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Marco Borggreve



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ORCHESTRA HALL INFORMATION



**ABOUT THE COVER:** Music Director Thomas Søndergård and the Minnesota Orchestra. Four Orchestra musicians solo in early December concerts, while Principal Horn Michael Gast retires mid-month. Photo: Travis Anderson Photo.

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**DECEMBER 2025**

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## CELEBRATING RETIRING PRINCIPAL HORN MICHAEL GAST



Greg Helgeson

Principal Horn Michael Gast accepting applause amid his colleagues at a Season Opening concert in September 2025.

— In December the Minnesota Orchestra is celebrating the many achievements of Principal Horn Michael Gast as he retires after 35 years in the ensemble—including 21 at the head of the horn section.

While growing up in Tallahassee, Florida, Gast started on cornet before switching to horn in 10th grade—“because I liked the challenge and sound of the instrument,” he recalls—but a career in music wasn’t a given outcome. “My father was a true rocket scientist who worked on the Saturn V moon shots, and I developed a solid science education,” he says. “I won a scholarship to the National Science Foundation Oceanography camp and considered a career in oceanography, but then I attended a music camp at FSU and thought I should pursue a career in music because it

would be easier and more fun than oceanography; *wrong!*”

After committing to music, Gast studied with Dr. William Capps at Florida State University, then moved on to the Curtis Institute of Music. He began his professional career heading the horn section of the Jacksonville Symphony, where he met his violinist wife Joan, and then became assistant principal horn of the San Antonio Symphony before landing a position in the Minnesota Orchestra in 1990 under Music Director Edo de Waart. Gast eventually served several seasons as acting principal horn, and in 2004 Music Director Osmo Vänskä appointed him to the principal position. “I owe Osmo endless gratitude for such an amazing opportunity for the last 21 years,” Gast reflects.

[Continued on page 10](#)

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Looking back on a career in Minnesota he calls “a dream come true,” Gast names numerous highlights. “Some of my favorite concerts include all the international touring we did in the great halls of the world, in particular Bruckner’s Fourth and Mahler’s Fifth at the Royal Albert Hall with the BBC 3 telecasts at the Proms. Playing Schumann’s *Konzertstück* for four horns was a real rush—I prepared for two years for that week. Another very special week was playing the Britten Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings with Jeffrey Tate; the tenor cancelled two weeks out and we brought in an up-and-coming understudy from the Met Opera, Matthew Polenzani, before he went onto a stellar career! Standing in front of this Orchestra to solo with Strauss and Mozart concertos are special memories, as well as the years being recognized with solo bows with an incredible horn section.”

Among the many things Gast will miss is the camaraderie with the Orchestra’s musicians—and he offers his gratitude to some “unsung heroes” of the horn section. “For decades freelancers did heavy lifting so I could have a nice sound for solos and concentrate on musical matters. Thanks to all of you who sat next to me!”

Gast also reflects often on the under-the-surface aspects that go into a performance, as well as the methods that have enhanced his musicianship. “There is quite a bit of mental gymnastics that go on during our rehearsals, concerts and home preparation,” he says. “It starts with how do you want to sound, and what is your message? What’s the timbre,



Gast at age 14 with his original musical instrument, cornet.

articulation, demeanor—and how do you take it to an even higher level in your preparation and execution? Years ago I got into sports psychology to learn techniques to increase my performance success, and here are a few. No brain chatter, only the sound in your head, embracing the ‘Lizard Brain’ that is devoid of all except what you’re trying to play. Stay out of the way of yourself and stay ‘in the now.’ Play with intent and desire, and play with risk to attain your greatest and most convincing music.”

In closing, Gast comments: “I’m lucky I have had such a memorable career and look forward to supporting the Orchestra during my retirement. And many thanks to our audiences and staff. The teamwork evident in this organization is the envy of many cities.” Read an extended version of his retirement reflections at [minnesotaorchestra.org/stories](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/stories).



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## REACHING HIGH: THE LINDAHL LEGACY



Tony Nelson

Nancy Lindahl at the Minnesota Orchestra's 2023 Symphony Ball.

In an interview about philanthropy, Nancy Lindahl—a Minnesota Orchestra Life Director and former Board chair—recounted advice that she and her husband, John, once received: “Stand on your tiptoes and reach higher than you ever thought you could.”

It was counsel that these heavyweight philanthropists took to heart, and the list of nonprofits served and supported by the Lindahls is lengthy, ranging from Children’s Cancer Research to the Junior League, the Greater Twin Cities United Way and the University of Minnesota.

Their extraordinary, typically quiet, support of the Minnesota Orchestra is recognized this month with a concert dedication—timed with one of Nancy Lindahl’s favorite works, Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9—and the installation of signage designating the “Lindahl Auditorium” within Orchestra Hall. It all honors the substantial role the pair have played in the life of the Orchestra for decades.

Nancy Lindahl’s connection to the organization extends to her childhood, when she attended concerts with her parents. She went on to chair the 1994 Symphony Ball, joining the Board in 1998 and being named a Life Director in 2016. During her 2023–25 tenure as Board chair, she led the organization through major artistic and administrative transitions and ignited the fundraising effort for the Upper Harbor Terminal Amphitheater.

From the musicians’ perspective, her greatest legacy may well be her personal touch. Said Principal Bass Kristen Bruya: “Nancy really cares about us as people, and she has worked so hard to protect this institution and bring new supporters into the circle. It’s hard to overstate her impact. We are deeply grateful for the importance she and John place on art and music to make our community better.”



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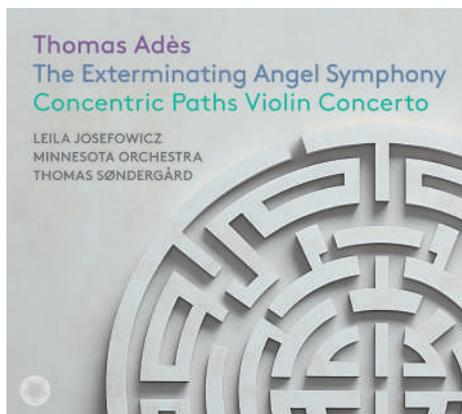


## HOLIDAY GIFTS, RECORDINGS AND MORE!

Good news for Minnesota Orchestra fans and holiday gift-givers: Orchestra Hall’s merchandise cart is open at all Orchestra concerts until the end of January’s Nordic Soundscapes festival! Located through New Year’s Day in the lobby near the Peavey Plaza entrance—then moving to the Target Atrium during the Nordic festival—the cart features an array of Orchestra apparel, recordings and more, plus a selection of items from FRIENDS of the Minnesota Orchestra in connection with the recent Kinder Konzerts premiere of *Caps for Sale*, Minnesota composer Abbie Betinis’ setting of the classic children’s book by Esphyr Slobodkina.

