida Orchestra. Prior to her time in Minnesota, she held titled conducting positions with the San Antonio Symphony and Virginia Symphony. Born in Japan, she holds degrees from Stanford University, the Eastman School of Music and Boston University. More: williamreinert.com, akikofujimoto.com.



NORMAN HUYNH, CONDUCTOR

American conductor Norman Huynh has attracted significant acclaim not just for his natural musicality and technical command, but for his dynamic presence, creative programming, and highly sought-after abilities in connecting with new audiences. Music director of the Bozeman Symphony Orchestra since 2020, his past and future guest appearances include engagements with the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Mobile Symphony Orchestra, Oregon Symphony, Portland Symphony, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and the Britt Music & Arts Festival. Huynh's prowess as an insightful collaborative conductor includes concerts conducting not only renowned stars of the world of classical music, but throughout the genres of R&B, hip-hop and pop. These include violinists Itzhak Perlman and Augustin Hadelich; bassist Edgar Meyer; guitarist Pablo Sáinz Villegas;

composers Kevin Puts, Andy Akiho and Philip Glass; singer-songwriters Smokey Robinson and Gladys Knight; rappers, musicians and actors Leslie Odom Jr., Wyclef Jean and Nas; indie and folk artist Gregory Alan Isakov; and pop groups such as Pink Martini and Boyz II Men. Huynh has received considerable acclaim for his work conducting performances of live film soundtracks. A proud first-generation Asian-American, Huynh's passion for engaging new audiences reflects his own entry point to classical music as a 12-year-old "band geek" trombonist in Alabama. The euphonium player turned maestro continues to find excitement in exploring new ways to create these same gateways for others. In 2015, Huynh and the Portland (Maine) Symphony Orchestra earned the Yale Distinguished Music Educator Award, awarded "in recognition of innovative approaches to music education." More: normanconductor.com.



ARTEM KUZNETSOV,
PIANO

A native of Novopokrovskoye, Russia, pianist Artem Kuznetsov has been praised for his virtuosity, lyricism and electrifying stage presence as both a concert soloist and chamber musician. He has won first prizes in more than 15 international piano competitions, including the Santa Cecilia International Competition (Portugal), Blanca Uribe International Piano Competition (Colombia) and Roma International Piano Competition (Italy). His upcoming engagements span more than ten countries across Europe, Asia and the Americas. He has been featured on major media outlets such as Texas Public Radio, Seattle's King FM, Medici TV and Euronews Dubai. Deeply committed to outreach and education, he regularly performs for underserved communities and leads events for young musicians. For his contributions to the arts, he was honored by Texas State Senator Brandon Creighton and named Emissary of the Muses for San Antonio by Mayor Ron Nirenberg. More: artemkuznetsovpiano.com.



MANNY LAUREANO,
TRUMPET

Manny Laureano, who retires from the Minnesota Orchestra this summer after a record-setting 44-year tenure as principal trumpet, began his career as the Seattle Symphony Orchestra's principal trumpet for four seasons. He has performed solos on all the Minnesota Orchestra's concert series and served as an assistant conductor during the 2005-06 season. In 1983 he performed the American premiere of the Wildgans Concerto for Trumpet with Leonard Slatkin conducting, and in 2003 he premiered Stephen Paulus' Concerto for Two Trumpets and Orchestra, which was written for him and Doc Severinsen. He has commissioned and performed several pieces for trumpet and orchestra, including works by Michael Gilbertson and Reinaldo Moya. Laureano, who currently serves as music director of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra, also led Minnesota Youth Symphonies for 32 years as co-artistic director with his wife Claudette. Turn to page 10 for a feature on Laureano commemorating his retirement. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



SAMUEL LEE,
CONDUCTOR

Samuel Lee is the associate conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the 2024 winner of the prestigious Malko Competition for Young Conductors in Copenhagen. As a result of his success at that Competition, he will have conducting contracts with 24 leading international symphony orchestras and a three-year period with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra's chief conductor Fabio Luisi as a personal mentor. He was previously awarded first prize at the BMI International Conducting Competition in Bucharest and the International Conducting Competition in Taipei. An avid promoter of contemporary music, he has conducted premieres of orchestral and ballet works by Bryce Dessner, Giuseppe Gallo-Balma and Marc Migó, and was a conducting fellow with the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in 2021 and 2022. He has performed as a violist with several orchestras worldwide, and from 2009 to 2017 was the violist of the Novus String Quartet. More: harrisonparrott.com.



AYANE NAKAJIMA,
PIANO

Japanese-American pianist Ayane Nakajima has garnered recognition as both a soloist and chamber musician. She has appeared in major venues such as Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, New World Center, and Steinway Hall in both New York and London. Next season she will make her German recital debut with performances in Bayreuth and Fulda. She is a prize-winner of the Pianale, YoungArts, International Keyboard Odysiad and Young Texas Artists competitions, and is a member of Talent Unlimited and the Keyboard Charitable Trust. A devoted song pianist and chamber musician, she won the top prize at the Young Musicians' Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center competition, as well as the pianist prizes at the AESS Patricia Routledge National English Song Competition and the RCM Brooks Van der Pump English Song Competition. She is pursuing her master's degree at London's Royal College of Music with Danny Driver. More: ayanenakajima.com.



