Sound On

Friday, October 27, 2023, 8:00 p.m.
16,945th Concert

Brad Lubman, Conductor
   (New York Philharmonic debut)
Kinan Azmeh, Clarinet
Layale Chaker, Violin
   (New York Philharmonic debut)

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

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

Brad Lubman, Conductor
  (New York Philharmonic debut)
Kinan Azmeh, Clarinet
Layale Chaker, Violin
  (New York Philharmonic debut)

John ZORN
(b. 1953)  

for your eyes only (1989)

Kinan AZMEH (b. 1976)
and Layale CHAKER (b. 1990)

Dawning for improvising musicians and orchestra (2023; New York Premiere–NY Phil Co-Commission with the Nebraska Crossroads Music Festival and Lincoln’s Symphony Orchestra)

Dusk
Oxytocin
Iridescence
Nightfall

(played without pause)

KINAN AZMEH, LAYALE CHAKER

Intermission
Unsuk CHIN
(b. 1961)

Gougalōn: Scenes from a Street Theater
(2009 / 2011)
I. Prologue — Dramatic Opening of the Curtain
II. Lament of the Bald Singer
III. The Grinning Fortune Teller with the False Teeth
IV. Episode Between Bottles and Cans
V. Circulus Vitiosus — Dance Around the Shacks
VI. The Hunt for the Quack’s Plait

Guest artist appearances are made possible through the Hedwig van Ameringen Guest Artists Endowment Fund.

Stream New York Philharmonic recordings on Apple Music Classical, the new app designed to deliver classical music lovers the optimal listening experience. Select New York Philharmonic performances are syndicated on The New York Philharmonic This Week (nyphil.org/thisweek), the award-winning weekly radio series.

Follow the NY Phil on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, and at nyphil.org.

PLEASE SILENCE YOUR ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING ARE PERMITTED ONLY DURING APPLAUSE.
Notes on the Program

for your eyes only

John Zorn

John Zorn, celebrating his 70th birthday this year, has been a central figure in New York City’s downtown scene since 1975, incorporating a wide variety of creative musicians into various compositional formats. His work — as composer, conductor, arranger, and saxophonist, among other roles — is remarkably diverse and draws inspiration from art, literature, film, theater, philosophy, alchemy, and mysticism, as well as music.

Born and raised in New York City and educated at the United Nations International School, Zorn was exposed to the wide spectrum of music from an early age, and soon took up piano, guitar, and flute. Later, while enrolled at Webster University, in St. Louis, he discovered composer and saxophonist Anthony Braxton’s album *For Alto*. This inspired him to pick up the instrument himself; he developed a keen interest in avant-garde and experimental jazz, which would become an important throughline in much of his later work. Many of his early compositions were so-called “game pieces” — forms of controlled improvisation whereby musicians are free to play what they want within the constraints of certain prescribed rules.

After a decade in New York’s underground arts scene, Zorn achieved a significant breakthrough with his 1986 album *The Big Gundown*, released by Nonesuch Records, which comprised radical interpretations of the film music of Ennio Morricone — from *The Battle of Algiers* to *Once Upon a Time in America* — replete with innovative overdubbing and multitracking techniques. The release was later added to *The Penguin Guide to Jazz’s core collection of essential recordings*.

His renown extended beyond the avant-garde and jazz clubs. His string quartet *Cat O’ Nine Tails* was commissioned by the Kronos Quartet in 1988, who later included it on their CD *Short Stories*. This awakened him to the possibilities of writing for classical musicians, and in 1998 the New York Philharmonic premiered Zorn’s *Orchestral Variations: Leonard Bernstein in Memoriam*, which the Orchestra commissioned in celebration of its 150th anniversary. Nearly two decades later Zorn’s works would appear in different presentations during the 2016 NY PHIL BIENNIAL: his string quartet *Remedy of Fortune*, composed that year, was performed by the Mivos Quartet, and Brooklyn Rider performed *The Alchemist*, another string quartet he’d written in 2013.

Through his prolific output and wide compositional eclecticism Zorn resists categorization, and any effort to pin him down is folly. He has incorporated elements from jazz, orchestral film music, hardcore punk, and heavy metal, among other genres. Zorn said it best himself: “In a sense, my music is rootless since I draw from all these traditions; I don’t hold to any one camp.”

