



JAAP VAN ZWEDEN
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Thursday, March 21, 2024, 7:30 p.m.
17,016th Concert

Saturday, March 23, 2024, 8:00 p.m.
17,017th Concert

Sunday, March 24, 2024, 2:00 p.m.
17,018th Concert

Jaap van Zweden, Conductor
Joseph Alessi, Trombone
(The Gurnee F. and Marjorie L. Hart Chair)

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.

Major support for these concerts is provided by **Honey M. Kurtz**.



March 21 & 23–24, 2024

Jaap van Zweden, Conductor

Joseph Alessi, Trombone (The Gurnee F. and Marjorie L. Hart Chair)

Joel THOMPSON

(b. 1988)

To See the Sky: an exegesis for

orchestra (2023; World Premiere–

New York Philharmonic Co-

Commission with the American

Composers Forum, Atlanta

Symphony Orchestra, Aspen Music

Festival and School, and Bravo! Vail

Music Festival)

I. Sometimes...

II. ...you have to gaze into a well...

III. ...to see the sky.

TAN DUN

(b. 1957)

Trombone Concerto: Three Muses in

Video Game (2021; New York Premiere)

Muse of Bili

Muse of Xiqin

Muse of Sheng

JOSEPH ALESSI

Intermission

FE. MENDELSSOHN
(1809–47)

**Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 56,
Scottish** (1840–42)
Andante con moto — Allegro un poco
agitato
Vivace non troppo
Adagio
Allegro vivacissimo — Allegro
maestoso assai
(played without pause)

These performances of Joel Thompson's *To See the Sky* are made possible with generous support from the **Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts**.

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Notes on the Program

To See the Sky: an exegesis for orchestra

Joel Thompson

Joel Thompson, currently the inaugural composer-in-residence at Houston Grand Opera, has a special affinity for working with voices. “The world would be so much better if everyone sang in a chorus,” he says. “Call me idealistic and naive, but it’s one of the few spaces in which people can come together, sync up their heart rates, and seek beauty together.”

A choral conductor by training, Thompson most often writes topical compositions that engage racial and social justice issues. His best-known work, *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, for men’s chorus, parallels the liturgical structure of Haydn’s *The Seven Last Words of Christ*, powerfully setting the final words of Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Oscar Grant, Eric Garner, Kenneth Chamberlain, Amadou Diallo, and John Crawford — all Black unarmed men who died at the hands of law enforcement. The piece received the Hermitage Prize at the Aspen Music Festival in 2017, where Thompson was a composition fellow studying with Stephen Hartke and Christopher Theofanidis, and the 2018 American Prize for Choral Composition.

The Snowy Day, Thompson’s opera based on the Caldecott Medal-winning children’s book by Ezra Jack Keats, follows Peter, its young black protagonist, into a magically transformed urban landscape. Thompson has also composed music for voices on the topic of bus boycotts, on poetry written by incarcerated people in Michigan’s prisons, and on the texts of Black authors such as Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Joseph Seamon Cotter,

Jr., and James Baldwin. Even Thompson’s first orchestral work, *Act of Resistance*, features voices, giving members of the orchestra the option of putting down their instruments to stand up and sing the word “love.” “That’s the whole point,” he explains, adding:

I wanted to create a situation in which the musician has to embody what love feels like. It can be perceived as cheesy, but it requires them to stop everything that they have been trained to do and be as vulnerable as possible with the voice that they have been given.

Although there is no singing in Thompson’s *To See the Sky: an exegesis for orchestra*, premiered in this concert, the piece was inspired by a line from a song that has personal meaning to him: “Thunderclouds” by MacArthur Fellowship-winning jazz vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant. “She’s probably my favorite artist alive right now,” Thompson says. “I’m obsessed

In Short

Born: December 17, 1988, in the Bahamas

Resides: in Houston, Texas

Work composed: 2023, on a commission by the New York Philharmonic, the American Composers Forum (made possible by The Thelma E. Hunter Fund in honor of the 100th anniversary of her birth), Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival and School, and Bravo! Vail Music Festival

World premiere: these performances

Estimated duration: ca. 20 minutes

with her.” Buoyed by an aspiration to live beyond his experiences of Black trauma, Thompson has given the musicians soaring melodies layered with percussion lines full of rhythmic play, a language that is at once the descendant of late-19th-century Romanticism and traditions of the African diaspora. His previous work commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, *The Places We Leave*, for countertenor and orchestra, written for Anthony Roth Costanzo with text by US poet laureate Tracy K. Smith, was premiered in 2022.

