



**GUSTAVO DUDAMEL**

OSCAR L. TANG AND H.M. AGNES HSU-TANG  
MUSIC AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE

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

**2025–26 Season Sponsored by  
Leni and Peter May**

Friday, February 27, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 28, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 1, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

**Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Conductor**  
**Emanuel Ax, Piano**

This program will last approximately two hours,  
which includes one intermission.

Generous support for Emanuel Ax's  
appearances is provided by  
**The Donna and Marvin Schwartz  
Virtuoso Piano Performance Series.**

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**  
(1872–1958)

***Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis***  
(1910; rev. 1913 / 1919)

**John WILLIAMS**  
(b. 1932)

**Concerto for Piano and Orchestra**  
(2025; New York Premiere)  
Colloquy (Art Tatum)  
Listening (Bill Evans)  
Finale. Presto (Oscar Peterson)  
  
EMANUEL AX

**Intermission**

**M. WEINBERG**  
(1919–96)

**Symphony No. 5 in F minor, Op. 76** (1962)  
I. Allegro moderato  
II. Adagio sostenuto  
III. Allegro  
IV. Andantino

(There is no pause between the third  
and fourth movements.)

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

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In consideration of the performers and audience, please silence your devices, and take photos and video only during applause.

## GUSTAVO DUDAMEL, *Music & Artistic Director Designate*

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Ryan Roberts+

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Pascual Martínez

Forteza  
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Barret Ham

### E-FLAT CLARINET

Benjamin Adler

### BASS CLARINET

Barret Ham

(Continued)

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

**HONORARY  
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Deborah Borda

Zubin Mehta

Leonard Bernstein

*Laureate Conductor,  
1943–1990*

Kurt Masur

*Music Director Emeritus,  
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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.

# Notes on the Program

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## *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*

### Ralph Vaughan Williams

**F***antasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, which is among Ralph (pronounced “Rafe”) Vaughan Williams’s most widely performed compositions, is a splendid entry point to the large, wide-ranging, truly extraordinary oeuvre of its composer. It encapsulates many of the hallmarks of his style: exquisite sensitivity to instrumental sonority, veneration of ancient tradition, nobility of spirit, and a sense of soaring effortlessly through some sublime ether that is as much attached to heaven as it is to earth.

Vaughan Williams was 38 years old when he wrote the *Fantasia*, and although he was respected within musical circles, he had not achieved what could honestly be called fame. He had received a thorough musical education at the Royal College of Music and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was especially drawn to playing the organ. He continued sharpening his skills as a composer by traveling to work with Max Bruch in Berlin and with Maurice Ravel in Paris (this last at the age of 35). His early compositions — and anything he wrote before about 1910 qualifies as early in what would prove an exceptionally long career — often suggested a mystical, visionary style, as in his *Toward the Unknown Region* (1905–06) and *A Sea Symphony* (1906–08). In addition, he had gotten involved with the collecting of folk songs (working closely with the musicologist Cecil Sharp) and with the exploration of English music from the Renaissance and Baroque, which was far less known then than it is today.

In 1904 Vaughan Williams was invited to

edit a new iteration of *The English Hymnal*. Although he protested that he knew rather little about hymns, the composer was intrigued by the project and happily took it on. He established what he felt were historically correct texts of the volume’s hymns, culled numerous pieces he considered musically inferior, and even wrote a few new melodies himself (attributing them to Anonymous).

Among the tunes that Vaughan Williams included in the hymnal was the so-called *Third Mode Melody*, a composition by Thomas Tallis (ca. 1505–85) that had first appeared in a 1567 psalter. That psalter, assembled by Archbishop Matthew Parker, was organized according to the modes of its melodies — the traditional melodic-harmonic game plans that governed music before the rise of modern major-minor tonality. The Third (or

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## In Short

**Born:** October 12, 1872, in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, England

**Died:** August 26, 1958, in London

**Work composed:** summer 1910; revised 1913 and 1919

**World premiere:** September 6, 1910, with the composer conducting the London Symphony Orchestra at the Three Choirs Festival, in Gloucester Cathedral

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** March 9, 1922, with Walter Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony (a New York Philharmonic forebear)

**Estimated duration:** ca. 15 minutes

Phrygian) Mode is most easily explained as the pattern one hears playing the white keys of a keyboard from E to an E an octave higher or lower. In his psalter, Parker had characterized the mode thus: “the Third doth rage: and roughly brayth.”

