



JAAP VAN ZWEDEN  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

**Thursday, April 4, 2024, 7:30 p.m.**  
17,019th Concert

**Friday, April 5, 2024, 11:00 a.m.**  
17,020th Concert

**Saturday, April 6, 2024, 8:00 p.m.**  
17,021st Concert

**Karina Canellakis**, Conductor  
(New York Philharmonic debut)

**Alice Sara Ott**, Piano  
(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.



April 4–6, 2024

**Karina Canellakis**, Conductor (New York Philharmonic debut)

**Alice Sara Ott**, Piano (New York Philharmonic debut)

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**WEBERN**

(1883–1945)

**Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6b**

(1909; rev. 1928)

Slow

Moving

Moderate

Very moderate

Very slow

Slow

**R. STRAUSS**

(1864–1949)

***Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration), Op. 24*** (1888–89)

**Intermission**

**RAVEL**

(1875–1937)

**Piano Concerto in G major** (1929–31)

Allegramente

Adagio assai

Presto

ALICE SARA OTT

**SCRIABIN**

(1872–1915)

***Le Poème de l'extase (The Poem of Ecstasy), Op. 54*** (1905–07)

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# Notes on the Program

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## Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6b

### Anton Webern

If brevity is the soul of wit, as pompous Polonius proclaims in *Hamlet*, Anton Webern might be the wittiest of composers. His entire output fills — if that is the correct word — a few compact discs. The length of two of his Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6b, is about a minute; the third of them is only 11 measures long. At one point Webern remarked that once all 12 notes of the musical scale had been played, he had the feeling a piece was over.

The number of minutes and measures, of course, is no indication of quality. Countless prolific composers are now long forgotten, yet for a period during the 1950s and '60s Webern's music was arguably the most influential among high-Modernist composers. His ideas and example, even more than those of his teacher Arnold Schoenberg, set the agenda many composers pursued. The experience of time in Webern's music works differently from that in Beethoven, Wagner, or Brahms, as does his sense of color, gesture, and avoidance of traditional thematic development.

Webern composed the initial version of Six Pieces for Orchestra in the summer of 1909, using as a model Schoenberg's recent Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16, and offering the dedication: "To Arnold Schoenberg, my teacher and friend, with greatest love." These were crucial years for both of them (and also for Alban Berg), as they moved away from traditional tonality to atonality (or, as Schoenberg preferred to call it, "pantonicity"). The rich Romanticism found in Webern's earlier Passacaglia, Op. 1, took a sparer and more abstract turn in his Expressionist works.

Schoenberg conducted the premiere of Six Pieces for Large Orchestra, as it was initially called, at the legendary "Scandal Concert" on March 31, 1913 (see sidebar, page 22). In anticipation of the event Webern published the work at his own expense in a limited edition of 200 copies. He revised the pieces in 1928, writing to Schoenberg: "Everything extravagant is now cut (alto flute, six trombones for a few measures, and so on)." In a later program note he said that the new version, heard on this concert, "is to be considered the only valid one."

Despite using what is indeed a large orchestra, in both versions, Webern's deployment of the forces is often intimate

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## In Short

**Born:** December 3, 1883, in Vienna, Austria

**Died:** September 15, 1945, in Mittersill

**Work composed:** in the summer of 1909 for a large orchestra (as Op. 6); revised in 1928 (as Op. 6b) for the reduced instrumentation heard in these concerts

**World premiere:** March 31, 1913, at Vienna's Grosser Musikvereinsaal of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, by the Orchester des Wiener Konzertvereins, Arnold Schoenberg, conductor; the revised version, November 22, 1929, in Stockholm

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** January 16, 1958, Leonard Bernstein, conductor

**Most recent New York Philharmonic performance:** January 25, 2003, Zubin Mehta, conductor

**Estimated duration:** ca. 10 minutes

and pointillistic — every note matters. The opening piece is painted with a wide range of instrumental colors, and the second moves at the swiftest speed to a terrifying end. In the third, the softest and briefest movement, the meter changes eight times over eleven measures. Percussion comes to the fore in the funeral march, gradually building to a great climax. Brief allusions to a more popular style peek out in the fifth piece, and the sixth has a lyrical character before eventually dying away with the celesta and harp.

Webern acknowledged the deeply personal nature of the Six Pieces, which he connected with the death of his beloved mother in 1906. He wrote to Schoenberg before the premiere:

The first piece is to express my frame of mind when I was still in Vienna, already sensing the disaster, yet always maintaining the hope that I would find my mother still alive. It was a beautiful day — for a minute I believed quite

## Witness to the Premiere

“I don’t understand how it has not occurred to anyone yet that such noisemaking was a breach of the law. A ticket to a concert only extends the right to hear the concert — not to disrupt the proceedings. A ticket-purchaser is a guest who acquires the right to listen: nothing else.” Thus Arnold Schoenberg fumed to a journalist a few days after the most infamous concert of his career: the “Scandal Concert” of March 31, 1913, in Vienna’s hallowed Musikverein that ended prematurely with brawling and the police needing to restore order.

