

REINHARDT



URISTE



GOMEZ



LEWIN



DIMMICK



**25/6**  
SEASON

MASUR



YANG



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Welcome to the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra's 25/26 season!

Over the last 80 years at the Rhode Island Philharmonic, with your help, we have built a vibrant, supportive, inspiring community around our love of music. The Orchestra has shared the stage with some of the world's most talented artists and conductors and evolved under singular artistic leaders, including Larry Rachleff and Bramwell Tovey. And, through our Link Up Education Concerts and Music School, we've impacted hundreds of thousands of students, including many who have gone on to significant careers in music and music education.

This year, with Music Director Ruth Reinhardt at the helm, the Orchestra explores the symphonic world with programs that introduce new works and composers, alongside traditional pillars of orchestral music. All performed by world-class artists, including many Ruth is bringing to us for the first time, it is a season worthy of this transformative moment as Ruth guides us into the Reinhardt Era!

Your chance to interact with the Orchestra doesn't stop when the curtains close! Join Ruth and our Guest Artists for talkbacks after tonight's concert and ask them your burning questions. Subscribe to our email newsletters. Join the Conductor's Circle and gain access to behind-the-scenes tours, exclusive events, and even the chance to sit on stage! Inquire about volunteering for a committee or our Board of Directors. Become a student at the RI Phil Music School! There are so many ways to channel your passion.

For now, enjoy tonight's concert! We are delighted and grateful you are here with us. Your dedication, enthusiasm and generosity are the foundation on which this Orchestra is built. We are honored to embark on this journey with you.

A heartfelt thank you!



# RUTH REINHARDT

Music Director

It is with tremendous excitement that I welcome you to tonight's Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra concert. As you may already know, this is my first season as Music Director. Becoming a part of this vibrant organization, with its rare combination of a world-class orchestra and a thriving music school, is an honor, a dream and an inspiration.

Over the course of this season and beyond, I am so looking forward to building on the legacies of Larry Rachleff and Bramwell Tovey, celebrating some of the most cherished works in classical music, and introducing you to some of my favorite living composers and soloists.

We opened the season with Steven Banks, a young and mesmerizing saxophonist, who performed Billy Childs' powerful *Diaspora* concerto. I'm so grateful for the warm welcome that you showed to Steven and to me. His artistry and charisma capture the spirit of innovation we're embracing this year, which we continued in October with the rediscovered work of French romantic composer Marie Jaëll. It was a joy to premiere her beautiful cello concerto for you, with the remarkable Andrei Ioniță as soloist.

This season is built on connection: between performers and audiences, generations of musicians and our Orchestra, and the Rhode Island community we proudly serve. It is a connection that I feel growing with every concert. As we began 2026, a particular thrill for me was the opportunity to work closely with our wonderful concertmaster and January concert soloist Charles Dimmick, along with the talented students of our Music School in a side-by-side performance of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*, where students shared the stage with RI Phil musicians in a celebration of mentorship, collaboration, and shared passion.

Whether you're a long-time subscriber, a first-time concertgoer, a parent of a Music School student or a student yourself, this is *your* orchestra. I'm eager to get to know you, to listen, to learn and to build on the work of those who have come before me.

Thank you for your warm welcome. I can't wait to continue our musical journey together.





RUTH  
REINHARDT  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

25<sup>6</sup>  
SEASON

# COME JOIN ME IN THE CONDUCTOR'S CIRCLE!

The Conductor's Circle is comprised of music lovers and donors who contribute generously to keep the music playing!

Membership in the Conductor's Circle connects you with the Rhode Island Philharmonic and offers access to our unique world of music creation, both on stage and off. From complimentary parking, lounge access, and the opportunity to purchase premiere tickets in the Mezzanine; to private dinners with Guest Artists and Conductors, backstage tours, invitations to exclusive events and even the chance to sit on stage during a concert. Conductor's Circle benefits are designed as exclusive experiences.

Beginning at the \$3,000 giving level (for a couple), our Conductor's Circle tiers offer an assortment of benefits, each providing you with exclusive access to your Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra.

I look forward to seeing you in the Conductor's Circle as I turn to the audience from the stage!

If you are interested in learning more about membership or are considering supporting us at any level, please contact Laurie Johnson-Carvalho, Director of Development and Donor Relations at 401.248.7034 or [ljohnson-carvalho@riphil.org](mailto:ljohnson-carvalho@riphil.org).





# RUTH REINHARDT

Music Director

German conductor Ruth Reinhardt is building a reputation for her keen musical intelligence, programmatic imagination, and elegant performances.

The 2025/26 season marks the beginning of Reinhardt's term as Music Director of the Rhode Island Philharmonic, leading seven programs across the season. In the summer of 2025, she debuted with the Seoul Philharmonic and the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra. Other significant debuts in 25/26 include the Staatskapelle Dresden, Philharmonia Orchestra in London, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Bruckner Orchester Linz, SWR Symphonieorchester, the Folkwang Kammerorchester in Essen and the Sinfonieorchester St. Gallen in Switzerland. She also has return engagements with the Warsaw Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic (FL) and the Orlando Philharmonic.

Programmatically, Reinhardt's interests have led her toward contemporary repertoire, with significant emphasis on women composers of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Her programs often introduce new names and fresh faces to many orchestras, including Grażyna Bacewicz, Kaija Saariaho, and Dai Fujikura, to name some of the more familiar ones, and pairs them with stylistically contrasting or complementary pieces, whether core masterworks by Brahms, Rachmaninoff, or Dvořák, or with "classic moderns" such as works by Bartók, Stravinsky, Lutosławski, Martinů, and Hindemith. Ruth is a frequent collaborator of many of today's foremost instrumentalists spanning several generations. Among them are pianists Emanuel Ax, Daniil Trifonov, and Eva Gevorgyan, violinists Augustin Hadelich and Vadim Gluzman, cellists Andrei Ioniță and Jean-Guihen Queyras, horn player Stefan Dohr, and saxophonist Steven Banks.

In past seasons, Reinhardt has appeared with many of the major North American Orchestras and as recently as last season has made debuts with the St. Louis and Charlotte Symphony Orchestras. Previously, she has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra (on four occasions), National Symphony Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of San Francisco, Detroit, Houston, Seattle, and Baltimore. In Europe, she has appeared with Hague Residentie Orkestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic in Amsterdam, Orchestre National de France, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, RSO Berlin, Stockholm Philharmonic, and Tonkünstler Orchestra Wien, among many others.

Ruth Reinhardt served as Assistant Conductor of the Dallas Symphony for the final two seasons of Jaap Van Zweden's tenure as Music Director (2018-2020). She received her master's degree in conducting from the Juilliard School of Music in New York in 2017. She was a Dudamel Fellow of the Los Angeles Philharmonic (2017-2018), conducting fellow at both the Seattle Symphony (2015-2016) and Tanglewood Music Center (2015), and Taki Concordia associate conducting fellow (2015-2017). She currently makes her home in Switzerland.



# ROBERT SPANO

## Principal Guest Conductor

Robert Spano, conductor, pianist, composer, and teacher, is known worldwide for the intensity of his artistry and distinctive communicative abilities, creating a sense of inclusion and warmth among musicians and audiences that is unique among American orchestras. He was appointed Principal Conductor of the Rhode Island

Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School in 2024 and transitioned to Principal Guest Conductor this season following Ruth Reinhardt's appointment as Music Director. Unfortunately, due to schedule shifts at the Washington National Opera where he is Music Director, Spano will be unable to conduct in Rhode Island this season. We look forward to his return in 2026/27.

Music Director of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (FWSO) since August 2022, Spano will continue there through July 2031, shaping the artistic direction of the Orchestra and driving its continued growth. This season, Spano also steps into the role of Music Director of the Washington National Opera (WNO) for a three-year term. As Music Director of the Aspen Music Festival and School since 2011, he oversees the programming of more than 300 events and educational programs for 630 students and young performers; he also directs the Aspen Conducting Academy, which offers participants unparalleled training and valuable podium experience. After twenty seasons as Music Director with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO), he now serves as its Music Director Laureate.

In his fourth season as music director of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Spano leads more than six symphonic programs, including a world premiere by Michael Gandolfi. Spano leads two productions at Washington National Opera in 2025-2026: the company's production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and a new production of Robert Ward's Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award®-winning opera *The Crucible*. Other highlights of the season include a return to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for two programs celebrating the 250th anniversary of America's independence and guest conducting appearances with the Louisville Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Spano's newest recording as a pianist and composer is a collaboration with mezzo-soprano Kelley O'Connor, "Songs of Orpheus," a series of song cycles by Edvard Grieg, Claude Debussy, George Crumb, and Spano himself, on Sono Luminus (August 22, 2025).

With a discography of critically acclaimed recordings for Telarc, Deutsche Grammophon, and ASO Media, Robert Spano has garnered four Grammy™ Awards and eight nominations with the Atlanta Symphony. Spano is on faculty at Oberlin Conservatory and has received honorary doctorates from Bowling Green State University, the Curtis Institute of Music, Emory University, and Oberlin. Maestro Spano is a recipient of the Georgia Governor's Award for the Arts and Humanities and is one of two classical musicians inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame.



# OUR COMMITMENT TO MUSIC FOR ALL



The RI Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School's mission is to enrich and transform Rhode Island and our region through great live symphonic performances and music education. To further this mission, we offer concerts and education programs of exceptional quality that are relevant and accessible to all.

We believe that our work can help achieve a more just and equitable society and have worked for many years to use music as a tool to further equity and opportunity in our community.

We work with many partners to further our efforts to expand access, including the Pappito Opportunity Connection (POC), the Rhode Island Foundation, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, as well as mayors, school superintendents, principals, teachers, and many other organizations and individuals who share our vision.

On our stages, in our classrooms, and with our partners, we are committed to harnessing music's power to inspire, transform, educate and unify, including within our own organization. As such, we:

- Ensure that the Orchestra performs a significant number of works each season written by exceptional living composers, and composers with diverse backgrounds and voices;
- Perform free concerts in Providence, Pawtucket and elsewhere;
- Work to keep quality high, and ticket prices and tuition affordable;
- Create pathways for students through free and subsidized learning opportunities like Link Up and the Victoria's Dream Project, and employ third party researchers to evaluate our efforts;
- Offer financial aid to students who cannot afford tuition at the Music School;
- Employ hiring and audition practices that value and further quality and diversity;
- Hold ourselves accountable for results.

Through these and other actions, we seek to provide pathways for more performers, educators, composers and arts leaders from diverse backgrounds who will enrich, enliven and expand access to our concert halls and classrooms for generations to come. By listening to, celebrating, empowering and reflecting the many voices that make up our communities and our profession, we can honor the past, and forge a bright and exciting future for symphonic music and music education, and contribute to the cultural, educational and economic vibrancy of our region.



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REINHARDT**  
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**ADMINISTRATIVE  
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REINHARDT**  
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REINHARDT**  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

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MUSICIAN ROSTER**

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**Robert Spano**, Principal Guest Conductor

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*Collis Family  
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*Concertmaster  
Heidi & Chester Kirk Chair*  
Katherine Winterstein  
*Associate  
Concertmaster*  
Omar Chen Guey  
*Assistant  
Concertmaster*  
Sasha Callahan  
Xiao Fu  
Barbara Lefkowitz  
Mina Lavcheva  
Allyson Michal  
Alexey Shabalin  
Zoya Tsvetkova  
Zoia Bologovsky

**VIOLIN II**

Amy Rawstron  
*Principal*  
Lois Finkel  
*Assistant Principal*  
Antoaneta Anguelova  
Lisa Goddard  
Laura Gulley  
Ella Leone  
Rose Drucker

**VIOLA**

Abigail Cross  
*Principal*  
Susan Culp  
*Assistant Principal*  
Noriko Futagami  
Christine Orio  
Katrina Smith  
Willine Thoe  
Harold Lieberman

**CELLO**

Brent Selby  
*Principal*  
Melanie Dyball  
*Assistant Principal*  
Jackie Ludwig Selby  
Aron Zerkowicz  
Steven Laven  
Rebecca Thornblade  
Megan Koch  
Claire Dresselhuis

**BASS**

Barry Boettger  
*Principal*  
Robert Caplin  
*Assistant Principal*  
Eliot Porter  
Anthony D'Amico  
Joseph Higgins  
Nancy Kidd

**FLUTE**

Ann Bobo  
*Principal*  
*Marie J. Langlois Chair*  
Kathleen Boyd

**PICCOLO**

Rachel Braude

**OBOE**

Cheryl Bishkoff  
*Principal*  
Denise Plaza-Martin

**ENGLISH HORN**

Jane Murray

**CLARINET**

Ian Greitzer  
*Principal*  
*Lisa Bisaccia &  
Robert Naparstek Chair*  
Steven Zhang

**BASS CLARINET**

Tom Parchman

**BASSOON**

Ron Haroutunian  
*Principal*  
Brooke Allen

**HORN**

Kevin Owen  
*Principal*  
Joshua Michal  
Whit Hill

**TRUMPET**

Joseph Foley  
*Principal*  
Mary-Lynne Bohn

**TROMBONE**

Greg Spiridopoulos  
*Principal*  
Alexei Doohovskoy

**BASS TROMBONE**

Gabriel Rice

**TUBA**

Stephen Lamb  
*Principal*

**TIMPANI**

Craig McNutt  
*Principal*  
*Mr. & Mrs. George M.  
Sage Chair*

**PERCUSSION**

Rob McEwan  
*Principal*  
Nathan Lassell

**HARP**

Hyunjung Choi  
*Principal*

Actual performance rosters vary. Go to [streamriphil.org/current-season](http://streamriphil.org/current-season) for a list of tonight's musicians.



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**VIOLIN I**

- 1. Charles Dimmick
- 2. Katherine Winterstein
- 3. Omar Chen Guey
- 4. Sasha Callahan
- 5. Xiao Fu
- 6. Barbara Lefkowitz
- 7. Mina Lavcheva
- 8. Allyson Michal

9. Alexey Shabalin

- 10. Zoya Tsvetkova
- 11. Zoia Bologovsky

**VIOLIN II**

- 12. Amy Rawstron
- 13. Lois Finkel
- 14. Lisa Goddard
- 15. Laura Gulley
- 16. Ella Leone
- 17. Rose Drucker

**VIOLA**

- 18. Abigail Cross
- 19. Susan Culpo
- 20. Noriko Futagami
- 21. Christine Orio
- 22. Katrina Smith
- 23. Willine Thoe
- 24. Harold Lieberman

**CELLO**

- 25. Brent Selby
- 26. Melanie Dyball
- 27. Jackie Ludwig Selby
- 28. Aron Zelkowicz
- 29. Steven Laven
- 30. Rebecca Thornblade
- 31. Megan Koch
- 32. Claire Dresselhuis



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**BASS**

- 33. Barry Boettger
- 34. Robert Caplin
- 35. Eliot Porter
- 36. Anthony D'Amico\*
- 37. Joseph Higgins
- 38. Nancy Kidd

**FLUTE**

- 39. Ann Bobo
- 40. Kathleen Boyd

**PICCOLO**

- 41. Rachel Braude

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- 42. Cheryl Bishkoff
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- 44. Jane Murray

**CLARINET**

- 45. Ian Greitzer
- 46. Steven Zhang

**BASS CLARINET**

- 47. Tom Parchman

**BASSOON**

- 48. Ron Haroutunian
- 49. Brooke Allen

**HORN**

- 50. Kevin Owen
- 51. Joshua Michal
- 52. Whit Hill

**TRUMPET**

- 53. Joseph Foley
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- 55. Greg Spiridopoulos
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**BASS TROMBONE**

- 57. Gabriel Rice

**TUBA**

- 58. Stephen Lamb

**TIMPANI**

- 59. Craig McNutt

**PERCUSSION**

- 60. Rob McEwan
- 61. Nathan Lassell

**HARP**

- 62. Hyunjung Choi

**Musicians not pictured:**  
Antoaneta Anguelova

*\*leave of absence*

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The Rhode Island Philharmonic gratefully acknowledges the following music lovers for their gifts to the 2024/2025 Annual Fund and special events. Each gift helps our Philharmonic bridge the gap between operating expenses and revenue, allowing us to continue to provide outstanding concerts and comprehensive music education throughout the year.

*This list reflects donations received between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.*

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Business Partnership support represents a significant source of philanthropic funding and enables our core performance and education mission while helping to fund scholarships and free community partnership programs.

*This list reflects donations received between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Includes in-kind and Gala gifts.*

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For more information about how you can sponsor a musician or faculty member, please contact **Laurie Johnson-Carvalho** at **401.248.7034** or **ljohnson-carvalho@riphil.org**.

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(continued)

### FRANCIS MADEIRA SOCIETY

#### *Keep Our Music Alive for Generations To Come!*

Named in honor of Francis K.C. Madeira, Conductor Emeritus and founder of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, this society welcomes people who have remembered the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School in their estate plans. Their legacy will not only enable the Philharmonic to continue great music into the future, it ensures the permanence of each gift.

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### FRIENDS WHOSE LEGACY LIVES ON AT THE PHILHARMONIC

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### ENDOWMENT GIVING

The Rhode Island Philharmonic has been the grateful recipient of gifts that have been made by people who wish to assist our organization in sustaining our mission. Gifts have also been made in honor of or in memory of special people and the programs they loved. A gift to the endowment ensures that the music will continue for generations to come. Gifts can be added to endowments at any time once they are established.

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# Leave a legacy...

*And live on through the music*




We hope that you enjoy tonight's performance, that it connects you with others in our community, with your own humanity, and possibly even inspires you.

We also hope you consider contributing to the Rhode Island Philharmonic's Endowment Fund through your estate plan, so that you can bring the joy and inspiration of music to others for generations to come.

Endow a specific instrument or section in the Orchestra, or an annual concert, a Music School faculty position or education program or create an endowed scholarship. These are some of the many ways that you can leave a legacy, ensure that the RI Philharmonic's mission will continue to evolve and thrive, that lives will continue to be changed for the better through music - and that you will be remembered for making it possible.

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## **BRIAN WEI**

Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School

**2025-2026 Concerto & Aria Competition Winner**

Brian Wei has been studying violin at the Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School for the past twelve years. He was a student of Laura Gulley in the Suzuki violin program from 2014-2024, and he was a member of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Orchestras from 2018-2025, studying under conductors Erin Erban (Intermediate Strings, 2018-2019), Irina Naryshkova (String Orchestra, 2019-2021), Vincent Mattera (Repertory Orchestra, 2021-2023), and Alexey Shabalin (Symphony Orchestra, 2023-2025). He has also been a member of the Music School's Chamber Music ensembles, studying under Lois Finkel and Gideon Rubin. The Music School has been crucial to the development of his technique and musicality, and he has been blessed by the wonderful community of dedicated teachers, friendly staff, and fellow musicians. He has been a four time participant in the Concerto Competition, and he has always enjoyed the learning experience of recording and performing with Music School piano teacher and accompanist Juan Rios. Brian is currently learning under Charles Dimmick to further develop his violin skills and music understanding, and he is a member of the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra in their 2025-2026 season. Outside of music, he enjoys speedcubing and playing soccer.

### **How did you choose the violin and who has had an influence on your growth as a musician?**

I started playing the violin when I was three, and it has always been my favorite instrument. I like its sharpness and intensity, which gives it the ability to be heard through other sounds. As my playing progresses, its wide range of notes and large repertoire comes as an advantage as well. I would not be here if it had not been for my first teacher, Laura Gulley, who taught me for ten years and helped me develop strong technique and an understanding of music. My current teacher, Charles Dimmick, continues to help me improve as a musician. My wonderful conductors Irina Naryshkova, Vincent Mattera, and Alexey Shabalin have all helped me by teaching me about being apart of an orchestra and giving me leading roles. Finally, the most important person to my growth as a musician has been my mom, who is always supportive, and drives me to lessons and rehearsal every week.

### **What does it mean to you to be selected as the winner of the concerto competition?**

I have been a participant in the concerto competition for four years. Looking back, it's amazing to see how far I have come. The previous winners of the competition have inspired me so much with their hard work and confidence, and I hope that my performance will be able to live up to their standards. I made the final of the competition last year with Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, and even though I was unable to win, the experience of playing in front of the judges helped me prepare for this year's competition. This year there were many other skilled musicians that I had to compete against who deserved to win as much as I did, if not more. I am thrilled to be selected, and it feels amazing to see my hard work finally pay off.

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*The Rhode Island Philharmonic Music School Concerto & Aria Competition is open to currently enrolled student musicians who play either piano, orchestral or band instruments, or sing. Finalists are selected from an initial round of current students who perform at a very high level. Brian will perform the first movement from Dvořák's Violin Concerto at the RI Philharmonic Youth Orchestra concert on May 3 at East Providence High School.*



# KEN-DAVID MASUR

## Conductor

Hailed as “fearless, bold, and a life-force” (*San Diego Union-Tribune*) and “a brilliant and commanding conductor with unmistakable charisma” (*Leipzig Volkszeitung*), Ken-David Masur is celebrating his seventh season as Music Director of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and Principal Conductor of the Chicago Symphony’s Civic Orchestra.

Masur’s tenure in Milwaukee has been notable for innovative thematic programming and bridge-building, including a festival celebrating the music of the 1930s, when the Bradley Symphony Center was built; the Water Festival; a new annual city-wide Bach Festival. He has also instituted a multi-season artist-in-residence program, and has led highly-acclaimed performances of major choral works, including a semi-staged production of *Peer Gynt*.

In 2025-2026, Masur will lead celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus, featuring performances of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 and *Missa Solemnis*, as well as Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* as part of the third annual Bach Festival. Ken-David Masur and the MSO will reunite with longtime collaborators such as Yo-Yo Ma, Augustin Hadalich, Orion Weiss, Stewart Goodyear, Nancy Zhou as well as a special project with Bill Barclay and Concert Theatre Works to celebrate America’s 250th birthday with a program interweaving the music of Aaron Copland with the words of Mark Twain. In Chicago, Masur leads the Civic Orchestra, the premiere training ensemble of the Chicago Symphony, in a wide range of programs, including its annual Bach Marathon.

Masur has conducted orchestras around the world including Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, l’Orchestre National de France, Kristiansand Symphony, NFM Wrocław Philharmonic in Poland, and Tokyo’s Yomiuri Nippon Symphony. He makes regular festival appearances at Ravinia, Tanglewood, the Hollywood Bowl, Verbier, the Pacific Music Festival and the Oregon Bach Festival.

Masur is passionate about contemporary music and has conducted and commissioned numerous new works including Wynton Marsalis, Augusta Read Thomas, Unsuk Chin among others. He has recorded with the English Chamber Orchestra and the Stavanger Symphony and received a Grammy nomination from the Latin Recording Academy for the album *Salon Buenos Aires*.

Masur and his wife, pianist Melinda Lee Masur are founders and Artistic Directors of the Chelsea Music Festival. The Festival celebrated its 16th Anniversary in 2025, has been praised by *The New York Times* as a “gem of a series” and by *TimeOutNY* as an “impressive addition to New York’s cultural ecosystem.”

Born and raised in Leipzig, Germany, Masur was trained at the Mendelssohn Academy in Leipzig, the Gewandhaus Children’s Choir, the Detmold Academy and the „Hanns Eisler“ Conservatory in Berlin. While an undergraduate at Columbia University in New York, Masur became the first music director of the Bach Society Orchestra & Chorus with which he toured to Germany and recorded the music of J.S.Bach and his sons.



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## All Mozart!

Saturday, April 11, 2026, 7:30pm

Ken-David Masur, conductor • Robert Levin, piano

**MOZART** *The Marriage of Figaro: Overture*

**MOZART** Piano Concerto No.23 in A major, K.488

*I. Allegro*

*II. Adagio*

*III. Allegro assai*

**Mr. Levin**

I N T E R M I S S I O N

**M. HAYDN** Symphony No.25 in G major, K. 183

(with an introduction by Mozart)

*I. Adagio maestoso – Allegro con spirito*

**MOZART** Symphony No.38 in D major, K.504 (Prague)

*I. Adagio - Allegro*

*II. Andante*

*III. Presto*

You are invited to join Ken-David Masur and Robert Levin when they return to the stage for a brief conversation immediately following the concert.



The Rhode Island Philharmonic is funded in part by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and private funders.

**Mr. Levin's appearance is sponsored by Larry & Shannon Reilly.**

Mr. Levin appears by arrangement with Rayfield Allied.

Mr. Masur appears by arrangement with Colbert Artists Management.



# ROBERT LEVIN

Piano

Robert Levin has performed throughout the world, appearing with the orchestras of Atlanta, the BBC, Berlin, Birmingham, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, La Scala, Los Angeles, Montreal, Philadelphia, Toronto and Vienna on the Steinway, and with the Academy of Ancient Music, La Chambre Philharmonique, the English Baroque Soloists, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Orchestre

Révolutionnaire et Romantique on early keyboards. Renowned for his improvised cadenzas in Classical period repertoire, Robert Levin has made recordings of a wide range of repertoire for AAM, Archiv, Bridge, CRI, Decca/Oiseau-Lyre, Deutsche Grammophon, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, ECM, Hänssler Classic, Hyperion, Klavierfestival Ruhr, New York Philomusica, Philips and SONY Classical, including Bach's complete harpsichord concertos with Helmuth Rilling, the six English Suites and both books of the Well-Tempered Clavier (Hänssler Edition *Bachakademie*); a Mozart concerto cycle with Christopher Hogwood, Richard Egarr, Bojan Čičić, Laurence Cummings, and the Academy of Ancient Music (Decca/Oiseau Lyre and AAM); the Beethoven concertos with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique (Archiv); the complete piano music of Dutilleux (ECM; Bernard Rands' Preludes and Impromptu (Bridge); and the complete Beethoven sonatas and variations for fortepiano and 'cello with Steven Isserlis (Hyperion). Recent releases include the six Bach Partitas (*Grand Prix International du Disque*)(Le Palais des Dégustateurs), the complete Schubert piano trios with Noah Bendix-Balgley and Peter Wiley (Le Palais des Dégustateurs), and the complete Mozart sonatas on Mozart's Walter piano (ECM) (*Diapason d'Or de l'Année*).

A passionate advocate of new music, Robert Levin has commissioned and premiered numerous works, among them Denissov's *Paysage au clair de lune*, Joshua Feinberg's *Veils* (2001), the Second Piano Sonata of John Harbison (2003), the Piano Concerto *Chiavi in mano* of Yehudi Wyner (2005, Pulitzer-Prize 2006), the *Préludes* of Bernard Rands (2007), the Piano Concerto by Thomas Oboe Lee (2007) and *Träume* by Hans Peter Türk (2014).

He has a long partnership with violist Kim Kashkashian and appears frequently with his wife, pianist Ya-Fei Chuang, in duo recitals and with orchestra, and with cellist Steven Isserlis. A noted Mozart scholar, Mr. Levin's completions of Mozart's Requiem, C-minor Mass, and other unfinished works have been recorded and performed throughout the world. From 2002 to 2024 he was President of the International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition (Leipzig, Germany). He was awarded the Bach Medal of the City of Leipzig in 2018 and the Golden Mozart Medal by the Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum in Salzburg in 2024. From 1993 to 2013 he was Dwight P. Robinson, Jr. Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University and is presently Visiting Professor at The Juilliard School and the Sibelius Academy, and International Chair at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. From 2007 to 2016 he was Artistic Director of the Sarasota Music Festival. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

## WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE THE SHOW PARALLEL EVENTS

# 1784

## M. Haydn

Symphony in G - *I. Adagio maestoso - Allegro con spirito*



### MUSIC

Salieri  
*Il ricco d'un Giorno*



### ART

David  
*Oath of the Horatii*



### LITERATURE

Holcroft  
*Tales of the Castle*



### HISTORY

The Emerald Buddha is installed at the Wat Phra Kaew in Thailand

# 1786

## *Le nozze di Figaro*

Piano Concerto No. 23, Symphony No. 38



### MUSIC

Haydn  
Symphony No. 82  
in C ("Bear")



### ART

Le Brun  
*Self-portrait  
with daughter*



### LITERATURE

Burns  
*Poems in the  
Scottish Dialect* (First  
published collection)



### HISTORY

Shays' Rebellion of  
taxpayers begins in  
U.S. Commonwealth  
of Massachusetts.

## ALL MOZART!

What we today call the Czech Republic has long been a font of musical inspiration. Three of the composers performed by the RI Philharmonic this season - Smetana, Dvořák, and Suk - all hail from this small, central European hotbed of creativity. So, it is fitting that even the music on a program devoted (almost) entirely to Mozart finds its roots in the same soil, blossoming from the adoration of the Czech people, whose appetite for his genius knew no bounds.

When first confronted with *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Beaumarchais' irreverent comedy of manners, King Louis XIV proclaimed that it was "detestable and must never be produced." Such a proclamation, only served to make the forbidden fruit more enticing, and Mozart, hungry for a story that would be worthy of his first great opera buffa, was willing to take a bite. The overture on tonight's program condenses all the madcap goings-on of the opera into a concise musical whirlwind, and it was its premiere in Prague that marked the beginning of that city's enduring infatuation with Mozart.

The infatuation was mutual. When Mozart returned a year later for the premiere of *Don Giovanni*, he brought with him a symphonic thank you card. The aptly named "Prague Symphony" incorporates much of the same boisterous spirit found in *Figaro*.

Another nod of thanks and admiration can be found in Mozart's skillful deployment of wind instruments in both this Symphony and in his Piano Concerto No. 23, written in the same year. Famed throughout Europe for their skill, the wind players of Bohemia reveled in Mozart's increasingly wind-centric approach to orchestration, including the dark, mellow tone of a relative newcomer to the orchestra - the clarinet.

Though lesser-known today, Joseph Haydn's younger brother, Michael, enjoyed an enviable reputation during his lifetime, with 41 symphonies to his name, and wide renown as a musician and music director. Mozart, in an act of appreciation for his colleague's talent, added a slow introduction to Haydn's 25th Symphony for a performance in the court of an influential Austrian aristocrat.

### **The Marriage of Figaro: Overture**

#### **WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)**

*Last performed March 11, 1995 with Zuohuang Chen conducting. This piece is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.*

When Mozart conspired with his librettist Lorenzo da Ponte to make an opera out of Beaumarchais' racy and irreverent play *The Marriage of Figaro*, the two had to work furiously over a six-week period to have it ready for opening night on May 1, 1786. The overture, in fact, was completed only two days prior.

That same sense of urgency is reflected in the overture's opening notes. Frenetic (and famously difficult) melodic figures seem to scurry this way and that in the strings and bassoons until, somehow, they come together to create a playful and boisterous theme which romps happily throughout the overture. The original title to Beaumarchais' play, "La Folle Journée" ("the crazy day"), is a perfect description of the music here. Moods shift like quicksilver, a comedic helter-skelter atmosphere prevails, and there is no rest. At one point, Mozart had considered adding a contrasting slow tune for oboe but deleted the idea, preferring instead a seemingly unstructured outpouring of nervous energy. Listen for the prominence and independence of the winds, a particularly unusual compositional choice for the late 18th century, as the overture races to a rollicking finish.

### **Piano Concerto No.23 in A major, K.488**

#### **WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

*Last performed February 26, 2005 with Larry Rachleff conducting and soloist Alon Goldstein. In addition to a solo piano, this piece is scored for flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns and strings.*

Mozart's frivolous spending habits consistently placed him in financial difficulties, and he often found himself in desperate need of opportunities to concertize for wealthy patrons. Fortunately, he possessed a genius and a talent that allowed him to do so and, in the process, pen some of the most significant piano concertos in history.

All 27 of Mozart's piano concerti are justifiably deemed masterpieces, but Nos. 23 and 24 (which Mozart most likely imagined that no one but himself

would ever perform) are considered by many to be his best. It is our good luck that publishers recognized their worth after his untimely death and had the good sense to publish them for future generations to enjoy.

Mozart took full advantage of the relatively recent advent of the piano to catapult the form of the solo concerto to new heights of expressive possibilities. The sonority and tonal weight of the piano make for an equal partner to the orchestra, thus allowing Mozart (and others) to fully develop a sense of dramatic interplay between soloist and orchestra.

Dramatic interplay was, by now, second nature to Mozart. He had written quite a number of operas, the most recent of which – *The Marriage of Figaro* – enjoyed riotous success. Mozart's innovative decision to omit trumpets and timpani, and to replace oboes with clarinets, adds to this concerto's unique sense of drama. Despite the bright key choice of A major, the overall mood is both dark and intimate. But the key of A major has some singular acoustic properties as well, which Mozart well understood and exploited. After hearing the graceful lyricism of the concerto's opening themes played by the orchestra, listen for the subtle sympathetic vibrations drawn from the open strings as the soloist restates them.

The second movement, *Adagio*, is the only music Mozart ever wrote in the key of F#-minor, and it is some of the most poignant and pensive music Mozart would ever compose. Listen for the deeply expressive wind writing, pregnant pauses, an arching second theme that evokes a prolonged sigh, and a delicate interplay between the soloist and orchestra.

In the final movement Mozart decides that we've looked inward long enough, and it's time to enjoy a good romp. Here, all the musicians on stage engage in a game of harmonic "tag," taking the listener through unexpected key changes as themes race from one section to the other. Finally, an exciting bass drone fuels our anticipation for a satisfying ending, while the piano soars and plummets in exuberant cries of joy.

## **Symphony No.25 in G major, K. 183 (with an introduction by Mozart) - I. *Adagio maestoso - Allegro con spirito***

**MICHAEL HAYDN** (1737-1806)

*This is a RI Philharmonic Orchestra premiere. This piece is scored for flute, two oboes, two horns and strings.*

While Johann Michael Haydn was cutting his teeth as a composer, the symphony, as a form, was developing from mere instrumental interludes for opera and theater to the grand form we know and love today. Five years younger than his brother Franz Joseph Haydn, Johann Michael was not only an eyewitness to this bit of genre bending, he contributed to it. A gifted young musician, he started contributing to the family coffers at the age of 12 as a substitute organist at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, where occasional performances of his original preludes and fantasies became the talk of the town. At the age of 23 he was named music director of the Großwardein Orchestra, and proceeded to compose prolifically - both sacred and secular music - producing a body of work that was largely regarded as every bit as good as that of his more famous brother. After a notable performance of his music at Mirabell Castle in Salzburg, he was quickly engaged as the music director at the Salzburg court, a position he occupied until his

death. It was there that he met, and impressed, Mozart.

Of Michael Haydn's almost 150 instrumental works (not to mention hundreds of other choral and liturgical works), 41 of them were symphonies. Haydn's 25th symphony was, for a time, mistakenly attributed to Mozart because the latter had (in a nod of respect) added an introduction to the symphony and included it in a concert of his own music in Linz in 1783. It was until 1907 that the mistake was discovered, and the work was reattributed to its rightful composer. But Mozart's introduction - an Adagio maestoso in triple time that ends on a lingering, unresolved chord - added such a compelling touch of grace and pathos to the work that it is rarely performed without it today.

## **Symphony No.38 in D major, K.504 (Prague)** **WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

*Last performed March 15, 2003 with Larry Rachleff conducting. This piece is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.*

Looking to distance himself from the snobbishness and political intrigues of Vienna in 1786, Mozart decided to hit the road and take *The Marriage of Figaro* to Prague. The opera caught on like wildfire, and the people of this intensely musical city never looked back. Even today, nearly a quarter of the concerts that take place daily in the Czech capital include something written by Mozart. It's almost a law.

Even before he and his wife first entered the city gates, Mozart's reputation preceded him. The customs officer on duty, after looking at the composer's passport, asked if he was the genius behind *Figaro*.

The opera was such a success that the opera manager, Pasquale Bondini, commissioned a new opera from him, which was to become *Don Giovanni*. He returned to Prague less than a year later, with not one but two new scores under his arm: the nearly completed new opera, and a fully completed new symphony, nicknamed the "Prague." He took up lodgings in a residence where today a plaque proclaiming "V tomto domě bydlel Mozart v roce 1787" ("In this house lived Mozart in the year 1787") proudly hangs. He also spent fruitful time finishing up *Don Giovanni* as a guest in a charming villa known as Bertramka, where he would, in fact, spend many happy days in the coming years. Bertramka is now a cherished museum dedicated to the composer's memory. *Don Giovanni* premiered to wild acclaim in October of that year, and went on to be such a success that he lived on income from its performances for the rest of his days (though it never quite solved all of his considerable financial woes).

Like the piano concerto, the "Prague" symphony is in three movements (rather than four, which had become the vogue for symphonies in that day). During his time there, Mozart had discovered that the people of Prague preferred them that way, and so he took pains to give the good people what they wanted. This symphony is also one of the few that feature a slow introduction to the first movement, a common practice for Haydn but rare for Mozart. From a stately and dignified Adagio that gives due deference to the city's leaders, Mozart moves to an *Allegro* that sparkles with all the fun that Czech audiences had come to expect from their idol.

In the *Andante* second movement, listen again for the masterful treatment

Mozart gives the woodwinds. In his hands (and ears) the winds no longer simply provide color to the orchestra, but are now a crucial part of its beating heart. Slipping deftly between moments of sweetness and melancholy, repose and urgency, Mozart achieves an almost incomprehensible balance between delicacy and depth.

Then, in a nod to the Bohemian craze for all things *Figaro*, Mozart opens the Finale of the symphony with a clever echo from one of its popular arias, and uses it as a springboard from which to launch the entire movement. Mozart keeps things delightfully off kilter with insistent syncopations and a relentless invention that foreshadows Beethoven. In the words of one contemporary concertgoer, "*the very soul is carried to sublime heights.*"

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## ***Beethoven's Fifth!***

Friday, May 1, 2026, 6:30pm

José Luis Gomez, conductor

**SIMON**

*Fate Now Conquers*

**R. STRAUSS**

*Death and Transfiguration, TrV 158, op.24*

**BEETHOVEN**

Symphony No.5 in C minor, op.67

*I. Allegro con brio*

*II. Andante con moto*

*III. Allegro*

*IV. Allegro*

You are invited to join José Luis Gomez when he returns to the stage for a brief conversation immediately following the concert.



The Rhode Island Philharmonic is funded in part by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and private funders.

Mr. Gomez appears by arrangement with Arabella Arts.



# JOSÉ LUIS GOMEZ

## Conductor

The Venezuelan-born, Spanish conductor José Luis Gomez was catapulted to international attention when he won First Prize at the International Sir Georg Solti Conductors' Competition in 2010 in Frankfurt. Gomez's electrifying presence, talent, creativity, and energy quickly earned him admiration among the Frankfurt Radio Symphony

Orchestra's musicians and their music director Paavo Jarvi, immediately launching his conducting career.

Music Director of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra since 2016, Gomez has consistently crafted compelling programs, many of which are juxtaposed with lesser-known composers from South America whom he champions, expanding and enriching the orchestra's repertoire. He's worked diligently to provide innovative and engaging outreach activities and education projects, as well as new commissions.

Recent and upcoming highlights include appearances with the Flanders Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, D.C.), conducting a new piece by Paquito D'Rivera performed by Yo-Yo Ma, which resulted in an immediate re-invitation, Rhode Island Philharmonic, Indianapolis Symphony, Houston Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Omaha Symphony, Charleston Symphony, Nashville Symphony, Symphony San Jose, Las Vegas Philharmonic, Puerto Rico Symphony, New Zealand Symphony, Edmonton Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería, Orquesta Sinfónica Brasileira, Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, and Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional del Perú. Among past and future engagements in Europe are the RTVE National Symphony Orchestra, in Madrid, Frankfurt Radio Orchestra (HR), Weimar Staatskapelle, Royal Scottish National, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, George Enescu Philharmonic, Hamburg Symphony, Estonian National Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y Leon, Orquesta Filarmónica de Gran Canaria, Orquesta Sinfónica de la Región de Murcia, Orchestra Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano, Sinfonia Varsovia, SWR Symphonieorchester Stuttgart, orchestra of the Komische Oper Berlin, and the Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife.

Equally at home in operatic repertoire, Gómez has led performances of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* and Puccini's *La bohème* at the Frankfurt Opera, Rossini's *La Cenerentola* at Stuttgart Opera, Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* in Tokyo at the New National Theatre, *Don Carlo and Norma* at The State Opera in Tbilisi, Georgia, *La Traviata* in concert with Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Cavalleria Rusticana* with the Teatro Sociale di Como and a special Zarzuela Gala at Opera de Tenerife, where he returns for Gounod's *Romeo & Juliet* in 2025/26. In 2023/24 he conducted *La bohème* at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and Teatro di Coccia in Novara, where he will return for *La Traviata* this summer. This summer he also returns to the Wolf Trap for a production of Bizet's *Carmen*.



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## Beethoven's Fifth!

Saturday, May 2, 2026, 7:30pm

Sponsored by The Winoker Family

José Luis Gomez, conductor

**SIMON**

*Fate Now Conquers*

**R. STRAUSS**

*Death and Transfiguration, TrV 158, op.24*

I N T E R M I S S I O N

**BEETHOVEN**

Symphony No.5 in C minor, op.67

*I. Allegro con brio*

*II. Andante con moto*

*III. Allegro*

*IV. Allegro*

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Mr. Gomez appears by arrangement with Arabella Arts.

## WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE THE SHOW PARALLEL EVENTS

# 1808

## Beethoven

### Symphony No. 5



#### MUSIC

Spohr  
Clarinet Concerto No.1



#### ART

Goya  
*The Third of May, 1808*



#### LITERATURE

Blake  
*Milton*



#### HISTORY

Tsar Alexander I of Russia proclaims Finland a part of Russia.

# 1889

## R. Strauss

### Death and Transfiguration



#### MUSIC

Mahler  
*Das Lied von der Erde*



#### ART

Matisse  
*Dance (I)*



#### LITERATURE

Baum  
*The Road to Oz*



#### HISTORY

Louis Blériot is the first man to fly across the English Channel.

# 2019

## Simon

### Fate Now Conquers



#### MUSIC

Chin  
*Subito con forza*



#### ART

Plensa  
*Water's Soul*



#### LITERATURE

Erdrich  
*The Night Watchman*



#### HISTORY

The World Health Organization declares the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic.

## BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH!

Ruth Reinhardt has chosen to cap her first season as Music Director with a program that bristles, like the world itself, with enormous contrasts.

While Maestro Reinhardt has breathed new life into our beloved orchestra during her inaugural season as Music Director, she has stepped aside for the season closer in order to bring a new life of her own into the world. Tonight will be a celebration of both momentous events.

Composed for the Philadelphia Orchestra's planned performance of a complete cycle of Beethoven's works during his 250th anniversary year in 2020, Carlos Simon's *Fate Now Conquers* is a contemporary reflection of the German master's Seventh Symphony. Expressively orchestrated, this compact work reimagines the rhythmic and harmonic components Beethoven used in a new context, wordlessly posing a timeless question: Do we control our fate—or does it control us? In a world grappling with uncertainty, Simon's music reminds us of the power of persistence, imagination, and the unyielding desire to create meaning—even in the midst of turmoil.

Richard Strauss explored the very same question in his master tone poem *Death and Transfiguration*. Drawing on his distinctive and freely-developing musical style, Strauss follows the thoughts of a dying man, from childhood innocence to the struggles of his manhood, and from the attainment of worldly goals to the longed-for transfiguration “from the infinite reaches of heaven.”

Beethoven's musical wrestling with fate, while unquestionably brilliant, met with a much less auspicious beginning than either of the other two works on this program. On the fated evening of the premiere in Vienna, the composer's ambition seemed to have gotten the better of him. He had programmed a marathon event lasting over four hours, in a freezing hall. Making matters worse, the woefully under-rehearsed orchestra had to restart due to a derailing mistake, only to watch in horror as Beethoven's awkward conducting led to both a toppling of lamps and the accidental smacking of an unfortunate stagehand in the face.

But great art easily overshadows such mishaps, and Beethoven's fifth symphony was quickly launched on its way to immortality.

### ***Fate Now Conquers***

**CARLOS SIMON** (1986- )

*Last performed November 12, 2022 with Kensho Watanabe conducting. This piece is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.*

Carlos Simon was born in Washington, D.C. and raised in Atlanta, GA, as the son of an African-American preacher. Gospel music was a pervasive influence in his formation as an American composer. Gospel music's improvisational aspect was especially important to him. At the age of ten, Simon began to play keyboard accompaniments in his father's church, thus formally entering into the world of gospel music. As he grew older and developed his style as a composer, classical music masters, such as Beethoven and Brahms, became definite influences as well.

Simon attended Morehouse College as well as Georgia State University, earning degrees before embarking on doctoral studies at the University of Michigan. Along the way, he attained professional experience as keyboardist and musical director for rhythm and blues artists Angie Stone and Jennifer Holliday. In 2019, with doctoral degree in hand, Simon was appointed assistant professor in Georgetown University's Department of Performing Arts. This position became a springboard for several commissions, awards and honors, notably Composer-in-Residence at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2021. Many honors and commissions for music have followed.

Simon introduces us to his *Fate Now Conquers* in the following words:

This piece was inspired by a journal entry from Ludwig van Beethoven's notebook, written in 1815:  
*Iliad. The Twenty-Second Book:*

*But Fate now conquers; I am hers; and yet not she shall share In my renown; that life is left to every noble spirit.  
And that some great deed shall beget that all lives shall inherit.*

Using the beautifully fluid harmonic structure of the second movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, I have composed musical gestures that are representative of the unpredictable ways of fate. Jolting stabs, coupled with an agitated groove with every persona. Frenzied arpeggios in the strings that morph into an ambiguous cloud of free-flowing running passages depict the uncertainty of life that hovers over us.

We know that Beethoven strived to overcome many obstacles in his life and documented his aspirations to prevail despite his ailments. Whatever the specific reason for including this particularly profound passage from the *Iliad*, in the end, it seems that Beethoven relinquished himself to fate. Fate now conquers.

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## ***Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration)*, TrV 158, op.24 RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)**

*Last performed May 2, 1992 with Eleazar de Carvalho conducting. This piece is scored for three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, two harps and strings.*

When Strauss introduced his youthful Don Juan to the world, he had almost completed his next symphonic poem, *Death and Transfiguration*. Its literary connection was the outline of a poem by the composer's friend, Alexander Ritter, in which Death is conceived as both destroyer and liberator. In the poem, the dying man, racked by pain, has fitful glimpses of his childhood and youth. The ambitions and ideals of his younger years pass before him. Death, when it comes, marks the beginning of that for which he had hoped all along. Death, having delivered him

from mortality and its sufferings, turns out to be nothing less than a transfiguration – a realization, fulfillment and culmination of all those dreams and longings he had striven for in his earthly life. Stemming from Biblical sources, his personal apocalyptic visions are a part of the Judeo-Christian heritage firing Strauss's youthful imagination.

His approach to actual composition, however, was cool and detached. Claude Debussy wrote rather disparagingly of Strauss's self-admitted dependence on literary programs for his symphonic poems: "To make a symphonic poem he (Strauss) takes any idea that occurs to him, thus proving himself to be an extraordinary illusionist who could give points to the most adept of Fakirs... the frequent misunderstandings that occur between composer and listener will certainly not be dissipated by reading those little guide-books in which the letters of the alphabet represent parts of picture puzzles which you try to solve during the performance."

Debussy was right, of course. Strauss, the self-assured tone painter, joked that the discerning listener might be able to distinguish which of Don Juan's victims was a redhead or which glass of beer was a Pilsner! But the reason why his symphonic poems remain popular is not because of any graphic musical rendering of objects, character, plot or story, but because the music itself retains its own vibrancy and dramatic strength above and beyond the narrative which inspired it. There is no doubt that in the tone poems, the musical images are extraordinarily rich, colorful and evocative, with the composer revealing himself as absolute master of the resources of the post-Wagnerian romantic orchestra. In doing so, Strauss stretched symphonic form to the extent that it was malleable for his own expressive and dramatic needs, without extending or bending it so far that his tone poems become shapeless.

Debussy felt that the program behind *Death and Transfiguration* was superfluous with its "ever recurring temptation for verbose explanations. Music simple and unadorned suffices." Yet he himself could not entirely avoid a descriptive thrust when writing that the opening suggested "the atmosphere of the sepulcher in which alarming larvae appear to move," and in which "the soul engages in terrible struggles, endeavoring to free itself from the vile body which still holds it to the earth."

This opening is in fact Strauss's "De Profundis," with the first of his two principal themes emerging lugubriously from the nether regions. This later will become forceful, surging and aggressive as it wages unremitting warfare with the romantic, tenderly lyrical second theme first heard so hauntingly on the oboe. Incredible tension is generated as Strauss stretches and contrasts these themes. To be sure, there are moments of respite when the conflict is temporarily postponed. But the combat has to reach feverish depths of dissipation and dissolution before the "transfiguration" theme is finally announced. Even Debussy, ever critical of musical storytelling, here speaks of "the Transfiguration taking place before the eyes of the public, without any trickery beyond the great chords of C major. It is the key which most perfectly conveys the impression of eternity."

The conclusion does indeed have a magisterial serenity to it, as the music modulates and broadens into the final image of transfiguration, then softens to a warm glow full of peace and contentment.

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## Symphony No.5 in C minor, op.67

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1824)

Last performed January 22, 2022 with Nathaniel Efthimiou conducting. This piece is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings.

Perhaps the biggest challenge when listening to a live performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is to listen to it as if you're hearing it for the first time. But the effort is worth it.

At its core, Beethoven's Fifth is an experimental symphony. The opening is strange, with no clear harmony for quite some time. What key are we really in? But that question soon takes a back seat in the face of even more pressing matters. A revolutionary at heart, Beethoven eschews traditional melody to give this iconic work its distinctive sense of drama, but relies instead on visceral rhythm and imaginative structural details. In this way, he was a hundred years ahead of his time.

The famous four-note motif at the opening serves as the foundation for not just the first movement but, in fact, for the entire symphony. From it, the composer wrings every musical possibility imaginable, endowing the entire work with a stunning coherence. With the stroke of his pen, Beethoven gives history a new idea: even the most minute musical gesture can give rise to a masterpiece of enormous scope. Listen for the startling and lyrically expressive oboe cadenza (about four minutes in) that abruptly halts the torrent of rhythm. This delicious moment gives even greater meaning to the motif as it returns like a relentless hammer in the coda that follows.

In the second movement- *Andante con moto* – Beethoven elegantly spins a series of four variations on two main ideas. Violas and cellos start by venturing into an unexpected key (A-flat major), with one of the composer most memorable melodies. A contrasting, more assertive theme in an equally unexpected key (C major) is then offered by the clarinets, flute and bassoons. Beethoven masterfully weaves double variations on both of these ideas, while never losing sight of the underlying rhythmic energy of the motif from the first movement.

The third movement takes the (then) traditional idea of a dance movement and whips it up into an enigmatic *scherzo*. Opening with a mysterious arpeggio in the low strings, unison horns soon interrupt to remind us what this bold symphony is all about. Once the matter is settled, the cellos and double basses launch into a ferociously difficult bit of counterpoint with the tenacity of feral animal. Ultimately, a truncated version of the opening returns, but even softer now, setting the stage for a moment of true musical magic.

Beethoven bridges the transition into the last movement with a delicate solo passage in the first violins, supported by gently throbbing basses and timpani, and sustained pianissimo notes in the seconds and violas. Then, in one of the most unnerving and tension-building passages in all the literature, a snake-like melody slithers and builds until, in a moment of unbridled joy, the trombones, contrabassoon, and piccolo (instruments usually reserved only for the military or operas back in the day) finally make their long-awaited entrance. Echoes of "La Liberté" - a French revolutionary hymn that Beethoven certainly knew - cry out, and the whole orchestra responds with familiar music that is now made new by its context. All hints of darkness are expelled. At the end, 54 measures of emphatic C major chords mark the completion of the journey from strife to triumph.



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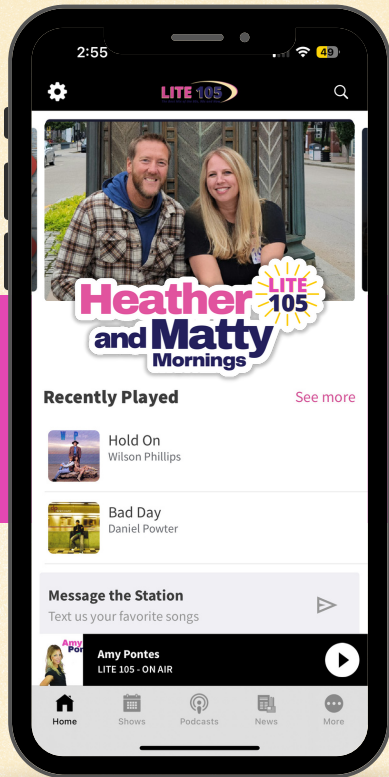


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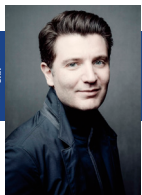
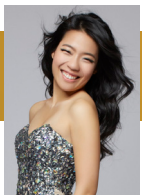
Arturo Puentes as Don Pacheco in 2024's  
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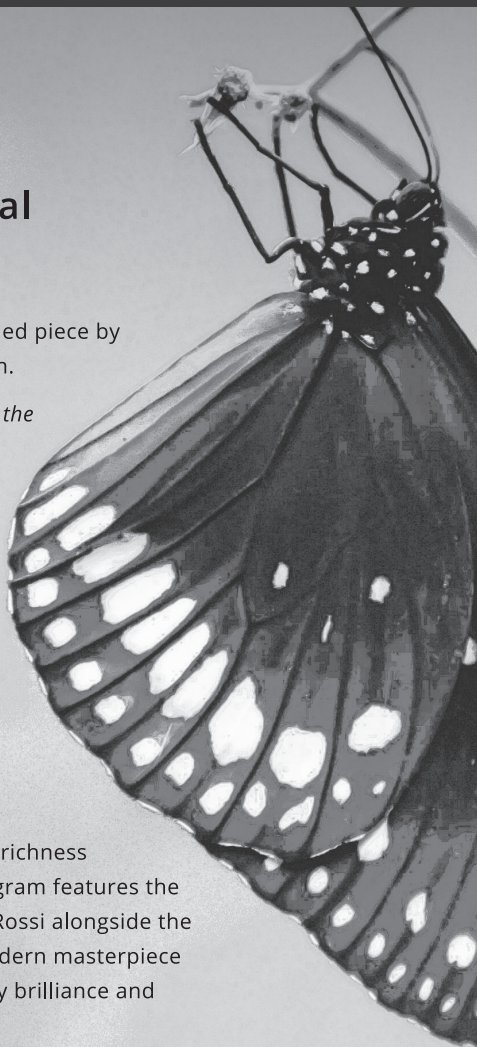
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## Welcome to Providence - Your Gateway to Creativity and Culture!

On behalf of the Providence Tourism Council, we extend an invitation to explore our creative capital, where culture, history and creativity converge to offer an unforgettable experience. Immerse yourself in our thriving arts scene, indulge in culinary delights and wander through our historic neighborhoods while you uncover the rich heritage that shapes our city's identity.

Congratulations to the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School as it works to enrich and transform our community through great music performance and education. Programs like this highlight the many local and national artists, musicians and cultural organizations that contribute to the vibrancy of our creative capital.

As a proud season sponsor, there is much to celebrate as we get to experience this year's concerts, guest artists and conductors that will usher in unique and diverse programs.

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The Rhode Island Philharmonic holds a unique place in our state's cultural heart, and we are honored to help it thrive.

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