The melody stuck in Vaughan Williams’s mind, and in the summer of 1910 it provided the basis for his *Fantasia*. (He revised it in 1913 and again in 1919.) He led the premiere on September 6, 1910, at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester Cathedral, with the London Symphony Orchestra, as a program opener for a performance of Elgar’s oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius*.

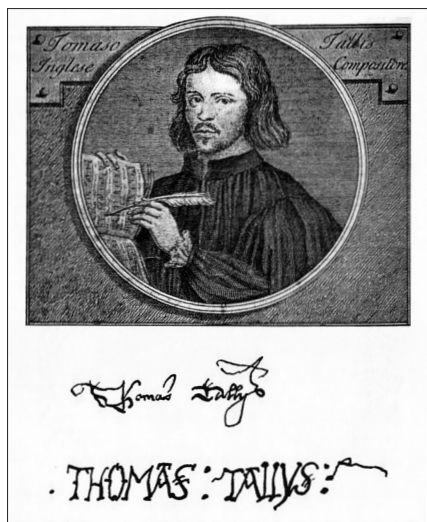
The work is scored for strings only, grouped imaginatively as a double string orchestra and a solo string quartet. Tallis’s theme is first suggested through the pizzicato violas, cellos, and basses, and

before long it is given out in its entirety (with the harmonies just as Tallis wrote them) by second violins, violas, and half the cellos. Its melody and harmonies are explored exhaustively as the piece slowly evolves in a spirit of rapt meditation. One can only imagine the effect it made on listeners who had never heard it before as it unrolled for the first time in the vast Norman expanses of Gloucester Cathedral.

**Instrumentation:** two string orchestras and a “solo ensemble” consisting of two violins, viola, and cello.

— James M. Keller is a former New York Philharmonic Program Annotator and the author of *Chamber Music: A Listener’s Guide* (Oxford University Press).

## Sources and Inspirations



Posthumous portrait of Thomas Tallis, by Gerard Vandergucht, combined with his signature, signed as “Tallys”

Thomas Tallis’s career as a composer of church music reflected the great upheavals of the Reformation in England, as his work for the royal court required him to adapt to the wills and religious practices of succeeding Tudor monarchs.

Tallis became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1542, serving under Henry VIII, whose marital travails prompted his break from Rome and formation of the Church of England. Edward VI (Henry’s son with his third wife, Jane Seymour) was the first English ruler raised as a Protestant, and Tallis became adept at setting sacred text in English during that monarch’s brief reign (from age 10 to his death at 15).

The composer reverted to using more traditional Latin settings under subsequent efforts by Queen Mary I (Henry’s daughter with his first wife, Catherine of Aragon) to restore England to Catholicism, and he ended his career blending musical traditions under the more lenient religious rule of the Protestant Queen Elizabeth I (Henry’s daughter with his second wife, Anne Boleyn).

— The Editors

# Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

## John Williams

John Williams has done more than any other composer to unite classical music and film music. Most listeners associate him with the latter, but he is a formidable symphonic composer, especially of concertos. He has written a bassoon concerto for New York Philharmonic Principal Bassoon Judith LeClair and two cello concertos for Yo-Yo Ma, and others for horn, trumpet, violin, viola, harp, flute, clarinet, tuba, cello, and oboe. Williams has said he values “association with the soloists, the wonderful inspiration from players,” and the work heard in this concert is the product of his long admiration for pianist Emanuel Ax.

