OPENING GALA

Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 7:30 p.m.
16,929th Concert

Jaap van Zweden, Conductor
Yo-Yo Ma, Cello

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

This program will last approximately one and one-quarter hours. There will be no intermission.
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Jaap van Zweden, Conductor
Yo-Yo Ma, Cello

BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)
Overture to Egmont, Op. 84 (1809–10)

TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–93)
Capriccio italien, Op. 45 (1880)

DVOŘÁK (1841–1904)
Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104 (1894–95)
   Allegro
   Adagio, ma non troppo
   Finale: Allegro moderato

YO-YO MA

THIS CONCERT WILL BE PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERMISSION.

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Notes on the Program

Overture to *Egmont*, Op. 84
Ludwig van Beethoven

Ludwig van Beethoven endured a tortured relationship with the stage. He aspired relentlessly to conquer the genre of opera: his career was littered with fervent expressions of desire, and even a few fragmentary attempts, to compose an opera worthy of his genius. But in the end, he managed to complete only one — *Fidelio*. As if to underscore his unease with the genre, he actually “completed” *Fidelio* three times (the first two under the title *Leonore*) before it reached the state in which it is usually performed today.

But there was more to the stage than opera, and in other theatrical genres Beethoven fared better. He wrote music for ballets (*Ritterballet* and *The Creatures of Prometheus*) and incidental music for a half-dozen stage plays: *Egmont*, *Coriolan*, *King Stephen*, *The Ruins of Athens*, *Tarpeja*, and *Leonore Prohaska*. Except for Goethe’s *Egmont*, all of these plays would be profoundly forgotten in most quarters today but for Beethoven’s contributions to their productions. Even that has not been enough to keep most of them alive, with the result that these scores contain many of Beethoven’s least known pages.

Beethoven fairly idolized Goethe, whom he referred to as “the foremost German poet,” and when the Hoftheater commissioned the composer to write incidental music for a revival of Goethe’s 1786 tragedy *Egmont*, scheduled to open in June 1810, he leapt at the opportunity. The commission offered him a good excuse to meet the poet, and he lost little time writing to Goethe, adopting a tone of uncharacteristic humility:

You will soon receive my music for *Egmont* — this wonderful *Egmont* which I read and felt and set to music thinking warmly of you. I am eager to know what you think of it. Even censure will be beneficial to me and my art and will be just as welcome as unmitigated praise.

Goethe did respond with unmitigated praise, expressing particular delight at a passage the composer crafted to accompany the hero’s slumber, the eighth of the nine numbers in Beethoven’s score, not counting the Overture.

The play’s subject appealed greatly to Beethoven’s political taste, derived as it was from a historical incident of the 16th century in which Count Egmont, a Flemish nobleman — let us not forget that

In Short

Born: December 16, 1770 (probably, since he was baptized on the 17th), in Bonn, Germany
Died: March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria
Work composed: 1809–10
World premiere: June 15, 1810, to introduce a performance of Goethe’s tragedy *Egmont* at Vienna’s Hoftheater, with the composer conducting
New York Philharmonic premiere: April 7, 1843, Ureli Corelli Hill, conductor
Most recent New York Philharmonic performance: September 24, 2023, Jaap van Zweden, conductor, at the McKnight Center for the Performing Arts at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma
Estimated duration: ca. 8 minutes
Beethoven was of Flemish ancestry — defies the occupying Spanish forces and seals his own doomed fate to afford his people a vision of freedom. Ideals of political liberation were dear to Beethoven, and they informed a number of his compositions, including *Fidelio*, the plot of which sports many parallels with that of *Egmont*. In *Fidelio* the opponent of oppression is locked away in a prison and is rescued at the 11th hour by his steadfast and courageous wife. In Goethe’s *Egmont* things don’t work out as happily, and the hero’s girlfriend is unable to prevent his execution. Nonetheless, personal sacrifice leads to a greater good, in this case inspiring the oppressed Flemish people to rebel against the occupying forces. “I too go forth from this prison to meet an honorable death,” proclaims Count Egmont in a monologue after his girlfriend appears in a dream to explain the victory that lies ahead. “I die for the freedom for which I lived and fought and to which I now sacrifice myself as a suffering victim.”