The occasion was meant to provide Schoenberg an opportunity to conduct his own music as well as works by students and mentors. The program (see right) opened with Anton Webern’s Six Pieces for Orchestra, and snickering among some in the audience began during these aphoristic pieces. There followed four orchestral songs by Alexander von Zemlinsky (who had been Schoenberg’s teacher), and then Schoenberg’s own Chamber Symphony, Op. 9. Pandemonium broke out during two songs from Alban Berg’s *Five Orchestral Songs on Picture Postcard Texts by Peter Altenberg*, stopping the concert and forcing the cancellation of the concluding work, Gustav Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder*.

While these leading Viennese progressive composers had many supporters among the audience, a small and apparently coordinated faction wanted to cause trouble. Various things upset the opponents, including the brevity of some of the works and the advanced harmonic vocabulary that signaled a breakdown of traditional tonality, heralding a new atonal style.

AKADEMISCHER VERBAND FÜR LITERATUR UND  
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Montag, den 31. März 1913,  $\frac{1}{8}$  Uhr abends  
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## ORCHESTER-KONZERT

Dirigent: ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG

Orchester des Wiener Konzertvereins

Gesang: A. Boruttau, Margarete Bum, Maria Freund

1. ANTON VON WEBERN: Sechs Stücke für Orchester op. 4\*
2. ALEXANDER VON ZEMLINSKY: Vier Orchesterlieder nach Gedichten von Maeterlinck  
Margarete Bum
3. ARNOLD SCHÖNBERG: Kammer-symphonie op. 9 in einem Satz
4. ALBAN BERG: Zwei Orchesterlieder nach Ansichtskartentexten von Peter Altenberg (aus einem Zyklus)  
Alfred J. Boruttau
5. GUSTAV MAHLER: Kindertotenlieder\*  
Maria Freund

\* Die einzelnen Teile bilden ein einheitliches Ganzes und es muss daher die Kontinuität (auch durch Hintanhaltung von Beifallsbezeugungen u. dgl.) aufrecht erhalten werden.

PREIS DES PROGRAMMES 30 HELLER

firmly that nothing had happened. Only during the train ride to Carinthia — it was on the afternoon of the same day — did I learn the truth. The third piece conveys the impression of the fragrance of the Erica [a kind of brilliant flowering heather], which I gathered at a spot in the forest very meaningful to me and then laid on the bier. The fourth piece I later entitled *marcia funebre*. Even today I do not understand my feelings as I walked behind the coffin to the cemetery.

Such revealing personal comments may seem surprising coming from a composer typically identified with cold precision and analytic detail. Yet the later 20th-century reading, mirroring the turn Webern took in his compositional approach, distorts the original context of

his Expressionist scores in fin-de-siècle Vienna, before the cataclysm of the First World War, and when he was most influenced by Wagner and Mahler.

**Instrumentation:** two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), four horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, orchestra bells, low bells of indefinite pitch, snare drums, tam-tam, triangle, harp, celesta, and strings.

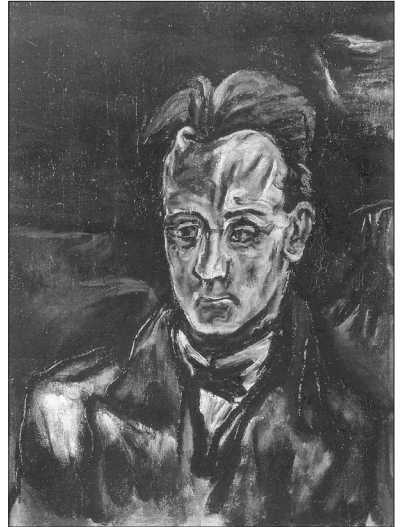
— Christopher H. Gibbs, James H. Ottaway Jr. Professor of Music at Bard College and co-author, with Richard Taruskin, of *The Oxford History of Western Music, College Edition*

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## In the Composer's Words

Webern provided the following explanation of the pieces for a German music festival in 1933:

They represent short song forms, in that they are mostly tripartite. Thematic relations do not exist, not even within the individual pieces. I consciously avoided such connections, since I aimed at an always changing mode of expression. To describe briefly the character of the pieces (they are of a purely lyrical nature): the first expresses the expectation of a calamity; the second the certainty of its fulfillment; the third the most tender contrast — it is, so to speak, the introduction to the fourth, a funeral march; five and six are an epilogue: remembrance and resignation.



Portrait of Webern by Oskar Kokoschka, 1914

## *Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration), Op. 24*

### Richard Strauss

The idea of the symphonic poem may trace its ancestry to the dramatic or depictive overtures of the early 19th century, such as Felix Mendelssohn's *Fingal's Cave Overture* or Berlioz's *Waverley Overture*. The idea proved popular in Germany and elsewhere, and the repertoire quickly grew thanks to contributions by such composers as Liszt, Smetana, Dvořák, Musorgsky, Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns, Franck, and — most impressively of all — Richard Strauss.

Many lesser figures jumped on the symphonic poem bandwagon. One of them was Alexander Ritter, an Estonian-born violinist and composer who fell in with the Liszt and Wagner circle, married a niece of Wagner's, composed six symphonic poems of his own, and eventually became associate concertmaster of the Meiningen Court Orchestra, which was conducted by the eminent Hans von Bülow. In Meiningen he grew friendly with the young Richard Strauss, whom von Bülow had brought in as an assistant music director in 1885. Strauss would later say that it was Ritter who revealed to him the greatness of the music of Wagner, Liszt, and Berlioz and, by extension, opened his eyes to the possibilities of the symphonic poem.

