



JAAP VAN ZWEDEN
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Thursday, February 2, 2023, 7:30 p.m.
16,847th Concert

Friday, February 3, 2023, 2:00 p.m.
16,848th Concert

Saturday, February 4, 2023, 8:00 p.m.
16,849th Concert

Herbert Blomstedt, Conductor

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

Lead support for these concerts is
provided by **Joan and Joel I. Picket.**

This program will last approximately one and
three-quarters hours, which includes one
intermission.



February 2–4, 2023

Herbert Blomstedt, Conductor

LIDHOLM
(1921–2017)

Poesis (1963; rev. 2011)

ERIC HUEBNER, piano

Intermission

BERLIOZ
(1803–69)

Symphonie fantastique: Episode de la vie d'un artiste (Fantastic Symphony: Episode in the Life of an Artist), Op. 14
(1830, rev. 1832)

Rêveries, Passions (Reveries, Passions):
Allegro agitato e appassionato assai —
Religiosamente

Un Bal (A Ball): Valse: Allegro non troppo
Scène aux champs (Scene in the
Fields): Adagio

Marche au supplice (March to the
Scaffold): Allegretto non troppo

Songe d'une nuit du sabbat (Dream of a
Witches' Sabbath): Larghetto — Allegro

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Notes on the Program

Poesis

Ingvar Lidholm

It cannot be often that we get to hear a conductor present a work he introduced to the world almost six decades ago. Herbert Blomstedt was a young man when, in 1964, he conducted the first performance of Ingvar Lidholm's *Poesis*, a work by a composer of his own generation who, like him, had studied in Stockholm and gained prominence in the city's musical life. Through the decades since, Blomstedt has remained faithful to the piece, conducting it in the US and around Europe. He also maintained a long friendship with the composer, who responded to that professional trust and personal closeness by making a new version in 2011 and dedicating it to Blomstedt.

Describing the piece, Blomstedt has said how Lidholm here "starts from scratch," almost as if the whole history of symphonic music did not exist. That is something Lidholm had to do more than once over his long life. Born to middle-class parents who encouraged their children to make music at home, he was, without much formal instruction, composing songs by the time he was 12.

Studies at the conservatory in Stockholm set him up for a career as a Scandinavian Romantic, but a 1949 visit to the summer school at Darmstadt — where Messiaen was giving a course and 12-tone music was very much on the agenda — encouraged him to begin all over. In 1953 he became a student again, spending several months in London taking lessons with the Hungarian émigré Mátyás Seiber, one of the few senior composers at that time fully equipped to teach 12-tone

composition. But a decade later Lidholm let all that go. His music now would spring from sound, with no preconceptions. *Poesis*, which he composed in 1963, on a commission from the Stockholm Philharmonic (now called the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra) for its 50th anniversary, was one of the immediate results.

The word *poesis* exists in Swedish as the genitive of the word for poetry, but Lidholm was more likely thinking of the similarly spelled Latin term for poetry and of that word's origin in the Greek "*poiesis*," meaning "composition." As a title, it is thoroughly abstract. It says nothing about form or tradition. We are, indeed, starting from scratch.

This means that no prior knowledge is required from listeners, and this program note might as well pack up and go home.

In Short

Born: February 24, 1921, in Jönköping, southern Sweden

Died: October 17, 2017, in Rönninge, Stockholm County

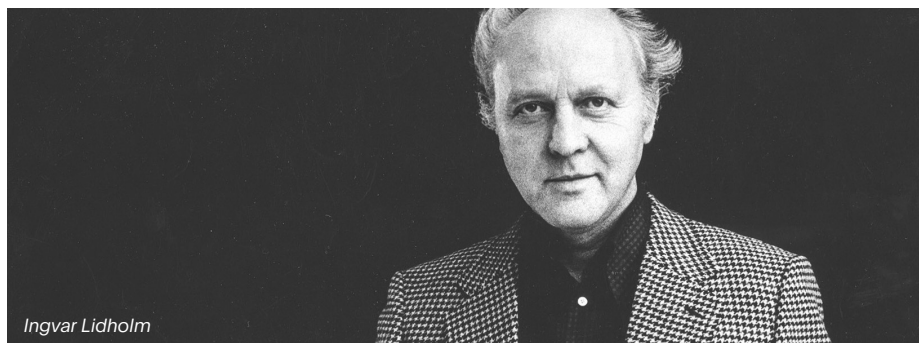
Work composed: 1963, commissioned by the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra (now called the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra); revised in 2011