Beethoven’s Overture, which is by far the most frequently performed piece of his *Egmont* music, seems crafted to set the scene very specifically. According to the traditional lore about the work, a slow introduction (*Sostenuto ma non*)

**Sources and Inspirations**

What follows is a portion of Goethe’s text that outlines one of the play’s illustrations of the ideals of political liberation that were so dear to Beethoven. It is the moment when Count Egmont, in a monologue, speaks of having seen his beloved, who has come to him in a dream, to explain the victory that lies ahead:

> With blood-bespattered soles she appeared before me, the waving folds of her hem flecked with blood. It was my blood and the blood of many nobles. No, it was not shed in vain. March on! Brave people! The Goddess of Victory is at your head! And as the sea breaks through your dykes, so break, so tear down the wall of tyranny and drown it, floating it free of the foundation it unjustly claims. [Drums approach.] Hark! Hark! How often this sound summoned me to go forth freely onto the field of conflict and victory! … I too go forth from this prison to meet an honorable death. I die for the freedom for which I lived and fought and to which I now sacrifice myself as a suffering victim. [The background fills with a rank of Spanish soldiers … Drums.] The enemy closes you in from all sides! Swords flash — friends, utmost courage! At your backs are your parents, wives, children! Protect your possessions! And to save what is dearest to you fall joyfully, following my example.

*Portrait of Lamoral, Count of Egmont, by Frans Pourbus the Elder*
troppo) depicts the Flemish populace suffering under the yoke of the Spanish oppressors. This eventually yields to a rapid section (Allegro) meant to suggest the optimistic spirit of revolt harbored by the Flemish. At the end, a celebratory climax (Allegro con brio) symbolizes the inevitable victory over oppression and, in the production of the play, returns at the end under the title Siegessinfonie, or “Symphony of Victory.”

Instrumentation: two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, 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)

At the Time

When Beethoven composed his Overture and Incidental Music to Goethe’s Egmont, in 1809–10, his eyes — along with all Europeans’ — were on Napoleon’s ever-expanding territorial ambitions. While living in Vienna, Beethoven, who in 1804 had turned his back on the figure he’d seen as a champion for humanistic causes, would have noted many unnerving news reports, among them:

• Holy Roman Emperor of Austria Franz I declares war on France in February 1809; Napoleon defeats the Austrians at the Battle of Abensberg in April and at the Battle of Wagram in July.

• The Peninsular War (in Spain and Portugal) continues to grind on, including the First Battle of Porto, in which 8,000 Portuguese soldiers are killed and thousands of fleeing civilians drown when a bridge collapses, March 1809.

• In February 1810 — having seized Jaén, Córdoba, Sevilla, and Granada — Napoleonic troops enter Málaga; that same month Napoleon decrees that Rome will be the second capital of the French Empire.

• Napoleon dissolves the Kingdom of Holland, annexing the country into the French Empire in July 1810.

— The Editors

Horace Vernet’s 1835 depiction of Napoleon at the Battle of Wagram on July 6, 1809
A browse through Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s catalogue yields a handful of works that reflect his enthusiasm for things Italian, such as his Romeo and Juliet Overture–Fantasy (1869) and a stand-alone duet (1878) inspired by the same Shakespeare play set in Verona; a lost orchestral piece titled *The Romans in the Coliseum* (1863–64); his Francesca da Rimini “symphonic fantasia after Dante” (1876); his string sextet *Souvenir de Florence* (1890); his song *Pimpinella* (1878), overtly based on a Florentine popular tune; and his orchestrations of operatic selections by Stradella and Cimarosa (1870). Also prominent on the list is his *Capriccio italien* (with its oddly bilingual title), which Tchaikovsky composed in 1880, when he actually was in Italy.