In 1886 Strauss produced what might be considered his first symphonic poem, *Aus Italien* (it is more precisely a sort of descriptive symphony), and continued with hardly a break through the series of tone poems that many feel represent the genre at its height: *Macbeth* (1886–88), *Don Juan* (1888–89), *Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration)*, also 1888–89), *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche (Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks,*

1894–95), *Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus Spake Zarathustra, 1895–96)*, *Don Quixote* (1896–97), *Ein Heldenleben (A Hero's Life, 1897–98)*, and *Symphonia Domestica* (1902–03). *Eine Alpensymphonie (An Alpine Symphony, 1911–15)* would become a late pendant to Strauss's catalogue of symphonic poems.

As a group, this remarkable series covers quite a spectrum of the human experience. However, *Tod und Verklärung* deals exclusively with serious, metaphysical matters. As Strauss explained some years after the fact, he had set out “to represent the death of a person who had striven for the highest and most ideal goals, possibly an artist.” This was an evolved choice for the basis of a symphonic poem, since the genre was understood to be a musical interpretation of a pre-existent literary work or perhaps a painting. In this case, Strauss worked from a general idea. Nonetheless, after he had composed the

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### In Short

**Born:** June 11, 1864, in Munich, Germany

**Died:** September 8, 1949, in Garmisch-Partenkirchen

**Work composed:** 1888–89, completed on November 18 of the latter year

**World premiere:** June 21, 1890, at the Eisenach Stadttheater in Germany, with the composer conducting

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** January 9, 1892, Anton Seidl, conductor; this marked the work's US Premiere

**Most recent New York Philharmonic performance:** February 21, 2015, Alan Gilbert, conductor

**Estimated duration:** ca. 26 minutes

piece, an appropriate poem was supplied retroactively by none other than Alexander Ritter. The poem was printed in the program for the premiere, and then expanded for the published score. Ritter was apparently a better musician than poet, and in its ultimate version his long-winded text rather overstays its welcome.

The progress of the action is quite clear for those who care to approach the work that way. In 1895 Strauss acquiesced to a friend's request to provide an explanation of the piece's action:

The sick man lies in a bed asleep, breathing heavily and irregularly;

agreeable dreams charm a smile onto his features in spite of his suffering; his sleep becomes lighter; he awakens; once again he is racked by terrible pain, his limbs shake with fever — as the attack draws to a close and the pain resumes, the fruit of his path through life appears to him, the idea, the Ideal which he has tried to realize, to represent in his art, but which he has been unable to perfect because it was not for any human being to perfect it. The hour of death approaches, the soul leaves the body, in order to find perfected in the most glorious form in the eternal cosmos that which he could not fulfill here on earth.

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## The Work at a Glance

The episodes Strauss described in his précis of *Tod und Verklärung* are divided into four broad sections: the sick man and his dreams (*Largo*); the man's struggle with death (*Allegro molto agitato*); the man seeing his life pass before him and giving himself over to death (*Meno mosso, ma sempre alla breve*); and the man's redemption and transfiguration (*Moderato*). The tableaux are depicted with considerable subtlety. In the opening sections, for example, irregular breathing is represented by gentle syncopations, and pain is portrayed through an agitated orchestral outburst. The famous "Artistic Ideal" theme (see sidebar, page 26) certainly possesses great nobility, and its octave leap is a Straussian fingerprint already at this early point in his career. But it is not necessary to follow the "plot" of *Tod und Verklärung* slavishly — or at all — in order to appreciate the piece. It would stand on its own perfectly well as a piece of non-programmatic music; Strauss himself stated at one point that the real reason he composed *Tod und Verklärung* was a "musical need ... to write a piece that begins in C minor and ends in C major" — which is precisely what he did.



Richard Strauss, 1888

**Instrumentation:** three flutes, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, tam-tam, two harps, and strings.

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

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## Listen for ... the Artistic Ideal

Strauss remained fond of his early tone poem *Death and Transfiguration* throughout his career. In fact, he quoted from it in several of his later works, including the song cycle *Krämerspiegel* (1918) and, most magically, the song "Im Abendrot" (1946–48) from the *Four Last Songs*, where the horn sounds the "Artistic Ideal" motif when the singer wonders, "Can this perhaps be death?" In *Death and Transfiguration* the theme is sounded together by first horn, third trumpet, two trombones, violas, and cellos:



In the context of the *Four Last Songs*, Strauss suggested that the moment represented not just death but also transfiguration, and he felt moreover that his musical theme held up well for the purpose, even though it had been composed almost six decades earlier. He stood by his representation: in the summer of 1949, on his deathbed, he declared to his daughter-in-law, "It's a funny thing to say, but this business of dying, it's just the way I composed it in *Tod und Verklärung*."

