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

Wednesday, November 22, 2023, 7:30 p.m.
16,957th Concert

Friday, November 24, 2023, 8:00 p.m.
16,958th Concert

Saturday, November 25, 2023, 8:00 p.m.
16,959th Concert

Dima Slobodeniouk, Conductor
J’Nai Bridges, Mezzo-Soprano
(New York Philharmonic subscription debut)
The Dessoff Choirs
Malcolm J. Merriweather, Director
Dima Slobodeniouk, Conductor
J’Nai Bridges, Mezzo-Soprano
   (New York Philharmonic subscription debut)
The Dessoff Choirs
   Malcolm J. Merriweather, Director

LIGETI
(1923–2006)

Atmosphères for Large Orchestra (1961)

J. PERRY
(1924–79)

Stabat mater (1951)
J’NAI BRIDGES

Intermission

HOLST
(1874–1934)

The Planets (1914–16)
Mars, the Bringer of War
Venus, the Bringer of Peace
Mercury, the Winged Messenger
Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
Uranus, the Magician
Neptune, the Mystic

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Notes on the Program

Atmosphères for Large Orchestra

György Ligeti

The seductive sound world of György Ligeti has captivated a large segment of the concertgoing public for half a century — a rare instance of someone from the musical avant-garde enjoying sustained popular success. That is, at least in part, due to the use of Ligeti’s music on the soundtrack of Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey, introducing him to pop culture. (Ligeti sued MGM for using his music in 2001 without permission, but he admired Kubrick’s film and later granted permission for his works to be used in The Shining and Eyes Wide Shut.) However, these film appearances can’t account fully for the composer’s continuing mystique.

Ligeti has long been championed by the New York Philharmonic, with an array of distinguished conductors presenting works from his various periods. Leonard Bernstein led the Orchestra’s first performance of Atmosphères on January 2, 1964 (the US premiere), and later recorded it. Pierre Boulez conducted Lontano, the Chamber Concerto, and Aventures and Nouvelles Aventures (Boulez credited Ligeti’s aesthetic with inspiring his own late masterpiece, Derive 2). Alan Gilbert led the New York premiere of the “anti-opera opera” Le Grand Macabre, an innovative theatrical event. Other maestros who have performed Ligeti with the Orchestra include Claudio Abbado, James Levine, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Bernard Haitink, and Seiji Ozawa. This fall the NY Phil has been performing several of his pieces to celebrate the centenary of his birth.

Atmosphères, from 1961, has the unique, instantly recognizable style that Ligeti inaugurated in the early 1960s and sustained into the ’70s in works like the Requiem, Lontano, and Lux Aeterna (all of which were used by Kubrick), featuring mysterious clouds of sound and an obsessive fixation on color and atmosphere. This music was very different from that of other postwar modernists such as Stockhausen, Boulez, and Koenig. Ligeti, a survivor of both Nazi and Soviet oppression, preferred to go his own way rather than submit to the dictates of serialism, post-serialism, or other musical ideologies. “I dislike the idea of being a member of a clique,” he said. In the words of pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard (Ligeti’s

In Short

Born: May 28, 1923, in Dicsőszentmárton, Transylvania (now Târnăveni, Romania)

Died: June 12, 2006, in Vienna, Austria

Work composed: 1961, on commission from Southwest German Radio; dedicated “In Memory of Mátyás Seiber,” the then recently deceased Hungarian composer who had made efforts to assist Ligeti’s career

World premiere: October 22, 1961, by the Southwestern German Radio Orchestra, Hans Rosbaud, conductor, at the Donaueschingen Music Festival in Germany

New York Philharmonic premiere: January 2, 1964, Leonard Bernstein, conductor; this marked the work’s US premiere

Most recent New York Philharmonic performance: the most recent complete performance was on March 7, 1978, James Levine, conductor

Estimated duration: ca. 9 minutes
longtime colleague, who performed Ligeti’s Piano Concerto and solo-piano works at the Philharmonic earlier this month, he was “too creative to fold into a system.”

