

NOVEMBER 2025

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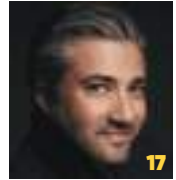


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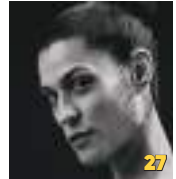
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- 39** Søndergård Conducts Brahms Requiem
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ABOUT THE COVER: Music Director Thomas Søndergård, whose first album with the Minnesota Orchestra, featuring works of Thomas Adès, is released in November. Photo: Darrell Owens.

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NOVEMBER 2025

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Saturday, January 17 - 7:30 PM

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Minnetonka

Sunday, January 18 - 3:00 PM

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PROFILE

THOMAS SØNDERGÅRD

Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who this fall begins his third 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. Highlights of his 2025–26 season in Minnesota include opera-in-concert performances of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, a festival of music from Nordic countries and his first Listening Project concert. In November the Pentatone label will release the Orchestra's first album under his direction, featuring works of Thomas Adès including the Violin Concerto with soloist Leila Josefowicz.

Since 2018 Søndergård has been music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO). He previously 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 at home and on tour in both Europe and China, he appears as guest conductor with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Danish National Symphony, Finnish Radio Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic and Barcelona Symphony.

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.

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NEW CD: SØNDERGÅRD CONDUCTS ADÈS

— The Minnesota Orchestra is set to launch a new chapter in its long recording history with the November 14 release of its first album made under the direction of Music Director Thomas Søndergård—a CD featuring two works by Thomas Adès recorded live in concert in September 2024. Released on the PENTATONE label, the disc includes the premiere recording of Adès' *The Exterminating Angel* Symphony and, with soloist Leila Josefowicz, his Violin Concerto. After the Orchestra's concerts on November 14 and 22, Søndergård will sign copies of the CD in the Orchestra Hall lobby.

Adès is among the most successful composers of our time, having written three operas that have been staged across the globe. He won a Grammy for a recording of *The Tempest* and



was the youngest recipient of the Grawemeyer Award. In 1997, the Minnesota Orchestra became the first professional American orchestra to perform his music. The new CD will be available starting November 14 in the Orchestra Hall lobby and at pentatonemusic.com, and through online music streaming services.

SAVE THE DATE: SYMPHONY BALL 2026

— Mark your calendars now for the Minnesota Orchestra's jazz-themed 2026 Symphony Ball—on Saturday, May 2, 2026. Chaired by Walter Tambor and Barry Berg, the Orchestra's 70th annual gala is titled "And All That Jazz" and features dinner, auctions, live performances, dancing and more, all while raising funds to support the Orchestra's artistic and education programs.

Symphony Ball attendees will be inspired by the heartbeat of the Jazz

Age and enjoy a night where music electrifies the soul. The evening will be a celebration of rhythm, resilience, raw emotion and beats that won't let you sit still.

Tickets go on sale in January for this can't-miss event that will be more than a gala; it will be a tribute to the soul and spirit that stirs within us all. Watch future issues of *Showcase* for more on the upcoming Ball!

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IN REMEMBRANCE: KATHY CUNNINGHAM

— In early September the Minnesota Orchestra family mourned the passing of Life Director Kathy Cunningham—who was connected to the Orchestra across five decades of extraordinary service—at the age of 96. Kathy first engaged with the Minnesota Orchestra as a member of WAMSO (now FRIENDS of the Minnesota Orchestra) and served a two-year term as its president. Elected to the Orchestra's Board in 1980, she was named a Life Director in 2003 for her outstanding commitment to the organization.



Kathy Cunningham with Music Director Thomas Søndergård

Kathy and her late husband, Charlie, were the quiet force behind many signature Orchestra projects. Committed concertgoers, they generously supported the Orchestra in three international tours. They contributed to the 2014 Orchestra Hall renovation, and the Cunningham Green Room bears their name. They also funded the commissioning of new music and the launch of the TV/livestream series *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*, offering a valuable lifeline for the Orchestra in the pandemic. Due to the generosity and foresight of Kathy, the Orchestra's historic materials are organized and preserved in the University of Minnesota's Performing Arts Archive.

The Cunninghams' philanthropy extended to many organizations across the Twin Cities. They provided scholarship support for students, musicians and athletes through the University of Minnesota, Gustavus Adolphus College and St. Olaf College and were committed members of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church for more than 60 years. Always a music lover, Kathy served on the boards of MacPhail Center for Music and the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies, including a term as its president.

Deeply respected and loved by colleagues, Kathy Cunningham modeled a life that was humble and service-oriented—and her impact on the Minnesota Orchestra was enormous, with her support helping to create the Orchestra we know today. The Orchestra family shares its deep condolences and appreciation for Kathy's legacy with her children, Dawn and Greg, and their extended families.

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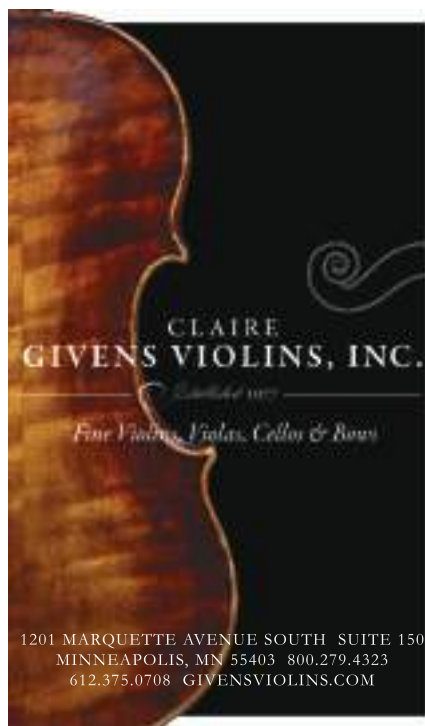
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Tonight's concert lasts about 2 hours and 20 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission. Please remain seated until the end of the credits.

A profile of conductor Norman Huynh appears on page 51.

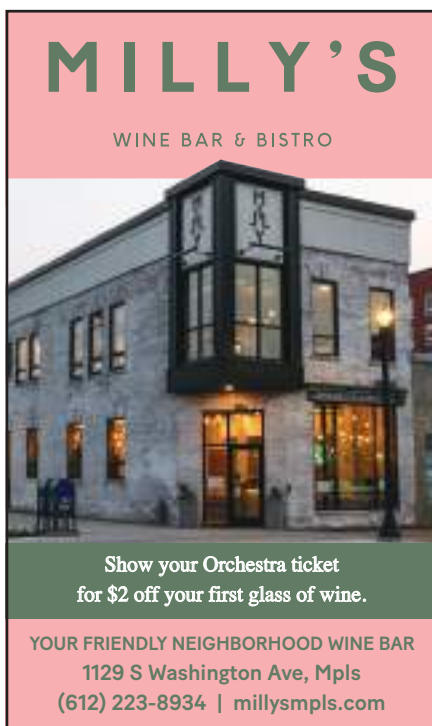
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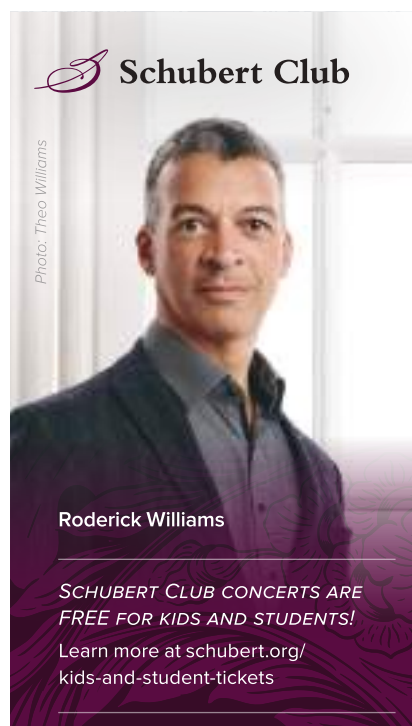
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Photo: Theo Williams