By then the composer had already visited that country three times: in the summer of 1873, briefly; on a more extended tour to Venice, Rome, Naples, and Florence in April 1874; and from December 1878 until March 1879, when he was based in Florence recovering from the nervous breakdown that had been precipitated by his brief, utterly disastrous, marriage. On an extended stay during his fourth visit (two further Italian journeys would follow in 1881), he was having a much better time, particularly since he was in the company of his brother Modest, who organized their itineraries to various museums and landmarks and generally attended to promoting good spirits. Although these sunny skies darkened on January 21, when word arrived that their father had died back in St. Petersburg, the news did not interrupt Tchaikovsky’s incipient work on his Italian Suite on Folk Melodies (to use the name he had employed when he wrote to his friend Sergei Taneyev about this project in a letter five days earlier).

At the end of December Tchaikovsky had written a letter to his benefactor, Nadezhda von Meck, that dropped hints about this piece. On January 28 he wrote to her that his intention was “to compose something like the Spanish fantasias of Glinka,” and a week later he reported to her:

> I have already completed the sketches for an Italian fantasia on folk tunes for which I believe a good future may be predicted. It will be effective, thanks to the delightful tunes which I have succeeded in assembling partly from anthologies, partly through my own ears on the streets.

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**In Short**

**Born:** May 7, 1840, in Votkinsk, Russia

**Died:** November 6, 1893, in St. Petersburg

**Work composed:** January–May 1880; dedicated to “M. Charles Davidoff,” i.e. Karl Yulevich Davidoff, a distinguished cellist and the director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory

**World premiere:** December 6, 1880, in Moscow, at a concert of the Russian Musical Society, Nikolai Rubinstein, conductor

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** November 5, 1886, with Walter Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony (which would merge with the New York Philharmonic in 1928 to become today’s New York Philharmonic)

**Most recent New York Philharmonic performance:** December 2, 2009, Daniel Boico, conductor

**Estimated duration:** ca. 15 minutes
Apparently Tchaikovsky then tucked his score away for a few months, and brought it out again in May (after he had returned to Russia in March) to work out its orchestration. This he completed on May 27, 1880, and at that point he attached to the piece its definitive title, *Capriccio italien*.

Tchaikovsky was always given to self-doubt when it came to his compositions, and this piece was no exception. As he neared the date that was scheduled to be the work’s premiere, he began to voice fears not so much about its surface effect — he knew that his orchestration had achieved the brilliant sheen he wanted (not really a typical Tchaikovskian sound) — but rather about the piece’s thematic substance. These were not themes that he had devised, and he worried that his instinct in employing them might have been misguided.

Tchaikovsky claimed that these were folk themes, though in all the intervening years only two of the piece’s five principal melodies have been identified. Modest revealed that the opening fanfare referred to a trumpet call that emanated daily from a cavalry barracks next door to their hotel in Rome, and the tarantella that closes the composition has been identified as a piece known in Italian as *ciccuza*. Sources indicate that other tunes encountered in the *Capriccio italien* are sometimes heard in Italy with words attached, but it is debated whether these represent the actual folk songs that Tchaikovsky heard or are “fake folk songs,” their words retro-fitted to tunes that became well known because of Tchaikovsky’s composition.

**Instrumentation:**
three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets plus two cornets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, tambourine, cymbals, bass drum, orchestra bells, harp, and strings.

— J.M.K.