“During the holiday season, we’ll be featuring our ‘Holiday Fave 5,’ with five vendors collaborating on curating one top item to be available as a wonderful gift to give—or to keep yourself!” says Greg Geiger, manager of concert enhancements, concessions and special events. “The Nordic festival will have a special setup of its own featuring several special partners, including Ingebretsen’s Scandinavian Gifts and the American Swedish Institute.”

Another must-have item is the Orchestra’s new album of music by British composer Thomas Adès, conducted by Music Director Thomas Søndergård and including the Violin Concerto starring soloist Leila Josefowicz. Released in November



The Orchestra’s new Thomas Adès CD.

2025, the CD has already been praised by *Opus Klassiek* for the Orchestra’s “certainly impressive [contribution]... Søndergård possesses a keen ear for balance and detail. The interplay with Josefowicz is exemplary: clear, dynamic, and well-balanced.”

Items available from FRIENDS of the Minnesota Orchestra include the book *Caps for Sale* along with related caps, plush monkeys, t-shirts and fabric marker sets to color scenes from the book, as well as musical instrument ornaments. FRIENDS’ mission is to inspire young audiences to discover the joy and wonder of orchestral music. As a community partner and nonprofit organization, FRIENDS creates hands-on, imaginative learning experiences that help children see themselves in the music—as listeners, learners and future musicians. We’ll see you at the merch cart!

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# DVOŘÁK NEW WORLD SYMPHONY

**Delyana Lazarova**, conductor

**Yi Zhao**, violin

**Kate Wegener**, oboe

**Erik Wheeler**, cello

**J. Christopher Marshall**, bassoon

THU DEC 4 11AM | FRI DEC 5 8PM

*The Minnesota Orchestra dedicates these performances of Dvořák's New World Symphony to Life Director and former Board Chair Nancy Lindahl for her outstanding leadership and for the extraordinary care and support she and John Lindahl demonstrate toward the organization.*

*Delyana Lazarova's appearance in these concerts is supported by Dr. Jennine Speier and her late husband John, dedicated advocates for advancing the work of women conductors.*

Caroline Shaw	<i>Entr'acte</i>	CA. 11'
Joseph Haydn	Sinfonia concertante in B-flat major, H. I: 105 Allegro Andante Allegro con spirito <i>Yi Zhao, violin</i> <i>Erik Wheeler, cello</i> <i>Kate Wegener, oboe</i> <i>J. Christopher Marshall, bassoon</i>	CA. 22'
	<b>I N T E R M I S S I O N</b>	CA. 20'
Antonin Dvořák	Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Opus 95, <i>From the New World</i> Adagio – Allegro molto Largo Scherzo: Molto vivace Finale: Allegro con fuoco	CA. 43'

Profiles of the conductor and soloists appear on pages 50 through 53.  
Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/pre](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/pre) for details about pre-concert activities.

## THANK YOU

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

**CAROLINE SHAW**

**B:** August 1, 1982  
Greenville,  
North Carolina

***Entr'acte***

**PREMIERED:**  
April 2011 (string quartet  
version); July 25, 2014  
(string orchestra version)

Caroline Shaw was just 30 years old in 2013 when she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Music for her innovative a cappella work *Partita for 8 Voices*—making her the youngest person ever to receive the honor. In the dozen years since, the North Carolina native has become one of the most accomplished living composers of vocal, orchestral and chamber music, while adding five Grammy Awards to her list of accolades. In addition to her compositional achievements, she is a member of the award-winning contemporary vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth, which premiered *Partita for 8 Voices* in 2013.

**SPARKS FROM HAYDN AND THE THEATER**

Shaw's program note for her work *Entr'acte*—originally a string quartet composed in 2011, then adapted for string orchestra in 2014—give brief insight into her inspiration for the piece. It was sparked while listening to the Brentano String Quartet's performance of a Joseph Haydn quartet: the Opus 77, No. 2. A singular moment in Haydn's *Minuet* movement expressed a disorienting shift of mood and character. It spoke profoundly to Shaw's sense of creativity, as she states: "I love the way some music (like the minuets of Opus 77) suddenly takes you to the other side of Alice's looking glass, in a kind of absurd, subtle, technicolor transition."

The word "Entr'acte" is derived from the theater and is used to describe a musical interlude between acts. Often, it serves as a link or transitional bridge connecting two important parts of a story. Shaw took these concepts of disorientation and transition and created an entirely new soundscape. The string orchestra version was premiered by the Boston-based orchestra A Far Cry, which commissioned the arrangement, at Ottawa Chamberfest on July 25, 2014.

**THE MUSIC: A DRAMATIC JOURNEY**

Over the course of 11 minutes, *Entr'acte* takes us on a journey through dramatic dynamic shifts, from single strings softly plucked to full-bodied

chords shared across the ensemble. In the score, she first asks the strings to play with “sweeping” character, but then completely juxtaposes that set of directions with another suggesting the players sound “like granite.” In the final few minutes, all of the instruments begin expressing what sounds like a series of mournful or exhausted sighs. As the whispers of the violins and violas disappear into the ether, a solo cello continues on, telling a contemplative tale through a long series of pizzicato chords. Shaw notes in the score that the cellist has freedom to luxuriate here, encouraging the soloist to play as though “recalling fragments of an old tune or story.”

**Instrumentation:** string orchestra

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.



### JOSEPH HAYDN

**B:** March 31, 1732  
Rohrau, Austria

**D:** May 31, 1809  
Vienna, Austria

### Sinfonia concertante in B-flat major, H. I: 105

**PREMIERED:** March 9, 1792

Joseph Haydn spent much of his professional life in the service of the Esterházy family, working primarily at their estates on the Hungarian plains east of Vienna, where he composed extensively for the court’s musicians. While approaching age 60, he was persuaded to accept an invitation from the violinist and concert promoter Johann Peter Salomon to come to London for part of the 1791-92 season. There he found himself a celebrity beyond his wildest dreams. His music was popular because he was a forward-looking composer who spoke the consummate language of his own day. After his death in the early Romantic age, his reputation swiftly declined, only to be mightily restored in the 20th century.

## NEW LIFE TO AN OLD FORM

As one of his London projects, Haydn composed his single known Sinfonia concertante—a genre he was apt to regard as old-fashioned. As its designation suggests, the Sinfonia concertante is a hybrid of 18th-century symphony and a concerto, except that the soloists are always multiple in number; instead of being competitors, the highlighted instruments proceed “together in arms,” which, after all, is the essence of the word

concerto, stemming from the Latin *concertare*, “to fight side by side.” Here the four solo instruments serve in a double capacity, as soloists as well as integrated into the full-orchestra tutti—a practice familiar from the Baroque concerto grosso.

That Haydn, like Mozart, could be attracted to the old Sinfonia concertante when the genre was declining may have been because the medium offers the opportunity for striking instrumental combinations and effects. The premiere on March 9, 1792—with the impresario Salomon on solo violin—earned high accolades, and a repeat performance was scheduled for the following week. For Haydn it was a triumph, with one reviewer noting that the composer “shone with more than his usual luster.” The report continued: “A new Concertante...was performed for the first time with admirable effect. The solo parts were finely contrasted with the ‘full tide of harmony’ of the other instruments, and they were very ably sustained by the respective performers.”