Roderick Williams

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----------------	--	---------

Camille Saint-Saëns	Concerto No. 2 in G minor for Piano and Orchestra, Opus 22 Andante sostenuto Allegro scherzando Presto <i>Janice Carissa, piano</i>	CA. 23'
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I N T E R M I S S I O N	CA. 20'
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Kurt Weill	Symphony No. 2 Sostenuto – Allegro molto Largo Allegro vivace – Alla marcia	CA. 28'
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Maurice Ravel	<i>La Valse</i>	CA. 13'
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Conductor and soloist profiles appear on pages 47 and 48.
Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/pre for details about pre-concert activities.

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**LILI BOULANGER****B:** August 21, 1893
Paris, France**D:** March 15, 1918
Mézy-sur-Seine, France***D'un soir triste*
(Of a Sad Evening)****COMPOSED:** 1918

Marie Juliette “Lili” Boulanger was the youngest daughter in a musical family, and it was her sister Nadia who made the family name famous as one of the pre-eminent composition teachers of the 20th century—a pedagogue to Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Philip Glass and Adolphus Hailstork, among many others. While Nadia’s life spanned nearly a century, Lili’s extraordinary musical accomplishments—including being the first woman to win the top prize at the Prix de Rome competition—were condensed into an unfortunately short timeline.

D'un soir triste (Of a Sad Evening) was the last work that Lili put on paper with her own hand before losing her battle at age 24 to what we now know was Crohn’s disease. The piece was kept in Nadia’s personal collection until soon before her own death six decades later. JoAnn Falletta, music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, worked alongside the Women’s Philharmonic Orchestra to make *D'un soir triste* and other works by Lili Boulanger accessible, transcribing her nearly illegible handwriting into playable parts and advocating for this music to be performed by ensembles worldwide.

MUSIC OF DEEP EMOTION

A quick glance through the score for *D'un soir triste* will tell you much about the deep emotions of this piece. Markings include words such as sorrowful, painful, intense and resigned, but also distant, sweet and elegiac. As a dark, melancholic song emerges from the clarinet section, the string section pulses beneath meandering woodwind chords, relentlessly building in intensity. In soft moments midway through the work, solos expressing deep reflection pass through the orchestra, trading between individual wind and string players. Both sorrow and hope sweep through Lili’s music, until her last penned notes gently lift upward into the clouds.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, suspended cymbal, tam-tam, harp, celesta and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.

**CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS****B:** October 9, 1835
Paris, France**D:** December 16, 1921
Algiers, Algeria**Concerto No. 2 in
G minor for Piano and
Orchestra, Opus 22****PREMIERED:** May 13, 1868

Camille Saint-Saëns wrote his second—and most popular—piano concerto in the span of just 17 days in the spring of 1868. The Russian composer-pianist Anton Rubinstein was visiting Paris and wanted to show off his abilities as a conductor. He and Saint-Saëns, then 32, struck a deal: Saint-Saëns would compose a piano concerto and be the soloist at the first performance, while Rubinstein would conduct. Saint-Saëns worked very quickly, not only composing but learning his own music in time for the premiere on May 13, 1868.

THE MUSIC: BRILLIANT AND SURPRISING

ANDANTE SOSTENUTO. The concerto contains a number of surprises. The first comes at the very beginning: the opening movement begins with an extended cadenza for solo piano rather than the typical orchestral exposition of the classical concerto. This cadenza is not so much a bravura showcase as it is an act of homage to Bach, its neoclassical poise paying tribute to a composer Saint-Saëns admired very much. After the orchestra makes its own dramatic entrance, the movement develops in more normal form, with a graceful second subject that flows easily between unexpected keys. This is brilliant music—the concerto was a particular favorite of that other piano-playing Rubinstein, Arthur—and Saint-Saëns offers the soloist a further cadenza just before the close.

ALLEGRO SCHERZANDO. The second movement, a rondo, is not the expected slow movement, but is instead very fast. The piano's dancing opening theme is repeated by the strings and develops through a series of repeated episodes. This might be mistaken for one of Felix Mendelssohn's scherzos: it has all the grace of that earlier composer's best fast movements.

PRESTO. The finale is a *tarantella*, a blazing dance in 6/8 meter that sweeps across the range of the keyboard. The music sparkles and bubbles along, leading one very witty pianist to remark that this concerto “begins with Bach and ends with Offenbach.”

Instrumentation: solo piano with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, cymbals and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



KURT WEILL

B: March 2, 1900
Dessau, Germany

D: April 3, 1950
New York City

Symphony No. 2

PREMIERED: October 11, 1934

In the early 1930s Kurt Weill was the most frequently performed living composer in Germany, due to the success of *The Threepenny Opera*, which premiered in 1928. But fame would not protect Weill from the storm that would soon engulf the world. Early in 1933, when Hitler was named German Chancellor and soon given dictatorial powers, Weill—a Jew with left-leaning political sympathies—saw the writing on the wall. Nazi sympathizers had been disrupting performances of Weill’s works since 1930, and by 1933 the government was banning performances of his music outright. In March of that year, Weill decided to leave Germany; he never returned.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Weill’s first destination was Paris. He had enjoyed success in the French capital the previous December, and hoped to launch collaborations with his new contacts there. He had with him the recently completed first movement of a symphony he was writing at the request of Winnaretta Singer—the Paris-based American daughter of the sewing machine magnate Isaac Singer—known as the Princess de Polignac from her second marriage to a French nobleman.

Weill’s new symphony would be one of his few works for the concert hall. Since the mid-1920s he had concentrated instead on music for the theater. He eschewed the complex and dissonant musical language of composers whom he believed were ignoring the general public. Instead, he adopted a style he said was epitomized by “clarity of language, precision of expression, and simplicity of feeling.” The symphony was premiered in Amsterdam on October 11, 1934, by the Concertgebouw Orchestra.

SERIOUS BUT ACCESSIBLE MUSIC

Weill's Symphony No. 2 is a compact work scored for a modest-sized orchestra. At once serious and accessible, it applies Classical-era compositional techniques to rhythmic and melodic materials drawn from popular songs and dance styles of Weill's own time.

SOSTENUTO–ALLEGRO MOLTO. The first movement begins with a hesitant introduction featuring a lone trumpet playing a mournful ballad. This somber music gives way to a brisk *Allegro* in which alternating rhythmic and lyrical passages push the music forward. Following a strong climax, a quiet interlude recalls the mood of the introduction. This calm is broken by the return of the vigorous music that will bring the movement to an end.