CHELSEA DE SOUZA,
PIANO

Indian pianist Chelsea de Souza is a Steinway Young Artist internationally acclaimed for her dynamic artistry and thought-provoking recital programming. A four-time All-India Piano Competition winner, she brings together a diverse range of musical influences from Western and Indian classical to jazz in her versatile, genre-defying artistry. Recent performance highlights include DACAMERA's Beethoven for All series; a live improvisation recital-experiment combining EEG brain interfacing with performance; and an artist residency on the 2024 *Performance Today* cruise with host Fred Child. She is the co-founder of Houston Music Festival. An enthusiastic improviser, she is an advocate for the practice, conducting her doctoral research at Rice University on the topic. She is currently Mitchell Center Scholar in Residence in Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, teaching classes in improvisation and music of the Indian diaspora and curating interdisciplinary performances. More: chelseadesouza.com.



KENSHO WATANABE,
CONDUCTOR

Japanese-American conductor Kensho Watanabe is acclaimed for his dynamic musicality, thoughtful interpretations and engaging presence on the podium. In the 2025–26 season, he will debut with Houston Grand Opera, leading Kevin Puts' *Silent Night*, following his widely praised Metropolitan Opera debut with Puts' *The Hours*. His other projects this season include debuts with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and Florida Orchestra, and returns to Orchestre Metropolitan and Opéra de Montréal for *Don Giovanni*. His 2024–25 season included a return to the Met to conduct *La Bohème*, a debut at Tokyo's Suntory Hall with the Tokyo Philharmonic, and first appearances with both the Calgary Philharmonic and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, as well as a return to the Minnesota Orchestra after leading the ensemble's Listening Project concerts in both 2022 and 2023. Currently based in Paris, he is also an accomplished violinist. More: askonasholt.com, kenshowatanabe.com.



JOHN WILLIAMS, COMPOSER

In a career spanning more than six decades, John Williams has become one of America's most accomplished and successful composers for film and for the concert stage, and he remains one of our nation's most distinguished and contributive musical voices. He has composed the music and served as music director for more than 100 films, including all nine *Star Wars* films, the first three *Harry Potter* films, *Superman*, *JFK*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, *Far and Away*, *The Accidental Tourist*, *Home Alone* and *The Book Thief*. His 50-year artistic partnership with director Steven Spielberg has resulted in many of Hollywood's most acclaimed and successful films, including *Schindler's List*, *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, *Jaws*, *Jurassic Park*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the *Indiana Jones* films, *Munich*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Adventures of Tintin*, *War Horse*, *Lincoln*, *The BFG*, *The Post* and *The Fabelmans*. His contributions to television music include scores for more than 200 television films for the groundbreaking, early anthology series *Alcoa Theatre*, *Kraft Television*

Theatre, *Chrysler Theatre* and *Playhouse 90*, as well as themes for *NBC Nightly News* ("The Mission"), NBC's *Meet the Press* and the PBS arts showcase *Great Performances*. He also composed themes for the 1984, 1988 and 1996 Summer Olympic Games and the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

He has received five Academy Awards and 53 Oscar nominations, making him the Academy's most-nominated living person and the second-most nominated person in the history of the Oscars. He has received seven British Academy Awards (BAFTA), 25 Grammys, four Golden Globes, five Emmys, and numerous gold and platinum records. In 2003, he received the Olympic Order (the IOC's highest honor) for his contributions to the Olympic movement. He received the prestigious Kennedy Center Honors in December of 2004. In 2009, Williams was inducted into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, and he received the National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists by the U.S. Government. In 2016, he received the 44th Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute—the first time in their history that this honor was bestowed upon a composer. In 2020, he received Spain's Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts as well as the Gold Medal from the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society in the UK, and in 2022 he was awarded an honorary knighthood of the British Empire as one of the final awards approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In

January 1980, Williams was named 19th music director of the Boston Pops Orchestra, succeeding the legendary Arthur Fiedler. He currently holds the title of Boston Pops Laureate Conductor which he assumed following his retirement in December 1993 after 14 highly successful seasons. He also holds the title of Artist-in-Residence at Tanglewood.

Williams has composed numerous works for the concert stage, among them two symphonies, and concertos commissioned by several of the world's leading orchestras, including a cello concerto for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a bassoon concerto for the New York Philharmonic, a trumpet concerto for the Cleveland Orchestra and a horn concerto for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 2009, the Boston Symphony premiered his concerto for harp and orchestra entitled *On Willows and Birches*, and in the same year, Williams composed and arranged *Air and Simple Gifts* especially for the first inaugural ceremony of President Barack Obama. In 2021, Williams premiered his second violin concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood along with soloist Anne-Sophie Mutter, for whom he composed the work.

LOS ALEGRES BAILADORES REBECCA MORAN CUSICK, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Los Alegres Bailadores is a Mexican folkloric dance ensemble based on the West Side of Saint Paul. Under the artistic direction of Rebecca Moran Cusick, this company of nearly 100 dancers—ages 3 to adult—celebrates Mexico's rich traditions through vibrant costumes, intricate choreography and authentic musical arrangements. For over four decades, it has presented regional dance styles—from lively foot-stomping rhythms of Jalisco to beautiful sones of Veracruz—across the Twin Cities and Minnesota. Committed to preserving and sharing Mexican cultural heritage, the group fosters community engagement, intergenerational learning and cross-cultural appreciation. More: losalegresbailadores.com.

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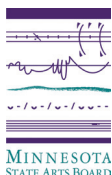
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CABARET

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music by **JOHN KANDER** lyrics by **FRED EBB**

directed by **JOSEPH HAJ**

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