Tuesday, December 6, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

**THE 65TH STREET SESSION**

**Chris Thile,** Curator / Performer  
**American Acoustic**  
**Punch Brothers,** Band  
**Watchhouse,** Band  
**Sarah Jarosz,** Singer

**Presenting Sponsors**  
Laura Chang and Arnold Chavkin

Wu Tsai Theater  
David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center  
Home of the New York Philharmonic

This program will last approximately two and one-half hours. There will be no intermission.

Lead support for *The 65th Street Session* is provided by Gregory Annenberg Weingarten, GRoW @ Annenberg.
A Note from the Curator

When a music haven as righteous as the new David Geffen Hall emerges, the entire music community rejoices, regardless of genre. *The 65th Street Session* is a series of concerts where that community can gather in all of its varied beauty, two or three artists at a time, performing separately and together, to remind us and each other that while our similarities may start conversations, our differences can deepen them beyond our wildest imagination.

— Chris Thile
Curator, *The 65th Street Session*
2022–23 Season Creative Partner

THIS CONCERT WILL BE PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERMISSION.

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The Artists

Chris Thile — MacArthur Fellow and Grammy Award–winning mandolinist, singer, and songwriter — is a founding member of the critically acclaimed bands Punch Brothers and Nickel Creek. For four years he hosted the public radio favorite Live from Here with Chris Thile (formerly known as A Prairie Home Companion). With his broad outlook, he creates a distinctly American canon and a new musical aesthetic for performers and audiences alike. He serves as the NY Phil’s 2022–23 season Creative Partner.

Most recently, Thile recorded Laysongs, released in June 2021 on Nonesuch. The album is his first truly solo album — just Thile, his voice, and his mandolin on new recordings of six original songs and three covers, all of which is contextualized with banter that includes his ideas about spirituality. Recorded in a converted upstate New York church during the pandemic, Laysongs’s centerpiece is the three-part Salt (in the Wounds) of the Earth, which was inspired by C.S. Lewis’s The Screwtape Letters. The album also features a song that Thile wrote about Dionysus; a performance of the fourth movement of Bartók’s Sonata for Solo Violin; God Is Alive, Magic Is Afoot, based on Buffy Sainte-Marie’s adaptation of a Leonard Cohen poem; a cover of bluegrass legend Hazel Dickens’s Won’t You Come and Sing for Me; and Ecclesiastes 2:24, an original instrumental loosely modeled after the Prelude from J.S. Bach’s Partita for Solo Violin in E major.

Punch Brothers are mandolinist Chris Thile, guitarist Chris Eldridge, bassist Paul Kowert, banjoist Noam Pikelny, and violinist Gabe Witcher. Their accolades include a Grammy for Best Folk Album for All Ashore (2018). Punch Brothers, formed in 2006, released their first Nonesuch record, Punch, in 2008; it combines elements of the band’s many musical interests. In 2009 they began a residency at New York City’s intimate Lower East Side club The Living Room, trying out new songs and ultimately spawning Antifogmatic (2010). In 2012 the band released Who’s Feeling Young Now? Their 2015 album, the T Bone Burnett–produced The Phosphorescent Blues, addresses the power and the pitfalls of our super-connected world with straight-up poignancy and subversive humor.

In November 2020, when the world felt so full of uncertainty, Punch Brothers
did the one thing that they could rely on: they stood in a circle, facing one another, and made music. A weeklong recording session, after quarantining and minimal rehearsal aside from a few Zoom calls, culminated in *Hell on Church Street*, a reimagining of Bluegrass great Tony Rice’s landmark album *Church Street Blues* (Nonesuch, 2022). *Hell on Church Street* is a potent work by a band realizing their own powers and returning to the foundations of their music.

This band of virtuosi had spent more than a decade changing the face of acoustic music, stretching the limitations of instruments, and influencing a generation of young musicians — but life has a way of keeping a band from getting in the same room. Thile elaborates: “These sessions were a reminder for me of what’s really important. I felt silly having this band take up so little of my creative year; it reminded me that us five together is critical to my happiness.”