### Happy Days

The year that Tchaikovsky wrote his *Capriccio italien*, 1880, represented an overwhelmingly happy interlude in the composer’s often tumultuous, depression-ridden life. At the end of that year the composer wrote to his patron, Nadezhda von Meck:

As I look back on the passing year I must sing a hymn of thanksgiving to fate for the great number of good days I have spent both in Russia and abroad. I can say that for this whole year I have enjoyed undisturbed security, and have been happy as far as happiness is possible. Of course, there have also been bitter moments — but only moments. What is more, these only arose from the misfortunes of people close to me while I, strictly speaking, have personally enjoyed unqualified happiness and contentment. This was the first year of my life during which I was the whole time a free man.

*Photo of Tchaikovsky from the 1880s*
Antonín Dvořák developed rather slowly as a composer, and although he gained a solid musical education, his first professional steps were far from extraordinary — as a violist in a dance orchestra in Prague. The group prospered, and in 1862 its members organized as the founding core of the Provisional Theatre orchestra. Dvořák would play principal viola in the ensemble for nine years, sitting directly beneath the batons of such conductors as Bedřich Smetana and Richard Wagner.

During those early years Dvořák also honed his skills as a composer, and by 1871 he felt compelled to leave the orchestra and devote himself to composing. Three times during the 1870s he was awarded the Austrian State Stipendium, a grant to assist young, poor, gifted musicians, which exactly defined his status at the time. If he had not received critical support when he did, he might well have given up trying to be a composer. Fortunately, the influential music critic Eduard Hanslick encouraged him to send some scores to Johannes Brahms. That eminent composer was so delighted with what he received that he recommended Dvořák to his own publisher, who immediately issued two collections of the younger composer’s pieces and contracted a first option on all his new works. Nonetheless, even his mature masterpieces were slow to make their way into the international repertoire, embraced in England and America sooner than in the rest of Europe. Except for his Symphony No. 9, From the New World, the Carnival Overture, and the Slavonic Dances, Dvořák remained little played outside his native land until practically the middle of the 20th century.

In 1891 Dvořák received a communication from Jeannette Thurber, a Paris-trained American musician who had become a New York philanthropist bent on raising US musical pedagogy to European standards. To this end she had founded the National Conservatory of Music in New York, incorporated by special act of Congress in 1891, and she set about persuading him to serve as its director. She succeeded, and the following year Dvořák and his family moved to New York. He remained until 1895, building the school’s curriculum and faculty, appearing as a guest conductor, and composing such masterworks as his String Quartet in F major (Op. 96, American), the String Quintet in E-flat major,
the New World Symphony, and (in his final year here) the Cello Concerto.

This grand and noble work was first heard when Dvořák played through it privately in August 1895 with his close friend Hanuš Wihan, an eminent cellist and the work’s dedicatee. Wihan suggested a few technical alterations, which the composer incorporated, but Dvořák rejected as superfluous Wihan’s idea of inserting a large-scale solo cadenza in the finale — to the cellist’s distress, since he had spent considerable care crafting one that incorporated material from the earlier movements. Dvořák took the precaution of spelling out his position in a letter to his publisher early that October:

I shall only give you my work if you promise not to allow anybody to make any changes — my friend Wihan not excepted — without my knowledge and consent, and this includes the cadenza which Wihan has added to the last movement. ... I told Wihan straight away when he showed it to me that it was impossible to stick bits on like that. The Finale closes gradually diminuendo, like a sigh — with reminiscences of the first and second movements — the solo dies down to pianissimo — then swells again and the last bars are taken up by the orchestra and the whole concludes in stormy mood. That was my idea and I cannot depart from it.

Feathers were apparently ruffled enough that Dvořák enlisted a different cellist, Leo Stern, for the premiere (in

Listen for ... the Tribute to a Long-Lost Love

Dvořák enjoyed a long and happy marriage to Anna Čermáková, whom he wed in 1873. But she had not been his first love; several years before, he had experienced a serious infatuation with one of her older sisters, Josefina, his piano student at the time. Absolutely nothing romantic came of that early attraction (which, in fact, seems to have been strictly one-way), and Josefina and Antonín spent 30 years living as affectionate and entirely platonic in-laws.