## THE CONCERTO: A GRACEFUL TONE

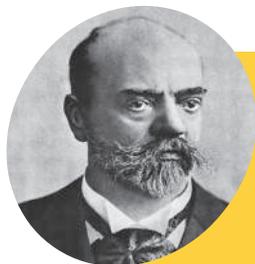
**ALLEGRO.** The graceful theme of the opening *Allegro* sets the tone for the entire work. Without waiting for a full orchestral exposition, the soloists promptly come to the fore, initiating an instrumental dialogue that never flags, and all four parts share the cadenza provided by Haydn.

**ANDANTE.** The core of the work is a glowing *Andante*, its flowing lyricism pastoral in mood. By its very nature, the theme lends itself to the silken embroidery of 32nd notes, these in the province of the soloists, while the orchestra is confined to the background, like retainers waiting to serve.

**ALLEGRO CON SPIRITO.** Announced by a unison-octave statement of the sturdy main theme, the finale uncorks numerous surprises. For instance, straightaway the violin interjects a parody of operatic recitative—serious at first, only to offer a sly new twist on the main theme, getting the movement in gear once and for all. There is no stopping Haydn’s wit: toward the end, just when we are led to expect another cadenza, he revives the recitative from the introduction—a bit of good-natured mockery that delighted the British. Such strokes as these—the sudden pause, the teasing gesture—Beethoven took to heart as he carried on in the symphony and chamber music precisely where his mentor Haydn left off.

**Instrumentation:** solo violin, cello, oboe and bassoon with orchestra comprising flute, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY MARY ANN FELDMAN.

**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK**

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

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

Symphony No. 9 in  
E minor, Opus 95,  
*From the New World*

**PREMIERED:**  
December 16, 1893

Antonín Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9, the *New World* Symphony, was one of many works this composer wrote during his sojourn in America from 1892 to 1895. Although the *New World* Symphony was written in the New World, it is not specifically *about* the New World. True, there are themes that were inspired by music of Indigenous Americans and African Americans, but he did not quote directly from folksongs—though special attention should be paid to the multi-layered story behind the famous melody the *Largo* movement.

Some 30 years before Dvořák composed the *New World* Symphony, he read Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha*, in a Czech translation. Dvořák re-read the poem in America and claimed that the scene of Minnehaha’s funeral in the forest inspired the *Largo* movement of his symphony. Although the *Largo*’s main theme, introduced by English horn, is Dvořák’s own, it is inspired by the tradition of African American spirituals taught to Dvořák by Harry Burleigh, a student at Dvořák’s conservatory in New York City with whom education went both ways. Dvořák spent a summer reflecting on this music, as well as elements of Indigenous American music, while in the process of composing the *New World* Symphony.

## A SYMPHONY OF MAGICAL MELODIES

**ADAGIO–ALLEGRO MOLTO.** This alone of Dvořák’s nine symphonies opens with a slow introduction. Within the space of just 23 measures, the composer incorporates moods of melancholic dreaming and tense foreboding, startling eruptions and a surging melodic line. The main *Allegro* section is launched by horns in an arpeggiated fanfare motif in E minor, a motif that will reappear in all remaining movements as well. Several additional themes follow.

**LARGO.** The second movement contains one of the most famous melodies in all of Western classical music, known to many as the song “Goin’ home.” That title arose when another of Dvořák’s students, William Arms Fisher, superimposed lyrics after Dvořák had completed the symphony. This

theme, first presented by the English horn, is in the key of D-flat major, which is harmonically very distant from the key of the first movement, E minor. Dvořák arrives at the new key through a sequence of just seven somber chords played by low woodwinds and brass, beginning in E minor and ending in D-flat major. The effect is effortless, even magical, “like the drawing back of a curtain revealing the scene to the spectators’ gaze,” to quote Dvořák’s biographer Otakar Šourek.

**SCHERZO: MOLTO VIVACE.** The *Scherzo* is one of the most energetic and exhilarating movements Dvořák ever wrote, and it borders on the virtuosic as well for the dazzling orchestral display it entails. Contributing to the bright colors and brilliant effects is the triangle, which is employed in this movement alone. The contrasting Trio section is a charming rustic dance introduced by the woodwind choir and set to a lilting long-short-long rhythm.

**FINALE: ALLEGRO CON FUOCO.** The finale, too, contains its share of melodic fecundity and inventiveness. The development section treats not only material from this movement but from the three previous ones as well, especially the main theme of the *Largo*, which is fragmented and tossed about with almost reckless abandon. The grand climax of the long coda (which begins after the horn solo that amazingly covers three full octaves) brings back the chordal sequence that opened the *Largo*, but now painted in broad, majestic strokes in the full brass and woodwind sections.

The fury subsides, the orchestra dies away to a whisper, and horns softly intone the finale’s main theme like an echo from a far-away world. Violins proudly proclaim the theme one last time, and the symphony seems destined to end in E minor, the key in which it began. But with a sudden shift of the harmonic gears, Dvořák brings the symphony to a close in joyous *E major*. The final chord, too, is a surprise—not a predictably stentorian chord played fortissimo by the full orchestra, but a lovely, warm sonority of winds alone.

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY ROBERT MARKOW.



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## CODY FRY CHRISTMAS

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, conductor  
Cody Fry, piano, guitar and vocals

WED DEC 10 7PM

The program for tonight's concert will be announced from the stage.  
There will be one 20-minute intermission.



### CODY FRY, PIANO, GUITAR AND VOCALS

Cody Fry's music sounds like the moment in your favorite old flick when the film changes from black-and-white to technicolor in a rush of emotion. As his orchestration booms, you practically expect a Golden Age romance to unfold to the narration of his vocals.

It's warm enough to make you nostalgic, but Fry always looks forward as a singer, songwriter, composer, producer, arranger and multi-instrumentalist. It's why he's quietly emerged as a phenomenon with hundreds of millions of streams, hundreds of thousands of TikTok creations and widespread acclaim. Along the way he's picked up two Grammy Award nominations and an RIAA Certified Platinum record, and sold out shows at some of the world's most prestigious concert halls. You can keep up with Fry's musical journey at [codyfry.com](http://codyfry.com) or on social media.

A profile of conductor Enrico Lopez-Yañez appears on page 50.

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Jason Seber, conductor

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From the novel by CHARLES DICKENS  
Original Score by MILES GOODMAN  
Songs by PAUL WILLIAMS

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A profile of conductor Jason Seber appears on page 51.  
Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/pre](https://minnesotaorchestra.org/pre) for details about pre-concert activities.