The extent to which Williams’s music has entered our bloodstream is mind-boggling. His career began more than five decades ago, with scores for *Wagon Train*, *The Poseidon Adventure*, and *The Long Goodbye*. It grew to include the *Indiana Jones*, *Harry Potter*, *Home Alone*, *Star Wars*, and *Jurassic Park* franchises, and includes a half-century partnership with Steven Spielberg, with iconic scores for *Jaws*, *E.T.*, and *Schindler’s List*. (The haunting violin solo in the last came to him while improvising at the piano with the eminent violinist Itzhak Perlman, another score inspired by a specific soloist.)

William’s attitude toward his art is paradoxical and self-deprecating. “What little I may have done,” he says, “will probably rest in the area of film music. I write concert music mostly for my own instruction and edification, and even some small degree of pleasure.” He is Hollywood’s premier composer, but he doesn’t go to movies, and besides his admiration for Bernard Herrmann (especially the hypnotic score for *Vertigo*), he

is not a fan of most movie music. Even as a child, Williams preferred radio, which allowed him to construct images in his own imagination, an approach that may explain why his film music is uniquely original and imaginative. He didn’t plan to be a film composer, and points out that many of his predecessors didn’t either: “Our careers are as much what happens to us as what we plan to do. For Korngold, if it hadn’t been for Mr. Hitler, he never would have come over here and probably never would have done film music.”

Williams’s conducting career — he was music director of the Boston Pops from 1980 to 1993 and has guest-conducted extensively — was also unplanned. Originally, he picked up the baton “in self-defense” against studio music directors who didn’t know the score as well as he. He came to be admired by many conductors, notably Gustavo Dudamel, the NY Phil’s Tang Music & Artistic Director Designate, who has idolized Williams since his childhood love for *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, and *Indiana Jones*. “He has a special creativity,”

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### In Short

**Born:** February 8, 1932, in Flushing, Queens, New York

**Resides:** in Los Angeles, California

**Work composed:** 2025

**World premiere:** July 26, 2025, at Tanglewood, by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Andris Nelsons, conductor, Emanuel Ax, soloist

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** these performances, which mark its New York Premiere

**Estimated duration:** ca. 20 minutes

Dudamel says, “and he works with incredible speed. He created an *Adagio* based on the score for the new *Star Wars* film in one night, and we played it the next day. He is the Mozart of our day.”

Williams’s Piano Concerto references three great jazz composers — Art Tatum, Bill Evans, and Oscar Peterson — reflecting his deep jazz background, beginning with his father, a jazz percussionist.

Williams himself played jazz piano professionally in the 1950s in New York; after moving to California he was a studio pianist for films such as *Some Like It Hot* and *West Side Story*. Many Williams melodies are jazzy: the cantina scene in *Star Wars*, the bluesy flute in *Sugarland Express*, the bebop saxophone in *Catch Me If You Can*, the klezmer-inflected clarinet in *The Terminal*.

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## The Work at a Glance

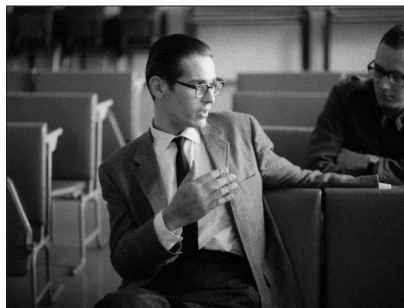


The impetus for John Williams’s Piano Concerto comes from his memories of three jazz giants: the massive cadenzas and cascading figurations of Art Tatum in the first movement, the wistful refinement of Bill Evans in the second, and the muscular excitement of Oscar Peterson in the finale. The sound world is entirely its own: unlike Korngold, Williams does not crib from his film scores in his symphonic music.

This is a classical concerto in the traditional, three-movement format. The first movement has two imposing cadenzas; indeed, the entire movement has an improvisatory, cadenza-like vibe. The orchestration is distinctive, beginning with mysterious lower strings that return at the end, a percussion-studded motoric theme, and a soaring brass motif. The pianist showers cascades of notes up and down the keyboard throughout the movement, then has the last, whispered word.

The lyrical second movement, marked “dreamily,” opens with an eloquent viola solo, followed by a wistful theme for orchestra and rippling piano, which continues with gentle chords and harp-like figurations. At the end, repeated piano notes disappear into an impressionist mist.

