

NOVEMBER 2026

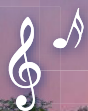
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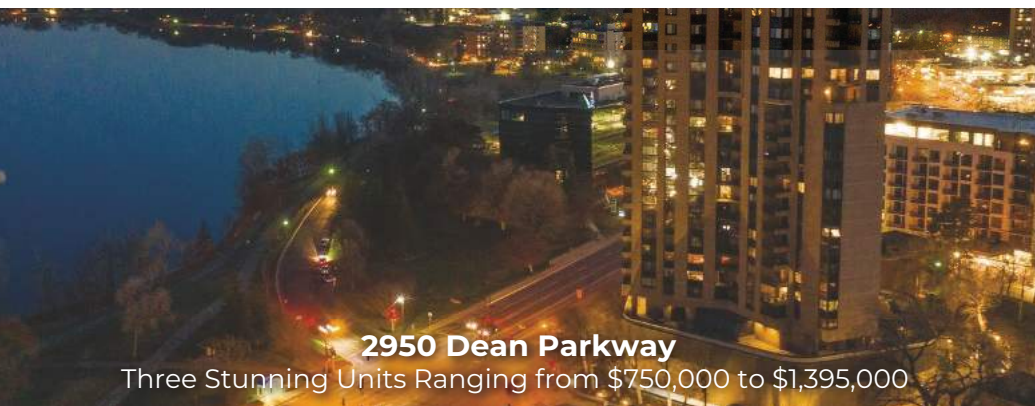


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ABOUT THE COVER: Audience members enjoying the ambiance outside Orchestra Hall during the January 2026 Nordic Soundscapes Festival. Photo: Darrell Owens.

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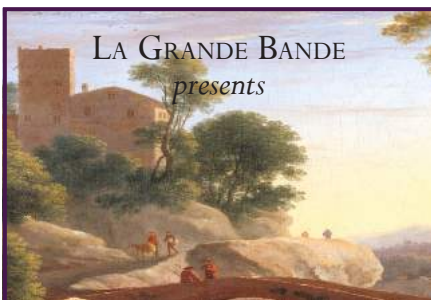
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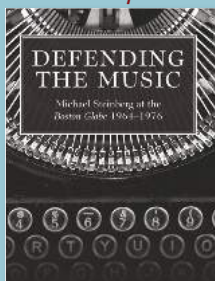
Many string players participate in a voluntary system of revolving seating. Section string players are listed in alphabetical order.

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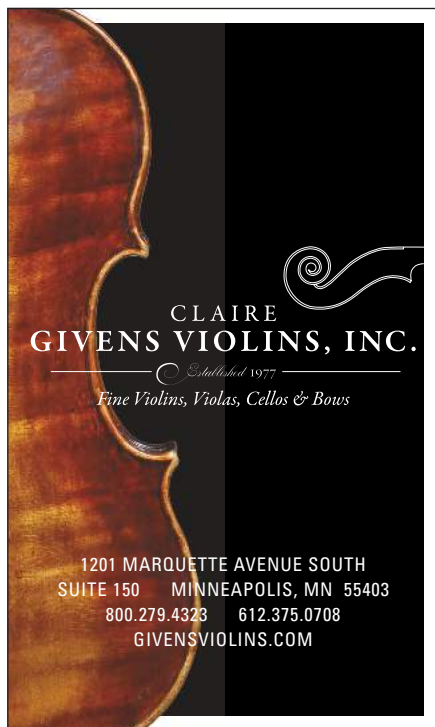
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PROFILE

THOMAS SØNDERGÅRD

Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, now in his fourth 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 2026–27 season here will include Sound Unbound performances of Puccini's *Tosca* and a festival of music from Nordic countries. The Orchestra's first album with him, released by Pentatone, features works of Adès including the Violin Concerto with Leila Josefowicz, while a forthcoming album will include two Prokofiev symphonies.

Søndergård is in his final season as music director of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), after which he will become music director emeritus. 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, Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic. This season, in addition to a full slate of RSNO concerts at home and on a European tour, he appears as guest conductor with the Gürzenich-Orchestra Cologne, Royal Danish Opera and City of Birmingham 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 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 Prokofiev and Strauss works with the RSNO.

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A DOWNTOWN DAY OF SERVICE

Darrell Owens



Music Director Thomas Søndergård making snack packets for distribution to people experiencing homelessness.

Minnesota Orchestra musicians, staff and Board members spent a day away from Orchestra Hall during the 2026–27 Season Opening week in September, participating in a volunteer Day of Service with the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID). DID Ambassadors, who patrol 120 blocks of downtown year-round, are charged with keeping the city's core clean, green and safe—and now 60 participants from the Orchestra have a better sense of what that work entails.

Some volunteers from the Orchestra worked at the DID Operations Center on Third Avenue, creating snack packets for DID outreach teams to use in their work with people experiencing homelessness.

Other volunteers fanned out to beautify downtown Minneapolis by picking up litter and removing graffiti alongside DID Ambassadors.

“It was amazing to learn more about the professionalism and compassion of Minneapolis’ DID Ambassadors by working next to them for a day,” says Minnesota Orchestra President and CEO Isaac Thompson. “I think we came away with tremendous respect for the important work that they do, and even more pride to be part of the downtown community.”

For more information on volunteering with DID, visit mplsdid.com.



Darrell Owens

A group of volunteers from the Orchestra posing in front of the Prince mural near First Avenue and Target Center.

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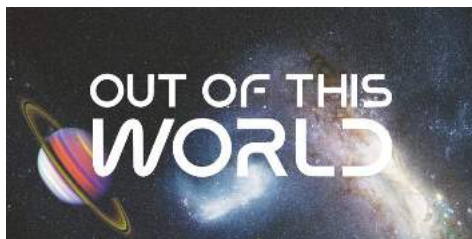
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SAVE THE DATE: SYMPHONY BALL 2027

— In recent years, the Minnesota Orchestra's annual Symphony Ball gala fundraiser has taken attendees on musical journeys down the Mississippi River and into the worlds of jazz, magic and the circus. The 2027 Symphony Ball is aiming even higher—much higher, in fact, as the space-themed “Out of this World” Ball is scheduled for Saturday, April 24, 2027. The Ball, which supports the Orchestra's artistic and education programs, will be held at Orchestra Hall and the Minneapolis Hilton, and is chaired by Linda D. and Mike Murrell.



Music Director Thomas Søndergård and the Orchestra will perform a program of celestial selections, while the evening's activities will also include food, drinks, auctions, more music and dancing, as Ballgoers will leave the familiar behind and journey into the universe as the Hall glitters in the starry cosmos of music and wonder. Watch the Orchestra's website and upcoming issues of *Showcase* for more information on the Ball and ticket availability.

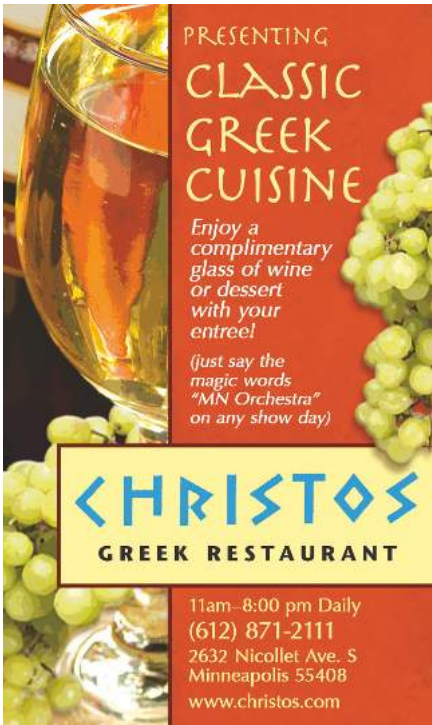
CRITICS' CORNER: RECENT CONCERT REVIEWS

— “Igor Stravinsky's complete, original 1910 music for the ballet, ‘The Firebird,’ was well played, full of finely sculpted ensemble work. And the video design of England's Tal Rosner proved a fine complement to the music, subtly touching upon elements of the ballet but never making you feel as if you needed to know the story to appreciate the performance....Captivating solos burst forth throughout the work, principal French horn Jaclyn Rainey repeatedly hypnotizing with her beautiful tone while each section leader in the woodwinds brought brilliant colors to their slice of the story.”