# Piano Concerto in G major

Maurice Ravel

**M**aurice Ravel composed both of his piano concertos more or less simultaneously from 1929 to 1931: the Concerto in D major for Piano Left-Hand and Orchestra (1929–30) and the Concerto in G major for Piano “Both-Hands” and Orchestra (1929–31). As early as 1906, he reported that he had begun sketching a piano concerto on Basque themes, provisionally titled *Zazpiak-Bat*, and in 1913 he informed his friend Igor Stravinsky that he was refocusing his attention on it. But in late 1914 Ravel, by then installed in the south of France due to the disruptions of World War I, wrote to his student and colleague Roland-Manuel that he had to give up work on the piece since he had left his sketches behind in Paris. And that was the end of it, except that some material from the project was reworked when Ravel came to write his G-major Piano Concerto.

The pianist Marguerite Long (a notable interpreter of music by Fauré and Debussy, as well as Ravel) recalled a gathering sometime in the 1920s:

One day at a dinner in the house of Mme. de Saint-Marceaux, whose salon, according to Colette, was “a citadel of artistic intimacy,” Ravel said to me point-blank: “I am composing a concerto for you. Do you mind if it ends *pianissimo* and with trills?” “Of course not,” I replied, only too happy to realize the dream of all virtuos.

One heard nothing more until 1927, the date of Ravel’s journey to North America.

But after his return a year elapsed before the Concerto was put in hand — doubtless after [Paul] Wittgenstein had commissioned the Concerto for the

Left Hand. Negotiations took place for a first performance of the Concerto in G in Holland, and the Concertgebouw even announced it with the composer as soloist for March 9, 1931.

In fact, Ravel had rather retracted his gift to Marguerite Long and, spurred by the success of his American tour, fixed on the idea of premiering the new concerto himself. But it was not to be. His health was none too good, and, Long continued:

The long hours spent on the *Études* of Chopin and Liszt greatly fatigued him. ... Even when this was evident he still wished to be the first to play his work, and it was only when pressed by his friends ... that he realized the

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## In Short

**Born:** March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées, France

**Died:** December 28, 1937, in Paris

**Work composed:** from 1929 to November 14, 1931, although the first and last movements reportedly drew on material composed in 1914

**World premiere:** January 14, 1932, at the Salle Pleyel in Paris, with the composer conducting the Lamoureux Orchestra, Marguerite Long (the work’s dedicatee), soloist

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** December 7, 1933, Bruno Walter, conductor, Harold Bauer, soloist

**Most recent New York Philharmonic performance:** November 26, 2022, Stéphane Denève, conductor, Víkingur Ólafsson, soloist

**Estimated duration:** ca. 21 minutes

difficulties confronting him in this formidable undertaking.

It can be understood how I was seized with agitation when on November 11, 1931, Ravel telephoned from Monfort l'Amaury announcing his immediate arrival with the manuscript. I had hardly composed myself when he entered holding out the precious pages. Hastily I turned to the last page to look for the *pianissimo* and the trills: they had become *fortissimo* and percussive ninths!

When he described this concerto to his friend the critic M.D. Calvocoressi, Ravel called it “a concerto in the truest sense of the word: I mean that it is written very much in the same spirit as those of Mozart and Saint-Saëns.” He continued:

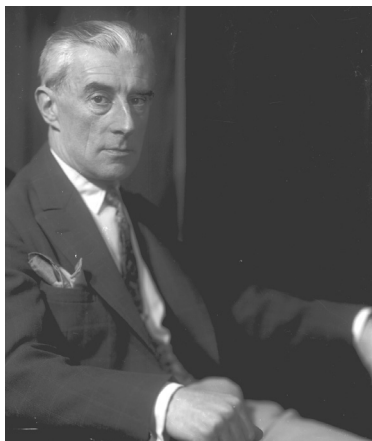
The music of a concerto should, in my opinion, be lighthearted and brilliant, and not aim at profundity or at dramatic effects. It has been said of certain classics that their concertos were written not “for” but “against” the

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## Ravel as Pianist

Maurice Ravel was seven years old when he was sent off to his first piano lessons, and five or six years later he began producing his earliest compositions, which took the form of variations and even a sonata movement, not surprisingly, for piano. He was admitted to the preparatory piano classes for the Paris Conservatoire and then entered the Conservatoire itself as a piano major. Although he was obviously a capable pianist, he did not display the panache required of a top-flight concert artist at the turn of the century.

Ravel focused on composition, accordingly. Still, the piano remained an essential medium for him. His output of piano music remained steady through 1920, and in addition to music destined originally for that instrument, he translated several of his orchestral pieces into versions for piano solo or piano duet. Even during his successful and demanding tour through the United States and Canada in 1928 he was applauded most enthusiastically as a composer, a bit less warmly as a conductor, and softer still as a pianist. After collaborating with Ravel on the composer's Violin Sonata in New York, the violinist Joseph Szigeti offered a typical assessment:



Ravel, in 1928

Ravel was somewhat nonchalant about his piano-playing; “unconcerned” might better describe his attitude. ... It was as if he said: “What of it, whether we play it a little better, or in a less polished and brilliant fashion? The work is set down, in its definitive form, and that is all that really matters.”

piano. I heartily agree. I had intended to title this concerto “Divertissement.” Then it occurred to me that there was no need to do so because the title “Concerto” should be sufficiently clear.

One may choose to disagree with what Ravel seems to imply about the presumed frothiness of piano concertos of Mozart — perhaps even about those of Saint-Saëns — and, indeed, of his own capacity for profundity, certainly in his Concerto for Piano Left-Hand and also in the *Adagio assai* of the G-major Concerto.