“I feel like I’m writing for my own little communities,” Thompson says. “I

know what they would want to hear. And I’m writing for seven-year-old me, who wanted to know if it is possible for classical music to sound a little bit like what I was familiar with.”

Thompson was born in the Bahamas to Jamaican parents. His father was a physics professor, his mother a school principal and teacher. The music with which Thompson was familiar as a boy included local Bahamian *junkanoo*, popular music from his parents’ Jamaican home, and their Nat “King” Cole records, plus gospel, which was largely an American import. But it was *Time Life’s* collection *100 Masterpieces of*

In the Composer’s Words

The title of the work comes from my favorite line in Cécile McLorin Salvant’s “Thunderclouds,” my favorite song on her album *Ghost Songs*: “Sometimes you have to gaze into a well to see the sky.” That line gave me so much hope when I heard it. It’s an encouragement towards introspection — she’s saying, *Just gaze inward*. The well might be your community, the loved ones around you, or your own soul. But the line also acknowledges that there are moments when life gets so hard that you can’t even bother to look up. I’m so prone to melancholy, and I struggle with anxiety and depression. Sometimes I live in that place.

Much of my art has been documenting my internal and external reality as a Black man in our country. I feel fatigued because there seems to be an appetite for our trauma in the classical music space. I’m now trying to expand beyond those limitations. I think of music as a space to imagine more equitable futures and what liberation feels like, which is what this piece is oriented around. I’m trying to do less documenting — and to dream a little bit more. The movements outline a non-linear journey towards healing.

Musically, this piece is an experiment. I don’t think I’ve written anything with orchestra before that relies on the rhythms of my youth. I’ve always been afraid to do so because then the question of genre arises. Dvořák could bring Bohemian tunes into his music, but then, if a Black person brings in African American music, does it become jazz? After [Terence Blanchard’s opera] *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, I felt maybe that I had the room to do that. There are places in the work where I tried to access an ancestral plane.



— Joel Thompson

Classical Music that Thompson “wore out.” He studied piano from the age of seven, continuing after his family’s relocation to Houston when he was ten, and then to Atlanta three years later.

Thompson pursued pre-med coursework as an undergraduate at Emory University, striking a deal with his father that medical school could wait until he had finished his master’s degree in choral conducting at that same institution. Thompson has never looked back. He is currently a doctoral candidate in the composition program at the Yale School of Music.

Instrumentation: three flutes (one doubling alto flute, another doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling English horn), three clarinets, three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, hand clap, suspended cymbal, temple blocks, tam-tam, crotales, maracas, djembe, tom-toms, orchestra bells, snare drum, hi-hat, agogô, harp, and strings.

— *Lara Pellegrinelli, a Harvard PhD in music and a contributor to National Public Radio*

Celebrate Jaap

As Jaap van Zweden approaches the conclusion of his tenure as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, he is leading concertos in which the Orchestra’s Principal players perform as soloists (as Principal Trombone Joseph Alessi does in another work on this concert) and conducting works by composers he has championed at his NY Phil. In addition to canonical composers like Beethoven and Brahms, whose music appeared earlier this season, and Mozart and Mahler, who will be heard in May and June, he is revisiting the oeuvres of Steve Reich (this past fall) and, in this concert, Joel Thompson.



*Joel Thompson, Anthony Roth Costanzo, and Jaap van Zweden following the 2022 World Premiere of *The Places We Leave* during the NY Phil’s first season after the pandemic shut-down, in a concert held at the Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Frederick P. Rose Hall while David Geffen Hall was being renovated*

Van Zweden conducted the first performance of Thompson’s music on January 27, 2022, with the World Premiere of *The Places We Leave*, a setting of a new text by Tracy K. Smith, US poet laureate, 2017–19. In its review of that performance *The New York Times* wrote that the composer “reveled in sumptuous, worried strings, and gave [countertenor Anthony Roth] Costanzo mellow, narrative vocal lines that surge into piercing climaxes. There was even a patch of exhausting Handelian coloratura, a wink at the text’s account of a lover who ‘left me breathless,’ and a Costanzo specialty.”

— **The Editors**

Trombone Concerto: *Three Muses in Video Game*

Tan Dun

Of all the seeming contradictions embodied in the multi-hyphenated Chinese-born, American-based composer-conductor Tan Dun, perhaps the most prevalent is his predilection for juxtaposing ancient traditions with cutting-edge culture. In the broadest sense, it explains how the village youth who once led his local Chinese opera troupe would later win the Oscar for his film score for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000). On a more profound level, it also explains how an avant-garde musical sensibility could find rich sonic inspiration in such basic “organic” materials as rocks, paper, and water.

