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—The New York Times

Feb 2
HERTZ HALL, BERKELEY

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With a reputation for exceptional refinement and ensemble cohesion over its celebrated 40-year history, the European quartet returns to Cal Performances for the first time in more than a quarter century with a formidable program of works by Haydn and Robert Schumann.



Feb 23
HERTZ HALL, BERKELEY

Brentano String Quartet



At the vanguard of American chamber music for more than 30 years, the distinguished quartet is known for stunning rapport and a rich, full ensemble sound. The program includes an early Beethoven quartet, Brahms' third quartet, and a new work by esteemed Chinese-born American composer Lei Liang.

Mar 2
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Vienna Philharmonic
Yannick Nézet-Séguin, *conductor*

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Mar 5–7
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SF SYMPHONY





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SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY EDITORIAL

Steven Ziegler, *Director* • Benjamin Pesetsky, *Associate Director*
Hayley Kellner, *Project Manager*

December 2024

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Encore—Connecting Arts, Culture and Community.

WELCOME


Cody Pickens

One of the remarkable things about an orchestra is its ability to collaborate with artists across various mediums. We are always eager to explore opportunities that push the San Francisco Symphony in fresh, exciting directions.

This December, our concerts exemplify the range of these collaborations and showcase the incredible versatility of our musicians. You'll witness the Symphony team up with high-flying Cirque performers in Holiday Cirque (December 2), expanding the realm of what's possible on our Davies Symphony Hall stage. The annual Deck the Hall concert (December 8) unites the Orchestra with dancers, singers, acrobats, and choruses for a festive, family-friendly holiday celebration. Co-hosted by Edwin Outwater and Peaches Christ, Holiday Gaiety (December 13) brings together the Symphony and dynamic performers from the worlds of drag, cabaret, and theater for a spirited evening.

We're also thrilled to collaborate with pop luminaries in Colors of Christmas (December 3-4) and Holidays with Boyz II Men (December 17-18). And we continue to expand our film with live orchestra series with performances of *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (December 12 & 14) and *Elf* (December 19–21).

Our holiday season also highlights two of the Symphony's outstanding ensembles: The SF Symphony Youth Orchestra, under new director Radu Paponiu, presents its annual performance of *Peter and the Wolf* (December 15), while our amazing SF Symphony Chorus joins the Orchestra and leading lights of the early music world for performances of Handel's *Messiah* (December 6-7). And don't miss our extraordinary brass and percussion musicians in Holiday Brass (December 11).

December is one of the busiest times for the Symphony, yet we are continually energized by the amazing collaborations that come to life on our stage. We look forward to welcoming you to Davies Symphony Hall and are honored to be part of your holiday celebrations.

Priscilla B. Geeslin
Chair, San Francisco Symphony

Community Connections

Advocating for Real Change

Sometimes, those closest to a problem are closest to its solution. That's why the **San Francisco Marin Food Bank** partnered with neighbors who've experienced hunger to form the grassroots **Food Policy and Advocacy Coalition** (Food PAC).

Meet Greer, a single mother, student, and Marin resident who's faced food insecurity throughout her life. When she joined the group, Greer identified CalFresh (formerly food stamps) as needing change. "When your benefits get messed up because of a paperwork issue or a change in caseworker, it impacts you in a lot of ways," she shared. "I've had to take days off work, leave my child at childcare longer. It adds so much stress to your life."

CalFresh is one of the most effective tools for ending hunger, but improvement is needed, including expanding enrollment of eligible people who don't receive benefits. That's why the Food Bank helped lead advocacy efforts to pass AB 518. The bill requires California to develop ways to identify those eligible but not participating in CalFresh and take culturally appropriate steps to enroll them.

There is more to do and becoming an advocate is motivating for Greer. "Having to utilize food banks in different ways throughout my life, I want to be able to help and give back in whatever way I can."

Learn more at sfmfoodbank.org.


Greer, Food PAC advocate

The San Francisco Symphony thrives on collaboration, and we're proud to work with the most creative, innovative groups and individuals shaping the Bay Area today.