**Instrumentation:** flute and piccolo, oboe and English horn, clarinet and E-flat clarinet, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, trombone, timpani, triangle, snare drum, cymbals, bass drum, tam-tam, wood block, slapstick, harp, and strings, in addition to the solo piano.

— J.M.K.

Ravel’s Piano Concerto in G major is presented under license from Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., copyright owners.

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## The NY Phil Connection: Maurice, George, and Jazz

Ravel’s Piano Concerto in G major demonstrates the influence of jazz. While the genre was popular in Paris, the composer may have most fully absorbed its rhythms during his tour of America in 1928, the height of the Jazz Age. Ravel was in New York City for his 53rd birthday on March 7 — preparing for a concert of his works that he would conduct the next day with the New York Symphony (which merged that year with the New York Philharmonic to form today’s Orchestra) — when he was fêted at a party hosted by Canadian soprano Éva Gauthier. Ravel’s main request for the fest was to meet George Gershwin, and to hear him play *Rhapsody in Blue*. In a remembrance of Ravel, published in *The New York Times* in 1938, Gauthier recalled:

It was a memorable evening. George that night surpassed himself, achieving astounding feats in rhythmic intricacies, so that even Ravel was dumbfounded. George was very keen to study with Ravel, but the Frenchman’s answer was “that you might lose that great melodic spontaneity and write bad Ravel.”

Gershwin reportedly settled for a trip to Harlem with Ravel, introducing the visitor to its celebrated jazz nightclubs and performers. The Frenchman then continued his immersion in American jazz on a tour stop in New Orleans before heading home and composing this piano concerto.

— The Editors



Ravel, at the piano, with Éva Gauthier and birthday party guests including George Gershwin, far right

## Le Poème de l'extase (The Poem of Ecstasy), Op. 54

### Alexander Scriabin

The operative word here is “ecstasy”: not the recreational pharmaceutical but a potent narcotic nonetheless. It comes as no surprise to recall that, at least in the United States, the music of Alexander Scriabin ascended to newfound popularity in the 1960s and early '70s, swept to public consciousness (or semi-consciousness) on a tide of hallucinogenic drugs. “Scriabin’s music sounds like I think — sometimes,” Henry Miller had written, presciently, in his 1959 novel *Nexus*:

Has that far-off cosmic itch. Divinely fouled up. All fire and air. The first time I heard it I played it over and over. Couldn't shut it off. It was like a bath of ice, cocaine, and rainbows.

As a teenager, Scriabin studied piano and composition alongside his lifelong friend Sergei Rachmaninoff, and when he was 16 he entered the Moscow Conservatory to study music theory and composition with Sergei Taneyev (who championed him) and Anton Arensky (who had doubts). He met with limited success in his composition studies, but he did graduate in 1892 with a second-place medal in piano — no dishonor in that, since Rachmaninoff took first. By all accounts, Scriabin was an excellent but not quite topnotch performer, limited by the fact that, as he had diminutive physical stature (peaking at five-foot-one), his hand spanned only an octave — not to mention that his righthand technique had been impaired by overzealous practice of virtuoso works by Balakirev and Liszt.

*Le Poème de l'extase* is big in that it requires an orchestra of large proportions, but it's not a long piece, with its

single movement lasting a little over 20 minutes. It surges through that span with a rarely relenting sense of extended yearning that seems sprung from the fount of *Tristan and Isolde* and that culminates in a dazzling, transcendent release. But to say that is possibly to project an unwarranted interpretation on a piece whose aspirations were exclusively lofty, or at least were so expressed in a program note, surely by the composer, that accompanied a performance in Moscow shortly after the Russian premiere — one shared with the admonition that anyone reading it at all might as well commit to reading it several times through:

*Le Poème de l'extase* is the Joy of Liberated Action. The Cosmos, i.e. Spirit, is Eternal Creation without External Motivation, a Divine Play with Worlds. The Creative Spirit, i.e. the Universe at Play,

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### In Short

**Born:** January 6, 1872, in Moscow, Russia

**Died:** April 27, 1915, in Moscow

**Work composed:** begun in June 1905 and finished in the spring of 1907; orchestration revised later that summer

**World premiere:** December 10, 1908, in New York City, by the Russian Symphony Society, Modest Altschuler, conductor

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** January 2, 1921, with Albert Coates conducting the New York Symphony (which would merge with the New York Philharmonic in 1928)

**Most recent New York Philharmonic performance:** March 10, 2020, Louis Langrée, conductor

**Estimated duration:** ca. 24 minutes

is not conscious of the Absoluteness of its creativeness, having subordinated itself to a Finality and made creativity a means towards an end. The stronger the pulse-beat of life and the more the precipitation of rhythms, the more clearly the awareness comes to the Spirit that it is consubstantial with creativity, immanent within itself, and that its life is a play. When the Spirit has attained the supreme culmination of its activity and has been torn away from the embraces of teleology and relativity, when it has exhausted completely its substance and its liberated active energy, the Time of Ecstasy shall then arrive.