LARGO. The austere second movement gradually builds momentum over slow repeated rhythms reminiscent of a funeral cortège. Mournful melodies float above the insistent tread of the march only occasionally relieved by passages of wistful, nostalgic music.

ALLEGRO VIVACE–ALLA MARCIA. The finale is a lively rondo. Bits of scales and decorative figures are tossed around the orchestra until the winds and brass introduce a jaunty tune played over a simple accompaniment in the strings. The opening ideas return and are developed before a sardonic march featuring trumpets and piccolos interrupts. A final return of the opening music proceeds at increasingly quicker tempos to a rapid-fire finish.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (both doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani, snare drum, tenor drum, bass drum, cymbals, gong, triangle and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY JEFFREY STIRLING.



MAURICE RAVEL

B: March 7, 1875
Ciboure, France

D: December 28, 1937
Paris, France

La Valse

PREMIERED:
December 12, 1920

— Maurice Ravel, like many French composers, was profoundly wary of German music. Yet there was one German form for which he felt undiluted affection: the waltz. As a young piano student in Paris, Ravel fell under

the spell of Schubert's waltzes for piano, and in 1911 he composed his own *Noble and Sentimental Waltzes*, a set of charming waltzes modeled on the Schubert dances he loved so much. Earlier, in 1906, he had planned a great orchestral waltz with the working title *Wien* (Vienna), but the piece was delayed and Ravel did not return to it until the fall of 1919. This was the year after the conclusion of World War I, and the French vision of the Germanic world was now quite different than it had been when he originally conceived the piece.

Nevertheless, Ravel still felt the appeal of the project, and by December he was madly at work. The orchestration was completed the following March, and the first performance took place in Paris on December 12, 1920. By this time, perhaps wary of wartime associations, Ravel had renamed the piece *La Valse*.

AN OPULENT AND TROUBLING SCORE

Ravel described exactly his original conception for the work: "Whirling clouds give glimpses, through rifts, of couples waltzing. The clouds scatter little by little. One sees an immense hall peopled with a twirling crowd. The scene is gradually illuminated. The light of chandeliers bursts forth fortissimo. An Imperial Court, about 1855."

The music also gives us this scene. Out of the murky, misty beginning come bits of waltz rhythms; gradually these join together and plunge into an animated dance. This is dazzling writing for orchestra, some of which results from the music's rhythmic energy, some from Ravel's keen ear for instrumental color.

If *La Valse* concluded with all this elegant vitality, our sense of the music might be clear, but instead it drives to an ending full of frenzied violence. We come away not so much exhilarated as shaken. Ravel made a telling comment about this conclusion: "I had intended this work to be a kind of apotheosis of the Viennese waltz, with which was associated in my imagination an impression of a fantastic and fatal sort of dervish's dance."

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, antique cymbals, castanets, tambourine, tam-tam, triangle, bells, 2 harps and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



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Chris Lewis, tenor and soprano saxophones, clarinet and bass clarinet

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Kathleen B. Mandel

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SAT NOV 1 7PM

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There will be one 20-minute intermission.

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Dessa, singer, rapper and writer

Ian Allison, bass

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Cameron Kinghorn, vocals

Matthew Santos, vocals

Joey Van Phillips, percussion

Joshua Williams, saxophone and vocals

Aby Wolf, vocals and vocal direction

Andy Thompson, arranger

FRI NOV 7 8PM | SAT NOV 8 8PM

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Profiles of Sarah Hicks and Dessa appear on pages 50 and 51.



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Gioachino Rossini	Finale from <i>William Tell</i> Overture	CA. 4'
Antonio Vivaldi	<i>Giunt'e la primavera: Allegro</i> , from <i>Spring</i> from <i>The Four Seasons</i> for Violin and Orchestra <i>Rebecca Corruccini, violin</i>	CA. 4'
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov	<i>Flight of the Bumblebee</i> , from <i>The Tale of Czar Saltan</i>	CA. 1'
Igor Stravinsky	Finale from <i>Firebird</i>	CA. 4'
Edvard Grieg	<i>Allegro molto moderato</i> , from Piano Concerto in A minor <i>Harold Fang, piano</i>	CA. 13'
Jimmy López	<i>AURYN</i> , from Symphony No. 5, <i>Fantastica</i>	CA. 4'

Conductor, soloist and host profiles appear on page 49, 50, 52 and 53.

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Benjamin Beilman, violin
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THU NOV 13 11AM | FRI NOV 14 8PM

Tōru Takemitsu	<i>Night Signal</i>	CA. 4'
Karol Szymanowski	Concerto No. 1 for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 35 [in one movement] <i>Benjamin Beilman, violin</i>	CA. 25'
I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20'
Hector Berlioz	<i>Symphonie fantastique</i> , Opus 14 Reveries – Passions A Ball In the Country March to the Scaffold Dream of the Witches' Sabbath	CA. 49'

Conductor, soloist and broadcast host profiles appear on pages 8, 47 and 52.
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Join us in the lobby following the November 14 concert as Thomas Søndergård will sign the Orchestra's new CD of works by Thomas Adès.

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**TŌRU TAKEMITSU****B:** October 8, 1930
Tokyo, Japan**D:** February 20, 1996
Tokyo, Japan***Night Signal*****PREMIERED:**
September 14, 1987

Contradictions and the push and pull of cultures were recurring themes in the singular musical life of Tōru Takemitsu, one of the most revered 20th-century Japanese composers of music for the concert hall and films. While living in American-occupied Japan after World War II, the young Takemitsu became acquainted with Western music through radio broadcasts on the Armed Forces network and began composing, primarily self-trained. He rooted his early works in the so-called “Western” idiom, rather than Japanese traditions, though his stance on incorporating influences from his home country evolved over time. Other sources of musical inspiration included the avant-garde American composer John Cage and Olivier Messiaen of France.

Takemitsu and his compositions enjoyed great success around the world during his lifetime, and he remains so beloved in Japan that a major Tokyo concert hall and composition prize are named in his memory. It is emblematic of this cultural straddling that Takemitsu’s 1987 two-part brass ensemble work *Signals from Heaven* received its world premiere on not one but two continents. The first movement, *Day Signal*, was premiered in Tokyo by the Les Chevaliers Brass Ensemble on July 25, 1987, while the second, *Night Signal*, received its first performance by the brass musicians of the Scottish National Orchestra, conducted by Matthias Bamert, at a contemporary music festival concert in Glasgow on September 14, 1987.

“A SIGNAL SENT TO THE UNKNOWN”

The word “signal” was clearly a meaningful one for Takemitsu. In 1993, he commented of his works in general: “My music is something like a signal sent to the unknown. Moreover, I imagine and believe that my signal meets another’s signal, and the resulting physical change creates a new harmony different from the original two.” The brief *Night Signal*, dedicated to British composer-conductor Oliver Knussen, fits this image well, as it is composed in the antiphonal brass tradition popularized in Renaissance-era Italy—in which two distinct ensembles play in alternation or combination. Set in slow, slightly shifting tempos, this peaceful music is characterized by

short, simple musical gestures and constant soft-loud-soft dynamic swells. In the middle section, rhythms grow in complexity and the separation between the two groups erodes. The conclusion brings one last dynamic swell from both groups, then a fade to nothing.