Zorn has carved out a legacy as a champion of the avant-garde in ways that go beyond his own music. In 1995 he founded the record label Tzadik, which has released more than 400 albums by artists such as the experimental metal band Kayo Dot and jazz saxophonist Steve Coleman. Between 1997 and 2021
Zorn edited and published ten volumes of musicians’ writings — from essays and artistic manifestos to interviews and scores — under the title Arcana. In 2005 he established the Greenwich Village–based The Stone, “a safe home for the mavericks, misfits, and visionaries of the musical world ... dedicated to presenting their cutting-edge music exactly as they envision it, without compromise.” He continues to serve as its artistic director.

His for your eyes only, completed in 1989, is one of his “file card pieces,” in which he writes musical ideas on cards (60, in this case) and arranges them in an order that feels right. It features madcap humor and evokes cartoon music. Reviewing the world premiere in The New York Times, John Rockwell called it “pungent and amusing in bending tradition to his own uses,” adding that it “sounded like an orchestration of a Zorn free improvisation, abrupt juxtapositions united under the aegis of wit.”

While it is unmistakably the work of a deeply experimental artist, Zorn, ever defying expectations, forwent improvisation in favor of a more conventional compositional process, writing at the time:

The Brooklyn Philharmonic called me up and asked me to write something for next year. I’m going to write a chamber piece. No improvisation, entirely notated. Every note — because that world is not about improvisation. I’m not interested, like Cage, in giving a symphony orchestra a bunch of little pictures from Thoreau and seeing what they come up with. I’m interested in getting the best out of these players and inspiring them, which means finding out who loves to play virtuosic music and who doesn’t and writing specifically for that group.

**Instrumentation:** flute (doubling piccolo), oboe, clarinet (doubling bass clarinet), bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, trombone, tuba, timpani, vibraphone, xylophone, orchestra bells, tubular chimes, handbells, bell tree, crotales, bongos, triangles, cymbals, tam-tams, flexatone, wind chimes, castanets, maracas, guiros, herd bells, tom tom, conga drums, cuica (lion’s roar), timbales, anvils, thunder-sheets, ratchet, slapsticks, woodblock, temple blocks, drum set, claves, jawbone of an ass, harp, piano, two violins, viola, cello, and bass.

— John Hollahan, Content Editor at the New York Philharmonic
Kinan Azmeh and Layale Chaker share much in common, and not just the fact that they are a couple. The Middle East natives are both based in New York, and both combine performance and composition, crossing genres including classical, jazz, and Arabic music.

Azmeh, born in Syria, is a clarinetist who graduated from The Juilliard School (as a student of Charles Neidich), the Damascus High Institute of Music, and Damascus University’s School of Electrical Engineering, and earned his doctorate from City University of New York, with a thesis on Arab music vocabulary in Syrian contemporary clarinet chamber works. In addition to appearing as a soloist with leading orchestras in the US and Europe, Azmeh has played with the Silkroad Ensemble since 2012; it was with that group that he performed with the New York Philharmonic in February 2015. He also leads the Arab-jazz quartet CityBand.

As a composer he has been commissioned by prestigious orchestras, scrappy contemporary chamber ensembles, and individual performers. His *Ibn Arabi Postlude* opened a New York Philharmonic concert in June 2017, and his *Café Damas* was performed on a *Sound On* concert in 2019 and, in 2021, at Brooklyn’s Green-Wood Cemetery, during the COVID pandemic. His first opera, *Songs for Days to Come*, with a libretto in Arabic, was premiered in June 2022 in Osnabrück, Germany.

Chaker, a violinist, trained at the National Higher Conservatory of Beirut in her native Lebanon, and at the Paris Conservatoire and London’s Royal Academy of Music. As a performer and composer, she has worked with Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, Johnny Gandelsman, Holland Baroque, London Jazz Festival, the Berlin Philharmonic, and New York City’s The Stone and National Sawdust. This year she held

---

*Dawning for improvising musicians and orchestra*

**Kinan Azmeh and Layale Chaker**

**Born:** Azmeh, June 10, 1976, in Damascus, Syria; Chaker, August 2, 1990, in Paris, France

**Reside:** in New York City

**Work composed:** 2023; “inspired by and dedicated to you, dear Shams”; commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, the Nebraska Crossroads Music Festival, and Lincoln’s Symphony Orchestra

**World premiere:** August 4, 2023, by Lincoln’s Symphony (Lincoln, Nebraska), Edward Polochick, conductor, with the composers as soloists, at the Nebraska Crossroads Festival

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** this performance

**Estimated duration:** ca. 28 minutes
a residency at WQXR in which she premiered a new work with her chamber jazz quintet, recorded with the string quartet ETHEL, and gave the first public reading of Ruinous Gods, her first opera, commissioned by the Spoleto Festival.

