

CHRIS THILE

Daniela Candillari, conductor
Chris Thile, mandolin and vocals
Alex Sopp, vocals
Susie Park, violin
David Stevens, drums
Members of the Minnesota Chorale, Jerry Rubino, special projects conductor

FRI JUL 31 8PM | SAT AUG 1 7PM

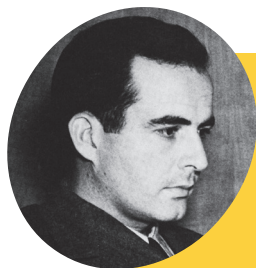
Samuel Barber	Overture to <i>The School for Scandal</i>	CA. 7'
Caroline Shaw	<i>And So</i> <i>Chris Thile, mandolin and vocals</i>	CA. 6'
Duke Ellington	Selections from <i>The River Suite</i> Spring Meander Giggling Rapids	CA. 12'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	CA. 20'
Chris Thile	<i>ATTENTION!</i> Attention Lord Starbucks The Rooftop Carrie Freaking Fisher <i>Chris Thile, mandolin and vocals</i> <i>Alex Sopp, vocals</i> <i>Susie Park, violin</i> <i>David Stevens, drums</i> <i>Members of the Minnesota Chorale</i>	CA. 40'

Profiles of the conductor, soloists and Chorale, and a list of Chorale members, appear on pages 42 and 44 through 48.

Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/shawtext for the text to Caroline Shaw's *And So*, and visit christhile.com/attention for the text to Chris Thile's *ATTENTION!*

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

The July 31 concert airs live on [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#).

**SAMUEL BARBER**

B: March 9, 1910
West Chester,
Pennsylvania

D: January 23, 1981
New York City

**Overture to *The School
for Scandal***

PREMIERED:
August 30, 1933

Samuel Barber was only 26 when he wrote the Adagio for Strings, his best-known work, but he was even younger when he wrote the Overture to *The School for Scandal*: it precedes the famous Adagio by five years. Barber was still studying at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia when he wrote this effervescent work, which later served as his graduation thesis.

The overture became Barber's first orchestral composition to be published and his first to be performed by a major orchestra. The premiere was given on August 30, 1933, with Alexander Smallens conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra before an audience of 8,000; the location was Robin Hood Dell, a natural amphitheater in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. Barber was in Italy at the time, so he could not attend.

As noted in the score, the music was “suggested by Sheridan’s comedy,” meaning that it intends only to capture the spirit of mirth, wit and laughter of Richard Sheridan’s 1777 play, which harkens back to the Restoration period of a century earlier, rather than to portray any particular characters or scenes. The eight-minute work conforms to the sonata-allegro design that would have been found in most symphonic movements in Sheridan’s time, hence, also the time of Mozart.

ORCHESTRAL LAUGHTER AND RAPIER WIT

Following a raucous call to attention, in which chords in one key grate against those in another (a startling harmonic juxtaposition, to say the least!), violins present the sprightly first theme—memorable if hardly singable. The headlong rush of energy dissipates in time for the lyrical, beautiful second theme in the solo oboe. Further thematic elements are heard in the solo clarinet, then solo flute. The brief development section culminates in a virtuosic *tour de force* for madly swirling strings, and the recapitulation proceeds in the expected manner, with the haunting second theme now going to English horn. More bursts of orchestral laughter, rapier wit and musical pokes in the ribs bring the Overture to a rollicking close, a sure-fire way to start a program.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbal, triangle, glockenspiel, harp, celesta and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ROBERT MARKOW.



CAROLINE SHAW

B: August 1, 1982
Greenville, North Carolina

And So

PREMIERED:
March 12, 2019 (original
version for chamber
orchestra and voice)

Caroline Shaw is one of today's most accomplished composers of vocal, orchestral and chamber music, holding the honor of being the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music for her a cappella composition *Partita for 8 Voices*; she has also earned four Grammy Awards. Her music has also been heard on screen in the 2022 film *Tár* and in Ken Burns' 2024 documentary series about Leonardo da Vinci, the latter garnering her an Emmy nomination. In addition to her incredible compositional achievements, she is a founding member of the award-winning contemporary vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth, which premiered *Partita for 8 Voices* in 2013.

Shaw has composed music for numerous combinations of instruments and voices, but her output for orchestra alone is comparatively small, perhaps explaining why the Minnesota Orchestra first performed her music only two years ago. Her orchestral works *The Observatory* and *Entr'acte* were played here in March 2024 and December 2025, respectively.