—Rob Hubbard,
The Minnesota Star Tribune,
September 26, 2026

“Violinist Stefan Jackiw makes for a dazzling guest with the Minnesota Orchestra this weekend, playing a Mozart concerto with loving dexterity and spirited vigor....Led by Thomas Søndergård, the concert showcases the ensemble's range of subtle and grandiose stylings....[T]he orchestra concluded with a snappy rendition of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's ‘Flight of the Bumblebee,’ in honor of the new mural that artist Rock ‘CYFI’ Martinez is painting outside Orchestra Hall.”

—Sheila Regan,
Pioneer Press,
October 1, 2026



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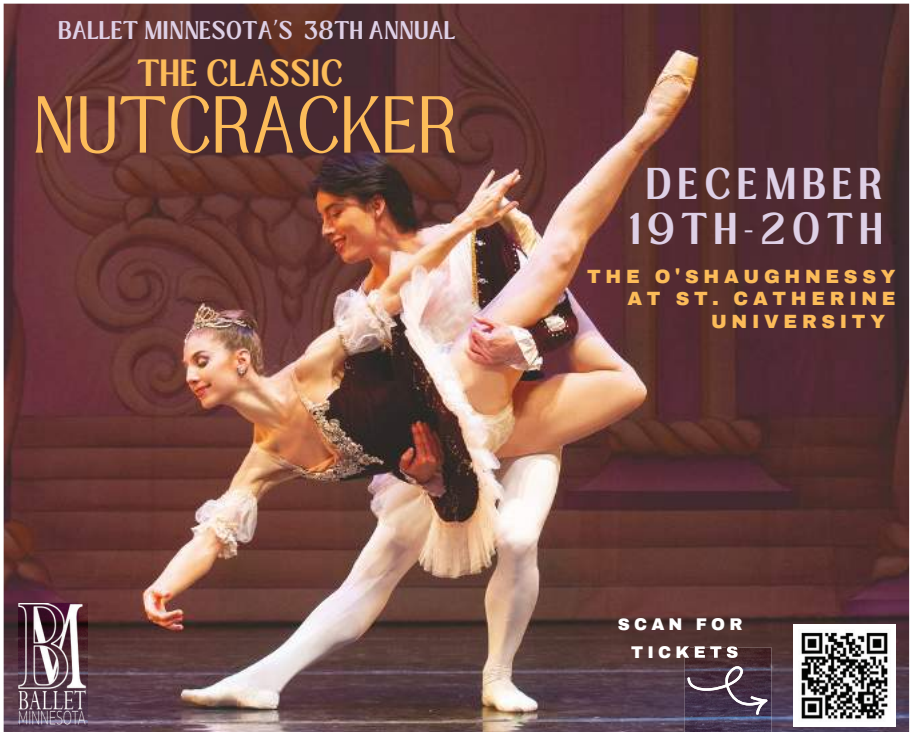


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A SYMPHONIC NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

VERTIGO

WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Scott Terrell, conductor

FRI OCT 30 7PM | SAT OCT 31 7PM

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Kim Novak	Madeleine Elster / Judy Barton
Barbara Bel Geddes	Midge Wood
Tom Helmore	Gavin Elster

Screenplay by ALEC COPPEL AND SAMUEL A. TAYLOR

Directed by ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Associate Producer HERBERT COLEMAN

Music by BERNARD HERRMANN

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PRODUCTION CREDITS

Producer: John Gberman

Live orchestra adaptation by Pat Russ

Technical Supervisor: Pat McGillen

Music Preparation: Larry Spivack

The producer wishes to acknowledge the contributions and extraordinary support of John Waxman (Themes & Variations).

A Symphonic Night at the Movies is a production of PGM Productions, Inc. (New York) and appears by arrangement with IMG Artists.

Today's concert lasts about 2 hours and 35 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission. Please remain seated until the end of the credits.

A profile of conductor Scott Terrell appears on page 56.

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- MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM JOSÉ JAMES **DEC 16-17**
- SOUTHSIDE ACES: CHRISTMAS IN NEW ORLEANS **DEC 18**
- TRAVIS ANDERSON TRIO'S "A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS" **DEC 19**
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Thomas Søndergård, conductor

Jon Kimura Parker, piano

Brian Newhouse, broadcast host

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FRI NOV 6 8PM

|

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Nordic Soundscapes is generously supported by Karen and David Grandstrand.

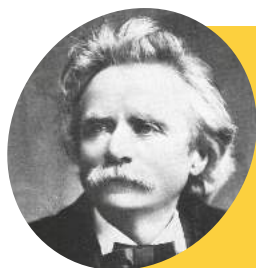
Edvard Grieg/ orch. Hans Sitt	Selections from Norwegian Dances, Opus 35 I. Allegro marcato IV. Allegro molto	CA. 14'
Anders Hillborg	Concerto No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra, <i>The MAX Concerto</i> [in one movement] <i>Jon Kimura Parker, piano</i>	CA. 21'
I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20'
Jean Sibelius	Symphony No. 2 in D major, Opus 43 Allegretto Andante, ma rubato Vivacissimo Finale: Allegro moderato	CA. 44'

Profiles of the conductor, soloist and broadcast host appear on pages 12, 53 and 54.
Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/pre for details about pre-concert activities.

THANK YOU

The 2026-27 Classical season is presented by Ameriprise Financial.

Friday night Classical concerts air live on [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#). The November 6 concert will also be broadcast live on [Minnesota PBS](#) and stream live on the Minnesota Orchestra’s YouTube channel. Learn more at minnesotaorchestra.org/TIMO.

**EDVARD GRIEG****B:** June 15, 1843
Bergen, Norway**D:** September 4, 1907
Bergen, Norway**Selections from
Norwegian Dances,
Opus 35, orchestrated
by Hans Sitt****COMPOSED:** 1880 (original
two-piano version); 1890
(Sitt orchestration)

Very few classical composers are more closely identified with the music of their home country than Norway's Edvard Grieg. Except for his beloved Piano Concerto and some chamber music, almost all of Grieg's music that we hear today was based on Norwegian sources.

FOLK TUNES SHOW THE WAY

As a young man, Grieg followed the path of many promising musicians from northern Europe, leading him to Leipzig. There he learned the musical language of past German masters from Bach to Beethoven, but he realized that this formal training could only take him so far. "It then struck me that I could develop myself further only on a national foundation. It was our Norwegian folk tunes that showed me the way," he later recalled. Grieg embraced his national identity, saying, "To paint in music the Norwegian landscape, Norwegian life, Norwegian history and Norwegian folk poetry was, for me, where I believed I could achieve something."

In 1880 Grieg wrote his four Norwegian Dances, Opus 35, for piano four hands—which is to say, two players sharing one keyboard. This was and remains a popular way for amateurs and professionals to make music together. Brahms' Hungarian Dances and Dvořák's Slavonic Dances are well-known examples in this genre. For his set, Grieg used original Norwegian melodies found in the collection *Old and New Mountain Tunes*, published by Ludvig Mathias Lindeman.

Grieg's publisher wanted orchestral versions of the new dances, but the composer did not want to make the arrangements himself. Hans Sitt was given the job and in 1890 produced the wonderfully idiomatic settings heard today.

ENERGETIC AND DRAMATIC DANCES

This week's performances include the first and fourth movements from the set of dances.

ALLEGRO MARCATO. Grieg’s first dance is announced by a curtain-raising “ta-daaa!” for full orchestra. A rollicking setting of *Sinclair’s March* follows. The high spirits of the march fade into a central interlude featuring a lyrical melody played by the oboe. The march returns with its manic “oompah” accompaniment and the movement is brought to a breathless conclusion.