Dawning, a double concerto collaboratively composed by Azmeh and Chaker, grew out of their experience rearing their three-year-old son, as they explain in a note in the score:

_Dawning_ is a musical love letter to the new souls who have joined us earthside amid our trying times. Resilient seedlings sprouting from the cracks of leaden landscapes, symbolizing the enduring spirit of life and the promise of a new dawn.

It’s a testament to the human capacity to create and nurture life, even in the face of adversities, and a poignant reminder that even in the darkest of times, there is room for joy, love, and the promise of a brighter future.

Stemming from the many lullabies we have been singing to our son for the past three years, and which have become the leitmotivs to our lives, _Dawning_ unfolds in four movements: _Dusk, Oxytocin, Iridescence_, and _Nightfall_. The movements pour into one another like a dance between joy and exhaustion, primal, uncontainable love and anxiety, laughter and tears, chaos and tranquility.

“Emerging out of nothingness,” as the score mentions it, _Dusk_ rises to a mist of uncertainty that gradually dissipates, erupting in a moment of indeterminate euphoria in _Oxytocin_, alluding to the love hormone that submerges the psyche of parents in their early days. The subtle leitmotivs become increasingly evident in the second part of the piece. We encounter celebratory and lively iterations of the aforementioned lullabies in _Iridescence_, which ultimately gradually dissolve into the final movement, _Nightfall_, a cathartic release of weariness and serenity.

As performer-composers, collaborating on a composition is already a rare occurrence, but co-composing with your life partner is even more extraordinary. In our first time embarking on such an exercise, we allowed the lived experience to overlap, inform, and intertwine with the compositional process itself, making way for a musical creation resulting from our shared life’s creation. A common contemplation on the human journey we are on together, made with the ever-changing colors of sleepless nights and new daily discoveries, time, energy, and love, and a certain amount of musical and practical improvisation that are deemed necessary for any new parents.

_Dawning_ utilizes quotes from Ya Sheikh el Bakri and Hal Sissan, lullabies from the popular Levantine Arabic repertoire.

**Instrumentation:** flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, vibraphone, bass drum, tubular bells, and strings, plus solo clarinet and solo violin.

— Edward Lovett, 
**Associate Director, Publications, at the New York Philharmonic**
Born in Seoul, South Korea, Unsuk Chin studied at Seoul National University, then traveled to Hamburg, where from 1985 to 1988 she was a pupil of György Ligeti (the eminent composer on whom the New York Philharmonic is now focusing during his centennial). She settled in Berlin, where she realized a sequence of compositions at the Electronic Music Studio of the Technical University of Berlin. By the early 1990s her acoustic works began to attract attention, with her breakthrough being Acrostic-Wordplay, premiered in 1991 and since performed across Europe, America, and Asia. In 1992 she began a long collaboration with Ensemble intercontemporain in Paris. Among her works the group commissioned is the 2011 revision — and expansion — of her Gougalōn: Scenes from a Street Theater of 2009.

Some of Chin’s compositions have combined acoustic and electronic sounds, and in the acoustic realm she has produced high-profile pieces for many combinations, vocal as well as instrumental. Her opera Alice in Wonderland, premiered in 2007 by the Bavarian Staatsoper in Munich, was hailed by critics and released on DVD. As composer-in-residence of the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin in 2001–02 she composed her first Violin Concerto, for which she received the Grawemeyer Award in 2004. She has also held that role at the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra (for which she established and oversaw a contemporary music series), the Philharmonie in Essen, Germany, and Hamburg’s NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. In 2022 she became artistic director of the Tongyeong International Music Festival in South Korea and of the Weiwuying International Music Festival in Taiwan.

Beyond such formal associations, she has composed works for the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel, clarinetist Kari Kriikku, and soprano Barbara Hannigan and the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra. Her recent works include Chant des Enfants des Étoiles, premiered in Seoul in 2016; SPIRA, premiered by the LA Phil in 2019; the Beethoven-inspired subito con forza, which has travelled widely since its premiere, in 2020; and Violin Concerto No. 2: Shards of Silence, premiered by Leonidas Kavakos and the London Symphony Orchestra, in 2022.