Instrumentation: 4 horns, 2 trumpets, cornet, 3 trombones and tuba

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



KAROL SZYMANOWSKI **Concerto No. 1 for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 35**

B: October 3, 1882
Tymoshivka, Ukraine

D: March 29, 1937
Lausanne, Switzerland

PREMIERED:
November 1, 1922

— Karol Szymanowski was a member of an interestingly lively and talent-filled family. He studied first with his father, who played cello and piano, and with another musical relative, Gustav Neuhaus, but it was really in the course of travel, independent study and quite simply experience that his true education began. He had been brought up on the three B's (Bach, Beethoven and Brahms) plus Chopin and, surprisingly for so conservative an environment, Scriabin. Now his horizons expanded to embrace Wagner, Strauss and Reger, then Debussy and Ravel, eventually and crucially Stravinsky, whose *Firebird* and *Petrushka* he saw in their original productions by Sergei Diaghilev. In sum, he drew on many sources, but fused them into a colorful, malleable language all his own.

The voice behind Szymanowski's two Violin Concertos is that of Paweł Kochański, a fiery and sweet-toned virtuoso, and one of the most admired European violinists of his time. The plan was for Kochański, who wrote the cadenza for Szymanowski's First Violin Concerto and to whom the work is dedicated, to give the first performance in St. Petersburg at the end of 1917, but the Russian Revolution got in the way. The premiere finally took place in Warsaw on November 1, 1922, with Józef Ozimiński as soloist and Grzegorz Fitelberg conducting.

A POETIC CONCERTO

Szymanowski cast his First Violin Concerto as a single movement of about 23 minutes' duration. The analytical ear and eye readily enough distinguish different sections and the recurrences of certain ideas, but

what the spontaneous listening ear responds to is the seamless, self-generating flow. (Violinist and conductor must be fully aware of the former in order to create the impression of the latter.)

The dominant impression is that of an intensely lyric, enchantingly colorful music that is in constant flux. The work is as much a poem as it is a concerto, being in fact based on a rhapsody, *Summer Night*, by one of the composer's literary contemporaries, Tadeusz Miciński. *Summer Night* is a feast of fantastical images—donkeys in crowns settled majestically on the grass, fireflies kissing the wild rose, and many birds.

The concerto is a work of white-hot passion, set in a magical landscape inhabited by, among others, the figure of Pan, part humorous, part threatening, whom Szymanowski invokes so wonderfully in the third of the Myths. Szymanowski said that the true national music of his country was not “the stiffened ghost of the polonaise or mazurka, nor a fugue on the *Chmieleu* wedding song...but the solitary, joyful, carefree song of the nightingale in a fragrant night in Poland.” In this concerto, he set that ecstatic song down for us to share.

Instrumentation: solo violin with orchestra comprising 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (1 doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, 3 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, tambourine, snare drum, cymbals, bass drum, glockenspiel, piano, celesta, 2 harps and strings

EXCERPTED FROM A PROGRAM NOTE BY THE LATE MICHAEL STEINBERG, USED WITH PERMISSION.



HECTOR BERLIOZ

B: December 11, 1803
La Côte-Saint-André,
France

D: March 8, 1869
Paris, France

Symphonie fantastique, Opus 14

PREMIERED:
December 5, 1830

— Hector Berlioz composed *Symphonie fantastique* in 1830, when much that was new and forward-looking was in the air. From today's vantage point we can see fairly easily that the beginnings of a new kind of European classical music were to be found in the works of Beethoven. And the better we know *Symphonie fantastique*, the more clearly we can sense in it the presence of Beethoven. At the same time, however deeply he was in

debt to Beethoven, Berlioz strove to write “new music.” He succeeded. The *fantastique* sounds and behaves like nothing ever heard before. It takes off on paths Beethoven could never have imagined; that it was written just three years after the death of Beethoven staggers the imagination.

A COMPOSER'S OBSESSION

In 1827, at the Paris Odéon, Berlioz saw a staging of *Hamlet* by a company from London. Among the performers was Harriet Smithson, a 27-year-old actress with whom Berlioz fell instantly and wildly in love. He wrote to her repeatedly; he heard gossip about an affair between her and her manager. This hurt him, but it also provided enough distance to enable him to plan and to begin work on the symphony—whose subject was an artist “with a vivid imagination” who falls in love with his “ideal” woman, experiences hope and doubt, then an opium-induced dream in which he sees himself being executed for killing his beloved; after his death she appears to be taking part in an orgy at “a foul assembly of sorcerers and devils.”

The premiere took place on December 5, 1830. Two years later Berlioz presented a sharpened and improved version of his symphony, now with a sequel whose script was full of unmistakable allusions to his passion for Smithson. She was persuaded to attend Berlioz’s concert on December 9, 1832. They finally met, and on October 3, 1833, they were married. The whole business was a disaster. By the time they separated in 1844, Smithson was no longer performing, as an accident had put an end to her career. She died in 1854, an alcoholic and paralyzed; though they were no longer together, Berlioz supported her financially until her death.

A FANTASTIC SYMPHONY

Berlioz wrote several programs for his autobiographical symphony. Excerpts from his 1845 note are indicated with quotation marks.

REVERIES—PASSIONS. A young musician, “the artist,” sees and falls hopelessly in love with a woman who embodies the charms of “the ideal being of whom he has dreamed.” In his mind she is linked to a musical motif, and both “the melodic image and its human model pursue him incessantly like a double *idée fixe*....The passage from this state of melancholic reverie, interrupted by a few fits of unmotivated joy, to one of delirious passion, with its movements of fury and jealousy, its return of tenderness, its tears, its religious consolation—all this is the subject of the first movement.” The subtly shaped *idée fixe* is the melody that violins and flute play to an accompaniment of nervous strings interjections when the *Allegro* begins.

A BALL. Whether the artist is engaged in festivities or contemplating nature, the “beloved image appears before him and troubles his soul.” The first three dozen measures paint for us the ballroom with its glitter and flicker, its swirling couples, the yards and yards of whispering silk. This softly scintillating waltz is exquisitely scored.

IN THE COUNTRY. The artist is calmed by the sound of shepherds piping, by “the quiet rustling of the trees gently disturbed by the wind,” but wondering if his beloved might be deceiving him, he feels a “mixture of hope and fear...ideas of happiness disturbed by black presentiments.” There is nothing in music before this, or since, like the pathos of the recapitulated conversation with one voice missing. As a picture of despairing loneliness it is without equal.

MARCH TO THE SCAFFOLD. “Having become certain that his love goes unrecognized, the artist poisons himself with opium.” But rather than dying, he “dreams that he has killed the woman he loves, that he is condemned, led to the scaffold, and that he is witnessing his execution.”