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David Schmalenberger, drums | Daryl Boudreaux, percussion  
The Lazarus Brass | Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs

SUN DEC 14 2PM

The program for today's concert will be announced from the stage.  
There will be one 20-minute intermission.



### CHARLES LAZARUS, TRUMPET

Charles Lazarus, a Minnesota Orchestra musician since 2000, is a multi-faceted performer, composer, producer and bandleader whose career has included tenures in Dallas Brass, Meridian Arts Ensemble and Canadian Brass. He has created several crossover orchestral shows featuring his various ensembles, with which he has released five recordings. His live recording of Steve Heitzeg's *American Nomad* concerto and a children's animated short film collaboration with author Michael Hall are available online. His most recent recording with Tommy Barbarella, *The Modern Hymn Project*, is a collection of modern jazz takes on traditional hymns and spiritual music. He has appeared as a soloist with orchestras around the U.S. and Canada, and has performed and taught master classes in every U.S. state, Canada, and throughout Asia and Europe. More: [charleslazarus.com](http://charleslazarus.com).

View a profile and roster of Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs and a roster of the Lazarus Brass on page 54. Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/merry](http://minnesotaorchestra.org/merry) for more profiles. Visit [minnesotaorchestra.org/pre](http://minnesotaorchestra.org/pre) for details about pre-concert activities.



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Molly Turner, conductor

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Overture

Scena - The Decoration of the Christmas Tree

March

Children's Galop

Scena - Arrival of Drosselmeyer

Scena - Grossvater Dance

Scena - The Magic Spell Begins

Scena - The Battle

Scena - Pine Forest Journey Through the Snow

Waltz of the Snowflakes

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

CA. 20'

Variation 1 - Tarantella

Final Waltz

Scena - Arrival of Clara and Nutcracker

Divertissement (Character Dances)

Chocolate (Spanish Dance)

Coffee (Arab Dance)

Trepak (Russian Dance)

Mother Gigogne

Dance of the Reed-Flutes (Mirlitons)

Tea (Chinese Dance)

Pas de deux - Variation

Variation 2 - Sugar Plum Fairy

Waltz of the Flowers

Coda

Today's concert lasts about 2 hours, including a 20-minute intermission.

Profiles of conductor Molly Turner and Troupe Vertigo appear on pages 52 and 55.

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## A NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION

Teddy Abrams, conductor

Aaron Diehl, piano

WED DEC 31 8PM | THU JAN 1 2PM

Michael Tilson Thomas    *Agnegram*    CA. 8'

Timo Andres    *Made of Tunes*    CA. 28'  
                           Come, Labor On  
                           American Nocturnal  
                           *Aaron Diehl, piano*

I N T E R M I S S I O N    CA. 20'

Leonard Bernstein    Three Dance Episodes from *On the Town*    CA. 11'  
                                   The Great Lover  
                                   Lonely Town (Pas de deux)  
                                   Times Square: 1944

Aaron Copland    Suite from *Billy the Kid*    CA. 20'  
                                   Introduction: The Open Prairie  
                                   Street in a Frontier Town  
                                   Mexican Dance and Finale  
                                   Prairie Night (Card Game at Night)  
                                   Gun Battle  
                                   Celebration (After Billy's Capture)  
                                   Billy's Death  
                                   The Open Prairie Again

Profiles of the conductor and soloist appear on pages 47 and 49.

After the New Year's Eve concert, join us in the Roberta Mann Grand Foyer for a countdown to midnight, vintage jazz from Belle Amour and a complimentary Champagne toast.

### THANK YOU

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

The New Year's Day concert airs live on [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#).

**MICHAEL TILSON  
THOMAS****B:** December 21, 1944  
Los Angeles, California***Agnegram*****PREMIERED:**  
May 14, 1998

To fully understand American composer-conductor Michael Tilson Thomas' *Agnegram*, it is imperative to know a bit about an extraordinary woman named Agnes Albert. Born in 1908, Albert was, for much of the 20th century, a powerful advocate for music in the San Francisco Bay area. Not only was she one of the San Francisco Symphony's biggest supporters, but as a skilled pianist she earned the honor of performing with that orchestra as soloist in 1932 and 1952. She ultimately found her philanthropic passion in arts education, giving well over \$1 million to support San Francisco's school music programs and to help create the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra. She also served on the symphony's board for a remarkable 50 years.

**A WITTY MUSICAL TRIBUTE**

As the time came to celebrate Agnes Albert's 90th birthday, Michael Tilson Thomas was serving as music director of the San Francisco Symphony. He composed *Agnegram* as a musical birthday tribute to this longtime friend of the organization, and led its premiere with the symphony on May 14, 1998. "I wanted a piece that would represent her the way she was," he noted, "witty, charming, vivacious and full of humor."

Using a technique that many composers have experimented with, Tilson Thomas derived all of the themes in *Agnegram* from musical notes that corresponded to the letters in Albert's full name. For letters not already in the musical alphabet of A through G, solfège syllables (do, re, mi, etc.) served as replacement; for example, la, or the sixth degree of the scale, could represent the letter L.

The work lasts only eight minutes, but it packs a punch of musical material, including references to many of Albert's favorite composers such as Bernstein, Stravinsky, Verdi, Tchaikovsky and Robert Schumann. No instrument is left out in this mini-concerto for orchestra, layered with the energy of a Sousa march, the cool groove of a late-night jazz band, powered by a full contingent of orchestral winds and strings. A series of musical jokes that Tilson Thomas himself describes as a "jungle-like cacophony"

with “alternately elegant and goofball percussion entrances” add dashes of wit and humor.

In a 2002 article in *SFGate* announcing Albert’s death at age 94, Tilson Thomas remembered that she “always started from the principle of ‘I love music, I love the Symphony, I love this city, and I want them all to work together and be the best they can possibly be.’” The predominant quality of *Agnegram* is exuberance, a fitting tribute to Albert’s incomparable dynamic spirit.

**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes (both doubling piccolo), piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets (1 doubling piccolo trumpet), 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, alto lion’s roar, anvil, low brake drum, 2 cencerros, 2 cowbells, crotales, flexatone, hi-hat, ratchet, side drum, tambourine, triangle, 2 wood blocks, whip, xylophone, glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes, harp, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.



TIMO ANDRES

B: 1985  
Palo Alto, California

*Made of Tunes*

PREMIERED:  
March 22, 2024

— Our all-American New Year’s program is rooted mainly on the country’s far coasts—featuring composers who were either born in California, worked primarily in New York, or both—and the man who crosses categories is composer-pianist Timo Andres, whose recent piano concerto *Made of Tunes* concludes the concert’s first half.

Born in Palo Alto, raised in rural Connecticut and now based in Brooklyn, Andres has earned high accolades for his work as both a composer and pianist. His album *The Blind Banister* received a 2025 Grammy nomination for Best Engineered Classical Album, and he earned a 2021 Grammy nomination for his performance as a pianist on the album *The Arching Path*. He received a Tony nomination for his work on the 2024 Broadway production of *Illinoise*, and in 2016 he was a Pulitzer Prize finalist for his piano concerto *The Blind Banister*.