In 2018 Unsuk Chin received The Marie-Josée Kravis Prize for New Music at the New York Philharmonic, and in 2019 the Orchestra performed her Šu for sheng and orchestra, the fourth of her compositions it has presented. She is also one of the 19 female composers the NY Phil has commissioned as part of Project 19. Other honors include the Arnold Schoenberg Prize in Vienna, the British Composer Award, the Music Composition Prize of the Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco (in 2010, for Gougalōn), Wihuri Sibelius Prize, Hamburg Bach Prize, Leonie Sonning Music Prize, and the Ho-Am Prize, considered South Korea’s most prestigious arts award.

Unsuk Chin’s music occasionally employs sounds associated with Asia, but her music is really part of the international avant-garde; it is personal rather than national, and decidedly not nationalistic. She devises striking effects of instrumental timbre, often making subtle use of a large number of percussion instruments — for instance, in Gougalōn, the five wind players assist on percussion instruments. Glowing or shimmering timbral
combinations flicker through her lyrical soundscapes. “My music,” she has written, is a reflection of my dreams. I try to render into music the visions of immense light and of an incredible magnificence of colors that I see in all my dreams, a play of light and colors floating through the room and at the same time forming a fluid sound sculpture. Its beauty is very abstract and remote, but it is for these very qualities that it addresses the emotions and can communicate joy and warmth.

Chin explains that Gougalōn’s title derives from an Old High German verb that encompasses such meanings as to hoodwink, to make ridiculous movements, to fool through feigned magic, and to practice fortunetelling. The piece was inspired by the composer’s trips to China in 2008 and 2009, when her itinerary included Hong Kong and Guangzhou. In those cities, she reports, “old and poor residential neighborhoods with their narrow, winding alleys, ambulatory food vendors, and market places” reminded her “of Seoul of the 1960s, of the period after the Korean War and before the radical modernization, of conditions that no longer exist in today’s (South) Korea.” In a commentary Chin provided about Gougalōn (translated by Howard Weiner), she writes:

I was particularly reminded of a troupe of entertainers I saw as a child in a suburb of Seoul. These amateur musicians and actors traveled from village to village in order to foist self-made medicines — which were ineffective at best — on the people. To lure the villagers, they put on a play with singing, dancing, and various stunts. (I still recall the plots almost always had to do with unrequited love, and the performances inevitably ended with the heroine’s suicide.) This was all extremely amateurish and kitschy, yet it aroused incredible emotions among the spectators: this is hardly surprising, considering that it was practically the only entertainment

---

**Gougalōn: Scenes from a Street Theater**

**Unsuk Chin**

**Born:** July 14, 1961, in Seoul, South Korea  
**Resides:** in Berlin, Germany  
**Work composed:** the original version in 2009, commissioned by Ensemble Modern and Siemens Arts Program; the expanded version in 2011  
**World premiere:** the original version, October 9, 2009, in the Large Hall of the Berlin Concert House, by the Ensemble Modern, Johannes Kalitzke, conductor; the expanded version, January 10, 2012, at the Concert Hall of the Cité de la Musique in Paris, by the Ensemble intercontemporain, Susanna Mälkki, conductor  
**New York Philharmonic premiere:** the only previous performances were on April 5–6, 2013, on CONTACT!, the Orchestra’s new-music series, Alan Gilbert, conductor; this marked the work’s US Premiere  
**Estimated duration:** ca. 21 minutes
in an everyday life marked by poverty and repressive structures. ... Therefore the whole village was present at this “big event,” a circumstance from which others also desired to profit: fortune-tellers, mountebanks, and traveling hawkers. Among these were also wig dealers from whom young girls could earn money for their families by sacrificing their pigtails.

Gougalôn does not refer directly to the dilettante and shabby music of that street theater. The memories described above merely provide a framework, just as the movement headings are not intended to be illustrative.

This piece is about an “imaginary folk music” that is stylized, broken within itself, and only apparently primitive.

Instrumentation: flute (doubling piccolo and alto flute), oboe (doubling English horn), clarinet (doubling E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet), trumpet (doubling E and E-flat trumpets), trombone, timpani, crotales, metal block, six triangles of different sizes, four harmonicas, maracas, vibraslap, small tambourine, ratchet, sistrum, finger cymbals, flexatone, guiro, sand box, small Chinese gong, metal rattle, prepared piano (slightly amplified), piano four hands, and strings; all winds double percussion.

Unsuk Chin’s Gougalôn: Scenes from a Street Theater is presented under license from Boosey & Hawkes Inc., copyright owners.