A MELDING OF CENTURIES

And So is the final piece in Shaw's *Is A Rose* trilogy, which includes three works commissioned by the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in 2016 for mezzo Anne Sofie von Otter. The trilogy reimagines poetry from the 18th and 21st centuries, culminating in *And So*, Shaw's own musing on poets Robert Burns, Jacob Polley and Gertrude Stein. While each part of the trilogy had its own premiere, *And So* was first performed to a sold-out audience at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in March 2019 as part of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra's "New Music for Old Instruments" initiative.

And So has seen numerous arrangements since it was first composed, including versions for percussion ensemble, electro-pop duo and wind band. The one performed today—tailored specially for soloist Chris Thile—utilizes a string orchestra, solo voice and mandolin. Through the all-too-brief five-minute work, the vocalist chants the poetic lyrics, navigating fluidly between sung and spoken text in the tradition of Baroque recitative, while supported by a mesmerizing blend of crystalline pizzicato and captivating, suspended string harmonies.

Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/shawtext for the text to *And So*.

Instrumentation: solo mandolin and voice with string orchestra

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.



DUKE ELLINGTON

B: April 29, 1899
Washington, D.C.

D: May 24, 1974
New York City

Selections from *The River Suite*

PREMIERED:
June 25, 1970 (original ballet score)

— When Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington was commissioned by the American Ballet Theatre to celebrate the company’s 30th anniversary in 1970, the result was a collaboration that merged the brilliance of two creative American minds, Ellington and famed choreographer Alvin Ailey. (Ailey had notably founded the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1960; it remains thriving to this day as America’s largest modern dance company.)

For the occasion, Ellington initially planned to create a suite of 12 movements, but by the time of the final rehearsals, only seven were complete. When the ballet premiered at Lincoln Center’s New York State Theater on June 25, 1970, Ailey could only share a portion of the planned work. It was presented under the title *Seven Dances from a Work in Progress entitled “The River”*—a candid admission that the piece was still finding itself, though it did nothing to dim the critical admiration the production received.

FROM CRADLE TO RACING

For these concerts, the Minnesota Orchestra performs the first three movements, which are described by the composer in his autobiography, *Music is My Mistress*. The *Spring* movement, Ellington says, “is like a newborn baby. He’s in his cradle...spouting, spinning, wiggling, gurgling, squirming, squealing, making faces...” Then, in *Meander*, the baby “hits the floor the first time out of the cradle” and thinks to himself, “This must be the biggest world in the world. Look at all that space out there!” In *Giggling Rapids*, the child “races and runs and dances and skips and trips all over the backyard.”

SPRING. The opening movement unfolds gently, led by solo horn before an oboe adds a new harmonic layer. Then, the woodwinds gradually pass the single pastorello melody among themselves—each voice taking it up in turn. A solo harp carries the movement to its close, glistening quietly like light on a peaceful spring day.

MEANDER. A jazz groove anchors this movement from the start, with low winds, brass and strings settling into an easy, swaying pulse. Above them, a free-flowing solo flute wanders without urgency before the full orchestra opens up into swinging, big-band textures.

GIGGLING RAPIDS. A syncopated piano introduction sets the stage for a playful exchange between horns, woodwinds and glockenspiel. The string section’s swirling figures mimic the churn of rushing water while Bebop-inflected melodies dart throughout the texture.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, congas, claves, drum set, xylophone, glockenspiel, harp, piano and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.

**CHRIS THILE**

B: February 20, 1981
Oceanside, California

ATTENTION!

PREMIERED:
June 29, 2023

If you only know Chris Thile as the host of the public radio variety show *Live from Here*, the successor to *A Prairie Home Companion*, then you've seen just a few dimensions of this Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter-mandolinist, founding member of the string bands Nickel Creek and Punch Brothers, and recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant." Thile has collaborated with numerous artists across the music spectrum, from Yo-Yo Ma to Fiona Apple to Brad Mehldau, and in recent years has increasingly crossed into the classical music world, soloing alongside ensembles such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony and National Symphony. This week's performances mark his Minnesota Orchestra debut.

Since 2023 Thile has appeared often in his massive autobiographical orchestral composition *ATTENTION!*, formally subtitled "A narrative song cycle for extroverted mandolinist and orchestra." Thile plays mandolin, sings, narrates and acts in this singular 40-minute work, which also includes featured parts for an additional vocal soloist, the orchestra's concertmaster, a drum set player and a small chorus.

Through four movements bearing whimsical titles such as *Lord Starbucks* and *Carrie Freaking Fisher*, the genre-defying *ATTENTION!* tells stories of unusual events and encounters from Thile's life, using the composer's own original text. The narrative culminates in an encounter with the late actress Carrie Fisher—Princess Leia of *Star Wars* fame. Thile and the New York-based orchestra The Knights performed the world premiere of *ATTENTION!* at the Tanglewood festival on June 29, 2023.