ALLEGRO MOLTO. Dance No. 4 follows the same three-part form as the preceding dances, but with the addition of a brooding introduction complete with a dramatic horn call. The clouds part with the appearance of a lively country dance known as a *halling*. Contrast is provided by a slower section that places the mournful melody of the introduction in dialogue with fragments of the dance tune. The *halling* is reprised, and Grieg rounds off the movement with a coda in which the rhythmic energy ebbs away only to be interrupted by a final burst of Norwegian sunshine that brings the curtain down on the dances.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, triangle and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY JEFFREY STIRLING.



ANDERS HILLBORG

B: May 31, 1954
Sollentuna, Sweden

**Concerto No. 2 for
Piano and Orchestra,
*The MAX Concerto***

PREMIERED:
October 12, 2023

— We often think of the piano concerto as a genre of a singular, virtuosic hero soloist playing against the orchestra, with fistfuls of notes being hurled through hammers and strings at the ensemble, its preordained march towards the final cadenza and triumphant punctuation by the entire ensemble. Swedish composer Anders Hillborg’s 2023 Piano Concerto No. 2, *The MAX Concerto*, strives to amend this tradition, giving shape to a new function of the soloist, as a virtuosic compatriot of the ensemble, playing with the textures and harmonic overtones of the ensemble—a work that prefers complement and curiosity rather than contrast.

The concerto’s subtitle, *The MAX Concerto*, is a cheeky nod to the premiering soloist, the giant of the 20th and 21st centuries Emanuel

“Manny” Ax (shortened as “M. Ax” to form the concerto’s title). The concerto was commissioned for Ax by the San Francisco Symphony; these forces premiered the work on October 12, 2023, with a close friend of Hillborg’s, Esa-Pekka Salonen, on the conductor’s podium.

A SINGULAR CONCERTO IN TEN SECTIONS

Despite its *MAX* title, Hillborg’s concerto does not maximize the orchestra’s size; rather, it is relatively light on forces. The lean complement of winds and brass is magnified through Hillborg’s deft attention to orchestration and color. The 21-minute concerto flows continuously through ten seamless sections. Throughout, the individual sections continually recast the piano soloist’s role—grand, toy, hard, soft, ascending—interspersed with moments of reflection and pause—*Mist* and *Chorales and Echo Chamber*. As with his 2006 orchestral work *Eleven Gates*, Hillborg returned to the completed music and gave its delineated sections evocative titles.

The opening, *Grand Piano*, features grand flourishes, like a refracted nod to Beethoven’s famed *Emperor* Concerto. The two *Mist* sections act as a subtle breath from the ensemble, with spectral textures of sustained notes slowly shifting in and out of focus. The *Toy Piano* sections feature light, bright, almost childlike figures with a twinkling repetition and pattern-based texture in the translucent upper register. *Chorales and Echo Chamber* sections feature Baroque-like ornamentation from the piano with long sustained chorales punctuated by harp and crotales, while winds answer with oscillating echoes, creating a dual echo effect. *Hard Piano* has a faster-moving texture from the soloist, with a jagged, bluesy feel that drives towards the exposed solo cadenza. The orchestra and pianist reprise the opening theme before *Soft Piano* arrives, with sweeping fluid arpeggios flowing seamlessly into the following second *Chorales and Echo Chamber* section, gradually picking up the winds’ echo gesture. The final section, *Ascending Piano*, offers a last celestial reflection, with sustained notes from earlier in the work reemerging with their spectral delicacy. The piano in this section is slightly more declamatory than in other “Piano” sections, its dense chordal sonorities radiating outward into the ensemble as the work dissipates until one final flick upward brings the concerto to a peaceful but arresting close.

Instrumentation: solo piano with orchestra 2 flutes (both doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, conga, crotales, 2 tom-toms, glockenspiel, chimes, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY NICHOLAS LANDRUM.

**JEAN SIBELIUS**

B: December 8, 1865
Hämeenlinna, Finland

D: September 20, 1957
Järvenpää, Finland

**Symphony No. 2 in
D major, Opus 43**

PREMIERED:
March 8, 1902

Jean Sibelius' Second Symphony is one of several of the composer's works linked to the man to whom it is dedicated, Baron Axel Carpelan. Carpelan, an amateur violinist, first introduced himself to Sibelius in October 1900, but he had already been writing letters to the composer, full of advice, suggestions, interference, trivia, insight, gossip, hypochondriac lamentations and unsolicited opinions. Even before their meeting, Carpelan had commanded Sibelius to go to Italy, and his intuition was on target.

AN EXTRAORDINARY TURNAROUND

In February 1901 Sibelius arrived in Rapallo, just below Genoa. Still depressed by the death of his youngest daughter, Kirsti, from typhus the year before, worried about the tough line taken toward Finland by Russia, inclined to drink and smoke too much, his marriage uneasy, the composer was in poor shape. But the tonic effect of Italy was extraordinary.

By May, home again, Sibelius had accomplished much, particularly by way of sketching what he thought of as a four-movement orchestral fantasy before realizing it was a real symphony. When the first performances took place—four concerts in March 1902, with Sibelius conducting the Helsinki Philharmonic—the composer's triumph was complete.

THE SYMPHONY: COHERENCE AND FRAGMENTATION

ALLEGRETTO. At an easygoing pace, strings quietly play a series of 11 chords that might be the beginning of a theme or an accompaniment in search of a theme. The 11 chords are repeated, then just the first five, twice. Now, in darker colors, the process begins again. Only this time, woodwinds and clarinets add a prettily chirping melody. Before the oboes and clarinets have gotten very far, the horns tell them they have the character all wrong, it should be soulful and slower. The woodwinds resume their version. The strings, having first experimented to see what the woodwind tune sounds like when you play it pizzicato, upside down and very slowly, return to a basic-Finnish version of their chords; that is, only the gesture remains, the

tune is gone. The horns carry on with their ruminations. And they all seem pretty much to ignore one another.

Gradually we come to feel the coherence of this music. What Sibelius wants us to perceive as most important, he positions accordingly, playing it more often or more emphatically. It is as though he had set himself the task of discovering the coherence and hierarchical placement of all these fragments. He himself put it more picturesquely when he once wrote, “It is as though the Almighty had thrown the pieces of a mosaic down from the floor of heaven and told me to put them together.” So, stones into mosaic, that is the scenario of this movement.

ANDANTE, MA RUBATO. A timpani roll sets the scene for the second movement. Bases alternating with cellos, both pizzicato, spell out a long line. Horns and timpani add punctuation to the bassoon melody, and quickly the heat is turned up, everything becoming louder, faster and more agitated. Antiphonal cries flung back and forth between winds and strings push the music to an almost strident climax; from there, it falls back in exhaustion from *fff* to *ppp*. When the music resumes after a long silence, the world has changed. Peace, however, is short-lived. Fragmentation overpowers coherence, and the music ends with a troubling abruptness.

VIVACISSIMO. A version of Sibelius’ buzzing-string music sets the very quick scherzo in motion. A long silence, broken only by five drumbeats that descend from *p* to *pppp*, clears the air for the trio, an oboe melody, distinctly *triste*, that begins with nine repetitions of its initial note. The scherzo begins again, the trio returns; but before long a new idea—three ascending notes—insists on making itself heard, and this soon bursts forth as the principal theme of the finale.

FINALE: ALLEGRO MODERATO. This theme, simple as it is, generates powerfully thrusting forward motion. The most fascinating feature of this *Finale*, however, is a wistful melody played obsessively over running eighth-notes in the lower strings. This passage was written in memory of the composer’s sister-in-law, who had recently taken her own life. The issue of this obsession when it seizes the music for the second time is the renewed blaze of D major in which the symphony so triumphantly ends.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani and strings

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



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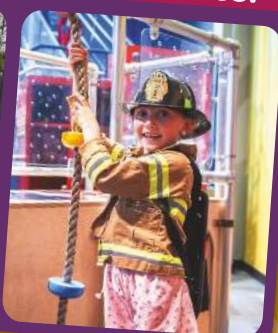
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THE MUSICAL TALES OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Thomas Søndergård, conductor
Deidre Cochran, host and narrator
TJ Yu, xylophone

Ion Concert Media, video design
Maria Camacho-Dively,
 ASL interpreter

SUN NOV 8 2PM

*We gratefully recognize **Angela Pennington** and **W. Anders Folk** as lead sponsors for this program. Nordic Soundscapes is generously supported by **Karen and David Grandstrand**.*

Edward Grieg	<i>Anitra's Dance</i> , from <i>Peer Gynt</i> Suite No. 1	CA. 3'
Georges Bizet	Excerpts from <i>Petite Suite</i> , from <i>Jeux d'Enfant</i> Marche Berceuse Impromptu	CA. 6'
August Enna	Overture to <i>The Little Match Girl</i>	CA. 7'
Edvard Grieg	Excerpts from Symphonic Dances on Norwegian Themes, Opus 64	CA. 12'
Hans Christian Lumbye	<i>Champagner Galop</i> <i>TJ Yu</i> , xylophone	CA. 3'

Profiles of the conductor, host-narrator and soloist appear on pages 12, 51 and 57. Profiles of the video designer and ASL interpreter appear in an insert.