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ESA-PEKKA SALONEN

MUSIC DIRECTOR



Known as both a composer and conductor, Esa-Pekka Salonen is the Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony. He is the Conductor Laureate of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he was Music Director from 1992 until 2009, the Philharmonia Orchestra, where he was Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor from 2008 until 2021, and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. As a member of the faculty of Los Angeles's Colburn School, he directs the preprofessional Negaunee Conducting Program. Salonen cofounded, and until 2018 served as the Artistic Director of, the annual Baltic Sea Festival, which invites celebrated artists to promote unity and ecological awareness among the countries around the Baltic Sea.

Salonen has an extensive and varied recording career. Releases with the San Francisco Symphony include recordings of Kaija Saariaho's opera *Adriana Mater*, Bartók's piano concertos, as well as spatial audio recordings of several Ligeti compositions. Other recent recordings include Strauss's Four Last Songs, Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin* and *Dance Suite*, and a 2018 box set of Mr. Salonen's complete Sony recordings. His compositions appear on releases from Sony, Deutsche Grammophon, and Decca; his Piano Concerto, Violin Concerto, and Cello Concerto all appear on recordings he conducted himself.

Esa-Pekka Salonen is the recipient of many major awards. Most recently, he was awarded the 2024 Polar Music Prize. In 2020, he was appointed an honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) by the Queen of England.

Cody Pickens

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

Esa-Pekka Salonen, Music Director

Michael Tilson Thomas, *Music Director Laureate*
Herbert Blomstedt, *Conductor Laureate*
Jenny Wong, *Chorus Director*
Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, *Resident Conductor of Engagement and Education*
Radu Paponiu, *San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra Wattis Foundation Music Director*
Aleksandra Melaniuk · Mert Yalniz, *Salonen Fellows, Colburn School of Music, Negaunee Conducting Program*
Vance George, *Chorus Director Emeritus*

FIRST VIOLINS

Alexander Barantschik, *Concertmaster*
Naoum Blinder Chair
Wyatt Underhill, *Acting Associate Concertmaster*
San Francisco Symphony Foundation Chair
Jeremy Constant, *Acting Assistant Concertmaster*
75th Anniversary Chair
Mariko Smiley, *Acting Assistant Concertmaster*
Paula & John Gambs Second Century Chair
Melissa Kleinbart
Katharine Hanrahan Chair
Yun Chu
Naomi Kazama Hull
In Sun Jang
Jeein Kim
Isaac Stern Chair
Suzanne Leon
Leor Maltinski
Sarn Oliver
Florin Parvulescu
Victor Romasevich
Catherine Van Hoesen
Catherine A. Mueller Chair
Sarah Knutson†

*On leave
†Substitute Musician

The San Francisco Symphony string section uses revolving seating. Players listed in alphabetical order change seats periodically.

SECOND VIOLINS

Dan Carlson, *Principal*
Dinner & Swig Families Chair
Jessie Fellows, *Acting Associate Principal*
Audrey Avis Aasen-Hull Chair
Olivia Chen, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Kelly Leon-Pearce
The Eucalyptus Foundation Second Century Chair
Raushan Akhmedyarova
David Chernyavsky
John Chisholm
Cathryn Down
Darlene Gray
Stan & Lenora Davis Chair
Kum Mo Kim
Polina Sedukh
Chen Zhao
Yuna Lee†

VIOLAS

Jonathan Vinocour, *Principal*
Yun Jie Liu, *Associate Principal*
Katie Kadarauch, *Assistant Principal*
Katarzyna Bryla
Joanne E. Harrington & Lorry I. Lokey Second Century Chair
Gina Cooper
David Gaudry
David Kim
Christina King
Leonid Plashinov-Johnson
Nanci Severance
Adam Smyla
Matthew Young

CELLOS

Rainer Eudeikis, *Principal*
Philip S. Boone Chair
Anne Richardson, *Associate Principal*
Peter & Jacqueline Hoefer Chair
Amos Yang, *Assistant Principal*
Karel & Lida Urbanek Chair
Davis You
Lyman & Carol Casey Second Century Chair
Barbara Andres
The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation Second Century Chair
Barbara Bogatin
Phyllis Blair Cello Chair
Vacant
Gary & Kathleen Heidenreich Second Century Chair
Sébastien Gingras
Penelope Clark Second Century Chair
David Goldblatt
Christine & Pierre Lamond Second Century Chair
Shu-Yi Pai†
Elizabeth C. Peters Cello Chair