Ligeti had an international upbringing and imbibed a variety of cultures. Born in Transylvania into a Jewish Hungarian family, he was sent to a forced labor camp in 1944. His parents, brother, uncle, and aunt were deported to concentration camps; only his mother survived. Following the war, he settled in Hungary to study and teach at the Franz Liszt Institute but found himself stifled by the Stalinist regime. The finale of the Six Bagatelles from 1953 — a wind quintet arrangement of Musica ricercata — was banned by the Hungarian authorities as subversive, prompting Ligeti to remark drily, “Totalitarian regimes don’t like dissonance.” With his ex-wife, Vera Spitz, a Hungarian psychiatrist whom he later remarried, he finally fled the country in 1956 following the Hungarian uprising. Initially on foot, then hiding under mailbags in trains, they traveled to several European cities, and eventually Ligeti became an Austrian citizen. Through much of his career he continued teaching, landing positions in Darmstadt and at the Royal Swedish Academy and Stanford University.

Ligeti continually found ways to connect with audiences, creating works that are dissonant but inviting, complex but intoxicating. Adding to his appeal is a comic, sometimes wildly absurdist sensibility. His First String Quartet, Aventures, Nouvelles Aventures, and Le Grand Macabre, among others, have a self-deprecating humor and mischievous wit. After Ligeti’s success in the 1960s and ’70s he continued to evolve in new directions, including novel tuning experiments (think of the mind-bending Horn Trio), African-inspired polyrhythms (the exhilarating, near-unplayable piano Études), and a reimagining of pulsing minimalism (Self-Portrait with Reich and Riley, which pays homage to Steve Reich and Terry

### The Work at a Glance

Atmosphères, a title that could fit any number of Ligeti works, suggests vast spaces — an ideal choice for the “stargate” sequence in 2001: A Space Odyssey. An early specimen of what Ligeti called “micropolyphony,” it features chromatic sound masses transforming from instrument to instrument, seeming to breathe like living entities; uncanny experiments with timbre that make the orchestra sound like something otherworldly and possibly electronic; shimmering harmonics and glissandi; dramatic woodwind ascents that seem to reach into outer space; and shuddery descents in the basses that suggest unplumbable depths.

The most remarkable aspect of the piece is the way the individuality of the instruments in a large orchestra is swallowed up by densely interlocking textures to create seductive clouds of color that exist for their own sake. Ligeti said that in Atmosphères he sought a new concept of music based not on traditional events like themes but on “states” (see sidebar, page 23).

The piece opens with a gigantic chord, each instrument playing its own contrapuntal line. It sits seemingly motionless even as it continually evolves, creating a simultaneous feeling of stasis and movement, an escape from temporality, as various groups vanish, reappear, and morph into new clusters. At the end, after a brassy outburst, the texture thins out, the instruments fade into an exquisite haze, and we are left with near-subliminal brushed piano strings and whispering violins. Like the faraway female chorus at the end of Holst’s The Planets — the work that concludes this concert — Atmosphères dies into nothingness, leaving us in a timeless world of mystery.
Riley). Until the end, Ligeti produced music that was daring and innovative. His death, in 2006, left a painful gap in contemporary musical culture; few others have combined uncompromising originality so deftly with broad audience appeal.

**Instrumentation:** four flutes (all doubling piccolo), four oboes, four clarinets (one doubling E-flat clarinet), three bassoons and contrabassoon, six horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, piano (played by two players playing inside the piano), and strings.


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**In the Composer’s Words**

Ligeti wrote the following about his work *Atmosphères*:

My most basic aim as a composer is the revivification of the sonorous aspect of musical form. Those factors of contemporary composition which do not manifest themselves directly as acoustical experience seem to me of only secondary importance. However, this emphatically does not mean that I intend to limit myself to the invention of new tone colors or other sound-phenomena. It is much more important to me to discover new musical forms and a new manner of expression. My personal development began with serial music, but today I have passed beyond serialism. In *Atmosphères*, I have attempted to supersede the “structural” approach to music which once, in turn, superseded the motivic-thematic approach, and to establish a new textural concept of music. In this kind of music, there are no “events,” but only “states,” no contours or forms, but instead, an uninhabited, imaginary musical space. Tone color, usually a vehicle of musical form, is liberated from form to become an independent musical entity.