PRE- AND POST-CONCERT

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THANK YOU

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NORDIC SOUNDSCAPES VÄNSKÄ, CHEN AND NIELSEN

Osmo Vänskä, conductor
Stella Chen, violin

FRI NOV 13 8PM | SAT NOV 14 7PM

Nordic Soundscapes is generously supported by Karen and David Grandstrand.

Outi Tarkiainen	<i>Songs of the Ice</i>	CA. 12'
-----------------	-------------------------	---------

Jaakko Kuusisto	Violin Concerto, Opus 28 Moderato Lento Molto allegro [There is no pause before movement II.] <i>Stella Chen, violin</i>	CA. 30'
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I N T E R M I S S I O N CA. 20'

Carl Nielsen	Symphony No. 6, <i>Sinfonia semplice</i> Tempo giusto Humoreske: Allegretto Proposta seria: Adagio Tema con variazioni: Allegro	CA. 31'
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Profiles of the conductor and soloist appear on pages 51 and 57.
Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/pre for details about pre-concert activities.

THANK YOU

Support for these performances of Tarkiainen's *Songs of the Ice* is provided by Sieglinde and Edward Grivna.

The 2026-27 Classical season is presented by Ameriprise Financial.

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

**OUTI TARKIAINEN**

B: February 7, 1985
Rovaniemi, Finland

Songs of the Ice

PREMIERED:
October 2, 2020

The musical journey of Outi Tarkiainen has been rich with myriad experiences throughout her native Finland, Europe and the U.S. Her music spans the genres of jazz, classical and contemporary music, much of it inspired by the mysterious, unpolluted landscapes of Finland's far north. *Songs of the Ice* is one part of a pair of orchestral works about this part of our planet. The other, *Midnight Sun Variations*, depicts the arctic summer nights when the sun never sets, and was played by the Minnesota Orchestra in January 2025.

In her own program note, Tarkiainen describes *Songs of the Ice* with beautiful poetic imagery: "In the Arctic region, the ice breathes with the seasons, swelling in winter and shrinking in summer. Its age-old movement sings a song of its own: slowly surging, unrelenting and covering all beneath it. It tinkles and rumbles, squeaks and laments as our ever-warmer climate breaks Nature's time-honored laws, forcing the ice to give way."

EMERGING FROM THE DEPTHS

Songs of the Ice opens with powerful, deep sounds from the lowest instruments in the orchestra, each emphatic hit launching a rising line in the winds and strings. When the piccolo and upper strings reach their highest register, almost suspended in air, the texture shifts. Percussion instruments chime softly with no clear rhythmic pulse, creating an atmosphere of mystery. A solo bassoon enters, followed by the contrabassoon, English horn, then oboe and flutes, each layering over the last before changing into a kaleidoscope of chirps and trills. Then a bass drum rumbles, possibly evoking the sudden shift of a massive block of ice.

All throughout, Tarkiainen explores extreme ranges, setting the lowest instruments at full power against the uppermost sounds of the piccolos, flutes, strings and mallet percussion. The effect is both grand and delicate: embodying the vast movement of the earth's largest ice sheets, and the poignant moments when summer sun strikes ice to create shimmering reflections and patterns.

Alongside its themes of ice and climate change, the piece carries a deeply personal thread. Tarkiainen composed it just before the birth of her second child, who arrived in the depths of winter. Already a mother, she drew on her memories of childbirth, of the physical emptiness, strength and healing that follow, and channeled them into the music.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (all doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets (1 doubling flugelhorn), 3 trombones, tuba, timpani (doubling bullroarer), bass drum, bell tree, 3 bullroarers, crotales, 2 suspended cymbals, medium gong, tam-tam, 2 triangles, glass wind chimes, shell wind chimes, vibraphone, piano (doubling celesta) and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.



JAAKKO KUUSISTO

B: January 17, 1974
Helsinki, Finland

D: February 23, 2022
Oulu, Finland

Violin Concerto, Opus 28

PREMIERED:
April 12, 2012

Few composers have possessed a greater pedigree and a more intimate understanding of the intricacies of the violin concerto than the late Finnish composer Jaakko Kuusisto, who passed away in 2022 at age 48. His knowledge of the medium was drawn from his own career as not only a world-class violin soloist, but also as a conductor and former concertmaster of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, notably including years under the baton of Minnesota Orchestra Conductor Laureate Osmo Vänskä.

AN INSIDER'S CONCERTO

Kuusisto first appeared at Orchestra Hall in 2004 as soloist in Einojuhani Rautavaara's Violin Concerto and returned in 2008 to conduct concerts with Finnish vocal ensemble Rajaton. Most recently his compositional talents were featured in the world premiere of his Symphony. Sadly, Kuusisto died before finishing that work, which was completed by his brother and frequent musical partner, the composer, conductor and violinist Pekka Kuusisto, with help from his longtime engraver and editor, Jari Eskola. The work was premiered posthumously by Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra on June 2, 2022.

Jaakko Kuusisto's Violin Concerto, composed in 2011–12, is a work of intense virtuosity and emotion. Though Kuusisto had toyed with the idea of composing a concerto to showcase his own prowess on the instrument, he didn't fully commit to the project until fellow Finnish violinist Elina Vähälä commissioned the work, allowing Kuusisto to bring his insider knowledge of the instrument to writing intended for another virtuoso.

THE CONCERTO: FROM CADENZA TO EXPLOSION

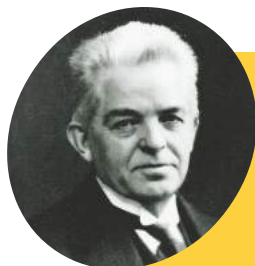
MODERATO. The concerto opens with an extended cadenza built from an impassioned, liquid melodic line clamoring over itself, intensified by fiendishly difficult harmonic intervals and trills, showcasing Kuusisto's intimate understanding of the instrument. The orchestra and soloist intertwine throughout this movement, oscillating between moments of blissful romantic lyricism and driving rhythmic passages, notably a motivic use of syncopation by the strings, and a constant, pounding quarter-note drive from the woodblock and timpani.

LENTO. The second movement begins unceremoniously with an elision from the first movement's final brass stab, with two horns sustaining a low C-sharp that is punctuated by a descending pointillistic gesture from the flutes, harp and pizzicato violins. The movement oscillates between quiet moments of placid reflection and monstrous passages of building tension. The violin is in a constant state of Sisyphean ascent, starting lines in the lowest register and climbing to stratospheric highs before returning.

MOLTO ALLEGRO. The final movement is faster, with the woodblock from the first movement returning to drive the quarter-note pulse. Flurries of ascent from the strings churn away at repeated gestures, eventually giving way to the soloist's virtuosic scrubbing *moto perpetuo* passages. The movement's formal construction mimics the traditional scherzo form often employed in other concertos—its playful, quick shifts between a march, cantabile lines and *moto perpetuo* interjections from the ensemble. Hyper-romantic strings flow into ensemble hits over the repeated quarter-note pulse; one final scrubbing and lashing from the soloist, with syncopated rhythms building from the ensemble before a final crash—an explosive punctuation on the work of one virtuoso written for another.