— Adapted from a note by 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)
New York Philharmonic Musicians Performing Tonight

Violin: Frank Huang**, Quan Ge*, Anna Rabinova*, Kuan Cheng Lu*, Yulia Ziskel*, Kerry McDermott*, Alina Kobialka*, Ellen dePasquale++*
   Qianqian Li***, Dumong Ba*, Jin Suk Yu*, Andi Zhang*, Na Sun*, Kyung-Ji Min*, David Southorn++*


Cello: Patrick Jee**, Sumire Kudo**, Maria Kitsopoulos*, Qiang Tu*, Elizabeth Dyson*

Bass: Max Zeugner**, Satoshi Okamoto*, Randall Butler*, Isaac Trapkus*

Flute: Alison Fierst***

Piccolo: Mindy Kaufman*

Oboe: Ryan Roberts**

Clarinet: Benjamin Adler**, Barret Ham** (doubling bass clarinet)

Bassoon: Judith LeClair*

Horn: Richard Deane*, Alana Vegter++*

Trumpet: Matthew Muckey**, Kevin Cobb++*

Trombone: Colin Williams**

Tuba: Alan Baer*

Timpani: Kyle Zerna*, Pablo Rieppi+++ (both doubling percussion)

Percussion: Christopher S. Lamb**, Daniel Druckman**, Pablo Rieppi+++*

Harp: Nancy Allen*

Piano: Eric Huebner**, Peggy Kampmeier++*

For all:
Librarians: Lawrence Tarlow, Viola Chan++

* Zorn
* Azmeh and Chaker
* Chin
++ Replacement / Extra

Current as of October 21, 2023
American conductor and composer Brad Lubman has gained widespread recognition for his versatility, commanding technique, and insightful interpretations over the course of more than two decades. He is much in demand with major orchestras in Europe and the United States and has been successful in building regular partnerships with several well-known orchestras and ensembles, including the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the WDR Symphony Orchestra. In addition to his busy schedule in Germany, he is frequently asked to conduct some of the world’s leading orchestras, including Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Milan’s Filarmonica della Scala, and Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. He has also worked with some of the most important contemporary music ensembles in Europe and the United States, including the Ensemble Modern, London Sinfonietta, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble MusikFabrik, Ensemble intercontemporain, and Steve Reich and Musicians.

After recent appearances conducting major international orchestras — such as the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra — Lubman kicked off the 2023–24 season leading Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey at the Auditorio Nacional Mexico City, a project in cooperation with the Southbank Centre London, which he had already done with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and San Francisco Symphony. Further collaborations this season include the New York Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, Radio Symphony Frankfurt, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, SWR Symphony Stuttgart, and Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Musica.

Brad Lubman is founding co-artistic and music director of the New York–based Ensemble Signal. Their recording of Steve Reich’s Music for 18 Musicians on Harmonia Mundi was awarded a Diapason d’or in June 2015 and appeared on the Billboard Classical Crossover charts. In the spring of 2019, he led the ensemble in the premiere of Reich’s Reich / Richter as part of the Reich Richter Pärt project at the opening of the New York art space The Shed.

In 2017 Lubman served as composer-in–residence at the Grafenegg Festival. His compositions have been performed by acclaimed ensembles such as the Tonkünstler Orchester Austria and musicians from the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In 2020 a new piece written for pianist Rudolf Buchbinder was premiered at the Vienna Musikverein; Buchbinder also recorded the work for Deutsche Grammophon.

Clarinetist and composer Kinan Azmeh has earned worldwide renown for his distinctive artistic voice across diverse musical genres. Originally from Damascus, Syria, Azmeh has developed a global reach through his artistry as soloist, improviser, and composer. His
first opera, *Songs for Days to Come* — fully sung in Arabic — was premiered in June 2022 in Osnabrück, Germany. In 2019 his double CD *Uneven Sky* was awarded Germany’s Klassik Opus Award.

As a soloist, he has appeared with the London Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, and Bavarian Radio Symphony orchestras, among others. He has shared the stage with such musical luminaries as Yo-Yo Ma, Daniel Barenboim, Marcel Khalife, John McLaughlin, Francois Rabbath, Aynur, and Jivan Gasparian. In addition to his own Arab-jazz quartet CityBand and Hewar ensemble, Azmeh has played with the Silkroad Ensemble since 2012, and is featured as a clarinetist and composer on its 2017 Grammy Award–winning album *Sing Me Home*. Organizations that have commissioned his compositions include the New York Philharmonic, The Knights, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, Apple Hill String Quartet, Quatuor Voce, Brooklyn Rider, Cello Octet Amsterdam, Aizuri Quartet, and Bob Wilson.