## STARTING WITH TUNES

Andres' resume of composition teachers and mentors encompasses an array of styles and techniques. It was after studying John Adams' groundbreaking work in minimalism, though, that Andres recalls his creative world being blown open. He often strives to use some of Adams' approach as inspiration for his own compositions, but in his newest piano concerto, *Made of Tunes*, the starting point was different. Instead, as Andres explained in an interview before the work's premiere: "I challenged myself to start this piece with melodic material—with tunes. Usually when I'm composing, the grit in the oyster is something much smaller and more basic, like a little harmony or figuration or a structural idea. Something more abstract and flexible. For me, melody is usually something that comes out of [that] material....In this case, all of the material in the piece is derived from preexisting melodies."

The first movement, *Come, Labor On*, features music from two religious hymns with significant meaning to Andres. The second movement, *American Nocturnal*, repurposes fragments of the well-known melody *America the Beautiful*. The other melodies he selected are not necessarily earworms from recognizable, beloved tunes of the past—a trick in many a composer's playbook. Instead, Andres folds in bits of music taken from his own successful works, such as *The Blind Banister*, his cello concerto *Upstate Obscura* and his solo piano pieces.

Additionally, Andres designed this music intentionally to emphasize the expertise of pianist Aaron Diehl, the work's premiering soloist and the one who joins the Minnesota Orchestra for these concerts. Diehl himself is a multi-dimensional artist, equally skilled in jazz, improvisation and classical performance, with a focus on the wide-ranging traditions of American music. Knowing this about Diehl, Andres explored ways of swirling together melodies found in American church music, folk songs and jazz clubs. He also flips a few traditional Western classical concerto concepts upside down, calling for the pianist to improvise sections within the main structure of the piece in response to the orchestra's gestures, but then fully notating a solo cadenza, leaving little room for improvisation there.

The work's title is pulled directly from a line in *The Things Our Fathers Loved*, a song by American composer Charles Ives: "I think there must be a place in the soul / all made of tunes, of tunes of long ago." Composer-conductor John Adams, Andres' mentor, led the premiere of the work with the Los Angeles Philharmonic on March 22, 2024, featuring Diehl as soloist.

**Instrumentation:** solo piano with orchestra comprising flute, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet), alto saxophone, 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, suspended cymbal, bongos, crotales, tam-tam, Thai gongs, tom-toms, triangle, xylophone, glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes, organ (doubling celesta) and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.



### LEONARD BERNSTEIN

**B:** August 25, 1918  
Lawrence, Massachusetts

**D:** October 14, 1990  
New York City

### Three Dance Episodes from *On the Town*

**PREMIERED:**  
December 28, 1944 (original  
musical); February 3, 1946  
(concert suite)

— Leonard Bernstein was just 25 years of age—and fresh from the triumph of his debut conducting the New York Philharmonic—when his ballet music for *Fancy Free*, paired with Jerome Robbins' choreography, launched his second career as a successful composer. Then, joined by Betty Comden and Adolph Green—who wrote the script and lyrics and played two of the leading roles—Bernstein, Robbins and director George Abbott created the 1944 Broadway musical *On the Town*, which was also about three sailors, but had completely different music and choreography.

Riding on the heels of multiple successes, Bernstein then distilled the score into a short three-movement orchestral suite. Following the adventures of three wartime sailors on 24 hours' shore leave in New York City, the Three Dance Episodes from *On the Town* depict the soldiers' dreams of finding romance, the bluesy feelings of loneliness on a cold evening, and the marvels and excitement of a first visit to the big city.

**Instrumentation:** flute (doubling piccolo), oboe (doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (1 each doubling E-flat clarinet, alto saxophone and bass clarinet), 2 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, drum set, triangle, wood block, xylophone, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER.



## AARON COPLAND

**B:** November 14, 1900  
Brooklyn, New York

**D:** December 2, 1990  
North Tarrytown,  
New York

Suite from *Billy the Kid*

**PREMIERED:**  
October 16, 1938  
(original ballet)

Early in 1938 Aaron Copland was approached by Lincoln Kirstein, director of the Ballet Caravan, who wished to commission a ballet based on the life of Billy the Kid. But Copland was not drawn to this subject, and he felt a particular aversion to cowboy music: “I have never been particularly impressed with the musical beauties of the cowboy song as such. The words are usually delightful and the manner of singing needs no praise from me. But neither the words nor the delivery are of much use in a purely orchestral ballet score, so I was left with the tunes themselves, which, I repeat, are often less than exciting. As far as I was concerned, this ballet could be written without benefit of the poverty-stricken tunes Billy himself must have known.”

Kirstein assured Copland that he need not use actual cowboy tunes in the ballet, but as the composer left to spend the summer of 1938 in Paris, Kirstein gave him several collections of cowboy songs to look over. And then a strange thing happened, softening Copland: “Perhaps there is something different about a cowboy song in Paris. But whatever the reason may have been, it wasn’t very long before I found myself hopelessly involved in expanding, contracting, rearranging and superimposing cowboy tunes on the rue de Rennes in Paris.” Copland uses theme-shapes, intervals and bits of rhythm from these tunes—we sense their origins and distinctive flavor without ever hearing the tunes in their original form.

## ADVENTURES IN THE FRONTIER

The premiere of *Billy the Kid* was a success, and Copland arranged an orchestral suite from its music, preserving about two-thirds of the original score. The suite begins with *The Open Prairie*, which creates a sense of great space, and the steady tread of two French horns marks the appearance of humans within this vastness. Suddenly we are on a *Street in a Frontier Town*, full of dizzy human energy. Here Copland quotes “Old Grandad,” “Whoopie-Ti-Yi-Yo” and “The Old Chisholm Trail,” and a solo trumpet performs a *Mexican Dance*—specifically, a *jarabe*. A reprise of the opening prairie music leads to the *Prairie Night (Card Game at Night)*—a nocturne

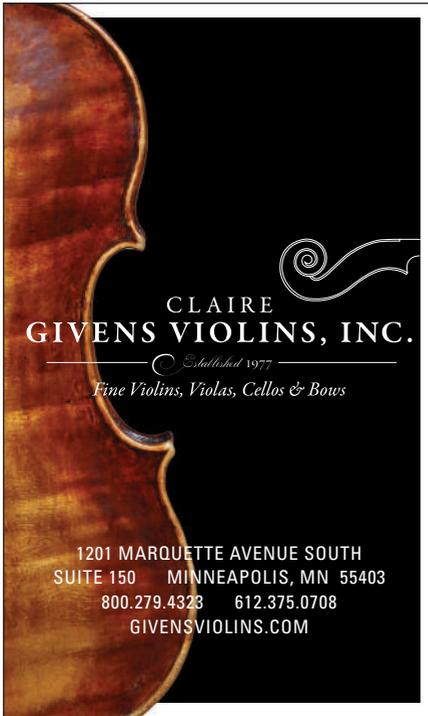
for woodwinds, trumpet and strings—and this proceeds into the *Gun Battle*, with its booming drums and spatters of gunfire.