BASSES

Scott Pingel, *Principal*
Daniel G. Smith, *Associate Principal*
Stephen Tramontozzi, *Assistant Principal*
Richard & Rhoda Goldman Chair
Bowen Ha
Lawrence Metcalf Second Century Chair
Charles Chandler
Chris Gilbert
Brian Marcus
Orion Miller
S. Mark Wright

Lead support for the San Francisco Symphony's string sections in the 2024–25 season is provided by Iris and Michael Chan.
Second Century Chairs are supported in part by the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Foundation, ensuring the ongoing artistic excellence of the San Francisco Symphony's string sections.
Alexander Barantschik plays the 1742 Guarneri del Gesù violin, on loan from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.
Radu Paponiu's appointment as Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra is generously supported by the Paul L. and Phyllis Wattis Endowment Fund.

The San Francisco Symphony is among the most adventurous and innovative arts institutions in the United States, celebrated for its artistic excellence, creative performance concepts, award-winning recordings, and standard-setting education and community engagement programs. Since it was established in 1911, the Symphony has a grown in acclaim under a succession of distinguished music directors: Henry Hadley, Alfred Hertz, Basil Cameron, Issay Dobrowen, Pierre Monteux, Enrique Jordá, Josef Krips, Seiji Ozawa, Edo de Waart, Herbert Blomstedt, and Michael Tilson Thomas. Now led by the visionary conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen, who completes his tenure as the Symphony's 12th Music Director at the end of the 2024–25 season, the San Francisco Symphony is redefining the orchestral landscape for the modern era. The Symphony is deeply committed to nurturing the next generation of musicians and music lovers through a comprehensive range of educational programs. These include Adventures in Music and Music and Mentors, which serve more than 25,000 San Francisco public school students annually; interactive youth and family concerts; heritage events; and the prestigious, tuition-free San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra. With a reputation for artistic daring and a dedication to excellence, innovation, and community engagement, the San Francisco Symphony continues to shape the future of orchestral music, making a lasting impact on the cultural fabric of San Francisco and the world. For more information, visit sfsymphony.org.

FLUTES
Yubeen Kim, *Principal*
Caroline H. Hume Chair
Blair Francis Paponiu, *Associate Principal*
Catherine & Russell Clark Chair
Linda Lukas
Alfred S. & Dede Wilsey Chair
Catherine Payne, *Piccolo*
The Rainbow Piccolo Chair

OBOES
Eugene Izotov, *Principal*
Edo de Waart Chair
James Button, *Associate Principal*
Brooks Fisher†
Dr. William D. Clinite Chair
Russ de Luna, *English Horn*
Joseph & Pauline Scafidi Chair

CLARINETS
Carey Bell, *Principal*
William R. & Gretchen B. Kimball Chair
Matthew Griffith, *Associate Principal & E-flat Clarinet*
Yuhsin Galaxy Su
Jerome Simas, *Bass Clarinet*

BASSOONS
Vacant, *Principal*
Stephen Paulson, *Associate Principal*
Justin Cummings
Vacant, *Contrabassoon*

HORNS
Vacant, *Principal*
Vacant, *Associate Principal*
Jesse Clevenger†, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Jonathan Ring
Jessica Valeri
Chris Cooper†

Learn More: For more on the SF Symphony musicians, visit sfsymphony.org/musicians

TRUMPETS
Mark Inouye, *Principal*
William G. Irwin Charity Foundation Chair
Aaron Schuman, *Associate Principal*
Peter Pastreich Chair
Guy Piddington
Ann L. & Charles B. Johnson Chair
Jeff Biancalana

TROMBONES
Timothy Higgins, *Principal*
Robert L. Samter Chair
Nicholas Platoff*, *Associate Principal*
Paul Welcomer
Christopher Bassett, *Bass Trombone*