Timpani crash in rudely for the toccata-like finale, which is relentless and snarling, with majestic brass, sizzling strings, and tingling percussion. A pensive piano solo slows things down in the middle, then the music builds in intensity, introducing another virtuosic cadenza, after which the timpani and piano pound toward a rousing coda.



From top: Art Tatum, 1948; Bill Evans, 1964; Oscar Peterson, 1959

## In the Composer's Words

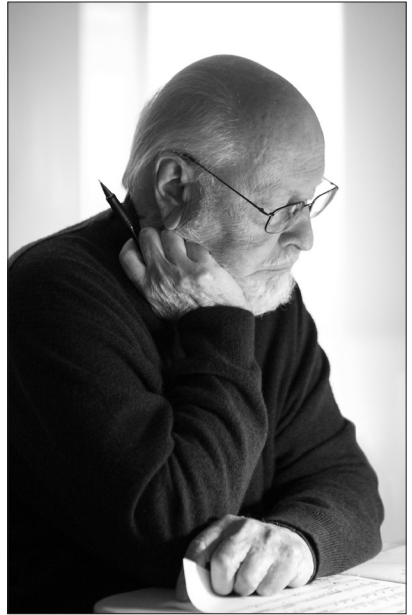
Composing a piano concerto was, for me, particularly challenging given the enormous canon of rich and diverse piano and orchestral masterworks created over the past centuries. Although my effort here is not a jazz piece per se, much of the impetus to write it down has been my memory of the particular "sound" produced by three legendary jazz pianists. Past this simple concept, the music is in no way an attempt to serve as a portrait of each of these artists, but merely to suggest and remember the unique artistic personalities of three men who greatly inspired me along with so many other lovers of the piano around the world.

Firstly, Art Tatum. When I was 15 or 16 years old, I remember a scene in a Los Angeles jazz club which welcomed underaged patrons providing they didn't drink. I saw a large man who was clearly not sighted being carefully guided to his place at the piano. The lights were turned down so as not to offend his eyes. He seemed to be huge. His piano also seemed enormous ... not with the usual 88 keys, but seemingly with 12 additional keys at either end of the keyboard, accommodating his massive reach. The size of his sound was awesome and reminded one of Rachmaninoff. He played three chords, listened, and played them again with an added note or two. He seemed satisfied and then began with a brief cadenza which served as his warm-up. The avalanche of gems that followed could hardly be imagined.

Secondly, Bill Evans. The second movement begins with a viola solo. Why? This may be because Bill was a quiet and very ethereal man who, when he approached the piano, always seemed to be less interested in playing than listening to what the piano may have to tell us. His piano eventually joins the viola, supporting Bill's ethereal mood while further investigations ensue.

Thirdly, tall, handsome Oscar Peterson emerges, looking like an NFL wide receiver on his day off. After a brief salutation from the timpani, he begins with a bristling and famous "bebop" passage composed by whom we do not know but often attributed to Oscar and to the late Phineas Newborn, who possessed a similar technical prowess. It serves as a reminder of Oscar's athletic affinity, which he always displayed with taste and the most graceful control.

I've always so greatly admired pianist Emanuel Ax, who is universally celebrated for his technical brilliance, refined elegance, and great artistic sensibilities. He is also one of the most gracious gentlemen I've had the privilege to know. When I first met Manny years ago, I asked him if in his travels he ever encountered a bad piano. He replied simply, "all pianos are my friends." I had only mentioned to a few friends and associates that I might be interested in writing a work for piano and orchestra. You can imagine my surprise and delight when Manny called me to say, "if you write it, I will play it!" I could not have been more grateful and honored.