Instrumentation: solo violin with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, crotales, triangle, wood blocks, glockenspiel, vibraphone, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY NICHOLAS LANDRUM.

**CARL NIELSEN**

B: June 9, 1865
Nørre Lyndelse,
Denmark

D: October 3, 1931
Copenhagen, Denmark

**Symphony No. 6,
*Sinfonia semplice***

PREMIERED:
December 11, 1925

— In 1952, when Homer Ulrich published *Symphonic Music: Its Evolution since the Renaissance*, Carl Nielsen's name did not even appear in the index. By 1980, when *The New Grove* encyclopedia appeared, Nielsen's star was ascendant: he was identified as “the central figure in Danish music after the Romantic period.”

Yet today, Nielsen's music remains comparatively rare on American orchestral programs. Minnesota Orchestra Conductor Laureate Osmo Vänskä did much to alter that imbalance during his 19-year tenure as music director, programming Nielsen's music at more than 50 Orchestra concerts after becoming music director in 2003. His successor Thomas Søndergård, also a leading proponent of Nielsen's music, has thus far led three of his works at Orchestra Hall.

FINDING THE NORDIC VOICE

Nielsen's Scandinavian predecessors tended to emulate other non-Nordic European composers, embracing the musical language prevalent in Germany, Austria and France. Nielsen and Jean Sibelius, on the other hand, forged boldly into unfamiliar musical turf, particularly in the realm of symphonic form. In the process, they gave the Nordic countries a distinctive and unique musical voice, while endowing the world of music with a substantially richer legacy. By a curious twist of fate, both Sibelius and Nielsen were born in 1865. While their lives and careers took vastly different paths, they are bonded in music history through shared Scandinavian heritage, and because they both declared independence from the dominant musical influence of Austria and Germany.

Nielsen's student works show the influence of the Norwegian composer Johan Svendsen and of the Bohemian Antonín Dvořák. His individual style, however, was already apparent in his *Suite for Strings*, Opus 1, written when he was 23. Nielsen composed in many genres—opera, chorus, chamber music—but made his greatest contribution as a symphonist. Spanning the period from 1892 to 1925, his six symphonies show progressively more daring breaks with tradition.

Sinfonia semplice was Nielsen's final essay as a symphonist, but not his final work with orchestra. The next year he wrote a Flute Concerto, the first of a projected series of five wind concertos, one for each instrument of a woodwind quintet. Unfortunately Nielsen died before completing that ambitious project. But its dual impetus—an increasing interest in the specific timbres of individual instruments and a striving for orchestral transparency—are evident in the Sixth Symphony.

AN ENIGMATIC SUBTITLE

Don't be misled by the subtitle *Sinfonia semplice*. This is *not* simple music. We might think of it as Nielsen's *Enigma* Variations, not because of its last movement variations, but because it is a work that baffles as it entertains, arousing our curiosity more than it answers our questions. We don't really know what Nielsen "meant," any more than we know Elgar's "enigma."

Plenty of musical debate swirls around the Sixth Symphony's legacy. Initially, British composer and musicologist Robert Simpson thought the Sixth tragic, particularly its first movement, writing of "loss of and fruitless search for a state of childlike joy." Essentially he was disappointed and unreceptive. Twelve years later, Simpson did a complete about-face in his assessment. Backpedaling furiously, he wrote that the Sixth "became increasingly convincing and impressive...completely persuasive as a masterpiece, though I could not explain why this is so."

That is perhaps Nielsen's enigma: we cannot explain why this music eats itself into our subconscious. In *The New Grove II*, David Fanning summarizes the paradox: "This *Sinfonia semplice* turned out to be the most complex and puzzling of his large-scale works. It may still be said to be about the aspiration toward simplicity, but it is held together by a recurring pattern of violated innocence. Such positive resolution as it enjoys has to do with acceptance, resignation and defiance."

THE SYMPHONY: FOUR DISTINCT PERSONALITIES

What does this rhetoric mean for what we actually hear? Structurally the symphony appears fairly conventional: a brisk first movement; a second movement *Humoreske* that functions as a scherzo; a slow movement; and a concluding set of variations. The outer movements are relatively long; the inner two significantly shorter. Each movement has a distinct personality.

TEMPO GIUSTO. Nielsen told his daughter in 1924 that his new symphony would have a "completely idyllic character." His *Tempo giusto* opens in that benign mode, with glockenspiel, a gentle string theme and lovely

woodwind duets. The musical message you are likely to retain, however, is a spiky, meandering fugue that asserts itself a few minutes in. Its dotted rhythms, wide leaps and triplets dominate the fabric thereafter. Eventually Nielsen superimposes music of both segments, driving toward a passionate outburst that all but erases memory of the tranquil opening. What began simply has become very complex indeed, and while the movement defuses the tension, ending quietly, Nielsen has left much unresolved.

HUMORESKE: ALLEGRETTO. Anyone familiar with the biting sarcasm of Shostakovich and Prokofiev will recognize an analogous spirit in Nielsen's *Humoreske*. The composer wrote: "I have in my symphony a piece for small percussion instruments—triangle, glockenspiel, and side-drum—that quarrel, each sticking to its own tastes and likings. Times change. Where is music going? What is permanent? We don't know! This idea is found in my little *Humoreske*." Here we have the modernist satire of Poulenc as well as the Russians, with the strains of circus music filtered through the lens of a Danish composer.

PROPOSTA SERIA: ADAGIO. In *Proposta seria*, Nielsen shifts gears again with a poignant elegy. "In the first and third movements there are more serious, problematical things," he wrote. His use of another fugue links the slow movement to the opening *Tempo giusto*. *Proposta* ends quietly, on a note of solace, hinting at the brighter finale.

TEMA CON VARIAZIONI: ALLEGRO. Nielsen concludes with a theme and nine variations, plus a concluding fanfare and peroration. An opening flourish from the upper woodwinds sets the stage. Unaccompanied bassoon introduces Nielsen's theme, in a solo comparable to the unforgettable opening of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. The variations unfold without pause, preserving the transparency that characterizes much of *Sinfonia semplice*. Several of them are like chamber music: a fugato for strings; an ensemble of bassoon, tuba, xylophone and percussion. The dance hall lilt of a waltz is countered by an elegiac *Adagio* variation. The brass fanfare toward the end ushers in a rollicking coda. The music evokes the carnival atmosphere of Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, a work Nielsen is known to have admired. Like that ballet score, this symphony has layered messages of irony, sadness, beauty and humor, fear and hope.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, xylophone, glockenspiel and strings

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SAT DEC 12 7PM | SUN DEC 13 2PM

This beloved comedy classic features renowned composer John Williams' charming and delightful score performed live-to-picture by the Minnesota Orchestra. © 1990 Twentieth Century Fox.



Handel's Messiah

FRI DEC 18 8PM | SAT DEC 19 7PM

Celebrate the holidays with the Minnesota Orchestra and Minnesota Choral, as Jane Glover conducts Handel's festive *Messiah*.



Merry & Bright with Charles Lazarus

SUN DEC 20 2PM

Bursting with toe-tapping arrangements of seasonal favorites, this joyful concert brings together top-notch local musicians for extra swing, extra sparkle and a distinctly jazzy holiday vibe.



A New Year's Celebration

THU DEC 31 8:30PM | FRI JAN 1 2PM

A journey through the sounds, rhythms and colors of Spain as imagined by both Spanish and French composers. This evocative and exhilarating program culminates with Ravel's hypnotic *Boléro*, one of classical music's most recognizable melodies.



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ELGAR AND DVOŘÁK

Dinis Sousa, conductor

Sasha Cooke, mezzo

THU NOV 19 11AM | FRI NOV 20 8PM

Kaija Saariaho *Ciel d'hiver* CA. 10'

Edward Elgar *Sea Pictures*, Opus 37 * CA. 23'

Sea Slumber Song (text by Roden Noel)
In Haven (Capri) (text by C. Alice Elgar)
Sabbath Morning at Sea
(text by Elizabeth Barrett Browning)
Where Corals Lie (text by Dr. Richard Garnett)
The Swimmer (text by Adam Lindsay Gordon)
Sasha Cooke, mezzo

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

Antonín Dvořák *Symphony No. 8 in G major, Opus 88* CA. 36'

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Allegretto grazioso
Allegro ma non troppo

* The English texts of Elgar's *Sea Pictures* will be projected as surtitles, and can also be read online at minnesotaorchestra.org/seapictures.