TUBA
Jeffrey Anderson, *Principal*
James Irvine Chair

HARP
Katherine Siochi, *Principal*

TIMPANI
Edward Stephan, *Principal*
Marcia & John Goldman Chair
Vacant, *Assistant Principal*

PERCUSSION
Jacob Nissly, *Principal*
Stan Muncy
James Lee Wyatt III

LIBRARIANS
Margo Kieser, *Principal*
Nancy & Charles Geschke Chair
Matt Holland-Gray, *Assistant*
Matthew Searing, *Assistant*

Tim Wilson, *Stage Manager*
Michael "Barney" Barnard,
Stage Technician
Jon Johannsen, *Recording Engineer/ Stage Technician*

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY CHORUS
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SOPRANOS
Morgan Balfour
Cheryl Cain*
Phoebe Chee
Tonia D'Amelio†
Cara Gabrielson
Ellen Leslie
Jennifer Mitchell
Aimée Puentes, *In Memoriam*
Natalia Salemmo

ALTOS
Terry A. Alvord
Margaret (Peg) Lisi
Brielle Marina Neilson
Leandra Ramm
Dr. Meghan Spyker
Kyle S. Tingzon
Merilyn Telle Vaughn
Heidi L. Waterman

TENORS
Seth Brenzel
Elliott JG Encarnación
Sam Faustine
Kevin Gibbs
Michael Jankosky*
Benjamin Liupaogo
Joachim Luis
Darita Seth†
Jack Wilkins

BASSES
Adam Cole
Harlan J. Hays
Clayton Moser
Matthew C. Peterson
Chung-Wai Soong
Michael Taylor
David Varnum
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CONDUCTOR AND TEACHER

Radu Paponiu joins the SF Symphony Youth Orchestra

BY BENJAMIN PESETSKY

ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON in early October, the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra convened for their third rehearsal of the season. Radu Paponiu, the YO's newly appointed Wattis Foundation Music Director, took the Davies Symphony Hall stage with Harry Jo, a high-school violinist who won the 2023–24 Concerto Competition on his second instrument, alto saxophone. At the downbeat, they ripped into Takashi Yoshimatsu's *Cyber Bird* Concerto, a jazz-influenced Japanese work from 1994. The saxophone, brilliant and a bit cheeky, wove over a rapid drumbeat laid down by the percussion section. The strings joined in a swell, responding to the soloist's lines, and sharp piano chords urged it all along. After an impressive read-through, Paponiu flipped back to work on the very first note.

"No hesitation! All together!" he tells the double basses, who ground the first bar with a low pizzicato C. What first sounded like a racket of notes comes together as a collective snap on the second try. Then Paponiu turns to a cacophonous, free-jazz section that asks members of the orchestra to improvise. He works through it until the crescendo takes the right climactic shape.

After a break, the YO turns to an older, more familiar piece—Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. "D natural! Nothing else!" Paponiu reminds the players as they tune a chord. Then he talks briefly about the piece's history and how it should be felt. "We know from Tchaikovsky's letter that this is about anxiety," Paponiu says. "This is *tense*." In 1878 Tchaikovsky wrote a letter to his patron describing the Symphony's theme as "the sword of Damocles over our heads." The young musicians play the opening again, more focused this time on the composer's emotional intent.

For the last half hour of this special rehearsal, parents are

"Playing in a youth orchestra teaches you things that apply in everything you do," Paponiu says.

invited into the hall to hear a preview of what the orchestra has been working on. Though more than a month of rehearsals remain before the first concert, the YO already gives a polished take on Tchaikovsky's finale and Bernstein's Overture to *Candide*. Parents watching closely might have noticed Jacob Nissly, the SF Symphony's Principal Percussion, hovering in the back, advising a triangle-player. Several other Symphony musicians who serve as coaches for the YO could be spotted on stage and in the audience—a superabundance of expert mentors that music students hardly get anywhere else.

Founded in 1981, the SFSYO offers tuition-free training to more than 100 young musicians (ages 12–21) from across the Bay Area; its ranks are filled each year through competitive auditions. Many go on to professional careers—five members of the SF Symphony are even alumni. The SFSYO's first Music Director was Jahja Ling, followed by David Milnes, Leif Bjaland, Alasdair Neale, Edwin Outwater, Benjamin Shwartz, Donato Cabrera, Christian Reif, Daniel Stewart, and now Radu Paponiu, who has been appointed to a three-year term.