DREAM OF THE WITCHES’ SABBATH. The artist sees himself “in the midst of a frightful assembly of ghosts, sorcerers, monsters of every kind, all come together for his funeral.” The melody representing his beloved is now “no more than the tune of an ignoble dance, trivial and grotesque...she takes part in the devilish orgy...funeral knell, burlesque parody of the *Dies irae*...” As we enter the final scene, with its trim thematic transformations, its bizarre sonorities—deep bells, squawking E-flat clarinet, the beating of violin and viola strings with the wooden stick of the bow, glissandos for winds, violent alternations of *ff* with *pp*—its grotesque imagery, its wild and coruscating brilliance, we have left the Old World for good.

SOUND THE BELLS

This week’s performances of *Symphonie fantastique* feature a pair of large church bells, custom-cast for the Minnesota Orchestra by the Royal Eijsbouts foundry in the Netherlands and added to the Orchestra’s permanent instrument collection thanks to a donation by Orchestra patron Gary B. Cohen.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets (1 doubling E-flat clarinet), 4 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 cornets, 3 trombones, 2 tubas, timpani, field drum, bass drum, cymbals, 2 large bells, 2 harps and strings

PROGRAM NOTE EXCERPTED FROM THE LATE MICHAEL STEINBERG’S *THE SYMPHONY: A LISTENER’S GUIDE* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1995), USED WITH PERMISSION.



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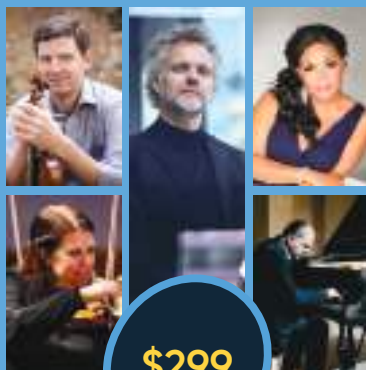
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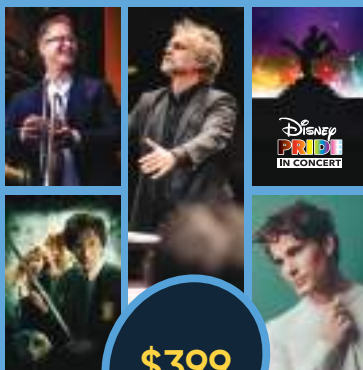
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SØNDERGÅRD CONDUCTS BRAHMS REQUIEM

Thomas Søndergård, conductor

Siobhan Stagg, soprano

Blake Denson, baritone

Minnesota Chorale, Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

FRI NOV 21 8PM | SAT NOV 22 7PM

Henry Dorn	<i>Transitions</i>	CA. 10'
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Anna Clyne	<i>Within Her Arms</i>	CA. 14'
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I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20'
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Johannes Brahms	<i>Ein deutsches Requiem</i>	CA. 68'
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(A German Requiem), Opus 45

Blessed are they that mourn

For all flesh is as grass

Lord, make me to know mine end

How lovely are thy tabernacles

Ye now therefore have sorrow

For here have we no continuing city

Blessed are the dead

Siobhan Stagg, soprano

Blake Denson, baritone

Minnesota Chorale

An English translation of the German text for Brahms' *A German Requiem* will be projected as surtitles. Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/brahmstext to read the text and translation.

Conductor, soloist and choir profiles, as well as a choir roster, appear on pages 8, 49, 54 and 55.

Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/pre for details about pre-concert activities.

Join us in the lobby following the November 22 concert as Thomas Søndergård will sign the Orchestra's new CD of works by Thomas Adès.

THANK YOU

The 2025-26 Classical season is presented by Ameriprise Financial.

Friday night Classical concerts air live on [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#).

**HENRY DORN**

B: 1988
Little Rock, Arkansas

Transitions

PREMIERED:
May 6, 2022

— The Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute has shone a spotlight on 133 emerging composers since the acclaimed program's founding in 2001, but only a handful of them now make their home in our state. One of those few is Arkansas native Henry Dorn, who since 2023 has been an assistant professor of conducting and composition at St. Olaf College in Northfield. He is also conductor of the St. Olaf Band—just the third person to hold that title in the past 68 years.

When Dorn participated in the Composer Institute in May 2022, his work *Transitions* received its world premiere; it has since been played by the Detroit and Atlanta symphony orchestras, among other ensembles. Dorn's other recent major works include the orchestral composition *...I Forgot to Say Good Morning* and *Transcendence* for concert band, while as a guest conductor he has led the United States Army Band, "Pershing's Own," and the 2025 MMEA All-State Symphonic Band, to name a few engagements.

A MUSICAL MEMORIAL

The composer comments on *Transitions*: "My mother passed in July 2017 from cancer. Her entire life could be summarized as endeavoring against opposition. This was true even right up to the end as she battled the suffocating effects of lung cancer. As I sat in wait with her in the hospital over her last month, I became an active participant in her transition from this life to whatever comes next. It was there that I started to write the notes and ideas I felt about the experience, her journey, her unspoken strength, and her quiet inner beauty. These sketches, which were too difficult to encompass at the time, were put to the side until I recently set to paper my thoughts about her final days. This work is for her."

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, 3 splash cymbals, suspended cymbal, crotales, gong, temple block, tom-toms, 3 triangles, xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, glockenspiel, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.

**ANNA CLYNE**

B: March 9, 1980
London, England

Within Her Arms

PREMIERED:
April 7, 2009

— Anna Clyne—who in 2015 became the first Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute alumnus to be nominated for a Grammy Award—is one of today’s most frequently performed and commissioned classical composers. In fact, her work heard on this week’s program, *Within Her Arms*, is the second piece by Clyne to be featured during the Minnesota Orchestra’s 2025-26 season. The first was played just over a month ago when Elisabeth Brauß was the soloist in *ATLAS*, Clyne’s new piano concerto.

These two works were born out of very different inspirations. *ATLAS* is a musical response to the imagery in a compendium of sketches and other images by the German artist Gerhard Richter. *Within Her Arms*, however, came out of great personal tragedy: the death of Clyne’s mother, Colleen Clyne, in 2008. In this sense, it is perfectly paired with the music that precedes it on today’s program: Henry Dorn’s *Transitions*—a response to the passing of his own mother. The title of Clyne’s work comes from the poem *Message* by the Vietnamese writer and peace activist Thích Nhất Hạnh (1926-2022).

A POWERFUL ELEGY

Within Her Arms—which was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and premiered by that ensemble in April 2009—is a moving and powerful elegy written for a small string orchestra of 15 players. Through her understanding of orchestral color, Clyne sonically paints listeners into a soul-searching meditation on the various stages of grief as it transforms within us: at first quiet with reflection in the beginning stages of the work; then heavy with dread in the middle, with clashing notes set against an ever-present drone in the low strings; then a cathartic release, with acceptance and love quieting the cries and offering a glimpse of hope as the piece gently fades into nothing.

Instrumentation: string orchestra

PROGRAM NOTE BY MICHAEL DIVINO.

**JOHANNES BRAHMS**

B: May 7, 1833
Hamburg, Germany

D: April 3, 1897
Vienna, Austria

***Ein deutsches Requiem*
(A German Requiem),
Opus 45**

PREMIERED: April 10, 1868
(initial version); February
18, 1869 (final version)

— In 1896, a year before his death, Johannes Brahms spent an evening with Antonín Dvořák, and in the course of a long night of talk, the men discussed religion. As the devout Dvořák walked home, a friend reported that he was silent for a long time, then finally burst out: “Such a man, such a fine soul—and he believes in nothing! He believes in nothing!”