World premiere: January 16, 1964, at the Konserthuset Stockholm, by the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert Blomstedt, conductor

New York Philharmonic premiere: these concerts

Estimated duration: ca. 18 minutes

The Work at a Glance



Poesis is largely a work of instrumental groups, either in conflict or alliance. A solo percussionist on sandblock opens the work with violins, very quietly, followed by *tutti* strings, brass, woodwinds, and — making a dramatic entry — piano and full percussion (all four players on instruments of indefinite pitch throughout the piece). However, there are points where the focus is on a single musician. One, of course, is the piano cadenza, demanded by the instrument's increasing prominence and instigated by a startling outburst from the percussionists.

There are others. The sandblock percussionist at the start, though so quiet, demands our attention. So does the solo bass player who makes a daring leap out of the string conglomerate much later, clearing the ground and so setting the piece on the way to its vociferous close.

Handwritten musical score for *Poesis*, showing staves for Violins I & II, Viola I & II, Violoncello I & II, and Contrabass I. The score includes dynamic markings (*ppp*, *pp*, *f*), performance instructions in German, and a glissando for the Contrabass.

Violins I & II: *ppp* — *pp*

Viola I & II: *ppp* — *pp*

Violoncello I & II: *ppp* — *pp*
pizz. frei improvisieren, successiv abschliessen

Contrabass I: *1 solo arco*
Das Kontrabaß-Solo immer sehr pathetisch und ausdrucksvoll. Wie eine absurde menschliche Stimme.
gliss.
langsam
pp — *f* — *ppp*

This is the moment when the voice from the depths of the orchestra comes right forward, and shows, too, where Lidholm can allow his notation to be free and where he needs it to be very precise. Playing pizzicato, musicians on violin, viola, and cello are asked to “improvise freely” and “end successively.” They produce a faint cloud, whose details do not matter. It is the background against which the bass player emerges, on a steady C sharp, then sliding down in accord with the given contour. The solo is to be “always full of pathos and expression, like an absurd human voice” — absurd in the sense of Samuel Beckett’s absurdism, at once futile and vital.

However, there is perhaps a challenge to be faced here. Since this work was written, composers have, by and large, found themselves drawn back to continuity, to recognizable progress through time, and to connection with tradition. Music that offers us raw sound, unmediated sonic experience, or a dramatic interplay of instrumental families may now seem a thing of the past. What was once felt to be novel and exciting could risk becoming, paradoxically, old hat.

That this is not happening here is partly due to Blomstedt's fidelity. A solid history of performances backs up, again paradoxically, the music's freshness for each new orchestra and each new audience. What also helps is that Lidholm, at the age of 90, gave the score a lift — but without touching most of it and, therefore, without blunting its vivid character. What he did was change the piano cadenza that arrives toward the middle of the piece. What was originally pure theater, the pianist parading around the instrument to make sounds at different stations, is now a passage in which the player is invited to improvise a nocturne,

asked to produce music of “stillness” and “dream,” with reminiscences of scale figures from a choral piece going back to the composer's mid-20s.

By the time Lidholm made this alteration, his music had long been retrieving the past — not only his own, but the deep history of Western music in modal chant. *Poesis*, in its final state, discovers, within the sudden and instantaneous, traces of memory.