This so-to-speak “informal” music is embodied in a new type of orchestral sound: the sonorous texture is so dense that the individual interwoven instrumental voices are absorbed into the general texture and completely lose their individuality. This new, unaccustomed orchestral sound results from the fact that the sound of each individual instrument (consisting of a number of “partial” tones) is itself a “partial” of a still more complex acoustical structure. The “interwoven” treatment of the orchestra is the reason for the omission of all percussion and for the unusual format of the orchestral score which is noted on eighty-seven staves, since the string instruments are written completely *divisi*, that is, with an individual part for each player.

*Atmosphères* presumably occupies an extreme position, which possibly may be interpreted as a dead end. But often, it is the apparent dead end which conceals a gateway opening into fresh fields.
In a more just world Julia Perry’s name and music would by now be widely known, celebrated for her blending of African American traditions and European classical forms, capped with a touch of mid-20th-century influences. The circumstances of her life and times wrote a different story, one in which Perry — a performer, composer, conductor, and the first Black woman to have her music played on a New York Philharmonic subscription program — is only now being fully appreciated.

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1924, Julia Perry grew up in Akron, Ohio, where her father was a physician and avid pianist. She and her four sisters were raised with music, with more than one showing real promise as a performer. Julia studied violin and piano, and earned particular notice as a vocalist. She graduated from Westminster Choir College, and her talent as a singer was recognized when she was given the Marian Anderson Award in 1949.

Perry began composing her *Stabat mater* in 1950, during her first year in New York, where she had a scholarship to the Columbia University Opera Workshop and studied conducting at The Juilliard School. The piece attracted the attention of conductor Piero Bellugi at Juilliard, who sent it to his former teacher, Luigi Dallapiccola. The Italian serialist composer agreed to take Perry on as a student at Tanglewood, where *Stabat mater* was completed and first performed, with Bellugi conducting a student orchestra and Perry as soloist.

*Stabat mater* would go on to become Perry’s most performed composition, and it also served as something of a financial launching pad. The work appeared on a benefit concert in Akron that helped raise funds for her to study with Dallapiccola in Italy. After sailing to Europe in late 1951, she received favorable notices for performances of the work in Milan, Naples, and Rome, and went on to perform it in Germany and Austria.

By 1953 Perry had stopped performing, demurring, “I am not a singer.” She spent most of the 1950s in Europe, gaining near-textbook experience for an emerging composer. She studied with Nadia Boulanger in France, where her Viola Sonata won the Boulanger Grand Prix. She conducted concerts across the continent through US Information Services programs, became fluent in Italian, and wrote the libretto in that language for her first opera, *The Cask of Amontillado*.

While she was in Europe her *Stabat mater* began attracting performances in the United States. A 1958 *New York Times* review declared that its setting of the 13th-century text, which tells the story of Christ’s crucifixion from Mary’s point of view, takes its cue from the words and sometimes seems to underline them...

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**In Short**

**Born:** March 25, 1924, in Lexington, Kentucky  
**Died:** April 29, 1979, in Akron, Ohio  
**Work composed:** 1951  
**World premiere:** August 8, 1951, with Piero Bellugi conducting a student orchestra at the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts, Julia Perry, soloist  
**New York Philharmonic premiere:** these performances  
**Estimated duration:** ca. 19 minutes
Miss Perry obviously has imagined them deeply and the intensity of her feeling, frequently conveyed through expressive string coloration, makes her work impressive... Combined with this, she knows, being a singer herself, how to write effective declamation for the voice.