Profiles of the conductor and soloist appear on pages 52 and 55.

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

THANK YOU

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**KAIJA SAARIAHO**

B: October 14, 1952
Helsinki, Finland

D: June 2, 2023
Paris, France

Ciel d'hiver

PREMIERED:
April 7, 2014

When Kaija Saariaho passed away in mid-2023, the classical music world poured out heartfelt tributes. Her longtime collaborator, the composer-conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen, noted that in their native Finland, she was held in such high esteem that she “would be recognized on the streets. People would go and talk to her and thank her for the music. And taxi drivers would tell her that they loved her opera. It was on that level.”

Saariaho began her compositional studies at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and later moved to Germany and France, where she lived for much of her adult life. Her music embraces eclectic styles and soundscapes, often blending conventional classical instrumentation with electronically generated elements. “I don’t want to write music through negations,” she stated. “Everything is permissible as long as it’s done in good taste.”

PARADOXES OF MORTALITY AND MOTION

Saariaho’s *Ciel d’hiver* (Winter Sky) is the second of three movements comprising *Orion*, an orchestral suite dedicated to the famed hunter of Greek mythology. While Orion is known in myths for his tremendous stature as well as his grace and beauty, today we most commonly associate Orion with the constellation bearing his name, as Zeus (or Artemis in some retellings) ensured he would be enshrined in the skies following his death. Saariaho sought to bring to life the juxtaposition of Orion as an active being and as a fixed object, an everlasting tribute and yet a mortal individual.

The outer movements of the *Orion* suite—the first titled *Memento mori* (“remember that you will die”) and the third simply *Hunter*—are both animated, with ever-changing energetic episodes. *Ciel d’hiver* is the more contemplative of the three, but even so, this is no conventional “slow movement” in the traditional symphonic mold.

CONTAINING MULTITUDES

Ciel d’hiver begins at a quadruple-*piano* dynamic, but already the music contains a rich depth of layered textures, with a low tremolo in the piano,

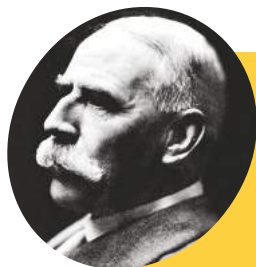
rising and falling harp glissandi and shimmering strings covering a range of five octaves. A shrill piccolo solo pierces the ensemble with a fragmented melody that will later be taken up by solo violin, clarinet, oboe and muted trumpet, spiraling about as if caught in a winter wind.

While expanding and compressing a dense array of instrumentation, the music retains a sense of calm, giving way to a hushed ending section featuring a solo cello and staggered percussive entrances including glockenspiel, vibraphone, glass chimes and crotales—small tuned brass cymbals.

Among the greatest qualities of this movement is the vast array of interpretations one can draw from the music, given what context the composer provides. Some may find it haunting, others peaceful; some may envision the stark and barren nature of the season, others the infinite scope of the cosmos where Orion resides.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, small bell, 3 suspended cymbals, glass chimes, shell chimes, crotales, triangle, tam-tam, vibraphone, piano, celesta and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY JONAH HERZOG.



EDWARD ELGAR

B: June 2, 1857
Broadheath, England

D: February 23, 1934
Worcester, England

Sea Pictures, Opus 37

PREMIERED:
October 5, 1899

The year 1899 was a momentous one for Edward Elgar. In June, the public recognition the English composer had long sought finally arrived when his *Enigma* Variations was first performed in London. This successful premiere catapulted Elgar into the first rank of composers both at home and abroad.

The previous year the Norwich Festival had commissioned Elgar to write a piece for the dramatic contralto Clara Butt, a rising star. The composer agreed, but he did not begin composing in earnest until July 1899. Elgar worked quickly and took as his starting point a song he had written in

1897, “Love Alone will Stay,” with words by his wife Alice. Four additional poems that explored aspects of the sea, each by a different author, were added, and Alice’s original text was renamed and revised to emphasize its coastal setting. On October 5, 1899, the composer conducted the cycle’s well-received debut.

THE OCEAN AND THE ORCHESTRA

In *Sea Slumber Song*, the sea is a mild and comforting mother singing of a place where all earthly troubles will be put to bed. In *Haven* celebrates the power of love to overcome life’s storms. The third and longest song, *Sabbath Morning at Sea*, compares an ocean voyage to the journey of grief after the loss of a loved one. On encountering firsthand the glory of God’s creation, the poet is reminded of his divine plan that promises comfort to those who mourn. *Where Corals Lie* once again asks the listener to surrender to the seductive charms of the deep, but this time the invitation comes with a hint of fairy dust rather than in the form of a lullaby. The final song, *The Swimmer*, is a story of personal struggle and enveloping darkness. The sea is wild and the shoreline where lovers once walked hand in hand is now a place of rocky crags and shipwrecks. The swimmer is caught in a maelstrom of waves that would dash even the “stoutest ship.” The foaming sea is reimagined as a band of galloping white horses. The protagonist determines to ride them “as never man has ridden” to the place where love never fades.

Throughout *Sea Pictures*, Elgar depicts the rising and falling of the ocean with arpeggios in the strings and touches of harp. Repetitive rocking figures are reminiscent of being onboard a ship. Accompaniments mirror the emotional ebb and flow of the verses with the sound of the full orchestra reserved for the grandest moments in songs three and five. The falling arpeggio heard at the start of the first song returns periodically during the cycle as a reminder of the ever-present and unknowable sea.

Instrumentation: solo mezzo with orchestra comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam, harp, organ and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY JEFFREY STIRLING.

**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK**

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

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

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

PREMIERED:
February 2, 1890

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

“MELODIES POUR OUT OF ME”

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

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

THE SYMPHONY: HARMONIC SURPRISES AND VARIATIONS

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

ADAGIO. The two middle movements are just as free. The *Adagio* is apparently in C minor, but it begins in E-flat major with dark and halting

string phrases; the middle section flows easily on a relaxed woodwind tune in C major in which some have heard the sound of cimbalom and a village band. A violin solo leads to a surprisingly violent climax before the movement falls away to its quiet close.

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

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

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.

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ANDREW BIRD

Sarah Hicks, conductor

Andrew Bird, vocals

Nathan Thatcher, arranger

SAT NOV 21 7PM

Tonight's program features a top-to-bottom performance of Andrew Bird's acclaimed 2005 album *The Mysterious Production of Eggs* with orchestral arrangements, capped by a suite of fan-favorite tunes from his near 30-year repertoire.

There will be one 20-minute intermission.



ANDREW BIRD, VOCALS

With his distinctive sound, Grammy-nominated violinist, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Andrew Bird makes his Minnesota Orchestra debut at tonight's concert. Balancing swelling sounds with jazz, folk and pop melodies in an unforgettable display of unique virtuosity, in 2026 Bird celebrates the 20th anniversary of his acclaimed record *The*

Mysterious Production of Eggs by performing the record for the first time in its entirety alongside a full orchestra. Since 1997, Bird has released 18 albums and headlined international venues including Carnegie Hall, Sydney Opera House Red Rocks Amphitheatre and Walt Disney Concert Hall. Bird has been a featured TED Talks presenter, a New Yorker Festival guest and an op-ed contributor for *The New York Times*. He performed as the Whistling Caruso in Disney's *The Muppets* and scored the FX Series *Baskets*. Shortly after receiving his 2020 Grammy nomination for Best Folk Album, Bird made his professional acting debut in the cast of FX's *Fargo*. For more information, visit andrewbird.net.

Profiles of the conductor and arranger appear on pages 52 and 56.