*John Williams, in a photo by Lefterisphoto.com*

— John Williams

The composer he admires most is Haydn, whose C-major String Quartet, Op. 64, No. 1, plays serenely through the sinister greenhouse scene in *Minority Report*. Haydn is “one of the all-time great musical talents,” he says. “Without Haydn, we probably wouldn’t have Mozart or Beethoven.” Perhaps there is a more personal resonance: like Haydn, Williams is a household name straddling two centuries, a populist and a meticulous artist, and an astonishingly prolific creator even in his later years. Asked when he plans to retire, Williams expresses happy bewilderment: “You can’t retire from music ... It’s like breathing. It’s your life. It’s my life. And so a day without music is a mistake.”

**Instrumentation:** three flutes (one doubling alto flute and piccolo), two oboes and English horn, three clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet), three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, orchestra bells, xylophone, vibraphones, marimba, triangle, suspended cymbals, tam-tam, tuned drums, bass drum, harp, piano, celesta, and strings, in addition to the solo piano.

— *Jack Sullivan, Emeritus Professor of English at Rider University, is the author of New World Symphonies, Hitchcock’s Music, and New Orleans Remix. He has interviewed and written extensively about John Williams.*

## Symphony No. 5 in F minor, Op. 76

### Mieczysław Weinberg

**T**hirty years after his death, Mieczysław Weinberg is finally recognized as a major composer. A native of Warsaw, Weinberg fled east when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. His parents and sister were murdered by the Nazis, but the young musician managed to escape to the Soviet Union, where he would remain for the rest of his life. After studying at the conservatory of Minsk he was evacuated to Tashkent, in Soviet Uzbekistan, during the war. His early works came to the attention of Dmitri Shostakovich, who made it possible for Weinberg to move to the capital. The two composers became lifelong friends and frequent duo-piano partners, and they dedicated works to one another.

Weinberg composed more than 150 works, including 7 operas, 22 symphonies, and 17 string quartets. The Fifth Symphony may be seen as his response to Shostakovich's Fourth, which was first performed by an orchestra in 1961, 25 years after it was written. Weinberg had long known the symphony; he and Shostakovich had played it through on two pianos for an invited audience as early as 1946. The Fourth is one of Shostakovich's boldest creations, using modernist means to convey a rather bleak artistic vision. That is where Weinberg took his cue (the allusion is particularly clear at the end of the symphony), although he also incorporated lessons learned from Shostakovich's more classically oriented Fifth Symphony.

Weinberg's Fifth was premiered during a period when political repression was relaxed, to a certain extent at least, under the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. The symphony was performed within a

few weeks of the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, a taboo-breaking account of the gulags, and two months before the premiere of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 13, *Babi Yar*, which, like Solzhenitsyn's short novel, was nothing short of a cultural bombshell.

Weinberg's music was performed in the Soviet Union with some frequency by such great artists as Leonid Kogan, Mstislav Rostropovich, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Rudolf Barshai, and the Borodin String Quartet. Yet some of his most important works, such as his Requiem or the opera *The Passenger*, were never heard in the Soviet Union, and the composer remained a somewhat marginal figure in his adopted homeland. He received *some* awards but never the highest ones.

His Polish mother-tongue and his Jewish heritage were always extremely important to Weinberg, who had a particular admiration for the Polish-Jewish poet Julian Tuwim (1894–1953) — his song cycle *Gypsy Bible* (1956) was one of many works inspired by Tuwim's poetry. In a recent study, British musicologist David Fanning observed that the Fifth Symphony

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### In Short

**Born:** December 8, 1919, in Warsaw, Poland

**Died:** February 26, 1996, in Moscow

**Work composed:** 1962, in Moscow; dedicated to Kirill Kondrashin

**World premiere:** October 18, 1962, in Moscow, by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, Kirill Kondrashin, conductor

**New York Philharmonic premiere:** these performances

**Estimated duration:** ca. 45 minutes

contains two quotes from this cycle. The opening movement is based on the first song, *Gypsy Bible*, an elegy for a vanishing world of ancient memories, while the last movement shares its main theme with the final song, *Blind Men*, an affectionate portrait of the sightless. These songs were unpublished and almost certainly unperformed when the symphony was written, so the audience could not have been aware of the connection; the composer was secretly alluding to his love for a homeland.