“When you listen to *Ecstasy*,” Scriabin told his friend Ivan Lipaev, “look

straight into the eye of the sun!” After hearing *Le Poème de l’extase* in 1909, the composer Sergei Prokofiev tendered this reasoned response:

Both the harmonic and the thematic material, and the voice-leading in the counterpoint, were completely new. Basically, Scriabin was trying to find new foundations for harmony. The principles he discovered were very interesting, but in proportion to their complexity they were like a stone tied to Scriabin’s neck, hindering his invention as regards melody and (chiefly) the movement of voices. Nonetheless, *Le Poème de l’extase* was probably his most successful work, since all the elements in his manner of composing

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## Changing Fortunes

Scriabin’s ultra-romantic stance of Composer-as-Visionary began to sit uneasily as the Soviet system settled in, and in 1931 Dmitri Shostakovich condemned Scriabin’s style for its “unhealthy eroticism” and its “mysticism, passivity, and a flight from the reality of life” — though, of course, his assessment must be considered in light of the stringently enforced political correctness of his time.

Eventually Scriabin returned to a place of honor among Russian composers, even before the Soviet era was out. When cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person to circle the planet in outer space, on April 12, 1961, All-Union Soviet Radio beamed *Le Poème de l’extase* into the universe as an emphatic and hopeful accompaniment. When Gagarin returned to Earth, he was greeted with a triumphant celebration in Red Square three days later, and again it was the music of Scriabin that blared forth.



Yuri Gagarin

were apparently balanced. But it was hard to imagine, at first hearing, just what he was trying to do.

and contrabassoon, eight horns, five trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, chimes, tam-tam, triangle, orchestra bells, two harps, celesta, organ, and strings.

**Instrumentation:** three flutes and piccolo, three oboes and English horn, three clarinets and bass clarinet, three bassoons

— J.M.K.

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## Sources and Inspirations

Scriabin often jotted down his flashes of inspiration in notebooks. In one volume he began to inscribe the seemingly endless *Poema extaza* (*The Poem of Ecstasy*), which would become the aesthetic basis for not only *Le Poème de l'extase* but also his Piano Sonata No. 5:

The Spirit  
Winged by the thirst for life,  
Takes flight  
On the heights of negation.  
There in the rays of his dream  
Arises a magic world  
Of marvelous images and feelings.  
    The Spirit playing.  
    The Spirit longing.  
The Spirit with fancy creating all,  
Surrenders himself to the bliss of love. ...  
I call you to life, mysterious forces!  
Drowned in the obscure depths  
Of the creative spirit, timid  
Embryos of life, to you I bring audacity! ...



Scriabin, in 1905

# New York Philharmonic

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2023–2024 SEASON

**JAAP VAN ZWEDEN**, *Music Director*

**Leonard Bernstein**, *Laureate Conductor, 1943–1990*

**Kurt Masur**, *Music Director Emeritus, 1991–2015*

## VIOLINS

Frank Huang  
*Concertmaster*  
*The Charles E. Culpeper Chair*

Sheryl Staples  
*Principal Associate*  
*Concertmaster*  
*The Elizabeth G. Beinecke Chair*

Michelle Kim  
*Assistant Concertmaster*  
*The William Petschek Family*  
*Chair*

Quan Ge

Hae-Young Ham  
*The Mr. and Mrs. Timothy M.*  
*George Chair*

Lisa GiHae Kim

Kuan Cheng Lu

Kerry McDermott

Su Hyun Park

Anna Rabinova

Fiona Simon  
*The Shirley Bacot*  
*Shamek Chair*

Sharon Yamada

Elizabeth Zeltser+  
*The William and Elfriede*  
*Ulrich Chair*

Yulia Ziskel  
*The Friends and Patrons*  
*Chair*

Qianqian Li  
*Principal*

Lisa Eunsoo Kim\*  
*In Memory of Laura*  
*Mitchell*

Soohyun Kwon  
*The Joan and Joel I. Pickett*  
*Chair*

Duoming Ba

Hannah Choi  
  
*The Sue and Eugene Mercy, Jr.*  
*Chair*

I-Jung Huang

Dasol Jeong

Alina Kobialka

Hyunju Lee

Kyung Ji Min

Marié Schwalbach

Na Sun  
*The Gary W. Parr Chair*

Audrey Wright

Jin Suk Yu

Andi Zhang

## VIOLAS

Cynthia Phelps  
*Principal*  
*The Mr. and Mrs. Frederick P.*  
*Rose Chair*

Rebecca Young\*  
*The Joan and Joel Smilow*  
*Chair*

Cong Wu\*\*  
*The Norma and Lloyd*  
*Chazen Chair*

Dorian Rence

Sofia Basile  
Leah Ferguson  
Katherine Greene  
*The Mr. and Mrs. William J.*  
*McDonough Chair*