Paponiu hails from Romania, where he began playing violin at age seven. He first came to the United States in 2007 to join the Perlman Music Program near Long Island, and later studied violin at the Colburn School in Los Angeles and conducting at New England Conservatory in Boston. Most recently, he served as associate conductor of the Naples Philharmonic in Florida and music director of the Naples Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. He has also been music director of the Southwest Florida Symphony, a member of the conducting faculty at the Juilliard Pre-College, and has guest conducted in Europe and America. His wife, Blair Francis Paponiu, is the SF Symphony's Associate Principal Flute, holding the Catherine & Russell Clark Chair. They met in Naples, where she played before joining the SF Symphony in 2023.

Backstage at the end of rehearsal, Paponiu sat down for an interview.

What are your first impressions of the SFSYO?
Already I feel that when you have this kind of talent, there really is no ceiling to what we can achieve. Each week I can't wait for the next rehearsal to see how much further we will get.

Did you grow up playing in youth orchestras yourself?
I'm from a small town in Romania, but we had an art school with both painting and music. When I was nine, I joined the string orchestra there. I still remember being so excited, going to the first rehearsal, playing the first bar, and then being lost the rest of the time! But it was a huge inspiration because I loved the idea of not just practicing by myself, but going and playing with others. At 12 I moved to Bucharest to attend the George Enescu Music High School, and I played in the Central European Initiative Youth Orchestra each summer. Students from across the region would get together, rehearse for two weeks, and then tour Europe. While I was in college, I played in the American Youth Symphony in LA and was also an assistant conductor there. As it turns out, I've always been involved in a youth orchestra program, whether playing, coaching, or conducting.

What drew you to conducting?
I always loved the idea of studying the score and perhaps discovering something new. To this day, I find it so exciting to deal with some of the greatest works of art that humanity has created. Every time you open a score, there's something to see. And then whatever you learn, you can go and share with others.

How exactly does a conductor study a score?
Every conductor has a different way, and it changes with time, because once you become familiar with a piece, it's very different when you return to it. I was fortunate to play a lot of pieces on the violin before conducting them. But I do have a process of phrase analysis where I try to get into the composer's mind and understand how the piece is built. I think harmony is ultimately what gives the form. Then I ask, what did the composer really want to say? And what do I want to say?

Do you encourage students look at the full score? How should they approach it?
This is where the fun begins! It's not just learning your own part, but seeing how it fits with everyone else. Any sort of studying, you cannot go wrong. That's how I learned—just being every day in the score, asking questions. First, find your instrument and try to follow along. Then ask, is anyone playing the same line with me? You'll get a glimpse into what the composer was thinking.

As a string player, how did you learn to work with students who play other kinds of instruments?
Ever since I started, I've tried to say yes to every single thing I was asked to conduct. So I've gotten to work with woodwinds, contemporary groups with lots of percussion, and brass ensembles. It takes a lot of work to get that experience, but it's the most helpful way to learn about instruments and how to address their particular issues. And of course, the SFSYO has incredible access to the musicians of the San Francisco Symphony, and that makes a huge, huge difference!

How do you choose what pieces to play with the YO?
I like to have a path every year. Program to program, I'm thinking about difficulty and how it can increase a little bit. I also want to work on ensemble technique and listening, so I try to think of music that is really going to force us to do that. I think it's very important to have a progression throughout the season, and to start with repertoire that can teach a lot.

What are the biggest benefits of playing in a youth orchestra?
I really think it's one of the most amazing experiences you can have. It teaches you things that apply in everything you do. You need to have the responsibility and discipline to practice the music, and then bring it to rehearsal and create a positive experience for everybody. You really learn to work with others—sometimes you might love a musical idea and be happy to do it, and sometimes maybe you'd prefer to play it a little bit differently. But you have to try it both ways, and many times you'll change your mind and see it from a new angle.

Benjamin Pesetsky is Associate Director of Editorial for the San Francisco Symphony.