Tan’s output has been organic in yet another definition of the term — a unified artistic development over a broad stretch of time. His Concerto for Water Percussion (2000), commissioned by the New York Philharmonic for Principal Percussion Christopher S. Lamb, traces its sonic roots back to *Ghost Opera* (1994), Tan’s breakthrough piece for string quartet and *pipa* (with its conspicuous presence of water), and its branches to the *Water Passion after St. Matthew* (2000), a visionary retelling of the Biblical story using aquatic auditory qualities as a quasi-Buddhist metaphor for baptism and resurrection. From Tan’s *Water Passion*, it was a short leap — though nearly two decades in the making — to his *Buddha Passion* (2018), an evening-length oratorio on the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha.

The same inspiration for *Buddha Passion*, the paintings in the Mogao Caves in the ancient Silk Road city of Dunhuang, also laid the groundwork for Tan’s Trombone Concerto: *Three Muses in Video Game* (2021), a work that once again

examines ancient sources through a modern lens. As Tan has cited, music was a common theme in these ancient paintings, with instruments of the day often depicted in practical use.

For the composer, three of these instruments stood out: the *bili* (also known as the *guanzi*, a double-reed precursor of the Chinese *suona*), the *xiqin* (a bowed two-stringed fiddle that was an ancestor of both the Chinese *erhu* and the Mongolian *morin khuur*), and the *sheng* (a polyphonic reed instrument whose conspicuous pipes, depicted in images as early as 1100 BCE, are frequently cited as the inspiration for the accordion and the Western pipe organ). Each of these instruments Tan credits as a muse, their distinctive inspirations commemorated in respective movement titles.

From there, Tan took an abrupt leap into the present. For a composer who once channeled Olivier Messiaen’s

In Short

Born: August 18, 1957, in Simao, Hunan Province, China

Resides: in New York City and Shanghai

Work composed: 2021, on commission by the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic Society, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, and Philharmonic Luxembourg

World premiere: November 5, 2021, at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, by the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Shiyoon Song, conductor, Jörgen van Rijen, soloist

New York Philharmonic premiere: these performances, which mark the work’s New York Premiere

Estimated duration: ca. 22 minutes

ornithological obsessions and John Cage's persistent playfulness through modern cell phone technology in his interactive *Passacaglia: Secret of Wind and Birds* (2015), it was a short — if indirect — step to connect those ancient images to contemporary video technology. Having lived through the cultural ascendance of digital technology during the COVID-19 pandemic, when disparate people found personal connection through an otherwise impersonal medium, Tan was inspired to document this trend in a musical score.

Much as many evocative orchestral works have been described — not always charitably — as “movie music without the movie,” Tan’s brilliantly scored *Three Muses in Video Game* consists of “three

distinct musical personalities” rendered as video game music without specific games in mind. Rather, the score embraces the pace of the medium, with quick shifts in narrative momentum and emotional tone. Much of the cheeky charm of *Three Muses* lies in requiring the trombone (with its distinctive sonorities and playing techniques) to mimic the musical characteristics of (to refer to the instruments with modern, European-based terms) an oboe, a cello, and a pipe organ.

Opening with a cascade of Chinese drums, the suite jump-starts the soloist into a propulsive momentum that eventually winds down in a contemplative close. After the slower pace of the second movement, the piece returns to form, reaching a conclusion that, with

In the Composer's Words

In interviews Tan Dun has offered the following comments on his Trombone Concerto: *Three Muses in Video Game*:

I was very much seduced by the Buddhist cave paintings in Dunhuang. Countless paintings were in those caves, most of them actually featuring instruments — ancient instruments and scores. Three of the instruments were very interesting, shape-wise and tone color-wise. One is called the *bili*; another one is called the *xiqin*, the ancestor of the *erhu*; another one is called the *sheng*, a mouth organ. These three disappearing instruments have stayed in these paintings for hundreds — thousands — of years, and still exist in a sort of dream shape. That's my musical inspiration. To me, it was like a musical goddess speaking to me in a special, spiritual way.

During the pandemic, I was intrigued by all the online and digital art forms that flourished, such as livestreaming and video games. Classical music is always trying to find new audiences — particularly young people, because they are the best way to pass on tradition. If you want to challenge — or be challenged by — young people, you have to get into their media. So I had this idea: Why don't I write music for some imaginary video games, but with disappearing classical instruments. And that was the biggest reward for me: that through this piece I reached a lot of young people, and they've now started to pay attention.



the soloist augmented by the orchestral section trombones, takes on a quasi-organ harmonic sound world that becomes part ritual, part theatrical bravura.