The text of *Stabat mater*, attributed to Franciscan friar Jacopone da Todi (ca. 1230–1306), has been frequently visited by composers. With a title taken from the first line, “Stabat mater dolorosa” (“the sorrowful mother was standing”), it strikes universal themes of profound grief, suffering, and the power of prayer. Perry created her own translation of the Latin text, altering some lines to fit better musically and poetically.

Perry’s *Stabat mater* unrolls over ten sections, without pause. Mary’s anguished, passionate, and at times reverent lines are underscored in the strings by fugal and chorale writing, ostinato patterns, and harmonic dissonance to paint moods ranging from foreboding to distress to contemplation. Musically, the young composer was experimenting with larger instrumentation and new techniques, in the neoclassical style with which she would be identified.

The composer was a devout church-goer, and her religious grounding, coupled with experience in the themes of Black spirituals she had explored in early songs (*Free at Last, L’il Orphan*) lends additional emotional weight to *Stabat mater*. As her music has gained appreciation in recent years, connections have been drawn between her interpretation, the civil rights movement, and the historical trauma of Black mothers witnessing the murder of innocent sons.

Perry would experience her own periods of pain and suffering. Her European successes would not be replicated when she returned to the States, where women composers — much less those of color — were virtually nonexistent. Beginning

The NY Phil Connection

In 1965 Julia Perry became the first Black woman to have a composition performed by the New York Philharmonic on a subscription concert. Guest conductor William Steinberg led her *Study for Orchestra* in May of that year. The piece actually dated back to 1952, when she composed it as a work for chamber orchestra, titled *A Short Piece for Orchestra*. Perry had written it during her time in Italy, and it was premiered there by the Turin Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dean Dixon (who, like Perry, was a Black American who had trained at Juilliard but spent the majority of his career in Europe).

Perry revised the work for larger orchestral forces in 1955 and again prior to the Philharmonic premiere, at Steinberg’s request. Alas, like much of Perry’s music, it was little known in her lifetime. The NY Phil has since revisited *Study for Orchestra* twice, both conducted by Music Director Jaap van Zweden: at the Bravo! Vail Music Festival in July 2021, and in March 2022 subscription concerts.
in the late 1950s, she also began experiencing symptoms of chronic illness. In 1970, at age 46, she suffered the first of a series of strokes that left her right side paralyzed. She continued working, teaching herself to write using her left hand. The catalogue of works left upon her death in 1979 includes twelve symphonies, three operas, three concertos, dozens of vocal pieces, and experimental titles such as *Homunculus C.F.*, scored for ten percussionists.

**Instrumentation:** strings and vocal soloist.

— Rebecca Winzenried, former Program and Publications Editor at the New York Philharmonic

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**Text and Translation**

**Stabat mater**

*Julia Perry*

I.  
*Stabat Mater Dolorosa*

juxta crucem lacrymosa
dum pendebat filius;  

cujus animam gementem
contristatam et dolentem
per transivit gladius.

Stood the Mother sadly weeping,  
near the cross her presence keeping,  
whereon hung the Only Son;

Through whose spirit sympathizing  
Him she saw in sorrow and compassion  
through whom passed the cruel sword.

II.  
*O quam tristis et afflcta,*

fuit illa benedicta
mater Unigeniti

‘quae morebat et dolebat,
et tremebat cum videbat
nati poe’nas inclyti.

O how mournful and afflicted  
was this favoured and most blessed  
Mother of the Only Son;

through His dying, suff’ring, grieving,  
as she trembled scarce perceiving  
pains of the Illustrious One.

III.  
*Quis est homo qui non fleret*

Christi matrem si videret
in tanto supplicio?

Who is the man who could not weep  
saw he there the Mother of Christ  
in great supplication?

Who could not give consolation  
to the Mother contemplating,  
mournful with her Child?
IV.
Pro peccatis suae gentis
vidit Jesum in tormentis
et flagellis subditum;

vidit Jesum dolcem natum
morientem desolatum
dum emisit spiritum.

For the sinning of His people,
saw her Jesus in great torment
beaten with the scourger’s rod;
saw her Sweet One dying
yes, forsaken, crying
yield His spirit up to God.