Vivek Kamath

Peter Kenote

Kenneth Mirkin

Tabitha Rhee

Robert Rinehart  
*The Mr. and Mrs. G. Chris*  
*Andersen Chair*

## CELLOS

Carter Brey  
*Principal*  
*The Fan Fox and Leslie R.*  
*Samuels Chair*

Matthew Christakos\*  
*The Paul and Diane*  
*Guenther Chair*

Patrick Jee

Elizabeth Dyson  
*The Mr. and Mrs. James E.*  
*Buckman Chair*

Alexei Yupanqui  
Gonzales

Maria Kitsopoulos  
*The Secular Society Chair*

Sumire Kudo

Qiang Tu

Nathan Vickery

Ru-Pei Yeh  
*The Credit Suisse Chair*  
*in honor of Paul Caello*

## BASSES

Timothy Cobb  
*Principal*

Max Zeugner\*  
*The Herbert M. Citrin*  
*Chair*

Blake Hinson\*\*

Satoshi Okamoto

Randall Butler  
*The Ludmila S. and Carl B.*  
*Hess Chair*

David J. Grossman

Isaac Trapkus

Rion Wentworth

## FLUTES

Robert Langevin  
*Principal*  
*The Lila Acheson Wallace*  
*Chair*

Alison Fierst\*

Yoobin Son

Mindy Kaufman  
*The Edward and Priscilla*  
*Pilcher Chair*

## PICCOLO

Mindy Kaufman

## OBOES

Liang Wang  
*Principal*  
*The Alice Tully Chair*

Shery Sylar\*

Robert Botti  
*The Lizabeth and Frank*  
*Newman Chair*

Ryan Roberts

## ENGLISH HORN

Ryan Roberts

## CLARINETS

Anthony McGill  
*Principal*  
*The Edna and W. Van Alan*  
*Clark Chair*

Benjamin Adler\*

Pascual Martínez  
Forteza  
*The Honey M. Kurtz Family*  
*Chair*

Barret Ham

## E-FLAT CLARINET

Benjamin Adler

(Continued)

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Instruments made possible, in part, by **The Richard S. and Karen LeFrak Endowment Fund**.

The Digital Organ is made possible by **Ronnie P. Ackman and Lawrence D. Ackman**.

**Steinway** is the Official Piano of the New York Philharmonic and David Geffen Hall.

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**BASS CLARINET**

Barret Ham

**BASSOONS**

Judith LeClair

*Principal*

*The Pels Family Chair*

Julian Gonzalez\*

Roger Nye

*The Rosalind Miranda Chair*

*in memory of Shirley and*

*Bill Cohen*

**CONTRABASSOON**

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**HORNS**

Rebekah Daley++

*Guest Principal*

Richard Deane\*

R. Allen Spanjer

*The Rosalind Miranda Chair*

Leelanee Sterrett

Tanner West

*The Ruth F. and Alan J. Broder*

*Chair*

**TRUMPETS**

Christopher Martin

*Principal*

*The Paula Levin Chair*

Matthew Muckey\*

Ethan Bensdorf

Thomas Smith

**TROMBONES**

Joseph Alessi

*Principal*

*The Gurnee F. and Marjorie L.*

*Hart Chair*

Colin Williams\*

David Finlayson

*The Donna and Benjamin M.*

*Rosen Chair*

**BASS TROMBONE**

George Curran

*The Daria L. and William C.*

*Foster Chair*

**TUBA**

Alan Baer

*Principal*

**TIMPANI**

Markus Rhoten

*Principal*

*The Carlos Moseley Chair*

Kyle Zerna\*\*

**PERCUSSION**

Christopher S. Lamb

*Principal*

*The Constance R. Hoguet*

*Friends of the Philharmonic*

*Chair*

Daniel Druckman\*

*The Mr. and Mrs. Ronald J.*

*Ulrich Chair*

Kyle Zerna

**HARP**

Nancy Allen

*Principal*

**KEYBOARD**

*In Memory of Paul Jacobs*

**HARPSICHORD**

Paolo Bordignon

**PIANO**

Eric Huebner

*The Anna-Maria and*

*Stephen Kellen Piano Chair*

**ORGAN**

Kent Trittle

**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

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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.

## The Artists



Internationally acclaimed for her emotionally charged performances, technical command, and interpretive depth, **Karina Canellakis** has become one of

the most in-demand conductors of her generation. She is the chief conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and the principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. This season she serves as the featured artist-in-residence at Vienna's famed Musikverein, where she conducts four different orchestras: the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic. The first woman to conduct the First Night of the BBC Proms in London, in 2019 with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, she returned to the Proms in 2022. She was also the first woman to conduct the Nobel Prize Concert with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic in 2018.

In addition to her New York Philharmonic debut, Canellakis's 2023–24 guest appearances include return engagements with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, and NDR Elbphilharmonie. Following last season's tour of Germany with the London Philharmonic and pianist Daniil Trifonov, she again leads that orchestra on tour. Highlights with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic include a concert performance of Wagner's *Siegfried* as part of the prestigious Zaterdag Matinee series. After the successes of *Kat'a Kabánova* and *The Cunning Little*

*Vixen* with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, she continues her series of Janáček operas with *The Makropulos Case*. She conducts Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* for Santa Fe Opera in summer 2024.

April 2023 marked the start of a multi-album collaboration among Canellakis, the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic (RFO), and Pentatone with their debut release, *Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra and Four Orchestral Pieces*. She and the RFO were also featured artists for the launch of Apple Music Classical in a recording of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 with Alice Sara Ott.