The four movements of the symphony cover an enormous emotional terrain, running the gamut ranging from eerie, suspenseful moments to violent dramatic outbursts, from comedy to tragedy. The work doesn't have a literary program, but it doesn't need one. The words of author Ilya Ehrenburg, written after the

premiere of Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony in 1943, apply here as well: "Music has a great advantage: without mentioning anything, it can say everything."

**Instrumentation:** four flutes (two doubling piccolos), two oboes and English horn, three clarinets (one doubling E-flat clarinet) and bass clarinet, three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), six horns, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, tambourine, snare drums (with and without snares), bass drum, tam-tam, xylophone, harp, celesta, and strings.

— *Peter Laki, visiting associate professor of music (emeritus) at Bard College, writes program notes for many orchestras and performing arts organizations around the country.*

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## The Work at a Glance

Weinberg's Fifth Symphony reveals that the composer had learned from Shostakovich the art of working with extremely short motifs, such as the trumpet motif at the beginning of the first movement, which basically consists of a single interval, the perfect fourth. Like Shostakovich, Weinberg was able to present such pithy material with great dramatic force and use it to build a complex movement in which a distant, idealized world clashes head-on with brutal reality.

The second movement is an extended lament, featuring a number of orchestral soloists (oboe, flute, cello) and expressing intense grief. The third movement brings some relief, with its cheeky melody first presented by the piccolo to an accompaniment of soft timpani strokes (reminiscent of a pipe and tabor), but even here, the playfulness cannot be maintained for very long, as the tone of the music soon becomes more strident, and what seemed a joke at first becomes more and more agitated and turbulent. At one point, the jolly piccolo melody is played, ominously, by the bass clarinet, before the piccolo reclaims it.

The finale, which follows the third movement without a break, steadfastly clings to a relatively slow *Andantino* tempo — there is no question of a joyful, triumphant conclusion. The gentle opening theme goes through several cycles of dramatic ebb and flow before settling into the mysterious noises of the conclusion.

## The Artists



**Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** was named principal guest conductor of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France starting in the 2026–27 season. As music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

(CBSO), 2016–22 — following Simon Rattle, Sakari Oramo, and Andris Nelsons — she has led the CBSO in acclaimed performances at home and on tour. She became the CBSO’s principal guest conductor in 2022–23, and has continued their close connection as associate artist.

Gražinytė-Tyla has electrified audiences as a guest conductor all over the world. In May 2025 she made her Vienna Philharmonic subscription debut, becoming the first woman to lead that ensemble. Recent and upcoming engagements include the Berlin Philharmonic, Oslo Philharmonic, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Madrid’s Spanish National Orchestra, Sinfonieorchester Basel, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic (at home and on tour), New York Philharmonic, and Staatskapelle Dresden, as well as at Madrid’s Teatro Real with Weinberg’s *The Passenger*. She led Britten’s *War Requiem* at the Salzburg Festival and Janáček’s *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Bavarian Staatsoper, and appeared with the Accademia di Santa Cecilia Rome and Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

With the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gražinytė-Tyla was a Dudamel Fellow in the 2012–13 season, assistant conductor (2014–16), and associate conductor (2016–17). She also served as music director of the Salzburg Landestheater (2015–17). Winner of the 2012 Salzburg Festival Young Conductors Award, she subsequently made her debut with the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra in a symphonic concert at the Salzburger Festspiele.

An exclusive Deutsche Grammophon Artist, Gražinytė-Tyla’s first album on the yellow

label, released in 2019, won Opus Klassik and Grammophon Awards. A 2019 recording featured works by Raminta Šerkšnytė and was followed by 2021’s *The British Project*, which included works by Elgar, Britten, Walton, and Vaughan Williams.



Born to Polish parents in what is today Lviv, Ukraine, **Emanuel Ax** and his family moved to Winnipeg, Canada, when he was a young boy. Ax made his New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series, and in 1974

won the first Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. In 1975 he won the Michaels Award of Young Concert Artists, followed by the Avery Fisher Prize. Ax was recently named *Musical America’s* 2026 Artist of the Year.