V.
Eia mater fons amoris
me sentire vim doloris
fac ut tecum lugeum;

fac ut ardeat cor meum
in amando Christum Deum
ut sibi complaceam.

Tender Mother, fount of love,
let me feel thy sadness,
that with thee my tears shall flow;
make my heart so steadfast for Him,
O Mother make it burn with love for thy Son,
that I may be pleasing unto Him.

VI.
Sancta Mater istud agas
crucifixi fige plagas
corde meo valide.

Tui nati vulnerati
jam dignati pro me pati
poenas mecum divide.

Holy Mother, this be granted:
let His wounds be firmly planted
in my heart forevermore.
See the Saviour wounded,
depths unbounded for me suffered;
 pang of grief me divide.

VII.
Fac me verum tecum fiere,
crucifixus condolere
donec ego vixero;

juxta crucem tecum stare
te libenter sociare
in planctu desidero.

Make me weep with thee in union
at the crucifix, there condoling;
I shall help to bear the blame:

near the cross with you standing,
sharing freely agony with Him
forever: this I desire.

VIII.
Virgo virginum praecelara
mihi jam non sis amara
fac me tecum plangere.

fac ut portem Christe mortem
passionis ejus sortem
et plagas recolere.

Virgin, of all virgins dearest,
be not bitter when thou hearest;
Make me with thee to weep.

Make me bear the death of Christ,
His passion sharing shamefully
while renewing pains in me.

(Please turn the page quietly.)
IX.
Fac me plagas vulnerari
cruce hac inebriari,
ob amorem filii

Wound for wound be there created
by the cross intoxicated,
for love of thy Only Son.

Inflammatus et accensus
per te virgo sim defensus
in die judicii.

Here inflam’d I stand in the fire of love.
Through thee, Virgin protect me
on the Judgement Day.

X.
Fac me cruce custodiri
morte Christe praemuniri
confoveria gratia;

Of Thy cross, Lord, make me keeper;
of Thy cross, Lord, defender
with a grateful heart to Thee.

quando corpus morietur
fac ut animae donetur
Paradisi gloria.

When the body death has risen,
grant that to the soul be given
Glories bright of Paradise.

Based on the *Stabat mater* text by Jacopone da Todi (ca. 1230–1306)

— Translation by Julia Perry

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“Every artist ought to pray that he may not be ‘a success,’” remarked Gustav Holst to a friend. “If he’s a failure he stands a good chance of concentrating upon the best work of which he’s capable.” Holst spoke with some authority on the matter, since he knew both sides of the equation intimately. A leading figure of what is today viewed as the “Second English Renaissance” in music, he was catapulted to celebrity through the double-whammy triumph of his symphonic cycle *The Planets* (1914–16) and his oratorio *The Hymn of Jesus* (1917). Success did not lie easily on his shoulders. Following the rapturous reception of the oratorio, he wrote to another friend, “Woe to you when all men speak well of you”; before long, he retreated into the solitude he found requisite to his profession.

Holst had been born into a musical family of Scandinavian, German, and Russian roots. The surname he inherited from his father, “von Holst,” alluded to a background of slight nobility in Sweden; he would drop the “von” and anglicize his given name of Gustavus at the onset of World War I, shaking off any presumption of what many assumed was a German lineage. Holst studied piano as a child, but neuritis in his right arm prevented him from pursuing a professional career. He entered the Royal College of Music in 1893, where he studied composition with the eminent Charles Villiers Stanford, although without achieving much distinction. He also studied trombone at the conservatory — a good thing, since it provided a skill with which he could earn a living playing in brass bands and opera orchestras.

The most important occurrences of his conservatory years, it seems, were the friendship he forged with fellow student Ralph Vaughan Williams (who would be his closest lifetime colleague) and his directing of the Hammersmith Socialist Choir. This group met at Kell-scott Manor, the home of William Morris, a progressive thinker who apparently introduced Holst to Hindu literature and philosophy, which would greatly inspire his musical compositions.