*Celebration* depicts the town's relief at Billy's capture. Eugene Loring, who danced the part of Billy at the premiere, had encouraged Copland to include a "macabre polka" as part of the ballet, and this was Copland's response. This *Celebration* is built on dotted rhythms and the sound of a honky-tonk piano, but what gives this music its "macabre" dimension is its bitonality: Copland sets the dance-tune in C major and its accompaniment in C-sharp. The suite now jumps to *Billy's Death*—his final breaths are heard in the *quasi tremolando* solo violin. In the suite, Copland moves directly from Billy's death to a reprise of the music for *The Open Prairie*, and *Billy the Kid* concludes out under the open sky of the vast prairies.

Copland's score for *Billy the Kid* set the gold standard for music about the West. Its epic sense of space, use of cowboy tunes, and concise evocation of a raw frontier town—replete with honky-tonk revelry, gunfights and the lonely hero—have become part of the imagination of every subsequent composer who writes music about the American West.

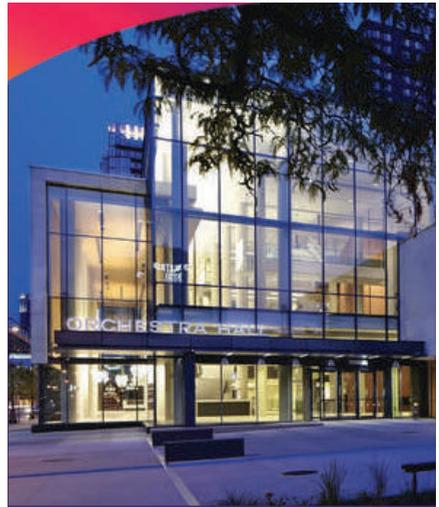
**Instrumentation:** 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, guiro, slapstick, sleigh bells, tin whistle, triangle, wood blocks, xylophone, glockenspiel, harp, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



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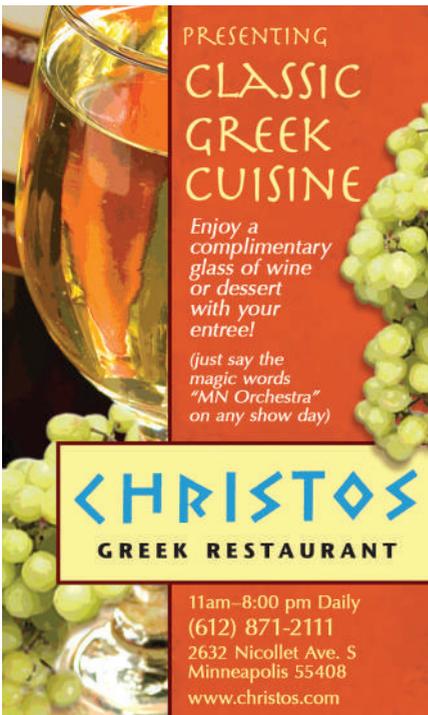
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**Steve Hackman**, conductor and creator

**Erin Bentlage, India Carney and Malia Civetz**, vocalists

SAT JAN 3 7PM

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Béla Bartók/Björk *Bartók X Björk* CA. 60'

**Bartók: Concerto for Orchestra**      **Björk: From first three albums**

Introduzione. Andante non troppo – Allegro vivace	Army of Me Hunter
Presentando le coppie. Allegro scherzando	Bachelorette Human Behavior
Elegia. Andante non troppo	Unravel
Intermezzo interrotto. Allegretto	All is Full of Love
Finale. Presto	Hyperballad Isobel Venus as a Boy Jóga Play Dead

Profiles of the conductor and soloists appear on pages 47 through 49.  
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**TEDDY ABRAMS,**  
CONDUCTOR

A Grammy Award-winning composer and *Musical America*'s 2022 Conductor of the Year, Teddy Abrams has been the galvanizing force behind the Louisville Orchestra's artistic renewal and social impact since his appointment as music director in 2014. He has conducted many orchestras in North America and Europe, including those of Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Helsinki and Luxembourg. This season he debuts with the Atlanta Symphony, Nashville Symphony and BBC Symphony; in September 2026 he starts a new role as artistic and executive director of the Ojai Music Festival. He is an award-winning composer whose recent works include the rap opera *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali*, a piano concerto for Yuja Wang, and *Mammoth*, premiered with Yo-Yo Ma and Davóne Tines. He is now at work on a Broadway musical, *ALI*, and an orchestral history of Kentucky. His solo piano recording *Preludes* was released this year on New Amsterdam Records. More: [opus3artists.com](https://opus3artists.com), [teddyabrams.com](https://teddyabrams.com).



**ERIN BENTLAGE,**  
VOCALS

Hailing from Vermont, Erin Bentlage is a two-time Grammy-winning vocalist, composer and multi-instrumentalist whose music blurs the lines between song, improvisation and soundscape. She first found expression through ballet and classical piano before discovering her voice in jazz and improvisation. She is featured on projects by Jacob Collier, Kiefer, Kate McGarry, Steve Hackman and Amber Navran, and on an upcoming *Moonchild* record. As a writer and arranger, she creates for voice in forms from cinematic choral textures and major motion picture scores to intimate, layered vocals. A recipient of the Los Angeles Jazz Society's New Note Award, she has written for ensembles such as Tonality, Kings Return and The Apartment Sessions. In 2019, she co-founded the Grammy-winning vocal collective *säje*, alongside Sara Gazarek, Amanda Taylor and Johnaye Kendrick. Their debut record features collaborations with Jacob Collier, Terri Lyne Carrington and Ambrose Akinmusire. More: Instagram [@erinbentlage](https://www.instagram.com/erinbentlage).



**INDIA CARNEY,**  
VOCALS

India Carney is a multi-talented solo artist with a wide range of dynamic performing experience. Her original music features a mix of classical, pop, R&B, a cappella and theatrical influences. Her versatility shines through her work as a singer, songwriter, arranger, actress and vocal coach. She competed as a Top 5 Artist on season 8 of NBC's *The Voice*. She has toured and performed with artists such as Olivia Rodrigo, Katy Perry, Kali Uchis, Lady Gaga, Mariah Carey and Christina Aguilera, and has performed on TV broadcasts of the Grammy Awards, the B.E.T. Awards, *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon* and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. As a vocal coach and mentor she has developed the next generation of singers on shows like *The Voice* and *American Idol*, and with arts foundations. Her debut single *Human* was released in 2021, while her single *Recovery* came out in 2024. More: Instagram [@india-carney](#).