BACKGROUND FROM THE COMPOSER-SOLOIST

Without spoiling the contents of *ATTENTION!* much further, Thile has offered this background and summary of the piece's creation.

"I adore orchestras. Whether scaled up for grandeur, or down for intimacy, nothing makes me prouder to be human than hearing a stage full of highly skilled orchestral musicians practicing their craft together. It's magic,

and it's something I've been desperate to participate in since the early aughts, when a hero of mine, Edgar Meyer, walked me through the score of a violin concerto he wrote for another hero of mine, Hilary Hahn. In the late aughts I wrote a mandolin concerto, but after performing it quite a bit for a year or so with some truly lovely orchestras, I realized that it was basically the musical equivalent of fan fiction (like I'm tempted to rename it 'Bartók meets Adès for coffee at Edgar's'). So, I went back to admiring orchestral music from afar, even as I continued to monitor my inner ear for something that might justify another attempt.

"A year or two ago, a tantalizing text from my pal, Eric Jacobsen ('Thile, whatever you wanna do with orchestra, we can make it happen!') prompted more pro-active monitoring and I started hearing bits of what would eventually become *ATTENTION!* I was confused at first, 'cause these little aural visions included not just mandolin and orchestra, but singing *and* talking as well. Whoa, ok...*fun*. Further dreaming led to the conviction that there should be an actual *story*, not just loosely related vignettes (which has pretty much been my M.O. on long form pieces with vocals up to this point).

"But *what* story? I've always loved writing songs based on short stories, so I started there, widened the search to essays, then read a bunch of plays, but every time I got excited about something, a nagging little voice (probably remembering my last orchestral piece) would say 'Yeah, but why would *you* be the one to musicalize this story?' Ugh. Fair. Ok, fine then: what is a story I like to tell about something that happened to me that my friends seem to like hearing? Ah *ha!* *This one*, hands down, no contest. If you've ever had a couple rounds with me at a good cocktail bar, chances are I've trotted it out, and the thought of turning it into a piece of orchestral music got my inner ear cranking like never before. It's a ridiculous story, but it's 100% true, and the more I've worked on the telling of it, the more aware I've become of what a profound impact the whole experience had on me as a person who loves to make things and show them to other people."

The lyrics of *ATTENTION!* are available at christhile.com/attention—but Thile recommends "only using it when my diction isn't up to snuff (I'm working on it, swear to God!)."

Instrumentation: solo mandolin and voice, additional solo voice, solo violin and small mixed chorus with orchestra comprising 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, bass trombone, timpani, drum set and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY CARL SCHROEDER, WITH BACKGROUND BY CHRIS THILE.



DANIELA CANDILLARI,
CONDUCTOR

Daniela Candillari has been principal conductor of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis since 2022. Celebrated for her dynamic artistry and insightful leadership, she is equally at home premiering new works and interpreting classical repertoire. Her international career spans major operatic and symphonic stages, where she has been praised by critics for her confidence, verve and incisive leadership. She makes her Minnesota Orchestra debut this summer in concerts with Chris Thile. Her 2026–27 season includes debuts with the Houston Symphony, Seattle Opera, Baluarte Teatro, Boston Lyric Opera and Charlotte Symphony. She will also return to Lyric Opera of Chicago, Manhattan School of Music and other institutions. Her other engagements include performances with the Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Washington National Opera, St. Louis Symphony, London Philharmonic, Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Deutsche Oper Berlin. She grew up in Serbia and Slovenia. More: imgartists.com, danielacandillari.com.



STEPHANIE CHILDRESS,
CONDUCTOR

Franco-British conductor Stephanie Childress has established herself as a rising star on both sides of the Atlantic, bringing a forward-looking vision to the role of the 21st-century conductor. Acclaimed for her interpretations of Mozart operas, she makes her Opéra de Paris debut in a new production of *Don Giovanni* in spring 2027. Her other operatic credits include *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Glyndebourne) and *La Traviata* (Finnish National Opera). She has led contemporary operas by Missy Mazzoli at Detroit Opera and Simon Voseček at the Prague State Opera. In June 2026 she collaborated with director Tom Morris on an interdisciplinary exploration of Mahler's Symphony No. 1. Other recent highlights include debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Symphony and San Francisco Symphony, as well as ongoing work as principal guest conductor of the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra. She debuted with the Minnesota Orchestra in July 2024. More: harrisonparrott.com, stephaniechildress.com.