Instrumentation: four flutes (all doubling piccolo), four oboes, three clarinets and E-flat clarinet, four horns, four trumpets, four trombones, bongos, reco-reco, claves, tambourine, marimba, snare drum, suspended cymbals, tam-tams, cowbells, tamburo rullante, sandpaper, whip, timbales, temple blocks, piano, and strings.

Ingvar Lidholm's *Poesis* is presented under license from G. Schirmer, Inc., copyright owners.

— *Paul Griffiths, a music critic for many years and the author, most recently, of Mr. Beethoven (New York Review Books)*

Symphonie fantastique: Episode de la vie d'un artiste (*Fantastic Symphony: Episode in the Life of an Artist*), Op. 14

Hector Berlioz

Hector Berlioz's biography makes extraordinary reading, especially when liberally peppered with accounts lifted from his beautifully written and often hilarious *Mémoires* (which have been vividly captured in English translation by David Cairns). His father was a physician in a town not far from Grenoble, within view of the Alps, and since the father assumed that his son would follow in the same profession, the son's musical inclinations were largely ignored. As a result, Berlioz never learned to play more than a few chords on the piano, and his practical abilities as a performer were limited to lessons on flute and guitar, on neither of which he achieved true virtuosity.

His unorthodox musical background surely contributed to his nonconformist musical language. He was sent to Paris to attend medical school, hated the experience, enrolled instead in private musical studies and, beginning in 1826, the composition curriculum at the Paris Conservatoire. The seal of approval for all Conservatoire composition students was the Prix de Rome, and in 1830 (in his fourth consecutive attempt) he was finally honored with that prize.

The work that won him this distinction, the cantata *La Mort de Sardanapale*, is long forgotten; in fact, only a fragment of it survives. Ironically, Berlioz had already composed earlier in the same year the work that would most consistently forge his place in posterity, the *Symphonie fantastique*. It would be the first of four Berlioz symphonies, all of which leave the abstract realm of Beethoven's symphonic ideal for the programmatic terrain that would find fruition later in the 19th century in the new genre of the symphonic poem.

The originality of Berlioz's achievement in the *Symphonie fantastique* is simply astonishing; it has been truly observed that this must be the most remarkable First Symphony ever written, not to be rivaled in this regard until the appearance of Mahler's six decades later. Certainly programmatic symphonies had been written before — Beethoven's *Pastoral* is a famous example — but in the *Symphonie fantastique* the images are depicted with such vibrant specificity as to be downright cinematic. Furthermore, Berlioz's sense of the programmatic goes well

In Short

Born: December 11, 1803, in La Côte-Saint-André, Isère, France

Died: March 8, 1869, in Paris

Work composed: 1830, incorporating some material sketched as early as 1819; revised 1832

World premiere: December 5, 1830, at the Salle du Conservatoire in Paris, by members of the orchestras of the Nouveautés, Théâtre-Italien, and Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, François-Antoine Habeneck, conductor; the revised version (which is nearly always heard today) unveiled on December 9, 1832, again with Habeneck conducting

New York Philharmonic premiere: the first four movements, January 27, 1866, Carl Bergmann, conductor; the first complete performance, March 1, 1878, with Leopold Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony (a NY Phil forebear)

Most recent New York Philharmonic performance: October 12, 2019, Jaap van Zweden, conductor, at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma

Estimated duration: ca. 51 minutes

The Work at a Glance

Berlioz penned this scenario for the premiere of the *Symphonie fantastique*:

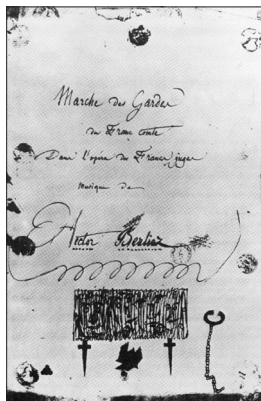
Part One: Reveries, Passions — The author imagines that a young musician, afflicted with that moral disease that a well-known writer calls the *vague des passions*, sees for the first time a woman who embodies all the charms of the ideal being he has imagined in his dreams, and he falls desperately in love with her. Through an odd whim, whenever the beloved image appears before the mind's eye of the artist, it is linked with a musical thought whose character, passionate but at the same time noble and shy, he finds similar to the one he attributes to his beloved.