**MALIA CIVETZ,**  
VOCALS

Malia Civetz has performed across the U.S. and Europe in Steve Hackman's symphonic mashups for the past 10 years. A Los Angeles-based recording artist and Warner Chappell published songwriter, she graduated from the USC's Thornton School of Music's popular music program, then linked up with powerhouse songwriters Ross Golan and JKash. She initially made waves with the independent single *Champagne Clouds*, then signed a record deal with Warner Records and made her major label debut with her first EP, *The Flip*, featuring her hit single *Broke Boy*, followed by her EP *Heels in Hand*. She has surpassed 200 million total streams as a songwriter and artist. Her early career accomplishments include performing as a *Star of Tomorrow* at New York's Apollo Theater at age 13, singing for President Obama at age 16 and performing in Barry Manilow's show at the Paris Las Vegas at 17. More: Instagram [@maliafromvegas](#).



**AARON DIEHL,**  
PIANO

Pianist Aaron Diehl has redefined the lines between jazz and classical with his nuanced, understated approach. He has performed with Wynton Marsalis, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Tyshawn Sorey and Philip Glass and has appeared as soloist with the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics, San Francisco Symphony and Cleveland Orchestra under conductors including Alan Gilbert, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Marin Alsop. In 2023 he was named artistic director of 92NY's Jazz in July Festival, succeeding Bill Charlap. Highlights of his 2025-26 season include performing a new piano concerto by Tyshawn Sorey with the Philadelphia Orchestra; performances of Timo Andres' *Made of Tunes* with the Minnesota and Cleveland orchestras; trio appearances at the Gstaad New Year Music Festival, The Forum in Saint Thomas and SFJAZZ; a solo program at Lincoln Center's Legacies of San Juan Hill Festival; and collaborative performances of The Complete Philip Glass Piano Etudes. More: [opus3artists.com](http://opus3artists.com), [aarondiehl.com](http://aarondiehl.com).



**STEVE HACKMAN,**  
CONDUCTOR AND CREATOR

Composer, arranger, producer, songwriter, conductor and pianist Steve Hackman is the musical polymath at the center of the most exciting productions in the orchestral space, whether writing for the concert stage or screen, collaborating with today's most compelling artists—including Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo on the recent *Wicked* TV special for NBC—or contributing to the Oscars and Emmys. His 16 barrier-shattering orchestral fusions, which synthesize great works of classical music with towering figures from contemporary popular music, have led to performances around the world of titles such as *Brahms X Radiohead*, *Beethoven X Beyoncé* and *Tchaikovsky X Drake*. In 2026 his release schedule spans from electronic-orchestral ballet scores to his concept art-piece *THE BRINK*, solo piano pieces and reimaginings of music by Frank Ocean, Jacob Collier and Kendrick Lamar. His first movie soundtrack came out in November, for Netflix's holiday caper *Jingle Bell Heist*. More: Instagram: [@stevehackmanmusic](https://www.instagram.com/stevehackmanmusic).



**DELYANA LAZAROVA,**  
CONDUCTOR

As a conductor, Delyana Lazarova thinks of herself as a musician among musicians. Collaboration, openness and sensitivity to the specific sound and character of every orchestra are the foundation of her work. During the 2025-26 season she begins positions as principal guest conductor of both the Utah Symphony and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; with the latter she made her BBC Proms debut in September. She also debuts with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony, Colorado Symphony and Hungarian Radio Symphony, among other ensembles, and embarks on a European tour with Kammerorchester Basel. Last season she became artistic partner of the chamber orchestra ROCO in Houston. Her first CD, featuring works by Dobrinka Tabakova recorded with the Hallé Orchestra, was released in 2023. Her honors include winning the inaugural Siemens Hallé International Conductors Competition and the James Conlon Conducting Prize at the Aspen Music Festival in 2020. More: [delyanalazarova.com](http://delyanalazarova.com), [harrisonparrott.com](http://harrisonparrott.com).



**ENRICO LOPEZ-YAÑEZ,**  
CONDUCTOR

Enrico Lopez-Yañez is one of the most innovative and in-demand conductors in North America. He currently serves as principal pops conductor of the Detroit and Pacific symphonies, principal conductor of Dallas Symphony Presents and principal guest conductor of pops at the Indianapolis Symphony. He was previously principal pops conductor of the Nashville Symphony. Highlights of his 2025-26 season include concerts with Ben Rector, Cody Fry, Common, Trisha Yearwood and Los Aguilar (Angela, Leonardo and Pepe Aguilar). Podium highlights include the Cleveland Orchestra, Hollywood Bowl and Philadelphia Orchestra, among other ensembles. As a composer and arranger, he has written for artists such as Big Sean and Mariachi Los Camperos, and has been commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony, Detroit Symphony and Indianapolis Symphony, among other ensembles. He is artistic director and co-founder of Symphonica Productions, LLC, which develops innovative pops, family and educational concerts. More: [enricolopezyanez.com](http://enricolopezyanez.com).



**J. CHRISTOPHER MARSHALL,**  
BASSOON

Texas native J. Christopher Marshall, a member of the Minnesota Orchestra since 1999, has appeared as a soloist with the ensemble in multiple performances of Dieter's Concerto for Two Bassoons, and appears regularly on the Orchestra's chamber music series. He has also performed as a soloist with the Bloomington and Mankato symphonies, and has appeared with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Boston Symphony and Pops, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the National Symphony. He has participated in numerous music festivals and has led master classes and sectionals for many universities as well as community and youth orchestras. Since 2022 he has served on the faculty of the University of Minnesota's School of Music. He earned his master's degree in bassoon performance at the New England Conservatory of Music. He holds two undergraduate degrees from Northwestern University: one in bassoon performance and the other in mechanical engineering. More: [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).



**JASON SEBER,**  
CONDUCTOR

Jason Seber is a strong believer in the eclectic experiences which today's symphony orchestras offer their communities. He strives to make music of many genres and styles accessible, relevant and meaningful to diverse audiences across the country. He has conducted many leading U.S. orchestras, including the symphonies of Baltimore, Colorado, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Nashville, National, North Carolina, Oregon, Phoenix, San Diego and St. Louis; the Louisville and Minnesota orchestras; the Buffalo Philharmonic; and the Cincinnati Pops. He has conducted over 25 feature films and performed with Patti Austin, Mason Bates, Andrew Bird, Boyz II Men, Ashley Brown, DeVotchKa, Melissa Etheridge, Ben Folds, Cody Fry, Renée Elise Goldsberry, Indigo Girls, Wynonna Judd, Lyle Lovett, Katharine McPhee, Natalie Merchant, Brian Stokes Mitchell, My Morning Jacket, Leslie Odom Jr., Aoife O'Donovan, Pink Martini, Ben Rector, Stephen Schwartz, Doc Severinsen, Lindsey Stirling and the Violent Femmes. More: [jasonseber.com](http://jasonseber.com).