While the Dvořáks were living in New York, Josefina’s health began to decline precipitously, and she died on May 27, 1895, only a month after they returned to Prague from their American sojourn. It appears that Dvořák worked a tribute to the dying Josefina into his Cello Concerto by incorporating into the slow movement a quotation from his song Lasst mich allein (Leave Me Alone, Op. 82, No. 1), which Dvořák’s biographer Otakar Šourek maintained was a particular favorite of Josefina’s. It was on learning of Josefina’s death that Dvořák crafted the coda at the concerto’s end — which he described as closing with a sigh — before concluding in a stormy mood.
London), as well as for the first Prague performance. But a truce was struck, and within a few years Wihan began performing this piece, too, including, on one occasion in Budapest, with Dvořák conducting — with no cadenza.

**Instrumentation:** two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, three horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, and strings, in addition to the solo cello.

— J.M.K.

## The NY Phil Connection: Early Interpreters

The New York Philharmonic’s connection to Dvořák’s Cello Concerto began at the moment of inception, since the Orchestra’s Principal Cello, Victor Herbert, served as an inspiration for the work. Herbert had played first cello when the New York Philharmonic gave the World Premiere of the Symphony No. 9, *From the New World*, and in 1894 Dvořák heard Herbert — who was also a composer — perform his own Cello Concerto No. 2 with Anton Seidl and the Philharmonic. Dvořák had not really considered the cello to be an instrument deserving of a concerto, even though he had been asked to write one. But then, according to former Philharmonic Program Annotator Michael Steinberg,

Dvořák was impressed when Herbert, who managed high-flying passages elegantly and wrote plenty of them for himself, showed Dvořák that he had been needlessly concerned.

The first American performance of Dvořák’s Cello Concerto occurred at an 1896 Sunday “Popular Concert” of the New York Symphony (a Philharmonic forebear), led by Walter Damrosch, that featured excerpts or movements of several works, many performed by young, emerging soloists. Only the second and third movements of the Cello Concerto were played that day by 22-year-old, American-born Franz Listemann. Leo Stern, who had performed the World Premiere in London with the composer conducting, played the complete work with the Philharmonic in March 1897. It was this performance that would generally be thought of as the first in the United States, overshadowing young Listemann’s.

Almost ten years passed before the concerto was performed again in New York, this time by Beatrice Harrison, a 23-year-old English cellist who had made her Philharmonic debut only two years earlier. Harrison became somewhat famous for BBC broadcasts in which her cello performances from her garden were accompanied by the singing of nightingales. In 2022 the BBC admitted the “nightingales” were a bird impressionist, probably Maude Gould, a variety-show whistler known as Madame Saberon. It was a live broadcast, and when the birds were scared off by the crew and its recording equipment, plan B was activated.

— The Archives

*Beatrice Harrison, one of the first to perform Dvořák’s Cello Concerto*
New York Philharmonic

2023–2024 SEASON

JAAP VAN ZWEDEN, Music Director
Leonard Bernstein, Laureate Conductor, 1943–1990
Kurt Masur, Music Director Emeritus, 1991–2015

VIOLINS

Frank Huang
Concertmaster
The Charles E. Culpeper Chair
Sheryl Staples
Principal Associate Concertmaster
The Elizabeth G. Beinecke Chair
Michelle Kim
Assistant Concertmaster
The William Petschek Family Chair
Quan Ge
Hae-Young Ham
The Mr. and Mrs. Timothy M. George Chair
Lisa GiHae Kim
Kuan Cheng Lu
Kerry McDermott
Su Hyun Park
Anna Rabinova
Fiona Simon
The Shirley Bacot Shamel Chair
Sharon Yamada
Elizabeth Zeltser
The William and Elfriede Ulrich Chair
Yulia Ziskel
The Friends and Patrons Chair
Qianqian Li
Principal
Lisa Eunsoo Kim*
In Memory of Laura Mitchell
Soohyun Kwon
The Joan and Joel I. Picket Chair
Duoming Ba
Hannah Choi
The Sue and Eugene Mercy, Jr. Chair
I-Jung Huang
Dasol Jeong
Alina Kobialka
Hyunjoo Lee
Kyung Ji Min
Marié Schwalbach
Na Sun
The Gary W. Parr Chair
Audrey Wright
Jin Suk Yu
Andi Zhang