By all accounts, Dvořák *was* right. Brahms was an agnostic, yet he had a profound knowledge of the Bible: he owned five copies of the *Lutherbibel*, as Luther’s translation of the Bible into German was called, and he read from them daily. If Brahms did not accept Christian dogma, he had enormous respect for its teachings, and it was this man—an agnostic with an essentially religious temperament—who composed *A German Requiem*.

A DEEPLY PERSONAL SOURCE

This is very personal music, and it appears to have sprung from very personal sources, starting with the death of Robert Schumann in 1856. Schumann had been the first major figure to believe in Brahms and support his career, and in the aftermath of Schumann’s mental collapse and death in an asylum, Brahms had set out to write music that registered his grief. But Brahms was unsure what form that music should take. He began a symphony, sketching it as a sonata for two pianos, but abandoned that project. He did, however, save the music: part of it went into his First Piano Concerto, and the symphony’s slow scherzo eventually became the second movement of the *German Requiem*. Evidence suggests that Brahms sketched this movement and three others in the form of a cantata and then set the project aside.

It was the death of his mother in February 1865, when Brahms was 31, that brought him back to this music. Though his parents were divorced, Brahms remained extremely close to both of them throughout their lives. For his mother he felt a particular bond: she had been a source of love and support and had taken great pride in his accomplishments. At the news of her stroke, he had rushed back to Hamburg, but he arrived too late to see her. A friend in Vienna reported that he found Brahms sitting at the piano,

playing Bach and sobbing as he announced his mother's death—and he would not stop playing. In the following months Brahms returned to his earlier sketches for a cantata and revised and expanded them.

The first three movements were performed in December 1867 in Vienna, and the occasion turned into a disaster. At the close of the third movement the timpanist either got lost or played much too loudly—accounts vary—and the music was actually hissed. Brahms revised the score, and a six-movement version for baritone, chorus and orchestra was successfully premiered on Good Friday 1868 in the Bremen Cathedral. At this point Brahms' old piano teacher Eduard Marxsen advised him to add one more movement, one that spoke of a mother's love. Brahms recognized that Marxsen was right, and he composed the additional movement, the fifth, in which a soprano sings a message of maternal consolation. This is the soprano's only appearance in the *Requiem*, and her silvery sound cuts through the generally dark colors of the work with a message emotionally crucial to the grieving composer.

ACCEPTANCE AND CONSOLATION

This is one of the great Requiems, but it is not a setting of the Catholic Mass for the dead. Instead, Brahms chose his own texts from Luther's Bible—16 separate passages from the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha—and set them in German. His choices of texts, and his exclusions, give the *German Requiem* a very particular character. There is no *Dies Irae* section of the Catholic Mass here, no day of judgment on which souls are separated into the saved and damned. In fact, there is not one mention of Christ in Brahms' setting, and he fiercely resisted suggestions that he include such a reference. Instead, his emphasis is on the living as they face the fact of death and loss. The first words of *A German Requiem* are "Blessed are they who mourn," and this message of consolation continues throughout: the closing text is "Blessed are the dead," and the progress is toward an acceptance of life and death and consolation for both those who die and those who mourn.

Brahms chose the title *A German Requiem* to indicate that it was different—that it was not a Catholic mass and was in German rather than Latin—but he was uncomfortable with that title. He wanted to call it "Requiem for Humankind" but in the end settled for the title we know today. The premiere of the complete version on February 18, 1869, was a triumph, and performances quickly followed throughout Germany and abroad. More than any other work, it was *A German Requiem* that established Brahms' reputation at this early stage of his career.

THE MUSIC

The two opening movements, both somber in color, introduce central ideas, bringing consolation to the living and reminding them of the transitory nature of human existence. The opening movement is made even more somber by Brahms' decision to do without violins, clarinets and trumpets. He mutes the strings in the second movement, a slow march (despite the 3/4 meter) that rises to a great climax on "But the word of the Lord endureth forever," then falls away to the quiet close. The solo baritone enters in the third movement, troubled and searching for direction within the confusion of existence. The music grows to a climax that breaks into a double fugue in D major on the words "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of the Lord" and drives to a triumphant conclusion. (This is the part that was ruined by the timpanist in the December 1867 performance.)

After this thunder comes a peaceful interlude. "How lovely are thy dwelling places," which celebrates the beauties of life on earth, is one of Brahms' loveliest choral settings, so beautiful that it is often performed by itself. The soprano soloist sings a message of maternal love and eventual reunion in "And ye now therefore have sorrow"; her heartfelt line floats over some luminous string writing—clearly this movement was important to Brahms.

The mood changes sharply at the beginning of the sixth movement: "For here have we no continuing city" brings the dramatic climax of the *Requiem*. The dark opening repeats the message of the transitoriness of human life, but the motion of this movement is toward resurrection and triumph over the grave. Brahms builds this up to a magnificent climax and another double fugue, this time on a text from Revelation, "Thou art worthy, O Lord," and the movement drives to a ringing close.

Brahms concludes by returning to the message and manner of the opening movement—in fact, the *Requiem* ends with the same music that brought the first movement to its close. Humanity may eventually triumph over the grave, but now Brahms' concern is with the living *and* the dead, and *A German Requiem* fades into silence with one final benediction of the dead and of those who mourn for them.

Instrumentation: solo soprano, solo baritone and mixed choir with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, harp, timpani and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

THE PRINCESS BRIDE IN CONCERT WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Nicholas Buc, conductor

FRI NOV 28 7PM | SAT NOV 29 7PM | SUN NOV 30 2PM

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Director of Photography: ADRIAN BIDDLE
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Screenplay by WILLIAM GOLDMAN
Produced by ANDREW SCHEINMAN and ROB REINER
Directed by ROB REINER

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Tonight's concert lasts about 2 hours, including a 20-minute intermission.
Please remain seated until the end of the credits.

A profile of conductor Nicholas Buc appears on page 48.

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Music composed by Mark Knopfler
"Storybook Love" written by Willy DeVille

Musical Score Adapted and Orchestrated for Live Performance by Mark Graham
Music Preparation: Jo Ann Kane Music Service
Film Preparation for Concert Performance: Epilogue Media
Technical Consultant: Laura Gibson
Sound Remixing for Concert Performance: Chace Audio by Deluxe

The score for *The Princess Bride* has been specially adapted for live concert performance.

With special thanks to: Norman Lear, Mark Knopfler, Julie Dyer, David Nochimson, Paul Crockford, Sherry Elbe, James Harman, Peter Raleigh, Trevor Motycka, Bethany Brinton, Matt Voogt, Adam Michalak, Alex Levy, Adam Witt, and the musicians and staff of the Minnesota Orchestra.



A NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER

To have been a part of *The Princess Bride* gives me enormous pride and joy. To me, the picture has never lost an ounce of its freshness and charm. I couldn't be more delighted to see it finding more devotees around the world with every passing year. Now, to hear the score in the hands of a brilliant orchestral arranger, conductor and players, is an added privilege. I hope you have a wonderful evening in their company along with the many memories the film has created.