Instrumentation: two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, taiko drum, marimba, snare drum, vibraphone, suspended cymbal, water drips, orchestra bells, wind chime, crash cymbal,

waterphone, slapstick, tubular bells, mark tree, congas, tam-tam, tom-tom, paigu drum, triangle, drum set, harp, piano, and strings, in addition to solo trombone.

— Ken Smith, an ASCAP / Deems Taylor Award-winning annotator and winner of the 2020 Society of Publishers in Asia Award for arts and culture reporting

Tan Dun's Trombone Concerto: *Three Muses in Video Game* is presented under license from G. Schirmer, Inc., copyright owners.

Sources and Inspirations

Tan Dun found inspiration for his Trombone Concerto: *Three Muses in Video Game*, as well as for his *Buddha Passion*, in the Mogao Caves. The UNESCO World Heritage Center — which added the caves' historic blend of art and anthropological treasures to its World Heritage List in 1987 — describes them as follows.

Carved into the cliffs above the Dachuan River, the Mogao Caves southeast of the Dunhuang oasis, Gansu Province, comprise the largest, most richly endowed, and longest used treasure house of Buddhist art in the world. It was first constructed in 366 AD and represents the great achievement of Buddhist art from the 4th to the 14th century. 492 caves are presently preserved, housing about 45,000 square meters of murals and more than 2,000 painted sculptures. ...

These works provide an abundance of vivid materials depicting various aspects of medieval politics, economics, culture, arts, religion, ethnic relations, and daily dress in western China. The unique artistic style of Dunhuang art is not only the amalgamation of Han Chinese artistic tradition and styles assimilated from ancient Indian and Gandharan customs, but also an integration of the arts of the Turks, ancient Tibetans, and other Chinese ethnic minorities. Many of these masterpieces are creations of an unparalleled aesthetic talent.

The discovery of the Library Cave at the Mogao Caves in 1990, together with the tens of thousands of manuscripts and relics it contained, has been acclaimed as the world's greatest discovery of ancient Oriental culture. This significant heritage provides invaluable reference for studying the complex history of ancient China and Central Asia.



Musicians depicted in a painting in the Mogao Caves

— The Editors

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 56, *Scottish*

Felix Mendelssohn

Thanks to his family's wealth and its penchant for attracting an entourage of intellectual and creative types, as a youth Felix Mendelssohn enjoyed such amenities as a string orchestra that could try out his new compositions when he conducted them during at-home musicales. Before he reached his 15th birthday, he had composed 12 so-called String Symphonies (plus a single movement of a 13th), delightful pieces that served their purpose and were then largely forgotten, remaining unpublished until after his death. Mendelssohn was no beginner when he embarked on his first full-scale symphony, in 1824 — a Symphony in C minor (Op. 11) that was soon overshadowed by his later orchestral essays: his Symphony No. 5, *Reformation*, in 1830 (revised in 1832); Symphony No. 4, *Italian*, in 1833 (revised in 1834); Symphony No. 2, *Lobgesang* (*Song of Praise*), in 1840; and Symphony No. 3, *Scottish*, in 1842.

The numbering of Mendelssohn's symphonies confusingly reflects their publication dates rather than the order in which they were composed. The *Scottish* was therefore the last of the five "mature" symphonies completed. Although he did not embark on its composition in any sustained way until 1840, Mendelssohn first thought about writing such a piece in 1829, when he toured the British Isles in the company of his friend Karl Klingemann. On March 26, 1829, Mendelssohn wrote him a breathless letter announcing that he expected to arrive in London in less than a month and proclaiming, partly in capital letters, "NEXT AUGUST I AM GOING TO SCOTLAND, with a rake for folksongs, an ear for the lovely, fragrant countryside, and a heart for the

bare legs of the natives." Following a stint in the cultural swirl of London, he and Klingemann left for Edinburgh in July, a long and sometimes arduous journey by stagecoach that Mendelssohn documented through very adept pencil drawings and pen-and-ink sketches. They arrived on July 26, and a few days later set out on a tour of the Scottish Highlands, which took them as far west as the town of Oban and the Atlantic islands of Staffa and Iona, then south to Glasgow and back to Cumberland, England. They reached London again on September 6.

Mendelssohn's letters home were filled with wonder. His report from Birnam Wood, on August 3, was typical in its almost painterly description:

In Short

Born: February 3, 1809, in Hamburg, Germany

Died: November 4, 1847, in Leipzig

Work composed: from late 1840 to January 20, 1842, revised slightly after its premiere; dedicated to "H.M. Queen Victoria of Great Britain and Ireland"

World premiere: March 3, 1842, with the composer conducting the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra; the next performance, on March 17, under the direction of Karl Bach, included Mendelssohn's revisions and was therefore the first airing of the work in its final form.