Ax began the 2025–26 season with The Philadelphia Orchestra in Carnegie Hall and a tour to Tokyo, Seoul, and Hong Kong. Following the world premiere of John Williams’s Piano Concerto — written for Ax and heard in these concerts — at Tanglewood last summer, he performed the work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in January subscription concerts. He returns to orchestras in Dallas, St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Charleston, Madison, Naples, and New Jersey, and gives recitals in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Santa Barbara, Des Moines, Cedar Falls, Schenectady, and Princeton. A European tour includes concerts in Munich, Prague, Berlin, Rome, and Turin.

A Sony Classical exclusive recording artist since 1987, Ax launched a multiyear Beethoven project with Leonidas Kavakos and Yo-Yo Ma; the first four discs have been released. A fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he holds honorary doctorates of music from Skidmore College, New England Conservatory of Music, Yale University, and Columbia University.

# Gustavo Dudamel and the New York Philharmonic



**Gustavo Dudamel** is committed to creating a better world through music. Guided by an unwavering belief in the power of art to inspire and transform lives, he has worked tirelessly to expand education and access for underserved communities around the world, and to broaden the impact of classical music to new and ever-larger audiences. His rise, from humble beginnings as a child in Venezuela to an unparalleled career of artistic and social achievements, offers living proof that culture can bring meaning to the life of an individual and greater harmony to the world at large. He currently serves as the Music & Artistic Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, and the Tang Music & Artistic Director Designate of the New York Philharmonic. He will become the NY Phil's Oscar L. Tang and H.M. Agnes Hsu-Tang Music & Artistic Director in September 2026, continuing a legacy that includes Gustav Mahler, Arturo Toscanini, and Leonard Bernstein. Throughout 2025, Dudamel celebrates the 50th Anniversary of El Sistema, honoring the global impact of José Antonio Abreu's visionary education program across five generations, and acknowledging the vital importance of arts education.

The **New York Philharmonic** plays a leading cultural role in New York City, the United States, and the world, connecting with millions of music lovers through live concerts in

New York and beyond, as well as broadcasts, recordings, and education programs. Gustavo Dudamel serves as the Oscar L. Tang and H.M. Agnes Hsu-Tang Music & Artistic Director Designate in the 2025–26 season, before beginning his tenure as Music & Artistic Director in 2026. The Orchestra's legacy of commissioning and / or premiering works by leading composers runs from Dvořák's *New World* Symphony to Pulitzer Prize winners by John Adams and Tania León, the latter made possible through *Project 19*, the world's largest women-only commissioning project. The Philharmonic has released more than 2,000 recordings since 1917, and in 2023 announced a partnership with Apple Music Classical. Performances can be heard on the nationally syndicated radio program *The New York Philharmonic This Week*, and the Orchestra's history is available free online through the New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives. Annual free concerts are complemented with the Phil for All: Ticket Access Program, education projects including the Young People's Concerts and the New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers Program, and free discussion series. Founded in 1842, the New York Philharmonic — which has appeared in 437 cities in 63 countries — is the oldest symphony orchestra in the US and one of the oldest in the world; past Music Directors include Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler.

# Q&A: Cong Wu, Assistant Principal Viola

[nyphil.org/cong-wu](http://nyphil.org/cong-wu)

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CHRIS LEE

**The Facts:** Born in Jinan, China. Received a bachelor's degree from Beijing Central Conservatory of Music, master's degree from The Juilliard School, and doctoral degree with the Helen Cohn Award from the Manhattan School of Music. Primary teachers included Wing Ho, Heidi Castleman, Hsin-yun Huang, Patinka Kopec, and Pinchas Zukerman. Member of the viola faculty at Manhattan School of Music and Mannes School of Music. Won Third Prize and the Chamber Music Prize in the 14th Primrose International Viola Competition and the Special Prize in the 12th Tertis International Viola Competition.

**At the Philharmonic:** Joined in September 2018.

**What are your earliest musical memories?** Listening to my father practicing and my mother singing Chinese traditional songs at home. As for myself, I started to play the violin at the age of four and switched to the viola when I was seventeen.