Holst taught at St. Paul’s Girls’ School, Hammersmith, from 1905 until the end of his life. Teaching exhausted him, such that

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**In Short**

**Born:** September 21, 1874, in Cheltenham, England

**Died:** May 25, 1934, in London

**Work composed:** *Mars, Venus, and Jupiter* in 1914; *Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune* in 1915; *Mercury* in 1916

**World premiere:** September 29, 1918, for a private audience at The Queen’s Hall, London, by New Queen’s Hall Orchestra, Adrian Boult, conductor; first public performance, omitting *Venus* and *Neptune*, November 22, 1919, with the composer conducting at The Queen’s Hall; first public performance of the complete work, November 15, 1920, at The Queen’s Hall, by the London Symphony Orchestra, Albert Coates, conductor

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** December 29, 1921, with Albert Coates conducting the New York Symphony (a New York Philharmonic forebear), with Women of the Oratorio Society of New York

**Most recent New York Philharmonic performance:** May 28, 2016, David Robertson, conductor, with Women of the Oratorio Society of New York

**Estimated duration:** ca. 49 minutes
he became a weekend composer. He spent World War I with the YMCA educational programs among British troops in Greece and Turkey. At the same time, the orchestral work was germinating that would thrust him to stardom. *The Planets*, a set of seven self-contained orchestral “mood pictures” portraying Earth’s neighbors in the solar system, has remained ultra-popular for almost a century. Following the work’s premiere, in 1918, Holst’s popularity became his nemesis. He was called upon to conduct performances of his works; social engagements and press interviews ate into his precious composition time. Publishers, suspecting that his earlier pieces might suddenly prove marketable, kept him busy correcting proofs and revising works he had long since put out of his mind.

Holst collapsed — literally. In February 1923 he fell from the podium while conducting at the University of Reading and suffered a concussion. He recovered fully and traveled that spring to lecture at the University of Michigan, but shortly after returning to England he cancelled all his professional engagements and disappeared for a year to lead what he called “the life of a real composer.” In 1925 he returned to London, simplified his life, and reveled in the fact that audiences were finding his new pieces too cerebral to be popular. He took great satisfaction from the works he composed and continued to earn the respect of fellow composers and

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**In the Composer’s Words**

Holst offered somewhat mysterious comments in connection with the premiere of *The Planets*:

These pieces were suggested by the astrological significance of the planets. There is no program music in them, neither have they any connection with the deities of classical mythology bearing the same names. If any guide to the music is required, the subtitle of each piece will be found sufficient, especially if used in a broad sense. For instance, *Jupiter* brings jollity in the ordinary sense, and also the more ceremonial kind of rejoicing associated with religious or national festivities. *Saturn* brings not only physical decay, but also a vision of fulfillment. *Mercury* is the symbol of mind.

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*Gustav Holst, in 1921*
intellectuals. By 1932 his health began to fail; a brief stint lecturing at Harvard was marred by complications from a duodenal ulcer, and he died two years later, following complications from surgery intended to alleviate his condition.

Instrumentation: four flutes (two doubling piccolo and one also doubling alto flute), three oboes (one doubling bass oboe) and English horn, three clarinets and bass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon, six horns, four trumpets, three trombones and tenor tuba, tuba, timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, xylophone, orchestra bells, chimes, celesta, two harps, organ, strings, and, in Neptune, an offstage chorus of high voices.

— 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)

What About Pluto?