New York Philharmonic premiere: November 22, 1845, George Loder, conductor; this marked the work's US Premiere.

Most recent New York Philharmonic performance: December 7, 2013, Alan Gilbert, conductor

Estimated duration: ca. 43 minutes

Yesterday was a lovely day, we passed from rock to rock, many waterfalls, beautiful valleys, with rivers, dark woods and heath with the red heather in blossom.

Or from Inverary, on August 9:

Our host's beautiful daughter in her black curls looked out like a sign over the signboard into the harbor, in which the newest herrings are swimming about all alive at nine o'clock in the morning, and at a quarter past nine are served up fried with the coffee. ... The Duke of Argyll's castle proudly looked forth from between the lofty trees; and from the tops of the surrounding hills the green trees held a colloquy with their relations below, who were already appointed to the navy and swam about in the water.

The composer would visit England nine more times, but never returned to Scotland. However, the three weeks he

spent there in 1829 left a deep impression, which was made most immediately evident by his composing the concert overture *The Hebrides* (also known as the *Fingal's Cave Overture*). Already during the trip he had fixed on the idea of commemorating Scotland through a symphony, and a decade later he set about making good on his plan. Mendelssohn does not draw on Scottish melodies in his score, but listeners have been happy to hear its flavor as authentically Scottish in spirit, replete with pentatonic melody, sparkling rhythm, and, in its fast movements, an infectious warmth.

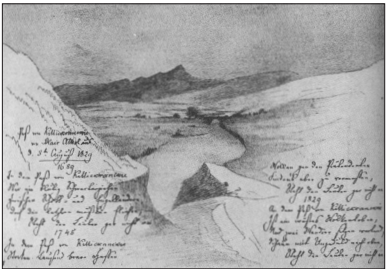
Instrumentation: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

— 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)

Sources and Inspiration

On July 30, 1829, Mendelssohn visited the Palace of Holyrood in Edinburgh and wrote this account to his family back in Berlin:

In the evening twilight we went today to the palace where Queen Mary lived and loved; a little room is shown there with a winding staircase leading up to the door: up this way they came and found Rizzio in that dark corner, where they pulled him out, and three rooms off there is a dark corner, where they murdered him. The chapel close to it is now roofless, grass and ivy grow there, and at that broken altar Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything round is broken and mouldering and the bright sky shines in. I believe I have found today in that old chapel the beginning of my *Scottish Symphony*.



An annotated sketch of the Scottish landscape, which Mendelssohn drew in the diary documenting his 1829 tour of Scotland

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The Artists



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 became Music Director of the Seoul Philharmonic in 2024. He will become Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in September 2026, after serving as the ensemble's Music Director Designate in the 2025–26 season. 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 *Turangalila-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.



Joseph Alessi was appointed Principal Trombone of the New York Philharmonic, The Gurnee F. and Marjorie L. Hart Chair, in 1985. He began musical

studies with his father, Joseph Alessi, Sr., as a high school student in San Rafael, California, and was a soloist with the San Francisco Symphony before continuing his musical training at the Curtis Institute of Music. Before joining the Philharmonic Alessi served as second trombone of The Philadelphia Orchestra and principal trombone of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. In April 1990 he made his NY Phil solo debut, performing Creston's *Fantasy for Trombone*, and in 1992 premiered Christopher Rouse's Pulitzer Prize-winning Trombone Concerto with the Philharmonic, which commissioned the work for its 150th anniversary celebration. Alessi performed the World Premiere of Chick Corea's Trombone Concerto, composed

especially for him, with the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra in August 2021, and in May 2023 gave its US Premiere with the NY Phil.

Joseph Alessi has participated in numerous festivals, including the Festival Musicale di Camera in Portogruaro, Italy; Cabrillo Music Festival; Swiss Brass Week; and Lieksa Brass Week, in Finland. In 2002 he was awarded an International Trombone Association Award for his contributions to the world of trombone music and trombone playing, and in 2014 was elected president of that association.

Alessi is currently on the faculty of The Juilliard School, and has also given master classes throughout the world. He has performed as soloist with several leading concert bands, including the US Military Academy Band at West Point, US Army Band, and US Marine Band. He has also recorded and performed extensively with five prominent trombone quartets: The New York Trombone Quartet, Aries Trombone Quartet, Four of a Kind Trombone Quartet, World Trombone Quartet, and Slide Monsters Trombone Quartet.

New York Philharmonic

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 Director Designate in the 2025–26 season, before beginning his tenure as Music and Artistic Director in 2026.