JOHN HOLIDAY,
COUNTERTENOR

John Holiday has established himself as one of the finest countertenors of his generation, moving fluidly between Baroque repertoire, contemporary opera and American song with technical assurance, stylistic authority and remarkable storytelling ability. He stars on leading international stages including The Metropolitan Opera, LA Opera and Bayerische Staatsoper, and with orchestras including the New York Philharmonic and San Francisco Symphony, among many others. A committed advocate for new music, he has been featured in premieres of works by Kevin Puts, Caroline Shaw, Luna Pearl Woolf, Matthew Aucoin and Daniel Bernard Roumain. He has curated *The John Holiday Experience*, an eclectic concert program spanning classical, pop, jazz and R&B, and a variety of cross-genre projects at the Apollo Theater. His debut album, *Over My Head*, is out on PENTATONE this summer. Since 2023, he has been associate professor of voice at the University of Maryland School of Music. More: opus3artists.com, johnholiday.com.

MEMBERS OF THE
MINNESOTA CHORALE
KATHY SALTZMAN ROMEY,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
JERRY RUBINO,
SPECIAL PROJECTS
CONDUCTOR

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 Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, Puccini’s *Turandot*, Mozart’s Requiem, Johannes Brahms’ *German Requiem* and *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. Founded in 1972 and led since 1995 by Artistic Director Kathy Saltzman Romey—who celebrates her final season leading the ensemble in 2026–27—the Chorale is Minnesota’s preeminent symphonic chorus and ranks among the foremost professional choruses in the U.S. More: mnchorale.org.

SOPRANO	TENOR
Alyssa K. Breece	Andrew Kreye
Elizabeth Longhurst	Andy McCullough
ALTO	BASS
Joy E. Roellinger	Michael R. Tomlinson
Natalie Wishcop	Riley Ano



SUSIE PARK,
VIOLIN

Australian-born Susie Park became the Minnesota Orchestra's first associate concertmaster in 2015. She has been featured as soloist with the Orchestra in Bach's Brandenburg Concertos No. 2 and 4, Barber's Violin Concerto, Ortiz's *Altar de Cuerda* and, with Associate Principal Cello Silver Ainomäe, Brahms' Double Concerto. She has performed solos around the world with European orchestras such as the Vienna Symphony, Orchestre de Lille and Royal Philharmonic; American orchestras including the Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Indianapolis and Memphis symphony orchestras and the Orchestra of St. Luke's; the major Australian orchestras of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Tasmania, Canberra and Perth; Korea's KBS Orchestra; and Orchestra Wellington in New Zealand. A dedicated chamber musician, Park was the violinist of the Eroica Trio from 2006 to 2012, touring and recording the ensemble's Grammy-nominated eighth album featuring all-American repertoire. She is also a founding member of the East Coast Chamber Orchestra. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



JONATHAN TAYLOR RUSH,
CONDUCTOR

American conductor Jonathan Taylor Rush brings passion, unique interpretation and a refreshing energy to the orchestral experience. Rooted in his musical upbringing within the church, Rush's approach to conducting is imbued with elements of gospel and soul music. Deeply committed to the music of contemporary and historical Black composers, Rush conducted the Minnesota Orchestra in the premiere of *brea(d)th* by Carlos Simon and Marc Bamuthi Joseph—a recording of which has been released on Decca Classics. Rush's 2025–26 season included his subscription debut with the Nashville Symphony, his European orchestra debut with the Danish Philharmonic, and appearances with the Atlanta and San Francisco symphonies and the Rochester and Buffalo philharmonics. From 2020 to 2023 he served as assistant conductor and associate conductor of the Baltimore Symphony. Concurrently he served as artistic director of the Baltimore Symphony Youth Orchestras, which he led on its first-ever European tour. More: polyarts.co.uk, jonathanrush.com.



ALEX SOPP,
VOCALS

Alex Sopp is a flutist, singer, composer and visual artist living in Brooklyn, New York. As a singer and a songwriter, her debut album of original songs, *The Hem & The Haw*, was released on New Amsterdam Records. She is the flutist and founding member of yMusic, The Knights, Between Worlds Ensemble and NOW Ensemble. She has played principal flute in the New York Philharmonic and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and has premiered solo works written for her by Allison Loggins-Hull, Judd Greenstein, Nico Muhly and Gabriel Kahane. Performing iconic vocal lines and whistle solos, Sopp toured the world with yMusic in support of their album with Paul Simon. Her unique visual artwork has been used by musicians such as Osvaldo Golijov and Joshua Bell and cutting-edge organizations like Castle of Our Skins to bring their projects to life. Her appearance alongside Chris Thile this summer marks her Minnesota Orchestra debut. More: alexsopp.com.