Many people have taken The Planets as an astronomical tour rather than the intended astrological one. It’s easy to imagine why Holst left Earth out of the lineup — too much information for a single “mood picture.” What about Pluto? That’s easy: Pluto wasn’t discovered until 1930, and by that time Holst was not inclined to devote what little health and strength he could muster to expanding a work he had grown to resent, so much did it overshadow the rest of his oeuvre. Still, Pluto’s absence became unsettling for later audiences, and a solution was proposed by the British composer Colin Matthews, who serves as administrator of the Holst Foundation and who from 1972 to 1984 had worked closely with Imogen Holst on editions of her father’s music. In 2000 Matthews composed Pluto: The Renewer, as a useful “appendix” to Holst’s evergreen suite. It was performed not infrequently as an add-on to Holst’s suite until 2006, when astronomers downgraded Pluto’s status to that of a dwarf planet, which left Matthews’s addition in limbo.
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Principal

KEYBOARD
In Memory of Paul Jacobs

HARPSICORD
Paolo Bordignon

PIANO
Eric Huebner
The Anna-Maria and
Stephen Kellen Piano Chair

ORGAN
Kent Tritle

LIBRARIANS
Lawrence Tarlow
Principal
Sara Griffin*

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

Programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.
Dima Slobodeniuok has become one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation, praised for his exhilarating approach and energetic leadership by musicians and audiences alike. He works with the world’s foremost orchestras, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and NHK Symphony Orchestra, in addition to the New York Philharmonic.

In the 2023–24 season Slobodeniuok has been invited to make his debuts with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC, and Zurich’s Tonhalle Orchestra. He returns to the London Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie, and Berlin Radio Symphony orchestras. He appears with the Vienna Symphony and Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, and returns to the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, where he served as music director until 2022. He opened the 2023–24 season with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Tanglewood, returns to lead the ensemble later in the season, and appears with the Seattle Symphony next spring.

An acclaimed recording artist, his recent recordings include Esa-Pekka Salonen’s Cello Concerto with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and Nicolas Altstaedt on Alpha, for which he received an ICMA Award. On BIS, he released an album of music inspired by the Finnish folk epic Kalevala, the works of Kalevi Aho with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra (2018 BBC Music Magazine Award), and another featuring Aho’s Sieidi and Fifth Symphony. For Ondine, he recorded works by Perttu Haapanen and Lotta Wennäkoski with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Slobodeniuok studied with the Ukrainian violinist Olga Parkhomenko at Helsinki’s Sibelius Academy, from which he graduated in 2001. There he also studied conducting with Leif Segerstam, Jorma Panula, and Atso Almila. From 2016 to 2021 he was principal conductor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra and artistic director of the Sibelius Festival. He was music director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia from 2013 to 2022, with which he built an extensive and highly acclaimed media library of live concert recordings. A passionate believer in widening opportunity, he started a conducting initiative while at the Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, providing aspiring conductors podium time with a professional orchestra and the opportunity to work with him on selected repertoire.

Two-time Grammy Award–winning American mezzo-soprano J’Nai Bridges graces the world’s top opera and concert stages. A leading figure in classical music’s shift toward conversations of inclusion and racial justice, she was announced as one of the Kennedy Center’s NEXT 50 cultural leaders in 2022.

The 2023–24 season spotlights Bridges in the world premiere of Jake Heggie’s
Intelligence, in which she appears as Lucinda at Houston Grand Opera. In addition to her New York Philharmonic subscription debut in these performances of Julia Perry’s Stabat mater, she appears with the Boston Symphony Orchestra singing Berlioz’s Romeo et Juliette. She returns to The Metropolitan Opera in John Adams’s El Niño, conducted by Marin Alsop, and appears in one of her signature roles, Bizet’s Carmen, at Hamburg Staatsoper. Her recital engagements over the season begin with a performance alongside soprano Latonia Moore at San Diego Opera and include Modlin Center of the Arts, at the University of Richmond, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Bridges’s career highlights include the 2022 Grammy-winning Metropolitan Opera production of Philip Glass’s Akhnaten and 2021 Grammy-winning recording of Richard Danielpour’s oratorio The Passion of Yeshua with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra; performing at the National Library of Congress to honor legendary fashion designer Diane von Furstenburg as she received the 2022 Ruth Bader Ginsburg Woman of Leadership Award; her sold-out Carnegie Hall Recital debut; and her role debut of Kasturbai in Glass’s Satyagraha at Los Angeles Opera. She has received the prestigious 2018 Sphinx Medal of Excellence Award, a 2016 Richard Tucker Career Grant, and she is a 2012 Marian Anderson Award winner.