Kinan Azmeh graduated from The Juilliard School (as a student of Charles Neidich), the Damascus High Institute of Music (where he studied with Shukry Sahwki, Nicolay Viovanof, and Anatoly Moratof), and Damascus University’s School of Electrical Engineering. He earned his doctorate from City University of New York in 2013.

Violinist and composer Layale Chaker was raised on the verge of several musical streams since her childhood. She began her musical training at the National Higher Conservatory of Beirut in her native Lebanon, and at the Paris Conservatoire and London’s Royal Academy of Music.

Chaker’s musical world lies at the intersection of classical contemporary music, jazz, Arabic music, and improvisation. As a violinist and composer, she has worked with Daniel Barenboim and the West–Eastern Divan Orchestra, Ziad Rahbani, Johnny Gandelsman, Holland Baroque, Oxford Orchestra, New World Symphony, London Jazz Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Junger Kunstler Festival Bayreuth, Lucerne Festival, Beethoven Festival Bonn, and Avignon Festival, among others, with features at the Berlin Philharmonic, Abbaye de Royaumont (in France), Hancher (at the University of Iowa), New York City’s The Stone and National Sawdust, and London’s Royal Albert Hall and Wigmore Hall.

During her yearlong residency at WQXR this year she premiered a new work with her chamber jazz quintet, recorded with the string quartet ETHEL (to be released in 2023), and gave a first public reading of *Ruinous Gods*, her first opera, commissioned by the Spoleto Festival. She is scheduled to premiere a new work for violin and choir at Morgenland Festival Osnabrück with Capella Amsterdam.

Jaap van Zweden became Music Director of the New York Philharmonic in 2018. In 2023–24, his 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 he has championed at the Philharmonic, from Steve Reich and Joel Thompson to Mozart and Mahler. 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 and began his conducting career almost 20 years later. He was named Musical America’s 2012 Conductor of the Year, was profiled by CBS 60 Minutes on arriving at the NY Phil, and in the spring of 2023 received the prestigious Concertgebouw Prize. 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, broadcasts, streaming, education programs, and more. In the 2023–24 season — which builds on the Orchestra’s transformation reflected in the new David Geffen Hall — the NY Phil honors Jaap van Zweden in his farewell season as Music Director, premieres 14 works by a wide range of composers including some whom van Zweden has championed, marks György Ligeti’s centennial, and celebrates the 100th birthday of the beloved Young People’s Concerts.

The Philharmonic has commissioned and / or premiered important works, from Dvořák’s New World Symphony to Tania León’s Pulitzer Prize–winning Stride. The NY Phil has released more than 2,000 recordings since 1917, and in 2023 announced a partnership with Apple Music Classical, the new streaming app designed to deliver classical music lovers the optimal listening experience. The Orchestra builds on a longstanding commitment to serving its communities — which has led to annual free concerts across New York City and the free online New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives — through a new ticket access program.

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, following titans including Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler. Gustavo Dudamel will become Music and Artistic Director beginning in 2026 after serving as Music Director Designate in 2025–26.
NEED TO KNOW
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.

Donate Your Concert Tickets
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.
New Music at the NY Phil

Major support for the November 30–December 2 concerts is provided by Sharon and Larry Hite. Lead support for the February 22–24 concerts is provided by Misook Doolittle in memory of Harry C. Doolittle. Generous support for Katia and Marielle Labèque’s and Emanuel Ax’s appearances is provided by The Donna and Marvin Schwartz Virtuoso Piano Performance Series. Lead support for Émigré is provided by Tian Ling and Diana Wang. Programs are made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Conductors, soloists, programs, prices, and sale dates are correct at the date of printing and are subject to change. © 2023 New York Philharmonic. All rights reserved. © 2023 New York Philharmonic. Photo Credits: Katia and Marielle Labèque by Umberto Nicoletti, Bryce Dessner by Shervin Lainez, Emanuel Ax by Lisa Marie Mazzucco, Long Yu by Xu Qing.

Katia and Marielle Labèque Perform Bryce Dessner
Nov 30–Dec 2
Bryce DESSNER Concerto for Two Pianos

Emanuel Ax, Hillborg, and Rachmaninoff
Feb 22–24
Anders HILLBORG Piano Concerto No. 2, The MAX Concerto

Émigré
Presented by Linda and Mitch Hart
Feb 29–Mar 1
Aaron ZIGMAN / Mark CAMPBELL libretto
Brock WALSH additional lyrics
Émigré (US Premiere–New York Philharmonic Co-Commission with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra)

NYPHIL.ORG | 212.875.5656