VIOLAS

Cynthia Phelps
Principal
The Mr. and Mrs. Frederick P. Rose Chair
Rebecca Young*
The Joan and Joel Smilow Chair
Cong Wu**
The Norma and Lloyd Chazen Chair
Dorian Rence
Sofia Basile
Leah Ferguson
Katherine Greene
The Mr. and Mrs. William J. McDonough Chair
Vivek Kamath
Peter Kenote
Kenneth Mirkin
Tabitha Rhee
Robert Rinehart
The Mr. and Mrs. G. Chris Andersen Chair

CELLOS

Carter Brey
Principal
The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Chair
Patrick Jee***
The Paul and Diane Guenther Chair
Elizabeth Dyson
The Mr. and Mrs. James E. Buckman Chair
Alexei Yurbanqui Gonzales
Maria Kitsopoulos
The Secular Society Chair
Sumire Kudo
Qiang Tu
Nathan Vickery
Ru-Wei Yeh
The Credit Suisse Chair in honor of Paul Calello

BASSES

Timothy Cobb
Principal
Max Zeugner*
The Herbert M. Citrin Chair
Blake Hinson**
Satoshi Okamoto
Randall Butler
The Ludmila S. and Carl B. Hess Chair
David J. Grossman++
Isaac Trapkus
Rion Wentworth

FLUTES

Robert Langevin
Principal
The Lila Acheson Wallace Chair
Alison Fierst*
Yoobin Son
Mindy Kaufman
The Edward and Priscilla Pitcher Chair

OBOES

Liang Wang
Principal
The Alice Tully Chair
Sherry Sylar*
Robert Botti
The Elizabeth and Frank Newman Chair
Ryan Roberts

ENGLISH HORN
Ryan Roberts

CLARINETS

Anthony McGill
Principal
The Edna and W. Van Alan Clark Chair
Benjamin Adler*
Pascual Martinez
Fortezza
The Honey M. Kurtz Family Chair

E-FLAT CLARINET
Benjamin Adler

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NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
BASS CLARINET

Judith LeClair
Principal
The Pels Family Chair

Roger Nye
The Rosalind Miranda Chair
in memory of Shirley and Bill Cohen

CONTRA BASSOON

HORNS

Principal

Richard Deane*
R. Allen Spanjer
The Rosalind Miranda Chair

Leelanee Sterrett
The Ruth F. and Alan J. Broder Chair

Tanner West

TRUMPETS

Christopher Martin
Principal
The Paula Levin Chair

Matthew Muckey*
Ethan Bensdorf
Thomas Smith

TROMBONES

Joseph Alessi
Principal
The Gurnee F. and Marjorie L. Hart Chair

Colin Williams*
David Finlayson
The Donna and Benjamin M. Rosen Chair

BASS TROMBONE

George Curran
The Daria L. and William C. Foster Chair

TIMPANI

Markus Rhoten
Principal
The Carlos Moseley Chair

Kyle Zerna**

PERCUSSION

Christopher S. Lamb
Principal
The Constance R. Hoguet Friends of the Philharmonic Chair

Daniel Druckman*
The Mr. and Mrs. Ronald J. Ulrich Chair

Kyle Zerna

HARP

Nancy Allen
Principal

HARP SICHORD

Paolo Bordignon

PIANO

Eric Huebner
The Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Piano Chair

ORGAN

Kent Tritle

LIBRARIANS

Lawrence Tarlow
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ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

DeAnne Eisch
Orchestra Personnel Manager

STAGE REPRESENTATIVE

Joseph Faretta

AUDIO DIRECTOR

Lawrence Rock

* Associate Principal
** Assistant Principal
*** Acting Associate Principal
+ On Leave
++ Replacement / Extra

The New York Philharmonic uses the revolving seating method for section string players who are listed alphabetically in the roster.

HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

Emanuel Ax
Deborah Borda
Zubin Mehta

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Jaap van Zweden began his tenure as the 26th Music Director of the New York Philharmonic in September 2018. He has served as Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic since 2012, and becomes Music Director of the Seoul Philharmonic in 2024. He has appeared as guest conductor with the Orchestre de Paris, Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and other distinguished ensembles.

In 2023–24, Jaap van Zweden’s New York Philharmonic farewell season celebrates his connection with the Orchestra’s musicians as he leads performances in which six Principal players appear as concerto soloists. He also revisits composers whom he has championed at the Philharmonic, ranging from Steve Reich and Joel Thompson to Mozart and Mahler.

By the conclusion of his Philharmonic tenure he will have led the Orchestra in World, US, and New York Premieres of 31 works. During the 2021–22 season, when David Geffen Hall was closed for renovation, he conducted the Orchestra at other New York City venues and in the residency at the Usedom Music Festival, where the NY Phil was the first American Orchestra to perform abroad since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022–23 van Zweden and the Orchestra inaugurated the transformed David Geffen Hall with HOME, a monthlong housewarming, and examined SPIRIT, featuring Messiaen’s Turangalîla-symphonie and J.S. Bach’s St. Matthew Passion, and EARTH, a response to the climate crisis that included Julia Wolfe’s unEarth and John Luther Adams’s Become Desert.

Jaap van Zweden’s New York Philharmonic recordings include the World Premiere of David Lang’s prisoner of the state (2020) and Wolfe’s Grammy-nominated Fire in my mouth (2019). He conducted the Hong Kong Philharmonic in first-ever performances in Hong Kong of Wagner’s Ring Cycle. His acclaimed performances of Lohengrin, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, and Parsifal — the last of which earned him the prestigious Edison Award for Best Opera Recording in 2012 — are available on CD and DVD.

Born in Amsterdam, Jaap van Zweden, at age 19, was appointed the youngest-ever concertmaster of Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and began his conducting career almost 20 years later. He is Conductor Emeritus of the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra and Honorary Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic (where he was Chief Conductor, 2005–13), having previously served as Chief Conductor of the Royal Flanders Orchestra (2008–11) and Music Director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra (2008–18). Under his leadership, the Hong Kong Philharmonic was named Gramophone’s Orchestra of the Year in 2019. He was named Musical America’s 2012 Conductor of the Year and was the subject of an October 2018 CBS 60 Minutes profile on the occasion of his arrival at the New York Philharmonic. In 1997 Jaap van Zweden and his wife, Aaltje, established the Papageno Foundation to support families of children with autism.
Cellist Yo-Yo Ma’s multifaceted career is testament to his belief in culture’s power to generate trust and understanding. Whether performing new or familiar works for cello, bringing communities together to explore culture’s role in society, or engaging unexpected musical forms, he strives to foster connections that stimulate the imagination and reinforce our humanity.

Most recently, Ma began Our Common Nature, a cultural journey to celebrate the ways that nature can reunite us in pursuit of a shared future. Our Common Nature follows the Bach Project, a 36-community, 6-continent tour of J.S. Bach’s suites for unaccompanied cello paired with local cultural programming. Both endeavors reflect his lifelong commitment to stretching the boundaries of genre and tradition to understand how music helps us to imagine and build a stronger society.

Yo-Yo Ma was born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris, where he began studying the cello with his father at age four. When he was seven, he moved with his family to New York City, where he continued his cello studies before pursuing a liberal arts education.