The Dessoff Choirs, one of the leading choruses in New York City, is an independent chorus with a reputation for pioneering performances of choral works from the Renaissance through the 21st century. Founded in 1924 by Margarete Dessoff, Dessoff is celebrating its centennial over the 2023–24 and 2024–25 seasons with programs that reflect music from the Choirs’ rich history as well as move forward into the next 100 years with new collaborations and commissions.

Since Dessoff welcomed its ninth music director, Malcolm J. Merriweather, in May 2016, Dessoff has championed the music of Black composers such as Margaret Bonds, Valerie Capers, and David Hurd, and provided a stage for musicians and soloists of color. It released, to great acclaim, two CDs presenting music by Bonds: The Ballad of the Brown King and Selected Songs (2019) and Credo and Simon Bore the Cross (2023). In addition, the Choirs are featured on Rough Magic, a new album from Roomful of Teeth, in Eve Beglarian’s recently commissioned None More Than You. Past performances of note include Britten’s War Requiem and Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 with Lorin Maazel in his final performances as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, as well as the US premieres of Philip Glass’s Symphony No. 5 and John Tavener’s all-night vigil, The Veil of the Temple.

Grammy nominated conductor and baritone Malcolm J. Merriweather is music director of The Dessoff Choirs and has been engaged to prepare the New York Philharmonic Chorus for appearances with the Orchestra in the 2022–23 and 2023–24 seasons. He is also an associate professor at Brooklyn College and serves on the faculty at the Manhattan School of Music. He has conducted ensembles in venues that include Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Madison Square Garden, and Westminster Abbey, as well as at the Vatican before Pope Francis. His repertoire covers everything from Bach to the world premiere recording of Margaret Bonds’s The Ballad of the Brown King (AVIE Records). Merriweather has earned degrees from Eastman, Manhattan School of Music, and Syracuse University.
The Dessoff Choirs
Malcolm J. Merriweather, music director

**CHOIR 1**

**SOPRANO 1**
Aleha Aziz
Gloria Bangiola
Jessica Bobadilla
Tina Davis
Rebecca L. Hargrove
Rada Hastings
Amanda Kelly

**SOPRANO 2**
Tatiana Bernard
Christina Fairweather
Ruthie Laurence
Ziwoo Lim

**ALTO**
Elizabeth Hollander
Jenna Mineo
Nicole Osmolovskya
Izaya Perrier
Christina Peter
Barbara Scharf Schamest
Katherine Velez
Seth Velez
Carla Wesby
Laurie Yorr

**CHOIR 2**

**SOPRANO 1**
Rebecca Blank
Brianna Brumfield
Kimberley Cohan
Mara Montez
Laura Pernas

**SOPRANO 2**
Sasha Calderon
Nicole Hakli
Sylvia Maisonet
Tara Tisch-Wallace
Katherine Fox Wolf

**ALTO**
Clare Avery
Jeanette Blakeney
Chris Chalfant
Kelsey Ge
Francisco Gomez
Martha Hollander
Katie O’Neal
Morissa Pepose

*Current as of November 14, 2023*
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.
Support the Education Fund

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New York Philharmonic’s Education initiatives reach tens of thousands of young people every year — from introducing new audiences to symphonic music through Young People’s Concerts™, to expanding and reinvigorating music education through Philharmonic Schools.

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- Tangible Personal Property
- Qualified Charitable Distributions

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Marvel Studios’ Black Panther in Concert
DECEMBER 20–23

Vertigo in Concert
JANUARY 23–26

The Movie Music of Terence Blanchard
Presented by Lincoln Center in collaboration with the New York Philharmonic
JANUARY 28

Metropolis in Concert
Featuring organist Cameron Carpenter
FEBRUARY 6

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial in Concert
MAY 17–19

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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 Con Indy, solists, 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 Yu Qing.
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