This melodic image and the model it reflects pursue him incessantly like a double *idée fixe*. That is the reason for the constant appearance, in every movement of the symphony, of the melody that begins the first *Allegro*. The passage from this state of melancholy reverie, interrupted by a few fits of groundless joy, to one of frenzied passion, with its gestures of fury, of jealousy, its return of tenderness, its tears, its religious consolations.

Part Two: A Ball — The artist finds himself in the most varied situations — in the midst of the tumult of a party, in the peaceful contemplation of the beauties of nature; but everywhere, in town, in the country, the beloved image appears before him and disturbs his peace of mind.

Part Three: Scene in the Fields — Finding himself one evening in the country, he hears in the distance two shepherds piping a *ranz des vaches* in dialogue. This pastoral duet, the scenery, the quiet rustling of the trees gently brushed by the wind, the hopes he has recently found some reason to entertain — all concur in affording his heart an unaccustomed calm, and in giving a more cheerful color to his ideas. He reflects upon his isolation; he hopes that his loneliness will soon be over. — But what if she were deceiving him! — This mingling of hope and fear, form the subject of the *Adagio*. At the end, one of the shepherds again takes up the *ranz des vaches*; the other no longer replies.

Part Four: March to the Scaffold — Convinced that his love is unappreciated, the artist poisons himself with opium. The dose, too weak to kill him, plunges him into a sleep accompanied by the most horrible visions. He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned and led to the scaffold, and that he is witnessing his own execution. The procession moves forward to the sounds of a march that is now somber and fierce, now brilliant and solemn, in which the muffled noise of heavy steps gives way without transition to the noisiest clamor. At the end of the march the first four measures of the *idée fixe* reappear.



The original title page for the March to the Scaffold

Part Five: Dream of a Witches' Sabbath — He sees himself at the sabbath, in the midst of a frightful troop of ghosts, sorcerers, monsters of every kind, come together for his funeral. Strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, distant cries which other cries seem to answer. The beloved melody appears again, but it has lost its character of nobility and shyness; it is no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial, and grotesque: it is she, coming to join the sabbath. — A roar of joy at her arrival. — She takes part in the devilish orgy. — Funeral knell, burlesque parody of the *Dies Irae* [a hymn sung in the funeral rites of the Catholic Church], sabbath round-dance. The sabbath round and the *Dies Irae* are combined.

beyond the “merely” descriptive to enter the realm of the psychological and the image of a state of mind, one that is far from stable and that spills into hallucinations. The *Symphonie fantastique* is an extraordinary example of self-exploration and self-expression, a work of autobiography underscored by the subtitle *Episode de la vie d'un artiste* (*Episode in the Life of an Artist*).

The episode in question was carefully described in a program note Berlioz prepared (see page 25). The action is often accompanied by an *idée fixe*, a musical theme that surfaces throughout the piece in various transformations. It is first played by flute and violins at the beginning of the opening movement's *Passions* section, and pervades the ensuing material. In succeeding movements, the artist finds himself in a ballroom, where he waltzes with his beloved, and in the Alpine countryside, where memories of his beloved disturb his peace. Under

the influence of a narcotic drug, he imagines himself being led to the scaffold, where he is executed for murdering his beloved, and finally to a *Witches' Sabbath* convened in honor of his death, at which the *idée fixe* now appears as a grotesque dance heard along with a parody of the funeral chant *Dies Irae*.

Instrumentation: two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes and English horn, two clarinets (one doubling E-flat clarinet), four bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones, two tubas, timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, church bells, two harps, and strings.