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON IN CONCERT WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Julian Pellicano, conductor

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

DREAMWORKS ANIMATION PRESENTS

“HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON”

Music by JOHN POWELL

Based on the book by CRESSIDA COWELL

Screenplay by

WILL DAVIES AND DEAN DEBLOIS & CHRIS SANDERS

Executive Producers

KRISTINE BELSON TIM JOHNSON

Produced by BONNIE ARNOLD

Directed by CHRIS SANDERS & DEAN DEBLOIS



Today's program is a presentation of the complete film *How To Train Your Dragon* with a live performance of the film's entire score, including music played by the orchestra during the end credits. Out of respect for the musicians and your fellow audience members, please remain seated until the conclusion of the music. The concert lasts about 1 hour and 50 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission.

How To Train Your Dragon © 2010 DreamWorks Animation LLC. All Rights Reserved.

A profile of conductor Julian Pellicano appears on page 54.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

How To Train Your Dragon in Concert is produced by Film Concerts Live!, a joint venture of IMG Artists, LLC and The Gorfaine/Schwartz Agency, Inc.

Producers: Steven A. Linder and Jamie Richardson

Director of Operations: Rob Stogsdill

Production Manager: Sophie Greaves

Production Assistant: Katherine Miron

Worldwide Representation: IMG Artists, LLC

Technical Director: Mike Runice

Music Composed by John Powell

Music Preparation: Jo Ann Kane Music Service

Film Preparation for Concert Performance: Ramiro Belgardt, Epilogue Media

Technical Consultant: Laura Gibson

Sound Remixing for Concert Performance: Chace Audio by Deluxe

The score for *How To Train Your Dragon* has been adapted for live concert performance.

With special thanks to: Universal Pictures, DreamWorks Animation, Bonnie Arnold, Chris Sanders, Dean DeBlois, John Powell, Chris DeFaria, Michael Silver, Patrick Koors, Tammy Olsen, Lawrence Liu, Chuck Nilsen, Mike Pastrano, Thomas Schroder, Tanya Perra, Chris Herzberger, Noah Bergman, Jason Jackowski, Heather Oster, Jen Ockelmann-Wagner, Alex Levy, Mark Graham, Matt Voogt, Bethany Brinton, and the musicians and staff of the Minnesota Orchestra.

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PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND CREOLE CHRISTMAS WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, conductor

Ben Jaffe, bass and tuba

Branden Lewis, trumpet

Clint Maedgen, saxophone

Revon Andrews, trombone

Glen Andrews, drums

Kyle Roussel, piano

TUE DEC 1 7PM

For tonight's performance, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band joins the Minnesota Orchestra to perform New Orleans classics as well as some best-loved holiday selections with a twist. The program will be announced from the stage.

There will be one 20-minute intermission.



Profiles of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band and conductor Enrico Lopez-Yañez appear on pages 53 and 55.



STELLA CHEN,
VIOLIN

American violinist Stella Chen rose to international recognition as winner of the 2019 Queen Elizabeth International Violin Competition and received the 2023 Gramophone Young Artist of the Year Award for her acclaimed debut album *Stella x Schubert*. She debuted with the Minnesota Orchestra in December 2021, performing Sibelius' Humoresques. Chen opened her 2026–27 season with the Chicago Symphony at Ravinia under Earl Lee. This season she also returns to Amsterdam's Concertgebouw with the Antwerp Symphony, makes her Taiwan concerto debut and opens the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields' London season. Further engagements include a return to the North Carolina Symphony, plus debuts with the Bournemouth, Detroit, Utah, Oregon, Fort Worth and Kansas City symphonies and the Danish Philharmonic. Recital highlights include the Dresden Music Festival, Rockport Festival and two tours with Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Chen teaches at Juilliard and performs on the "General Kyd" 1720 Stradivarius. More: intermusica.com, stellachen.com.



DEIDRE COCHRAN,
HOST AND NARRATOR

Deidre Cochran is an actor, educator and director based in Minneapolis. A Georgia native, she relocated to Minneapolis in 2016 and has been seen on multiple stages in the Twin Cities area since her move. She has appeared locally in *Scotland, PA* and *Jelly's Last Jam* (Theater Latté Da); *An American Tail* and *Milo Imagines the World* (Children's Theatre Company); *Shrek*, *Mary Poppins* and *The Music Man* (Artistry); *Ordway Cabaret: Rise Up!* (Ordway); and *In the Green* and *Islander* (Theatre Elision). In addition to performing, she is also the theatre advisor at Minneapolis Southwest High School and provides one-on-one acting coaching through her performance studio. More: deidrecochran.com.



SASHA COOKE,
MEZZO

Two-time Grammy Award-winning mezzo Sasha Cooke has sung at the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, English National Opera, Seattle Opera, Opéra National de Bordeaux and Gran Teatre del Liceu, among other companies, and as soloist with over 100 orchestras worldwide, frequently in Mahler works. In 2022, she was appointed as co-director of the Lehrer Vocal Institute at the Music Academy of the West. In the 2026–27 season, she appears with the Baltimore Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre National de France, among other ensembles, and with Opera Parallèle in Joby Talbot’s *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. She also joins guitarist Jason Vieaux to perform songs from Enrique Granados to Stephen Sondheim. Her recordings include Mahler’s Second Symphony with the Minnesota Orchestra and the Grammy-nominated *how do I find you*, showcasing contemporary song cycles written during the pandemic. More: imgartists.com, sashacooke.com.



SARAH HICKS,
CONDUCTOR

Sarah Hicks, the Minnesota Orchestra’s principal conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall, has led a broad range of programs since joining the Orchestra as assistant conductor in 2006, and has earned wide acclaim as a guest conductor in the U.S. and abroad. At the 2026 BBC Proms she led the BBC Philharmonic in a tribute to the film music of Alan Menken. 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, NurD, The New Standards, Cloud Cult and Dessa—with whom Hicks and the Orchestra made a live-in-concert recording on Doontree Records. During the Orchestra’s 2026–27 season she leads film music concerts of *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* and *Amadeus* as well as performances with Ben Folds, Guster and Leslie Odom, Jr. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.



ENRICO LOPEZ-YAÑEZ,
CONDUCTOR

Enrico Lopez-Yañez is one of the most innovative and in-demand conductors in North America. He is the Dallas Symphony's newly appointed creative director and principal conductor of pops and specials, and also serves as principal pops conductor of the Detroit and Pacific symphonies and principal guest conductor of pops at the Indianapolis Symphony. He was previously principal pops conductor of the Nashville Symphony. Highlights of his 2026–27 season include concerts with Aida Cuevas, Bernadette Peters, Idina Menzel, Megan Hilty, Cody Fry, Better Than Ezra, Mandy Gonzalez and Pepe Aguilar, as well as the New York Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony and Cincinnati Pops. 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, Detroit and Indianapolis symphonies. He is artistic director and co-founder of Symphonica Productions, LLC, which develops pops, family and educational concerts. More: enricolopezyanez.com.



BRIAN NEWHOUSE,
BROADCAST HOST

For the performance on Friday, November 6, Brian Newhouse serves as host and writer of the Minnesota PBS and online livestream *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*. Newhouse hosted his first live Minnesota Orchestra radio broadcast in 1983, and for much of the next four decades welcomed Minnesota Public Radio listeners to the Orchestra's concerts. Off-air, he became managing director of MPR's classical programming, which reaches nearly five million listeners each week. With degrees in voice and English from Luther College, he had an active professional singing career alongside his work in radio and earned an MFA in creative writing from Hamline University, winning a Peabody Award for writing the radio documentary *The Mississippi: River of Song*. In 2020 he joined the Orchestra's staff as associate vice president of individual giving, retiring at the end of 2024. In February 2026, E.C. Schirmer published Dale Warland's *Choral Conducting: A Life of Building*, edited by Newhouse.