JEARLYN STEELE,
VOCALS

Indiana native Jearlyn Steele is a member of the internationally acclaimed musical family The Steeles. After relocating to Minnesota, she began singing in churches, community centers and nightclubs. She has performed at such venues as the Guthrie Theater, State Theatre, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts and Penumbra Theatre. She starred in the pop/gospel musical *The Gospel at Colonus* with her siblings at Carnegie Hall and on Broadway. She has recorded numerous commercials for various national brands and can be heard on albums for artists such as George Clinton, Mavis Staples and Prince—with whom she recorded the duet *Race*. She was a frequent guest on *A Prairie Home Companion* and is former host of WCCO Radio's *Steele Talkin'*. Recently, she began public speaking, sharing stories called "My Songs in the Key of Life" with multiple national organizations. She is a member of the Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.



JEVETTA STEELE,
VOCALS

Jevetta Steele is a member of the internationally acclaimed musical family The Steeles. She is most noted for her Academy Award-nominated performance of *Calling You* from the movie *Bagdad Café*, which is certified Gold in several European countries. Steele is an original cast member of the Broadway, national and international touring hit *The Gospel at Colonus*; a featured artist on two operas (*Dear Mrs. Parks* and *African Portraits*); a recipient of four Gold records; and the author of two plays—*2 Queens*, *1 Castle: An Autobiographical Musical* and *Point of Revue*, which she contributed to with Don Cheadle. She has recorded four albums, performed on major theatrical stages and lent her voice to artists such as Prince, The Sounds of Blackness, Kirk Whalum and Natalie Merchant. Her voice can also be heard on national/regional radio and television commercials. She currently directs theatrical performances, music videos and online industrial presentations.



DAVID STEVENS,
DRUMS

David Stevens is a percussionist and timpanist based in New York City. As an orchestral musician, he has performed with the New York Philharmonic; National, Detroit, Virginia, and New Jersey symphony orchestras; Kansas City Symphony; New York City Ballet Orchestra; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra; Orchestra of St. Luke's and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. On Broadway, Stevens has performed as a substitute percussionist in *Chess*; *The Great Gatsby*; *Sweeney Todd*; *Parade*; *The Phantom of the Opera*; *Beetlejuice*; *Into the Woods*; *Hello, Dolly!*; *An American in Paris* and *Pippin*. Additionally, he was the percussionist in the *We Will Rock You* national tour and has held the timpani chair at the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*. As a chamber musician, Stevens is a member of Exceptet and has performed with Talea Ensemble, Argento Chamber Ensemble and Ensemble Échappé. Stevens received his bachelor's degree from The Juilliard School and his master's degree from Manhattan School of Music.



CHRIS THILE,
MANDOLIN AND VOCALS

Grammy Award-winning mandolinist, singer, songwriter, composer and MacArthur “genius grant” recipient Chris Thile is a multifaceted musical talent. He is a founding member of the influential string bands Punch Brothers and Nickel Creek and has collaborated with luminaries from Yo-Yo Ma to Fiona Apple to Brad Mehldau. For four years, he hosted public radio favorite *Live from Here with Chris Thile*. With his broad outlook, Thile creates a distinctly American canon and new musical aesthetic for performers and audiences. Recently he has been captivating audiences with the playfully ambiguous autobiographical composition *ATTENTION!*, a narrative song cycle for extroverted mandolinist and orchestra. He has recently toured with Nickel Creek in support of the acclaimed 2023 release *Celebrants*. Thile’s 2025–26 solo performances featured selections from his acclaimed solo recordings of Bach’s Sonatas and Partitas, alongside his signature post-genre blend of compositional rigor, folksy stagecraft and improvisation. More: christhile.com.



JOHN WILLIAMS,
COMPOSER

In a career spanning more than six decades, John Williams has become one of America’s most accomplished and successful composers for film and the concert stage. He remains one of our nation’s most distinguished and contributive musical voices. He has composed the music for more than 100 films, including all nine *Star Wars* films, the first three *Harry Potter* films, *Schindler’s List*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Jaws*, *Jurassic Park*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Lincoln*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Superman*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and this year’s *Disclosure Day*. He served as music director of the Boston Pops Orchestra for 14 seasons and remains its Laureate Conductor. He has composed numerous works for the concert stage including two symphonies and more than a dozen concertos commissioned by some of America’s most prominent orchestras. Last year the Boston Symphony premiered his new piano concerto for Emanuel Ax. He has received five Academy Awards and 54 Oscar nominations, seven British Academy Awards, 27 Grammys, four Golden Globes and five Emmys.