By the time 2019 came to its fitful end, Andrew Marlin knew he was tired of touring. He was grateful, of course, for the ascendancy of Mandolin Orange, the duo he’d cofounded in North Carolina with fiddler Emily Frantz exactly a decade earlier. With time, they had become new flagbearers of the contemporary folk world, sweetly singing soft songs about the hardest parts of our lives, both as people and as a people. Their rise — marked by crowds that grew first to fill small dives, then the Ryman, then amphitheaters the size of Red Rocks — humbled Frantz and Marlin, who became parents to Ruby late in 2018. They’d made a life of this.

Still, every night, Marlin especially was paid to relive a lifetime of grievances and griefs onstage. Those tunes conflicted with the name Mandolin Orange, an early-20s holdover that never quite comported with the music they made. Nightly soundchecks, at least, provided temporary relief, as the band worked through a batch of guarded but hopeful songs written just after Ruby’s birth. They offered a new way to think about an established act.

Those tunes are now *Watchhouse*, a moniker inspired by Marlin’s place of childhood solace. The name represents their reinvention as a band at the regenerative edges of subtly experimental folk-rock. Challenging as they are charming, and an inspired search for personal and political goodness, the nine songs on the same-titled album offer welcome lessons about what any of us might become when the night begins to break.

“We’re different people than when we started this band,” Marlin says, reflecting on all these shifts. “We’re setting new intentions, taking control of this thing again.”

With her captivating voice and richly detailed songwriting, Sarah Jarosz has emerged as one of the most compelling musicians of her generation. A four-time Grammy Award winner and ten-time
nominee at the age of 30, the Texas native started singing as a young girl and became an accomplished multi-instrumentalist by her early teens.

After releasing her full-length debut, *Song Up in Her Head*, at age 18, she went on to deliver such critically lauded albums as *Follow Me Down, Build Me Up From Bones*, and *Undercurrent*, in addition to joining forces with Sara Watkins and Aoife O’Donovan to form the acclaimed folk trio I’m With Her. Her fifth studio album, *World On The Ground*, produced by John Leventhal, went on to win the Grammy Award for Best Americana Album. In 2021 Jarosz released the Grammy-nominated *Blue Heron Suite*, a much anticipated song cycle that she composed after being the recipient of the FreshGrass Composition Commission. She has toured in 2022 in support of both releases.
Jaap van Zweden became Music Director of the New York Philharmonic in 2018; in the 2022–23 season he presides over the Orchestra’s return to the new David Geffen Hall. He is also Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic since 2012, and becomes Music Director of the Seoul Philharmonic in 2024. He has appeared as guest with the Orchestre de Paris; Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestras; Vienna, Berlin, and Los Angeles philharmonic orchestras; and London Symphony, Chicago Symphony, and Cleveland orchestras.

Jaap van Zweden’s NY Phil recordings include David Lang’s prisoner of the state and Julia Wolfe’s Grammy-nominated Fire in my mouth (Decca Gold). He conducted the first-ever performances in Hong Kong of Wagner’s Ring Cycle, the Naxos recording of which led the Hong Kong Philharmonic to be named the 2019 Gramophone Orchestra of the year. His performance of Wagner’s Parsifal received the Edison Award for Best Opera Recording in 2012.

Born in Amsterdam, Jaap van Zweden became the youngest-ever concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra at age 19. He began his conducting career almost 20 years later, was named Musical America’s 2012 Conductor of the Year, and was awarded the prestigious Concertgebouw Prize in 2020. In 1997 he and his wife, Aaltje, established the Papageno Foundation to support families of children with autism.

The New York Philharmonic connects with millions of music lovers each season through live concerts in New York and around the world, as well as broadcasts, recordings, and education programs. The 2022–23 season marks a new chapter in the life of America’s longest living orchestra with the opening of the new David Geffen Hall and programming that engages with today’s cultural conversations through explorations of HOME, LIBERATION, SPIRIT, and EARTH, in addition to the premieres of 16 works. This marks the return from the pandemic, when the NY Phil launched NY Phil Bandwagon, presenting free performances across the city, and 2021–22 concerts at other New York City venues.

The Philharmonic has commissioned and/or premiered important works, from Dvořák’s New World Symphony to Tania León’s Pulitzer Prize-winning Stride. The Orchestra has released more than 2,000 recordings since 1917, streams performances on NYPhil+, and shares its extensive history free online through the New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives.

Founded in 1842, the New York Philharmonic is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States, and one of the oldest in the world. Jaap van Zweden became Music Director in 2018–19, succeeding titans including Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler.