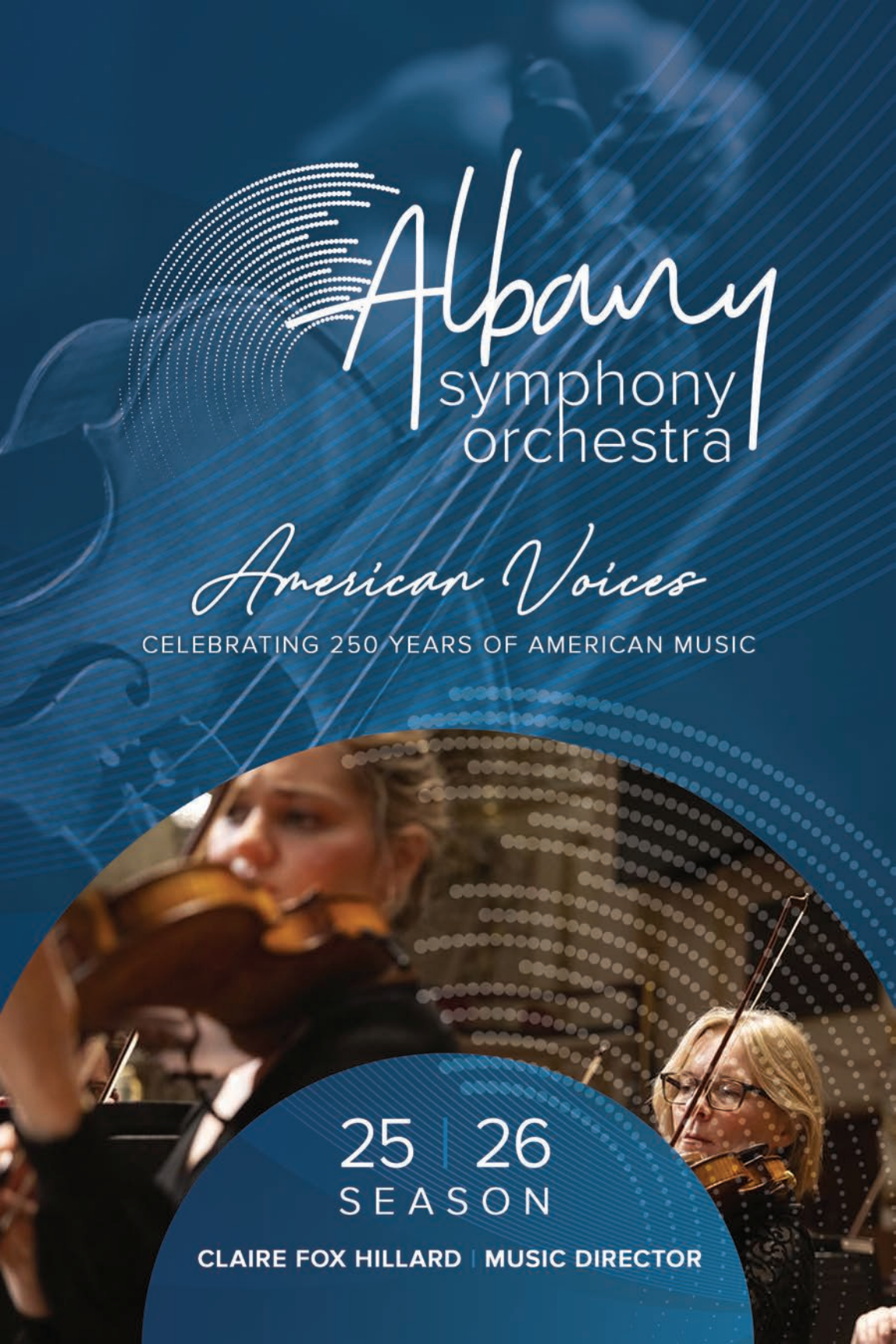


The poster features a deep blue background with a faint, large-scale image of a violin on the left. Overlaid on this are several concentric, semi-circular patterns of white dots, resembling sound waves or musical notes. The text is primarily white, with the orchestra's name in a mix of script and sans-serif fonts, and the season information in a clean sans-serif font within a circular graphic at the bottom.

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American Voices

CELEBRATING 250 YEARS OF AMERICAN MUSIC

A circular inset at the bottom of the poster shows a close-up of two violinists performing. The violinist on the left is a young woman with blonde hair, and the one on the right is an older woman with blonde hair and glasses. They are both focused on their instruments. The background of this inset is a pattern of white dots, similar to the ones in the main poster.

25 | 26
SEASON

CLAIRE FOX HILLARD | MUSIC DIRECTOR

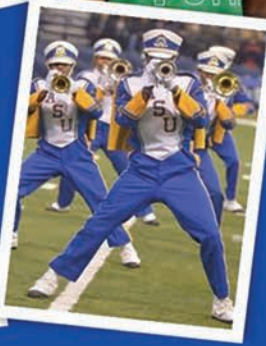


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2025 | 2026 62ND SEASON SCHEDULE OF PERFORMANCES

American Voices CELEBRATING 250 YEARS OF AMERICAN MUSIC

CLAIRE FOX HILLARD | MUSIC DIRECTOR

AMERICAN *Film Music*

Saturday, October 25, 2025

6:30PM | Albany Municipal Auditorium

Enjoy film scores by John Williams, James Horner, Harold Arlen, Henry Mancini from Star Wars, Titanic, The Godfather, Lion King, Wizard of Oz, Indiana Jones, and 007

Peppermint **POPS**

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

6:30PM | Albany Municipal Auditorium

Friday, March 20, 2026

9:30AM & 11:00AM

Albany Municipal Auditorium

The story of composer George Gershwin

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Gershwin's Magic Key

Performance for area elementary school students

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JAZZ IN CONCERT THE MUSIC OF

GERSHWIN

KEVIN COLE, PIANIST



Friday, March 20, 2026

6:30PM | Albany Municipal Auditorium

Gershwin favorites including Rhapsody in Blue

PATRIOTIC POPS CONCERT

MARC BOENSEL, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Saturday, May 16, 2026

7:30PM | Veterans Park Amphitheater

Patriotic favorites performed on Armed Services Day including, Marches by Sousa, Victory at Sea by Richard Rogers, and Armed Forces Salute and more



ALBANY SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION, INC

The mission of the Albany Symphony Association is to enrich the quality of life in southwest Georgia by providing and promoting symphonic music through the organization, development, and support of a symphony orchestra and related educational, artistic, and diverse cultural activities.

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a letter from *the president*

Welcome to the 2025 | 2026 season of the Albany Symphony Orchestra!

For 62 years, the Albany Symphony Orchestra has experienced the privilege of enriching the quality of life in southwest Georgia by providing and promoting symphonic music. Hundreds of professional musicians have performed hundreds of songs that have influenced thousands of people.

We want you to engage in this rich tradition this season by inviting others to join you in attending the scheduled concerts and fundraisers. This season, the ASO will focus on 250 years of American music. I'm excited for the upcoming concerts where we'll celebrate the contributions of American music—from holiday classics and jazz to patriotic and film music. We will also host our highly anticipated, annual educational school concerts entitled, "Gershwin's Magic Keys".

Additionally, engage by completing an online form to volunteer with the ASA. Engage by giving financially to support our efforts to enrich the lives of our community. Engage by hiring musicians for your special event from our "Symphony a la carte" program.

I'm grateful for the freedoms, resources, and privileges we have in our community and country. I give thanks to those who have made that possible. These sacrifices have allowed us to experience the joy of music. By engaging today, we can ensure that 60 years from now people will enjoy the same enriching experiences through the Albany Symphony Orchestra.

Danny James

President, ASA Board of Directors

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CAROL

DECEMBER 11-14

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*music director
and conductor*

CLAIRE FOX HILLARD

Claire Fox Hillard has served as Music Director and Conductor of the Albany Symphony Orchestra since 1988, now beginning his 38th season. He is also currently President of the International Conductors Guild.

Hillard was previously Music Director of the Meridian Symphony Orchestra (MS) from 1991 to 2011 and Music Director of the St. Joseph Symphony (MO) from 1984 to 1987. In academia, he has directed orchestras at Missouri Western State University, Indiana State University, and Albany State University.



Originally from Grand Rapids, Michigan, Hillard started piano and violin studies early and first conducted at age 18. At age 25, after earning his masters and doctoral degrees from The University of Iowa, he became one of the youngest conductors appointed Music Director of a professional orchestra. He studied with conductors James Dixon, Leonard Slatkin, Pierre Boulez, Maurice Abravanel, Jorge Mester, and John Barnett. Hillard has received many awards, including the Helen M. Thompson Award from the League of American Orchestras, recognition from Georgia Trend Magazine, the Artist's Achievement Award from the Meridian Council for the Arts, and a Dream Award from Albany's annual King Celebration. He is also a graduate of Leadership Albany program.

Hillard made his European debut in 1994 with the *Karlovsky symfonicky* orchestra and has subsequently conducted other ensembles such as the Moravian Philharmonic in the Czech Republic, *L'Orchestre Chapelle de Lorraine* in Brussels, *Filharmonica "Banatul"* and *Filharmonica Paul Constantnescu* in Romania, *Orquesta Sinfonica de San Pedro Sula* in Honduras, Karkov Philharmonic in Ukraine, Gdansk Philharmonic in Poland, National Russian Philharmonic, *Orquesta Sinfonica Caxias do Sul* in Brazil, and Academic Philharmony of Astana, Kazakhstan. In the United States, he has appeared with the Abilene Philharmonic, West Shore Symphony, North Arkansas Symphony, Tupelo Symphony, Flagstaff Symphony, Cobb Symphony, Quad-City Symphony, and Symphony of Southeast Texas.

Hillard's diverse programming includes major symphonic, choral, and operatic works, American compositions, and premieres of new music. He has earned seven ASCAP awards for programming and worked with composers and artists including Virgil Thomson, Aaron Copland, Alvin Singleton, Adolphus Hailstork, Hilary Hahn, Anthony McGill, Itzhak Perlman, Ruth Laredo, William Warfield, Ray Charles, Debbie Reynolds, Mark O'Connor, Chris Brubeck, and the Billy Taylor Trio.

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QUINTON BENNER

BASSOON

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KAOLIN WALTON
SHAWN KARSON

HORN

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SECTIONS ARE LISTED IN
ALPHABETICAL ORDER
FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPAL
PLAYER

HISTORY OF THE ALBANY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

The Albany Symphony Orchestra (ASO) began as the Albany Symphonette in 1964, established by a group of passionate musicians who envisioned the potential for an orchestra in southwest Georgia. Under the direction of Mr. E. L. Ziegler, the ensemble held its inaugural concert on May 18, 1965, at Porterfield Memorial United Methodist Church's gymnasium. In January 1967, Dr. Edward A. Tarratus, serving as Arts Division Chairman at Albany Junior College, assumed the role of the orchestra's second conductor.

FORMATION OF THE ALBANY SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION

During the 1967–1968 season, the Junior League of Albany assisted in forming the Albany Symphony Association as a nonprofit entity. Concurrently, the Albany Symphony Guild was created as the association's "working arm," boasting 172 charter members. Dr. Charles DeLaney, a professor of music at Florida State University, became Music Director and Conductor for the 1979–1980 season, commuting from Florida for rehearsals and concerts for nearly a decade.

PROFESSIONALIZATION AND ARTISTIC GROWTH

In 1987, the Albany Symphony Association made a decisive move to further professionalize the orchestra by hiring a resident Music Director and Conductor. Following an international search, Dr. Claire Fox Hillard was appointed for the 1988–1989 season. Hillard led the orchestra in an ambitious artistic direction, inviting renowned soloists and expanding the repertoire to embrace greater diversity and inclusion. In 1998, the Association received statewide recognition from the Georgia Association of Arts Agencies for the Celebration Concert at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, celebrating African American contributions to classical music. The ASO has also earned multiple honors from ASCAP and the League of American Orchestras for adventurous programming.

VENUES AND NOTABLE EVENTS

ASO concerts were initially held in the Albany High School Auditorium until 1990, after which the ensemble relocated to the renovated Albany Municipal Auditorium. The grand reopening featured a gala concert with Albany native Ray Charles on March 6, 1990. Today, the orchestra presents a variety of concerts each season, including classical masterworks, pops performances, educational and family programs, and collaborations with diverse organizations in the region. Partnerships have included the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce's Red Carpet of Georgia tour, events with SOWEGA Council on Aging, Albany's King Celebration, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital's gala with Debbie Reynolds, the Southeast Alabama Dance Company's Nutcracker, and collaborations with harpist Ann Hobson-Pilot at the Albany Civil Rights Institute.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As a service to the community, ASO ensembles regularly perform throughout the region as part of the Symphony à la carte program, making musical groups available for a wide range of events.

PRESIDENTS OF THE ALBANY SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION, INC

- **1968–1969:** Mr. Edmund A. Landau, Jr.
- **1970–1972:** Mr. James Meadors
- **1972–1973:** Miss Bee McCormack
- **1974–1976:** Mr. Charles M. Hairston
- **1977–1979:** Mr. W. Pinckney Whelchel
- **1980–1981:** Mr. Eugene C. Black, Jr.
- **1981–1982:** Mr. John G. Pierson
- **1982–1983:** Dr. Harvner Parish, MD
- **1983–1984:** Mrs. Patsy Martin
- **1983–1984:** Mr. Charles M. Jones, Jr.
- **1984–1985:** Mrs. Edith Black
- **1985–1987:** Mr. Richard Dieckman
- **1987–1989:** Mrs. Jane Fairburn
- **1989–1990:** Mr. Charles M. Jones, III
- **1990–1992:** Mr. Larry R. Sculley
- **1992–1994:** Mr. James B. Ligon
- **1994–1995:** Mr. Tommy Coleman
- **1995–1997:** Dr. Thomas Johnson, MD
- **1997–1998:** Dr. Robert B. Moss, Jr. DMD
- **1998–1999:** Dr. Jefferson U. Davis
- **1999–2000:** Mr. Anthony LaPorte
- **2000–2001:** Dr. T. Marshall Jones
- **2001–2002:** Mr. David Hardin
- **2002–2007:** Mrs. Diane Cunningham
- **2007–2008:** Mr. J. Huff Croxton, Jr.
- **2008–2010:** Mr. Edgar (Whit) Duskin, Jr.
- **2010–2012:** Dr. Holland Wright, DMD
- **2012–2015:** Rev. Jim Bullion
- **2016–2017:** Mr. Tim McLean
- **2017–2019:** Dr. Marcia Mitchell Hood
- **2019–1111:** Mrs. Dawn Benson
- **2020–2021:** Mr. Mathew Phelps
- **2021–2023:** Hon. Louis Sands
- **2023–2025:** Mr. Ben Roberts
- **2025–present:** Mr. Danny James

MUSIC DIRECTORS OF THE ALBANY SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION, INC

- **1964–1966:** Mr. E. L. Zigler
- **1967–1979:** Dr. Edward A. Tarratus
- **1979–1988:** Dr. Charles DeLaney
- **1988–present:** Dr. Claire Fox Hillard



*pictured left to right: Maestros Tarratus,
DeLaney and Hillard in 1995*

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2025-2026 Concert Schedule

October 23, 2025

December 4, 2025

March 5, 2026

May 7, 2026

Concert location:

7pm Covenant Presbyterian Church Albany

for info:
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From one Albany institution to another,
we thank the **Albany Symphony Orchestra**
for serving our community for over 60 years.

AMERICAN *Film Music*

A movie is nothing without its sound effects and musical score. For more than 100 years, film music has grown into its own unique art form, taking inspiration from almost every genre of music. While orchestral scores are still popular, there is a new balance of movies that use symphonic sounds, jazzy jingles, synthesized sonorities, rock and roll riffs, and pop bops.

From the 1890s through 1920s, silent films were accompanied by music provided by movie theatres, either by phonograph or performed by live musicians. Much like in the theatre of Ancient Greece and English Renaissance, musicians would improvise along to the film or perform classical music that fit the mood as the film played.

War and economic crisis, the world was alive with innovation and creativity. In film, comedies, action movies, The 1930s and 1940s was a unique period in film history. Despite it being a time of and musicals helped moviegoers to leave their troubles at the door and film music began to evolve, with orchestral scores composed to match the emotions of the films themselves.

The latter half of the 20th century saw an overhaul of the idea of film music. Symphonic jazz/pop composers like Henry Mancini, Elmer Bernstein, Ennio Morricone, and even Miles Davis found themselves writing for film, taking Hollywood film music in a different direction than the previous European-influenced sound in film.

The late 1960s began merging the mainstream music industry with film music, with movies creating an entire soundtrack using licensed songs from rock and roll/pop culture artists. The 1967 film *The Graduate* was among the first to use almost entirely licensed songs that had nothing to do with the film itself. Simon & Garfunkel's *Mrs. Robinson* is the only original song in the film and is now a number one hit.

With the synthesizer becoming more popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s, films began to introduce a world of computerized music and sound effects with movies like *Tron*, *Ghostbusters*, and *Footloose*. The space opera *Star Wars* blended the symphonic scoring of John Williams with the mind of American sound designer Ben Burt, who put the sounds of elephants, car engines, guide wires of a radio tower, and deep-sea diving gear through synthesizers to create the iconic out-of-this-world sound effects.

In the last forty years, film music has become a potpourri of styles combining original compositions with existing music, be it classical, jazz or popular. Classical era works have been infused into scores, some becoming more associated as "movie themes" than as the stand-alone works of their origination. In a return to its roots, the classic symphonic score made its comeback in the 1970's, especially for "blockbuster" films and film series. In the hands of John Williams, James Horner, Danny Elfman, Howard Shore and Hans Zimmer, the style once considered "old school" has become a viable and successful practice once again.



2025 | 2026 62ND SEASON

Saturday, October 25, 2025 | 6:30PM

Phoebe Stage

Albany Municipal Auditorium

Claire Fox Hillard, **conductor**

American Voices **AMERICAN FILM MUSIC**

JOHN WILLIAMS

Tribute to the Film Composer

HARLOD ARLEN, arr. Sayre

Selections from *The Wizard of Oz*

We're Off to See the Wizard, If I Only Had a Brain,
The Merry Ol' Land of Oz, Somewhere Over the Rainbow

HENRY MANCINI

"Moon River" from *Breakfast at Tiffany's*

JOHN WILLIAMS

"Imperial March" from *Star Wars*

ELTON JOHN / HANS ZIMMER

Music from *Lion King*

arr. Custer

Themes from 007

James Bond Theme, For Your Eyes Only,
Live and Let Die, Goldfinger

NINO ROTA, arr. Holcombe

Theme from *The Godfather*

JOHN WILLIAMS

"Raider's March" from *Indiana Jones*

arr. Vanacore

"Dueling Banjos" from *Deliverance*

JAMES HORNER, arr. Moss

Selections from *Titanic*

Take Her to Sea, Never and Absolution,
Southampton, Hard to Starboard, My Heart Will Go On

JOHN WILLIAMS

"Main Title" from *Star Wars*



March 14, 2026

Tickets: \$65.00

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HOLIDAY CONCERT

December 14, 2025 at 3:00 pm
Opperman Music Hall

GUEST ARTIST CONCERT

February 22, 2026 at 3:00 pm
Ruby Diamond Concert Hall

SPRING CONCERT

May 3, 2026 at 3:00 pm
Ruby Diamond Concert Hall

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MAY 16 & 17: auditions for the 26-27
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2025 | 2026 62ND SEASON

Tuesday, December 9, 2025 | 6:30PM

Phoebe Stage

Albany Municipal Auditorium

Albany Chorale

ABAC Festival Singers

Ballet Theatre South Dancers

Ben Roberts, *host*

Claire Fox Hillard, *conductor*

34th PEPPERMINT POPS *American Holiday Traditions*

LEROY ANDERSON

Christmas Festival

BRUCE BROUGHTON, arr. Vinson

Overture to *Miracle on 34th Street*

ALAN SILVESTRI arr. Murtha

Selections from *The Polar Express*

The Polar Express, Hot Chocolate, Believe, Spirit of the Season

IRVING BERLIN

"White Christmas"

P. I. TCHAIKOVSKY

"March of the Toy Soldiers" from *Nutcracker*

arr. Richman

Christmas Sing Along

Joy to the World, O Come All Ye Faithful,
O Little Town of Bethlehem, Angels We Have Heard on High,
The First Noel, Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly

JOHN WILLIAMS

"Star of Bethlehem" from *Home Alone*

BILL HOLCOMBE

'Twas the Night Before Christmas

LEROY ANDERSON

Sleigh Ride

P. I. TCHAIKOVSKY

"Waltz of the Snowflakes" from *Nutcracker*

arr. Munford

A Christmas Song Sing Along

Santa Claus is Coming to Town, Rudolph,
The Christmas Song, Jingle Bells,
We Wish You a Merry Christmas



SING ALONG LYRICS | DECEMBER 9, 2025
CHRISTMAS SING ALONG (arr. Richman)

JOY TO THE WORLD!

The Lord is come; let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room, And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness, And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love, And wonders and wonders of His love.

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest:
O come, let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH, sweetly singing o're the plains;
And the mountains in reply echoing the joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo!

THE FIRST NOEL the angels did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep. Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.

DECK THE HALLS with boughs of holly, fa la la la la, la la la la
'Tis the season to be jolly, fa la la la la, la la la la
Don we now our gay apparel, fa la la la la la, la la la
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol, fa la la la la, la la la la

See the blazing Yule before us, fa la la la la, la la la la
Strike the harp and join the chorus, fa la la la la, la la la la
Follow me in merry measure, fa la la la la la, la la la
While I tell of Yuletide treasure, fa la la la la, la la la la

Fast away the old year passes, fa la la la la, la la la la
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses, fa la la la la, la la la la
Sing we joyous, all together, fa la la la la la, la la la
Heedless of the wind and weather, fa la la la la, la la la la



SING ALONG LYRICS | DECEMBER 9, 2025

CHRISTMAS SING ALONG (arr. Richman)

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN

You better watch out, you better not cry.
You better not pout, I'm tellin' you why:
Santa Claus is comin' to town.
He's makin' a list, and checkin' it twice,
Gonna find out who's naughty and nice. Santa Claus is comin' to town.
He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake.
He knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake.
Oh, you better watch out, you better not cry.
You better not pout, I'm tellin' you why:
Santa Claus is comin' to town.

RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER

Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer had a very shiny nose,
And if you ever saw it, you would even say it glows.
All of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names.
They never let poor Rudolph join in any other reindeer games.

Then one foggy Christmas Eve, Santa came to say:
"Rudolph, with your nose so bright, won't you guide my sleigh tonight?"
Then all the reindeer loved him, as they shouted out with glee:
"Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer, you'll go down in history."

CHRISTMAS SONG

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, Jack Frost nipping at your nose,
Yuletide carols being sung by the fire and folks dressed up like Eskimos.
Everybody knows a turkey and some mistletoe help to make the season bright.
Tiny tots with their eyes all aglow will find it hard to sleep tonight.
They know that Santa's on his way; he's loaded lots of toys and goodies on his sleigh
And every mother's child is gonna spy to see if reindeer really know how to fly.
And so, I'm offering this simple phrase to kids from one to ninety-two.
Although it's been said many times, many ways:
"Merry Christmas to You!"

JINGLE BELLS

Dashing through the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh,
O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way.
HA! HA! HA!
Bells on bobtail ring, making spirits bright,
What fun it is to ride and sing a sleighing song tonight. OH!

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!
Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh! HEY!
Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!
Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh!

WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS

We wish you a Merry Christmas, We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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guest artist KEVIN COLE



Kevin Cole, pianist, is an award-winning pianist, musical director, arranger, composer, vocalist and archivist who garnered the praises of Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen, E.Y. Harburg, Hugh Martin, Burton Lane, Marvin Hamlisch, Stephen Sondheim and members of the Jerome Kern and Gershwin families. Known as "America's Pianist", Mr. Cole has delighted audiences with a repertoire that includes the best of American Music. Cole's performances with orchestras around the world have prompted accolades from some of the foremost critics in America. "A piano genius...he reveals an understanding of harmony, rhythmic complexity and pure show-biz virtuosity that would have had Vladimir Horowitz smiling with envy," wrote critic Andrew Patner. On Cole's affinity for Gershwin: "When Cole sits down at the piano, you would swear Gershwin himself was at work... Cole stands as the best Gershwin pianist in America today," Howard Reich, arts critic for the Chicago Tribune. Classical Kids is proud and grateful to have the support, knowledge and expertise offered by our good friend, Kevin Cole, in order to create this first-of-its-kind production introducing the life and music of George Gershwin to future generations.



The story tells of a chance meeting on the streets of New York City between a poor newspaper boy and the great American composer, George Gershwin. The orchestra magically weaves Gershwin's greatest hits into the drama as the master composer shares historical anecdotes about his life and musical passion. A bonding friendship develops as they explore the vast melting pot of American music and discover the key to unlocking the boy's own musical potential. Family and student audiences will be captivated by over twenty of Gershwin's most popular

compositions from classical compositions including *Porgy & Bess*, *American in Paris*, *Cuban Overture*, *Concerto in F* and *Rhapsody in Blue* to popular hits from the American Songbook including *I Got Rhythm*, *Swanee*, *Someone to Watch Over Me*, and *Fascinating Rhythm*.



2025 | 2026 62ND SEASON

Friday, March 20, 2026 | 6:30PM

Phoebe Stage

Albany Municipal Auditorium

Classical Kids LIVE!

Kevin Cole, *pianist*

Claire Fox Hillard, *conductor*

Gershwin's Magic Key

Music by:
GEORGE GERSHWIN

Lyrics by:
IRA GERSHWIN

Created & Directed by
PAUL PEMENT

ELIC BRAMLETT as George Gershwin
LANCE NEWTON as "Kid"
&
KEVIN COLE on Piano

Written by
WILL MARTIN, ELIZABETH WHEELER & PAUL PEMENT

Production Advisor
KEVIN COLE

Music Supervisor:
WILL MARTIN

INTERMISSION (15 MINUTES)

**GERSHWIN
GERSHWIN**

Overture from *Girl Crazy*
Rhapsody in Blue

PAUL PEMENT | CREATOR AND DIRECTOR



Paul serves as Executive & Artistic Director of Classical Kids Music Education, a non-profit arts organization focused on introducing children (and their parents) to the lives and musical masterpieces of the great classical composers. A BFA in theatre from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and professional experience as an actor, singer, dancer, director, choreographer and stage manager have enabled Paul to achieve success with Classical Kids LIVE! programming - the "gold-star" leader in the field for creating theatrical family concerts presented by professional symphony orchestras throughout North America and abroad. Production titles include *Beethoven Lives Upstairs*, *Mozart's Magnificent Voyage*, *Vivaldi's Ring of Mystery*, *Tchaikovsky Discovers America*, *Gershwin's Magic Key*, and the newest in the series, *Saint-Georges' Sword & Bow*.

ELIC BRAMLETT | GEORGE GERSHWIN

Elic joined Classical Kids during the 2005-06 season and has toured the US, Canada and Malaysia playing Mozart and Gershwin. A native of Phoenix, AZ, he now makes his home in Chicago. Stage credits include *South Pacific* at Drury Lane Oakbrook, *The Music Man* at Marriott Lincolnshire, *Stage Kiss* and *The Boys are Coming Home* at The Goodman; *Western Civilization* at Noble Fool; *Teapot Scandals*, *Elegies*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Macabaret*, *Hereafter*, and *Three Sisters* at Porchlight; *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *Cinderella* at Drury Lane; *The Bomb-itty of Errors* at The Royal George; and *Saturday Night* at Pegasus Players. In *Forever Plaid*, Elic has played the roles of Jinx, Frankie, and Sparky at several regional theaters including Chicago's original Royal George production. Elic also makes his living as a TV/Film actor, voice over talent, and as a director, producer, and teacher in the Chicago area. He would like to dedicate this performance to his loving and supportive wife and family.



LANCE NEWTON | "KID"



Lance is excited to bring Gershwin's Magic Key to life with Classical Kids Live. A native of Las Vegas, NV, he has performed with renowned Chicago theaters, including Steppenwolf Theatre for Young Adults and Chicago Shakespeare Theatre. His Chicago stage credits include *Animal Farm* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *Othello Remix* (Chicago Shakespeare Company), *Marvin Gaye Story* (Black Ensemble Theatre), *Southbridge* (Chicago Dramatists), *Six Stories Tall* (Adventure Stage), and *Princess and the Pea* (Chicago Kids Company). His television credits include *Chicago Fire* (NBC) and *Sirens* (USA). His commitment to storytelling extends to film, where his short film *Untamed Tongue* was recognized in several film festivals and won the In-Flight Entertainment Award for United Airlines. Lance is a proud member of Actor's Equity Association and SAG-AFTRA and earned his BFA from Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI.



WILL MARTIN | CO-WRITER & MUSIC SUPERVISOR

After making his professional debut in 2015 with the National Symphony Orchestra at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Will has been regularly featured in performances with symphony orchestras throughout the United States and Canada. He is pleased to have played a pivotal role in the creation of *Gershwin's Magic Key* as co-writer and music supervisor. *Gershwin's Magic Key* has performed around the globe, introducing more than one hundred thousand children to the inextinguishable and irrepressible life and music of George Gershwin while teaching them to follow their bliss. Will studied piano performance and English literature at Lawrence University in Appleton, WI, where he took both the B.Mus and B.A. *magna cum laude*. For more info, tour dates, and videos, visit www.williamrobertmartin.com!

ELIZABETH WHEELER | CO-WRITER

Elizabeth joins the creative team of *Classical Kids* as a contributing writer. Her first young adult novel, *Asher's Fault*, won the National Federation of Women's Press and Illinois Women's Press Association Young Adult Creative Fiction Book of the Year. Her second novel, *Asher's Shot*, received accolades from USA Today. Elizabeth is driven by a quest to unleash the authentic human experience in literature, on the stage, and in life. As an educator, she is touched and inspired by the real-world examples of how students, facing adversity, assimilate the lessons learned from those experiences to persevere and transform into triumphant adults. As an advocate for storytelling in the print and digital world, Elizabeth has spoken at international and regional educational conferences. She is a graduate of the University of Florida and the inaugural novel writing program at the University of Chicago's Graham School.



SUSAN HAMMOND | SERIES CREATOR



Susan has created a whole new generation of classical music fans through her innovative and award-winning *Classical Kids* recordings. She is the executive producer of a 16-title series of children's classical music recordings known collectively as *Classical Kids*, selling to date nearly 5 million CDs, DVDs and books worldwide, and earning over 100 prestigious awards and honors. Each story entails its own adventure featuring a unique combination of music, history, and theatricality to engage the imaginations of children. Susan holds the philosophy that, "Where the heart goes, the mind will follow."

An accomplished concert pianist and music teacher, Hammond searched for recordings about classical music to share with her young daughters. One day, she sat reading to her girls with a classical music radio station on in the background and noticed how they responded to the literature in a different way when enhanced by music. The rest, as they say, is history. Susan is the recipient of Billboard Magazine's International Achievement Award and is a member of the Order of Canada for her contribution to the arts.

Classical Kids Music Education is
partially supported by funds from:



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conductor

MARC F. BOENSEL, DMA

has been conducting bands, orchestras, and choruses in California, Virginia, Maryland, and Georgia for almost 40 years. From 2012 until 2016, Dr. Boensel was on the faculty of Darton State College in Albany, GA as an Assistant Professor of Music, where he conducted the Concert Band, Concert Choir, and taught courses in music theory, music history, and church music. From 2014 through 2017 he served as Director of Music Ministries at Porterfield Methodist Church, where he directed the Chancel Choir, and other musical ensembles. In 2017, Boensel became the Director of Music at St. Luke Methodist Church in Columbus, GA.



Dr. Boensel was Director of Music for First Presbyterian Church of Annapolis 1996 to 2012, where he directed the 40-voice Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir, and children's choir. He has also been a guest conductor and clinician for professional, collegiate and high school ensembles throughout the mid-Atlantic.

In addition to being the Symphonic Band Conductor-in-Residence and Adjunct Professor of Music at American University (2009-2012), Boensel was Concert Band director and Adjunct Professor of Music at Anne Arundel Community College (2007-2012), where he taught courses in music history and music theory. He continues a career as a professional oboist and vocalist that has spanned early four decades, including 22 years as a conductor and performer in U.S. Navy and Air Force bands as well as various orchestras in California, Virginia, Maryland, and Georgia.

He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from California State University Fullerton, a Master of Music degree from San Diego State University, and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting from the University of Maryland. He has studied conducting with Benton Minor, Edmund Williams, Robert Gilson, John Wakefield, and James Ross, and studied oboe with Larry Timm and Peggy Michel.

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2025 | 2026 62ND SEASON

Saturday, May 16, 2026 | 7:30PM

Veterans Park Riverfront Amphitheater

Bo Henry, *special guest*

Marc F. Boensel, *guest conductor*

American Voices
PATRIOTIC POPS CONCERT

JOHN WILLIAMS

Liberty Fanfare

National Anthem

JOHN PHILLIP SOUSA

Semper Fidelis March

JOHN WILLIAMS

"Imperial March" from *Star Wars*

BO HENRY

"Hero"

JOHN WILLIAMS

The Patriot

GEORGE GERSHWIN

"Summertime" from *Porgy & Bess*

arr. Kinzinger

"Georgia on My Mind"

RICHARD ROGERS

Victory at Sea

JOHN WILLIAMS

"Hymn to the Fallen" from *Saving Private Ryan*

MORTON GOULD

American Salute

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