— MARK KNOPFLER



DAVID AFKHAM,
CONDUCTOR

Known for his impeccable technique and compelling artistry, German-born David Afkham has received worldwide acclaim as one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation. He is the chief conductor and artistic director of the Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, a position he has held since 2019 after five seasons as its principal conductor. Afkham has appeared with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony, NHK Symphony, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra, among many other orchestras. He debuted with the Minnesota Orchestra in October 2021 in a program featuring pianist Emanuel Ax. His recent successes in opera include performances of Richard Strauss' *Arabella* at the Semperoper Dresden and a new production of the work at the Teatro Real in Madrid. Highlights of his 2025-26 season include debuts with the San Francisco and Lucerne symphonies and a tour of Japan with the NHK Symphony. More: kdschmid.de, davidafkham.com.



BENJAMIN BEILMAN,
VIOLIN

Benjamin Beilman, one of the leading violinists of his generation, has won international praise for his passionate performances and deep rich tone. His 2025-26 season highlights include concerts with the Rochester Philharmonic, Florida Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, Antwerp Symphony and more. Last season, he debuted with the Berlin Philharmonic, Belgian National Orchestra and Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony. In 2022 he became one of the youngest artists to be appointed to the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music. In recent seasons new works have been written for him by Frederic Rzewski and Gabriella Smith, the latter co-commissioned by the Schubert Club. He has given multiple performances of Jennifer Higdon's Violin Concerto and recorded Thomas Larcher's concerto with the Tonkünstler Orchester; he also premiered Chris Rogerson's Violin Concerto, *The Little Prince*, with the Kansas City Symphony. He also performs recitals and chamber music across the world. More: opus3artists.com, benjaminbeilman.com.



NICHOLAS BUC,
CONDUCTOR

Nicholas Buc is a composer, conductor and arranger known for working with film, bands and pop artists alongside symphony orchestras. Renowned for his work in live film concerts, he conducted the world premieres of *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *The Lion King* (2019), *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), *Shrek 2*, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2* and *Field of Dreams*. Last season he appeared with the Chicago Symphony, Chicago Lyric Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Tokyo Philharmonic and all major Australian orchestras, among other ensembles. He makes his Royal Albert Hall debut this November. Buc has also written music for film, television and the concert hall. His original live animation concert, *Daughter of the Inner Stars*, premiered in North America with the Vancouver Symphony in 2025. He also scored *The Apocalypse According to Mad Max*, a documentary on director George Miller. More: nicholasbuc.com.



JANICE CARISSA,
PIANO

A Gilmore Young Artist and Salon de Virtuosi winner, Indonesian-born pianist Janice Carissa has been hailed by critics for her vivid playing. Her artistry has been showcased at such renowned stages as the Sydney Opera House and Carnegie Hall. Since her Philadelphia Orchestra debut at age 16, she has performed with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Pittsburgh, San Diego, Nashville and Jakarta symphonies, among others. Highlights of her 2025-26 season include her Minnesota Orchestra debut and appearances with Houston Symphony, Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra of Columbus and Florida Orchestra, as well as a solo recital at Pepperdine University and a duo with cellist Sterling Elliott for Capital Region Classical. A passionate chamber musician, Carissa has performed at Bravo! Vail, Brooklyn Chamber Music Society and Jupiter Chamber Concert Series. She studied at the Curtis Institute of Music with Gary Graffman and at the Juilliard School with Robert McDonald. More: opus3artists.com, janicecarissa.com.



REBECCA CORRUCCINI,
VIOLIN

Rebecca Corruccini joined the Minnesota Orchestra's first violin section in 2008. She served as acting assistant concertmaster from 2014-15, then acting associate principal second violin for 2015-16. Before arriving in Minnesota, she performed two seasons with the Houston Symphony. She has recorded Emmy-winning PBS All-Star Orchestra episodes and has been featured in chamber and orchestral performances at festivals across the country, including as assistant concertmaster at the Colorado Music Festival. She has also performed with the Sun Valley Music Festival and Grand Teton Music Festival orchestras and at the Mainly Mozart Festival, and served on the Brevard Music Center faculty. A teacher since the age of 12, Corruccini particularly enjoys teaching adult amateurs as well as coaching individuals preparing for auditions. Her non-musical passions include the environment and animals. Corruccini and her husband live in a historic stretch of Uptown with their five children and two rescue dogs. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



BLAKE DENSON,
BARITONE

Acclaimed baritone Blake Denson is rapidly establishing himself on major international stages. In the 2025-26 season he returns to Houston Grand Opera and the Opéra National de Paris and reprises the role of Ford in *Falstaff* with Pittsburgh Opera. In 2024-25, he portrayed Monterone in *Rigoletto* with the Opéra National de Paris, Metropolitan Opera and Los Angeles Opera. He also performed in Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* with the New World Symphony. Recent performances include *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* and *Madama Butterfly* at the Metropolitan Opera, *Falstaff* with Houston Grand Opera and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the National Symphony Orchestra. He has also appeared with the Santa Fe Opera and New Orleans Opera. He has won the Richard Tucker Foundation's Sarah Tucker Grant, George London Competition and Tenor Viñas Competition, and was a Grand Finalist in the 2020 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. More: l2artists.com.



DESSA,
SINGER, RAPPER AND WRITER

Spanning genres and disciplines, Dessa's style is defined by wit, tenderness, rigor and candor. As a musician, she's co-composed for large choirs; crowdsurfed at rock clubs; recorded a live album with the Grammy-winning Minnesota Orchestra; and contributed a track to the #1 album *The Hamilton Mixtape*. As a speaker, Dessa regularly presents on art, science and entrepreneurship at colleges and universities across the U.S. Her TED Talk, which recounts her science experiment on how to fall out of love, has notched more than five million views. As an author, she's written for *The New York Times* and *National Geographic Traveler*; been broadcast by the BBC; and published several literary collections including the memoir-in-essays *My Own Devices* (Penguin Random House). She's currently serving as artist in residence at Georgetown University's Music Sustainability Initiative (well, *currently* she's probably pacing out the nerves backstage). Tour dates and more: dessawander.com.



HAROLD FANG,
PIANO

Harold Fang is a 15-year-old sophomore at Wayzata High School in Plymouth, Minnesota. He began studying piano at age 6 and is currently under the tutelage of Dr. Denis Evstuhin. Fang has earned numerous prestigious awards, including the top prize in the 2025 YPSCA Young People's Concerto Competition, which brought an invitation to perform as a soloist with the Minnesota Orchestra at a series of Young People's and Family Concerts. His recent success also includes the Grand Prize in the 2025 Mankato Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Concerto Competition and First Prize in the 2025 Wisconsin Richard Record Rising Stars Concerto Competition. He was a featured young artist at the 2025 ProMusica Minnesota Festival. Additionally, he won first prizes in the 2024 Wisconsin Chippewa Valley Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Competition and 2024 Minnesota Golden Valley Orchestra Young Artist Competition. Beyond piano, he enjoys scouting, history, math, baseball, cello and cooking.



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, The Moving Company, Nur-D, The New Standards, Cloud Cult and Dessa—with whom Hicks and the Orchestra made a live-in-concert recording on Doomtree Records. Later this season she will lead film music concerts featuring *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *Disney in Concert – The Sound of Magic* and *Disney PRIDE in Concert*, as well as a performance with singer Ben Rector, among other concerts. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



NORMAN HUYNH,
CONDUCTOR

American conductor Norman Huynh is recognized for dynamic performances, inventive programming and a natural ability to connect with audiences. He is music director of the Bozeman Symphony and the Britt Music & Art Festival Orchestra, and has appeared with leading ensembles including the St. Louis Symphony, New York Philharmonic, San Diego Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Detroit Symphony and Spain's Orquesta Sinfónica del Vallés. Huynh's versatility spans classical masterworks, premieres of new works, and cross-genre collaborations with artists such as Itzhak Perlman, Augustin Hadelich, Philip Glass, Smokey Robinson, Nas, Wyclef Jean, Pink Martini and Boyz II Men. He is also in demand for conducting live film scores. A proud first-generation Asian American, Huynh co-founded Baltimore's Occasional Symphony, known for imaginative concerts in non-traditional spaces, and helped develop the Portland Symphony Orchestra's PSO Explorers Program. More: monicafelkelcreativepartners.com, normanconductor.com.



ARIANA KIM,
BROADCAST HOST

For the concert on November 14, Ariana Kim serves as host and writer of the Twin Cities PBS broadcast and online livestream *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*. A Grammy-nominated violinist, Kim made her New York recital debut at Carnegie's Weill Hall during her doctoral studies at Juilliard and is now a tenured violin professor at Cornell University. At 16 she debuted with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and at 24 was appointed acting concertmaster of the Louisiana Philharmonic. Recent performance highlights include Bartók's Concerto No. 1 at Jordan Hall in Boston, a six-performance solo project exploring sound in darkness at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and a recital at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. During her recent sabbatical in Mysore, India, Kim dived deeply into the world of Carnatic music and its rich history of improvisation. Her upcoming solo album *(Un)common Thread* features works by Mozart and Beethoven alongside world folk music. More: arianakim.com.



NICHOLAS KOO,
CONDUCTOR

Nicholas Koo is a Korean-American conductor who has appeared with the Chicago Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Colorado Symphony and Utah Symphony. He made his debut with the Chicago Symphony in its MusicNOW series in March 2025 and debuted with the Minnesota Orchestra the previous year. He has collaborated with renowned soloists including Emanuel Ax, Hélène Grimaud, Jörgen van Rijen and Hilary Hahn, with whom he led Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Koo has assisted conductors such as Donald Runnicles, Fabien Gabel and Marin Alsop, and was featured conducting the St. Louis Symphony during Leonard Slatkin's 80th birthday celebration. A 2023 Solti Foundation Career Assistance Award recipient, he was selected from over 300 applicants to join Riccardo Muti's Italian Opera Academy in Ravenna, working on Verdi's Requiem and continuing his mentorship with Muti during the maestro's final season as music director of the Chicago Symphony. More: nicholaskoo.com.



TRINITY LEISER,
HOST

With a lifelong passion for the arts and the natural world, Trinity Leiser brings a rich background in both music and wildlife education to the Minnesota Orchestra's Magnificent Musical Creatures program—a unique collaboration between the Orchestra and the Minnesota Zoo. Her experiences have shaped her love of storytelling, performance and creative collaboration. For the past eight years, she has shared her enthusiasm for animals and conservation as part of the Minnesota Zoo team, connecting guests of all ages to the wonders of wildlife through engaging programs and experiences. In her free time, she enjoys singing in her local community choir and taking the stage in summer musical theatre performances.



WYNTON MARSALIS,
TRUMPET

Wynton Marsalis is music director of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, as well as managing and artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC). He has won nine Grammy Awards—and remains the only musician to win a Grammy in the jazz and classical categories in the same year—and his oratorio *Blood on the Fields* was the first jazz composition to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music. He is an internationally acclaimed musician, composer and bandleader, educator and advocate of American culture. Among his compositions are 600 original songs, 11 dance scores, 13 suites, four symphonies, a jazz oratorio, and concertos for violin, tuba, trumpet and orchestra. At JALC, he spearheads educational programs including the Essentially Ellington jazz band competition, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2025. He is also the founding director of Jazz Studies at the Juilliard School and president of the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation. More: wyntonmarsalis.org.



SIOBHAN STAGG,
SOPRANO

Soprano Siobhan Stagg is one of today's leading lyric artists. As a former member of the Deutsche Oper Berlin ensemble, she has sung Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Micaëla in *Carmen*, and has since performed major roles at Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, Opernhaus Zürich, Staatsoper Berlin and Bayerische Staatsoper, among other companies. In 2025-26 she debuts as Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* at State Opera South Australia, Adalgisa in *Norma* at Irish National Opera and Antonia/Stella in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, and appears in concert with Melbourne Symphony, Staatskapelle Dresden, Trondheim Symphony, Nord Deutscher Rundfunk, Orchestre National de Lyon and Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse. She also returns to London's Wigmore Hall in recital with Jonathan Ware. She received the Key to the City of Mildura in 2023. More: lewishollandartistmanagement.com, siobhanstagg.com.

THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA

The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO), comprising 15 of today's finest jazz soloists and ensemble players, has been the Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) resident orchestra since 1988 and spends over a third of each year on tour across the world. This remarkably versatile orchestra performs and leads educational events in New York, across the U.S. and around the globe in all type of venues and with symphony orchestras, ballet troupes, local students and guest artists. Under Music Director Wynton Marsalis, the JLCO performs a vast repertoire, from rare historic compositions to JALC-commissioned works. The JLCO has performed with many of the world's leading symphony orchestras. Education is a major part of JALC's mission; its educational activities are coordinated with concert and JLCO tour programming. These programs, many of which feature JLCO members, include the celebrated Jazz for Young People™ family concert series; the Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival; the Jazz for Young People™ Curriculum; Let Freedom Swing; educational residencies; workshops; and concerts for students and adults worldwide. In 2015, JALC launched Blue Engine Records; its recent albums include *A Swingin' Sesame Street Celebration* and *The Democracy Suite*. More: jazz.org.

MINNESOTA CHORALE

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BARBARA BROOKS,

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ARTISTIC ADVISER

The Minnesota Chorale, principal chorus of the Minnesota Orchestra since 2004, in 2023 marked the 50th anniversary of its first appearance with the Orchestra. Its recent collaborations with the Orchestra include performances of Puccini's *Turandot*, Mozart's Requiem, Johannes Brahms' *Schicksalslied* and the U.S. premiere of Eleanor Alberga's *Rise Up, O Sun!*, as well as the world premiere of *brea(d)th* by Carlos Simon and Marc Bamuthi Joseph. In March 2026, the Chorale will collaborate with the Orchestra in performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Founded in 1972 and led since 1995 by Artistic Director Kathy Saltzman Romey, the Chorale is Minnesota's preeminent symphonic chorus and ranks among the foremost professional choruses in the U.S. More: mnchorale.org.

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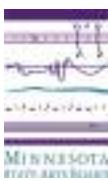


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