Already known in the classical music world for her virtuoso violin playing, Karina Canellakis was initially encouraged to pursue conducting by Simon Rattle while she was playing regularly in the Berlin Philharmonic for two years as a member of its Orchester-Akademie. She performed for many years as a soloist, guest leader, and chamber musician, spending her summers at the Marlboro Music Festival, until conducting became her focus. Canellakis was born and raised in New York City.



One of classical music's most creative minds, in the 2023–24 season pianist **Alice Sara Ott** appears as artist-in-residence at London's Southbank Centre and Paris's Radio France.

She also tours with London Symphony Orchestra and Antonio Pappano, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Kazuki Yamada. She makes her New York Philharmonic debut performing Ravel's

G major Concerto, conducted by Karina Canellakis. Ott also premieres Bryce Dessner's Piano Concerto with the Tonhalle Zurich Orchestra and Kent Nagano, before performing it with ensembles including London's Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, and Deutsches Sinfonieorchester Berlin.

Ott's major album releases this season include *Beethoven* and *Echoes of Life Deluxe*, a follow-up to *Echoes of Life*, her successful tenth album on the Deutsche Grammophon label that was built around Chopin's Preludes, Op. 28, and features works by the likes of Chilly Gonzales, Francesco Tristano, Arvo Pärt, and György Ligeti in an affecting and original

collaboration with architect Hakan Demirel. The *Beethoven* project — in partnership with Canellakis and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra — was born as a collaboration with Apple Music; Ott was the face of Apple Music's global advertising. In 2023–24 Ott takes *Echoes of Life* on an extensive Asia tour, with appearances in China, Hong Kong, and Japan. A digital video installation accompanying the recital takes the audience on their own virtual journey to create a unique concert experience.

*Beethoven* and *Echoes of Life Deluxe* follow seminal albums such as *Nightfall*, *Wonderland*, and *The Chopin Project*, taking her total number of album streams to over 370 million.

# Jaap van Zweden and the New York Philharmonic



**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 through performances with Principal players as concerto soloists, and 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 Seoul Philharmonic and will assume that role at Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in 2026, having recently concluded his 12-year tenure at the Hong Kong Philharmonic. 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

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### Order Tickets and Subscribe

Order tickets online at [nyphil.org](http://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.

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### For the Enjoyment of All

**Latecomers** and patrons who leave the hall will be seated only after the completion of a work.

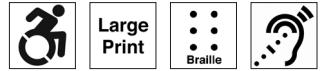
**Silence** all cell phones and other electronic devices throughout the performance.

**Photography**, sound recording, or videotaping of performances is prohibited.

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### Accessibility

#### David Geffen Hall



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

**Braille & Large-Print** versions of print programs are available at 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](http://lincolncenter.org/visit/accessibility).

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### For Your Safety

For the latest on the **New York Philharmonic's health and safety guidelines** visit [nyphil.org/safety](http://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.

# Spring



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# Gala

WITH GUSTAVO DUDAMEL  
A Celebration of Music Education

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**Wednesday, April 24, 2024**

*For more information or to support the Spring Gala, please contact the Office of Special Events  
at [specialevents@nyphil.org](mailto:specialevents@nyphil.org) or (646) 870-4054.*

# Support the Education Fund

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INSPIRE A LIFELONG LOVE OF MUSIC.

**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**.

Your support helps us leverage the many wonders of our art form to engage students, foster communities, and cultivate the next generation of music lovers.

Play your part by making a gift to the Education Fund today.

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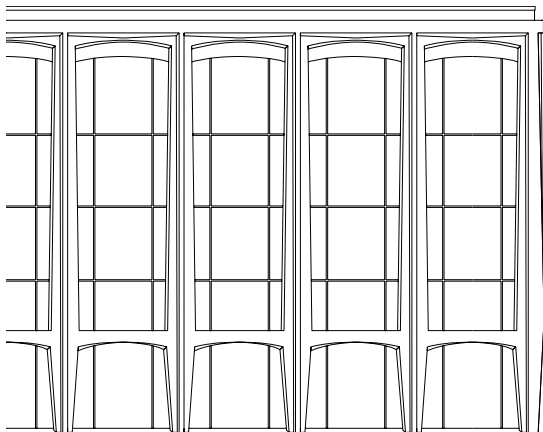
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# Young People's Concerts™

AT  
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**Come back for more fun with music!**

## **COMPOSING INCLUSION | APRIL 20**

Featuring students from the Juilliard Pre-College Orchestra, this concert will celebrate the creativity of young musicians with newly commissioned works for professional and youth orchestras. Conducted by Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser.

## **CELEBRATION | MAY 4**

Cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason joins the Orchestra for a madcap exploration of how composers have used humor to comment on important issues of their day. Conducted by Kwamé Ryan.

Doug Fitch is the director and stage designer for *Composing Inclusion* and *Celebration*.

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**NYPHIL.ORG/YPC | 212.875.5656**

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Lead support for Young People's Concerts is provided by **Evalyn E. and Stephen E. Milman**. Major support for Young People's Concerts is provided by the **Tiger Baron Foundation**. Support for Young People's Concerts is provided by **The Theodore H. Barth Foundation and The Brodsky Family Foundation**. Conductors, soloists, programs, prices, and sale dates are correct at the date of printing and are subject to change. © 2024 New York Philharmonic. All rights reserved. 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. Photos by Chris Lee.