— James M. Keller, former New York Philharmonic Program Annotator; San Francisco Symphony program annotator; and author of *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford University Press)

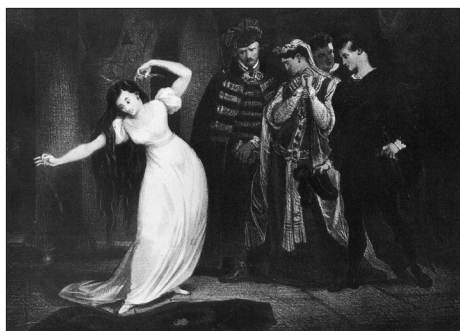
Angels and Muses

The Irish actress Harriet Smithson was born in 1800 into a theatrical family. On September 11, 1827, the 27-year-old opened in an English version of *Hamlet* at the Paris Odéon, playing Ophelia. Berlioz was present, and he was simultaneously smitten by Shakespeare and Smithson. “My heart and whole being were possessed by a fierce, desperate passion in which love of the artist and of the art were interfused, each intensifying the other,” he wrote.

They did not meet in person until the end of 1832, but that did not prevent Smithson from becoming a vibrant presence in Berlioz's imagination. In 1831–32, he composed a sequel to the *Symphonie fantastique* — *Lélio, ou Le retour à la vie* (*Lelio, or The Return to Life*) — that he described in his *Mémoires*:

The subject of the musical drama, as is known, was none other than my love for Miss Smithson and the anguish and “bad dreams” it had brought me.

Despite the fact that neither spoke much of the other's language, they entered into an erratic courtship and married in 1833. It would not be a happy marriage: after they separated in 1844 the actress succumbed to alcoholism, had a series of debilitating strokes, and died in 1854.



A depiction of Harriet Smithson as Ophelia in an 1827 production of *Hamlet*

New York Philharmonic

2022–2023 SEASON

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(Continued)

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The Artist



Noble, charming, sober, modest. Such qualities may play a major role in human coexistence and are certainly appreciated, but are rather atypical in extraordinary

personalities such as conductors. Whatever the public's notion of a conductor may be, **Herbert Blomstedt** is an exception, precisely because he possesses those very qualities that seemingly have little to do with a conductor's claim to power. Yet the fact that he disproves many clichés should not lead one to assume that he does not have the power to assert his clearly defined musical goals. Anyone who has attended his rehearsals and experienced his concentration on the essence of the music, precision in the phrasing of musical facts and circumstances as they appear in the score, and tenacity regarding the implementation of an aesthetic view, is likely to have been amazed at how few despotic measures were required. He has always represented the type of artist whose professional competence and natural authority make all external emphasis superfluous. His work as a conductor is inseparably linked to his religious and human ethos; his interpretations combine great faithfulness to the score and analytical

precision with a soulfulness that awakens the music to pulsating life. Throughout the 60-plus years of his career he has acquired the unrestricted respect of the musical world.

Herbert Blomstedt — born in the United States to Swedish parents and educated in Uppsala, New York, Darmstadt, and Basel — gave his conducting debut in 1954 with the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra; he subsequently served as chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic, Swedish and Danish Radio Orchestras, and Dresden Staatskapelle. Later, he became music director of the San Francisco Symphony, chief conductor of the NDR Symphony Orchestra, and music director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. His former orchestras in San Francisco, Leipzig, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Dresden, as well as the Bamberg Symphony and NHK Symphony Orchestra, have all honored him with the title of conductor laureate.

Herbert Blomstedt holds several honorary doctorates, is an elected member of the Royal Swedish Music Academy, and was awarded the German Great Cross of Merit with Star. Over the years, all leading orchestras around the globe have been fortunate to secure his services.

Having celebrated his 95th birthday in 2022, he continues to be at the helm of all leading international orchestras with enormous mental and physical presence, verve, and artistic drive.

Jaap van Zweden and the New York Philharmonic



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 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.

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New York Philharmonic Guide

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Accessibility

David Geffen Hall



All gender **restrooms** with accessible stalls are in the Karen and Richard LeFrak Lobby. Accessible men's, women's, and companion restrooms are available on all levels. Infant changing tables are in all restrooms.