He has recorded more than 120 albums, is the winner of 19 Grammy Awards, and has performed for 9 American presidents, most recently on the occasion of President Joseph R. Biden’s inauguration. Yo-Yo Ma has received numerous awards, including the National Medal of the Arts, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Birgit Nilsson Prize. He has been a UN Messenger of Peace since 2006, and was recognized as one of TIME magazine’s 100 Most Influential People of 2020.
The **New York Philharmonic** plays a leading cultural role in New York City, the United States, and the world. Each season the Orchestra connects with millions of music lovers through live concerts in New York and beyond, as well as broadcasts, recordings, and education programs.

The 2023–24 season builds on the Orchestra’s transformation reflected in the new David Geffen Hall, unveiled in October 2022. In his farewell season as Music Director, Jaap van Zweden spotlights composers he has championed, from Mahler and Mozart to Steve Reich and Joel Thompson, and leads programs featuring six NY Phil musicians as soloists. The Orchestra delves into overlooked history through the US Premiere of Émigré, composed by Aaron Zigman, with a libretto by Mark Campbell and additional lyrics by Brock Walsh; marks György Ligeti’s centennial; gives World, US, and New York Premieres of 14 works; and celebrates the 100th birthday of the beloved Young People’s Concerts.

The Phil for All: Ticket Access Program builds on the Orchestra’s commitment to serving New York City’s communities that lies behind the long-running Concerts in the Parks, Presented by Didi and Oscar Schafer, and the Free Memorial Day Concert, Presented by the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation. The Philharmonic engages with today’s cultural conversations through programming and initiatives such as EARTH (2023, an examination of the climate crisis centered on premieres of works by Julia Wolfe and John Luther Adams) and NY Phil Bandwagon (free, outdoor, “pull-up” concerts that brought live music back to New York City during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic).

The Philharmonic has commissioned and / or premiered works by leading composers since its founding in 1842, from Dvořák’s New World Symphony and Gershwin’s Concerto in F to two Pulitzer Prize winners: John Adams’s On the Transmigration of Souls and Tania León’s Stride, the latter commissioned through Project 19, commissions of works by 19 women composers. The Orchestra has released more than 2,000 recordings since 1917, most recently the live recording of Julia Wolfe’s Grammy-nominated Fire in my mouth conducted by Jaap van Zweden. In 2023 the NY Phil announced a partnership with Apple Music Classical, the new standalone music streaming app designed to deliver classical music lovers the optimal listening experience. The Orchestra’s extensive history is available free online through the New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives.

A resource for its community and the world, the Orchestra complements annual free concerts across the city with education projects, including the New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers Program and the Very Young People’s Concerts. The Orchestra has appeared in 436 cities in 63 countries, including Pyongyang, DPRK, in 2008, the first visit there by an American orchestra.

Founded in 1842 by local musicians, the New York Philharmonic is one of the oldest orchestras in the world. Notable figures who have conducted the Philharmonic include Tchaikovsky, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, and Copland. Jaap van Zweden became Music Director in 2018–19, succeeding musical leaders including Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler. Gustavo Dudamel will become Music and Artistic Director in the 2025–26 season, before beginning his tenure as Music and Artistic Director in 2026.
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New York Philharmonic Guide

Order Tickets and Subscribe
Order tickets online at nyphil.org or call (212) 875–5656.
The New York Philharmonic Box Office is at the Welcome Center at David Geffen Hall, open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday; noon to 6:00 p.m., Sunday; and remains open one-half hour past concert time on performance evenings.

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Can’t attend a concert as planned? Call Customer Relations at (212) 875–5656 to donate your tickets for re-sale, and receive a receipt for tax purposes in return.

For the Enjoyment of All
Latecomers and patrons who leave the hall will be seated only after the completion of a work.
Silence all cell phones and other electronic devices throughout the performance.
Photography, sound recording, or videotaping of performances is prohibited.

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 Guest Experience 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.