JON KIMURA PARKER,
PIANO

Pianist Jon Kimura Parker, known for his charismatic and dynamic performances, has performed in major international venues including the Berlin Philharmonie and Beijing Concert Hall. Parker serves as artistic director of the Honens International Piano Competition, artistic advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival and chairs the keyboard faculty at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. He was formerly creative partner for Summer at Orchestra Hall. An eclectic and collaborative artist, Parker has performed with Yo-Yo Ma, Susan Graham and Dessá, among others. He co-founded the Montrose Trio and toured Off the Score with Police drummer Stewart Copeland. A Gold Medalist at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition, Parker studied with Edward and Keiko Parker, Lee Kum-Sing, Marek Jablonski and Adele Marcus at Juilliard. He is an Officer of the Order of Canada and holds honorary doctorates from the University of British Columbia and the Royal Conservatory of Music. More: jonkimuraparker.com.



JULIAN PELLICANO,
CONDUCTOR

Known for his versatility across a broad spectrum of genres, dynamic interpretations and meticulous technique, American-Canadian conductor Julian Pellicano is a conductor with the National Ballet of Canada and music director of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra. Passionate about the intersection of music and dance, he has conducted numerous classical and contemporary ballet productions. His film project credits encompass more than 40 titles including Miloš Forman's *Amadeus*, many films scored by John Williams, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* with its original 1927 score, as well as recent blockbusters and classic films. He has conducted orchestras and ballet companies in North America and abroad, including the Seattle Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Hong Kong Ballet, and Orquestra Sinfônica de Porto Alegre, among many others. More: julianpellicano.com.



PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND

Throughout its history, New Orleans has been the point at which sounds and cultures from around the world converge, mingle and resurface. That idea is embodied in the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, which has held the torch of New Orleans music aloft for more than 65 years, all the while carrying it enthusiastically forward as a reminder that the history they were founded to preserve is a vibrantly living history. Its album *So It Is* redefines what New Orleans music means today by tapping into a sonic continuum that stretches back to the city's Afro-Cuban roots, through its common ancestry with the Afrobeat of Fela Kuti and the Fire Music of Pharoah Sanders and John Coltrane, and forward to cutting-edge artists with whom the PHJB has shared stages, including Stevie Wonder, Elvis Costello, the Grateful Dead, Beck, the Foo Fighters, My Morning Jacket and the Black Keys. More: preservationhalljazzband.com.



DINIS SOUSA, CONDUCTOR

Dinis Sousa is music director of Royal Northern Sinfonia and Founder and artistic director of Orquestra XXI, which he established in 2013 to unite Portuguese musicians pursuing international careers. Highlights of his work with Orquestra XXI include opening the Gulbenkian Foundation's concert season and an acclaimed tour of Mahler's Symphony No. 5. His 2026-27 season with Royal Northern Sinfonia includes performances of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, and a cycle of Beethoven's piano concertos with Alice Sara Ott, Stephen Hough and Elisabeth Leonskaja. On the opera stage he has led the Bergen Opera, Nevill Holt Opera and English National Opera. As a pianist he appeared in Morton Feldman's *Crippled Symmetry* as part of the 2026 BBC Proms. He was appointed a Knight of the Order of Prince Henry in Portugal, and in 2023 received the Critics' Circle Young Talent (Conductor) Award. More: imgartists.com, dinissousa.com.



SCOTT TERRELL,
CONDUCTOR

Scott Terrell has built a major conducting career through imaginative programs, an engaging presence and a passion for artistic excellence. An ardent champion of new music and diverse repertoire, he serves as associate professor of orchestral studies, holding the Virginia Martin Howard Chair at Louisiana State University School of Music. He makes debuts this season with the National Repertory Orchestra, Oregon Symphony, Pacific Symphony and Nashville Symphony, while returning to the Utah Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Bogota Philharmonic, Rochester Philharmonic and Louisiana Philharmonic. Passionate about developing aspiring musicians, Terrell has served as a guest conductor and instructor at the Aspen Music Festival and taught internationally in Bulgaria and Austria. He was music director of the Lexington Philharmonic from 2009–2019 and previously served as resident conductor of the Charleston Symphony and assistant conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra. More: imgartists.com, scottaterrell.com.



NATHAN THATCHER,
ARRANGER

Nathan Thatcher is a composer, arranger and author based in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has collaborated with a wide array of musicians including Nico Muhly, Shara Nova, Sufjan Stevens, Son Lux, Attacca Quartet, Caroline Shaw, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Chris Cerrone, the National, Andrew Bird, Daniel Wohl and Nadia Sirota, along with many others. His arrangements have been performed by the Kronos Quartet, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, the Knights and orchestras around the world. His work can be heard on the record *Away* by the band Okkervil River, in the recent movies *Knives Out* and *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, the new Broadway musical *Illinois*, and currently in the 20th-anniversary orchestral tour of Andrew Bird's *The Mysterious Production of Eggs*. More: nthatcher.com.



OSMO VÄNSKÄ,
CONDUCTOR

Minnesota Orchestra Conductor Laureate Osmo Vänskä, whose 19-year tenure as the Orchestra's music director concluded in 2022, is renowned internationally for his compelling interpretations of the standard, contemporary and Nordic repertoires. Vänskä's recordings with the Orchestra include all of the Mahler, Sibelius and Beethoven symphonies, released by BIS Records on discs that earned a Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance and two additional Grammy nominations. Vänskä also led the ensemble on major tours to Cuba, Europe and South Africa. This season he appears with orchestras including the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and Curtis Symphony Orchestra, with the latter including the world premiere of his own composition *Circus of Life*. He previously served as music director of the Seoul Philharmonic and Finland's Lahti Symphony. He is also active as a clarinetist in chamber music settings, often with Minnesota Orchestra Concertmaster Erin Keefe. More: minnesotaorchestra.org, harrisonparrott.com.



TJ YU,
XYLOPHONE

TJ Yu is a percussionist from Plymouth, Minnesota. Currently enrolled in his senior year at Wayzata High School, he plays tenor drums with the marching band, drum set for pit orchestra, and general percussion for concert band and percussion ensemble. He was a finalist in the 2026 YPSCA Young People's Concerto Competition. He has been a member of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies (GTCYS) program for five years, touring internationally with their flagship orchestra twice. He has studied under Robert Adney at MacPhail Center for Music for six years, as well as with Dr. Benjamin Yats in the Wayzata High School drumline. Yu's favorite classical pieces and concertos include Copland's *Billy the Kid*, Dvořák's Cello Concerto and Emmanuel Séjourné's Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra. Other modern artists he enjoys listening to include Masayoshi Takanaka, the Cardigans and Clairo. His favorite percussion instrument is the Udu.

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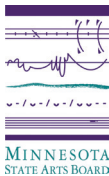
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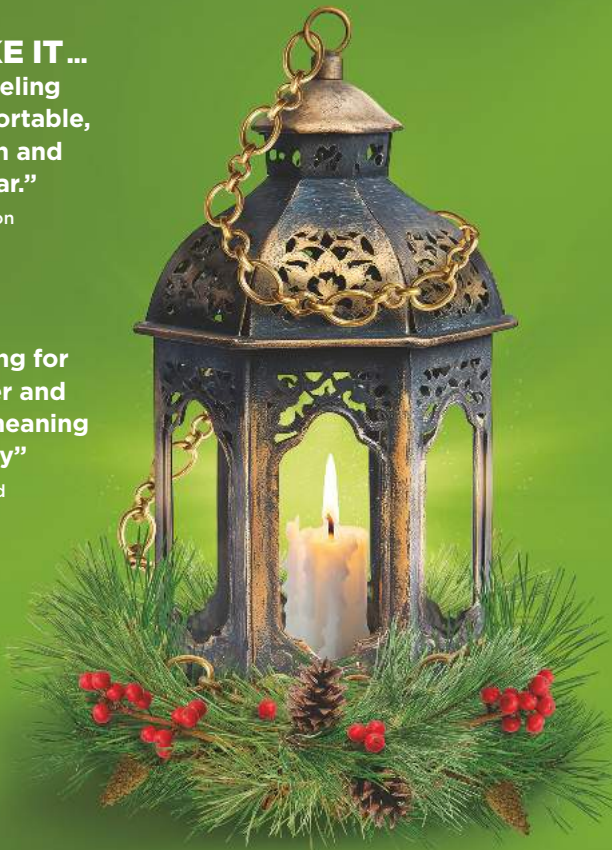
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