Braille & Large-Print versions of print programs are available at the Head Usher's Desk, located on the Leon and Norma Hess Grand Promenade. **Tactile maps** of the Karen and Richard LeFrak Lobby, with seating chart of the Wu Tsai Theater, are available in the Welcome Center.

Induction loops are available in all performance spaces and at commerce points including the Welcome Center, Coat Check, and select bars. Receivers with headsets and neck loops are available for guests who do not have t-coil accessible hearing devices.

Noise-reducing headphones, fidgets, and earplugs are available to borrow.

Accessible seating is available in all performance areas and can be arranged at point of sale. For guests transferring to seats, mobility devices will be checked by staff, labeled, and returned at intermission and after the performance. Seating for persons of size is available in the Orchestra and Tiers 1 and 2. Accessible entrances are on the Josie Robertson Plaza. Accessible routes from the Karen and Richard LeFrak Lobby to all tiers and performance spaces are accessible by **elevator**.

For more information or to request additional accommodations, please contact Customer Relations at (212) 875-5656 and visit lincolncenter.org/visit/accessibility.

For Your Safety

For the latest on the **New York Philharmonic's health and safety guidelines** visit nyphil.org/safety.

Fire exits indicated by a red light and the sign nearest to the seat you occupy are the shortest routes to the street. In the event of fire or other emergency, do not run — walk to that exit.

If an evacuation is needed, follow the instructions given by the House Manager and Usher staff.

Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and **First Aid kits** are available if needed during an emergency.

Compose Your Legacy, Sustain Your Orchestra



Did you know that you can support the New York Philharmonic in ways other than by giving cash? Help the Orchestra present inspiring concerts and provide essential music education and community programs. Make our music part of your legacy by designating the NY Phil as part of your estate plan through:

- ♦ **Bequests**
- ♦ **Charitable Trusts**
- ♦ **Retirement Plan Assets**
- ♦ **Insurance Policies**
- ♦ **Tangible Personal Property**

LEARN MORE

nyphil.org/planned-giving | plannedgiving@nyphil.org | (212) 875-5753

Compose Your Legacy with Our Gift To You



We want to express our gratitude for supporting us throughout the year with a gift for you. As special thanks to our NY Phil enthusiasts, we will host an informative session with a representative from Thompson & Associates, a nationally recognized leading firm in estate planning.

A client representative from Thompson & Associates will share a brief overview of estate planning and the values-based approach to meet your planning objectives while maintaining your lifestyles, providing for your heirs, and helping the charitable organizations you love.

Join us to learn more about this valuable new service that we offer at no cost to NY Phil generous supporters!

Estate Planning Seminar

FRIDAY, MARCH 17 AT 12:30 P.M.

Kenneth C. Griffin Sidewalk Studio
David Geffen Hall

Coffee and pastries will be provided

Virtual sessions are available on March 16, April 6, and throughout the year.

**Space is limited for in-person and virtual sessions.
Reserve your spot today!**

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Make Music Happen

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Support the Orchestra and enhance your concert experience in the new David Geffen Hall by becoming a member. Everything we do — from concerts to educational programs and more — is made possible by our community of members.

Access to Rehearsals:

Exclusive passes to Donor Rehearsals, to experience the NY Phil up close and personal in the new hall.

Ticketing Benefits:

Discounted and advance access to tickets (select concerts, subject to availability) throughout the year.

Backstage Passes:

Attend talks, receptions, and meet-and-greets with major artists, and NY Phil musicians.

Get closer to the music in this historic season. Deepen your involvement and donate today.

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The rewards of membership multiply with increased levels of giving. Membership begins at \$100. Patrons (\$2,500 and above) receive additional benefits including VIP ticketing concierge service, invitations to private chamber music performances, and complimentary refreshments at concerts in the Ackman Family Patron Lounge. Photo: Diamond Schmitt