**Are there other musicians in your family?** My father is a violist, and my wife, Quan Ge, is a violinist who is also a member of the New York Philharmonic. And, of course, our four-year-old daughter, who sings at home all the time.

**Who were your greatest musical influences?**

My parents, who imparted to me not only great musical instincts, but also an understanding of this musical path. And all my wonderful teachers. Each one of them gave me a huge piece to assemble who I have become as a musician, and each provided me with endless knowledge that I always go back to for answers.

**Who are your favorite composers?** The ones whose music I am playing this week!

**How do you prepare for a concert?** Before rehearsals, I study the score, listen to some recordings, and PRACTICE! Then I make sure I can take a nap before evening concerts, or do a ten-minute meditation before matinees.

**What have been your personal highlights at the New York Philharmonic?**

My first tour with the Philharmonic, in 2018 (when I was on my trial period before officially joining the Orchestra), in Asia. It started in Beijing, and my mom and several family members came to the concerts — it was a very special and proud moment for me. Over the years the Orchestra has been to East Asia many times. Knowing I am part of this bridge that connects so many people means a tremendous amount to me.

**What music are you listening to right now?** Whatever I am playing next week!

**What do you like to do outside of work at the Philharmonic?**

Spend time with my family, teach my students, play chamber music as much as I can, and follow Manchester United, New York Knicks, and New York Yankees games.

**What advice would you give to young musicians considering an orchestral career?**

Be curious, stay focused, and enjoy.

# Q&A: Audrey Wright, Violin

[nyphil.org/audrey-wright](http://nyphil.org/audrey-wright)



CHRIS LEE

**The Facts:** From Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Studied at New England Conservatory and University of Maryland. Primary teachers included Magdalena Richter, Lucy Chapman, and David Salness. Previously served as associate concertmaster of Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and concertmaster of Baltimore Chamber Orchestra. **At the Philharmonic:** Joined in 2022.

**What are your earliest musical memories?** The radio was often set to the classical music station when I was a child. Sometimes my parents would park our car in a parking lot and we would just sit there together, listening to the end of a Beethoven symphony or whatever else was playing. My childhood violin teacher instilled in me a passion for ensemble playing and chamber music. She would organize chamber music sight-reading sessions with her students because she felt that was the most effective way to develop a strong sense of rhythm and phrasing.

**Are there other musicians in your family?** No professionals, but there's a deep love for music of all kinds. My mother pursued many different instruments throughout her life, most recently the flute and African drumming. My grandfather

is a self-taught folk guitarist and songwriter, and we've jammed together for as long as I can remember. My uncle studied piano, and in retirement now conducts various community choirs and often attends Philharmonic concerts.

**What are your greatest musical influences?**

I was heavily influenced by my experiences playing in various youth orchestras and music festivals when I was younger. Working with world-class guest conductors and soloists and playing alongside my amazingly talented friends and peers from a young age was highly inspiring and motivating.

**Who are your favorite composers?**

Too many! Bach, Beethoven, Debussy, Stravinsky, Shaw, Puts, Biber, Reich, Mahler, von Bingen ...

**What are your Philharmonic highlights?**

Gustavo Dudamel conducting, going on multiple tours to Asia, and playing chamber music with my colleagues in Merkin Hall and other venues.

**What are you listening to right now?**

Archival recordings of the Philharmonic from this past season — hearing recordings of this Orchestra fills me with immense pride and admiration!

**What do you do outside of work?**

Explore the city, take walks through Central Park, kickbox, cook, watch crime TV series, and catch performances at other venues.

**What advice would you give to young musicians considering an orchestral career?**

Never stop refining your craft. Be endlessly curious and creative about your preparation for any performance or audition. Learn how to be objective about your playing and become your own teacher, even if you still have other wonderful teachers and mentors. Seek out opportunities for variety and balance, including both musical and non-musical activities. Go to performances and exhibitions of all genres to be inspired and expand your perspective.