**MOLLY TURNER,**  
CONDUCTOR

American conductor Molly Turner is an exceptional young talent who directs with fervor and imagination. During the 2024-25 season she was the New World Symphony's conducting fellow, a role in which she led subscription, family, education and holiday concerts. She was also a Dudamel Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, leading a performance with the LA Phil New Music Group and conducting the Philharmonic in a Symphonies for Schools concert. This season she returns to lead a performance with the LA Phil New Music Group and conducts the Orchestre de Paris, Kristiansand Symphony, Opera Grand Rapids and Musiqa, along with numerous cover conducting and preparatory engagements. In 2019 she was the youngest conductor invited for a residency at the Dallas Opera's Hart Institute for Women Conductors. Also active as a composer, she has premiered her own works, most recently *Open Doors* for orchestra. More: [harrisonparrott.com](http://harrisonparrott.com), [mollyxiuturner.com](http://mollyxiuturner.com).



**KATE WEGENER,**  
OBOE

Kate Wegener joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 2023 as associate principal oboe, and makes her debut as soloist with the ensemble in December's performances of Haydn's *Sinfonia concertante*. A native of Connecticut, she has been featured at the Marlboro Music Festival, the Spoleto Festival and the Lakes Area Music Festival, as well as with the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. She has also appeared as a substitute musician with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Florida Orchestra and other ensembles. Wegener received her bachelor's and master's degrees at the Juilliard School, where she studied primarily with Nathan Hughes—the Minnesota Orchestra's principal oboe—with additional studies with Elaine Douvas, Linda Strommen and Scott Hostetler. Passionate about passing on her expertise in the oboe and reed-making, she currently cultivates a private studio in Minneapolis. More: [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).



**ERIK WHEELER,**  
CELLO

Houston-born cellist Erik Wheeler joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 2019 and served as acting co-associate principal cello for the 2024-25 season. He has performed chamber music alongside renowned artists including Jon Kimura Parker, Philip Setzer, Lawrence Dutton, Timothy Eddy, Kim Kashkashian, Susan Starr and Charles Wetherbee, and has appeared as a soloist with numerous orchestras including the Houston Symphony. He began his musical studies with Diane Bonds and subsequently studied with Steve Laven, Lynn Harrell and Brinton Smith. He earned his undergraduate degree from Rice University, where his principal teacher was Desmond Hoebig, then spent a year at the Juilliard School with Richard Aaron. While at Rice, he performed Tchaikovsky's Rocooco Variations with the Shepherd School Chamber Orchestra and served as the Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra's principal cello. His parents are both musicians, and his father Lawrence was the Minnesota Orchestra's co-principal viola in the 1970s. More: [minnesotaorchestra.org](https://minnesotaorchestra.org).



**YI ZHAO,**  
VIOLIN

Born in Henan, China, Yi Zhao joined the Minnesota Orchestra's first violin section in 2023 and served as principal second violin last season. While previously serving as assistant concertmaster of the Colorado Symphony for nine seasons, she appeared frequently as soloist with that symphony and local community orchestras and at chamber music series statewide. She performs regularly at the Grand Teton Music Festival, taking on various leadership roles and chamber concerts. She has also been concertmaster of Oregon's Sunriver Music Festival since 2023, and has performed at the Salzburg Festival with the Pittsburgh Symphony and at the La Jolla SummerFest as part of the Pegasus Trio, among other engagements. Zhao received her bachelor's degree studying under Qian Zhou at the National University of Singapore's Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music and earned her master's with Cho-Liang Lin at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. More: [minnesotaorchestra.org](https://minnesotaorchestra.org).

**ANGELICA CANTANTI  
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The Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs (ACYC), founded in 1980, is an award-winning children’s community choral program and among the oldest in the Twin Cities. ACYC offers ten ensembles serving youth from grades K-12, plus an adaptive class for singers with special needs and an alumni adult chorus. ACYC singers performed at the 2018 Super Bowl and were named “Best Community Choir in MN” by WCCO-TV. More: [angelicacantanti.org](http://angelicacantanti.org).

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Julia Blessing	Avery Patterson
Emma Carpenter	Olivia Rocha
Julia Farah	Preston Rose
Chloe Fider	Finley Schmidt
Tilda French	Madeleine
Franki Gile	Schroeder
Elliott Hazzard	Berit Schulz
Charlotte Hersey	Naia Spoonheim
Elizabeth Hersey	Cullen Van Ranst
Kainalu Lazarus	Kayla Vogland
Kendall McGuire	Ryan Warmka

**LAZARUS BRASS**

The Lazarus Brass, which appears with trumpet player Charles Lazarus at the annual Merry & Bright holiday performances at Orchestra Hall, is composed of several Minnesota Orchestra musicians and other prominent Minnesota brass performers.

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Martin Hodel  
Brad Shermock

**HORN**

Michael Gast  
Brian Jensen

**TROMBONE**

Dean Sorenson  
R. Douglas Wright

**BASS**

**TROMBONE**

Andrew Chappell

**TUBA**

Steven Campbell



## TROUPE VERTIGO

Fusing elements of cirque acrobatics, classical dance and contemporary theater, Troupe Vertigo consists of world-class aerial artists, contortionists and ballet dancers, and was founded in 2009 by Artistic Director Aloysia Gavre and Technical Director Rex Camphuis. The ensemble has performed with major orchestras across North America, this season including the Dallas, Detroit and National symphonies and Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra, among other ensembles. Troupe Vertigo is known for its collaborative thematic programs including *Cirque España*, *Cirque Noir*, *Cirque Goes to Broadway*, *Cirque Goes to Hollywood*, *Cirque Dances* featuring *The Firebird*, and complete ballet presentations of *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake* and *Cinderella*. The company's unique perspective on the circus arts has led to a variety of speaking engagements including a TEDx Talk. Troupe Vertigo's facility is also home to Cirque School Los Angeles, which uses training, performance and community outreach to foster passion for the circus arts. More: [troupevertigo.com](http://troupevertigo.com).

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# NORDIC SOUNDSCAPES FESTIVAL

*Jan 3-17*

- ◆ Steve Hackman's Bartók X Björk  
with the Minnesota Orchestra

**SAT JAN 3 7PM**

Steve Hackman, conductor and creator



- ◆ Søndergård and Ehnes

**THU JAN 8 11AM & FRI JAN 9 8PM**

Thomas Søndergård, conductor | James Ehnes, violin



- ◆ Chamber Music in the Hall

with James Ehnes

**SAT JAN 10 7PM**



- ◆ Søndergård Conducts Sibelius

**FRI JAN 16 8PM & SAT JAN 17 7PM**

Thomas Søndergård, conductor | Lauren Snouffer, soprano



**Arrive early!**

Cozy up by the fire. Enjoy baked goods,  
sip a cocktail, sit back for pre-concert music  
and crafts provided by Nordic partners.

*Don't miss this magical festival!*

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by MATTHEW LÓPEZ  
directed by JOSEPH HAJ

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