The San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra gives its annual performance of *Peter and the Wolf* on December 15.

News & Notes



Announcing the New SFSKids

The San Francisco Symphony has launched the next generation of its award-winning, free online music education resource, SFSKids.org.

The new website, which was created by Rolling Orange and features artwork and animations by Bay Area artist Jesse Hernandez, is designed to be a fun online music education resource for children ages 8–13. Students can use the website for self-directed learning, while teachers or parents can utilize it for group learning in the classroom, homework assignments, or cooperative learning projects.

SFSKids.org is accessible on desktop and mobile devices and is intended as a resource to support several of the learning targets outlined in music standards documents at national, state, and local levels. Active listening, responding to music, developing personal preferences, fostering awareness of the expressive characteristics in music, creating music, and making creative decisions about music are some of the music content areas the website supports.

The original SFSKids.org launched in March 2002 as one of the first music websites for children. The Symphony unveiled the second generation of the website in 2014. Since its debut, the site has reached more than five million users. The current SFSKids.org—the third iteration of the site—features an updated design and content to engage a new generation of users.

Lead sponsorship for SFSKids.org was provided by the Sakurako & William Fisher Family.



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Alexander Barantschik violin
Peter Wyrick cello
Anton Nel piano

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Violin Sonata No. 1 in D major, Opus 12, no.1 (ca. 1798)
- Allegro con brio
- Tema con Variazioni–Andante con moto
- Rondo–Allegro

Cello Sonata No. 1 in F major, Opus 5, no.1 (1796)
- Adagio sostenuto–Allegro
- Allegro vivace

Intermission

Piano Trio in E-flat major, Opus 70, no.2 (1808)
- Poco sostenuto–Allegro ma non troppo
- Allegretto
- Allegretto ma non troppo
- Finale: Allegro

This series showcases the 1742 Guarneri del Gesù violin on loan to Alexander Barantschik and the San Francisco Symphony from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Violin Sonata No. 1 in D major, Opus 12, no.1

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Baptized: December 17, 1770, in Bonn
Died: March 26, 1827, in Vienna

Work Composed: ca. 1798



Beethoven in 1801

Ludwig van Beethoven studied the violin as a young man in Bonn and spent a stint as an orchestral violist before moving to Vienna to seek his fortune as a pianist and composer. In his diary for the year 1794, he wrote of meeting three times a week with Schuppanzigh, quite possibly referring to lessons with Ignaz Schuppanzigh, the violinist who would champion many of his compositions, including the groundbreaking string quartets. Even if he didn't study violin with Schuppanzigh, he almost certainly did with Wenzel Krumpholz, who had been appointed violinist with the Vienna court orchestra following a period of service under Haydn at the Esterházy court. Beethoven was also active composing music with violin during those years, including an incomplete violin concerto in the early 1790s, two single-movement romances for violin and orchestra around the turn of the century, and many chamber pieces; by the time he got around to writing his famous D-major Violin Concerto, in 1806, he had completed all but the last of his 10 violin sonatas. Beethoven knew his way around a violin almost as well as he knew his way around a piano, a fact that is most happily put on display in his violin sonatas.

Typical of Classical violin sonatas, Beethoven identified his first set of three (Opus 12) as being written "for the Harpsichord or the Pianoforte with Violin." In many earlier sonatas, the violin often did play "second fiddle" to the keyboard instrument; indeed, many composers designed their sonatas so that the violin could be omitted with no deleterious effect. But with Beethoven that designation is little more than a remnant: in each of the three Opus 12 sonatas we find true dialogue between the violin and the piano. That surely characterizes the opening movement of the D-major sonata, where the conversation sometimes even grows to resemble confrontation, so strongly does Beethoven etch the dramatic roles his two protagonists play.

Of Beethoven's first set of sonatas, this is the only one to present a theme with variations as its second movement. It is a straightforward movement in which the violin and the piano embellish the simple, folk-like melody—though not at the same time, carefully keeping out of each other's way when it comes to elaborations. The finale is a buoyant rondo: but for a touch of syncopation in the principal theme one might imagine that Beethoven had lifted the melody from Mozart.

Antonio Salieri, the rather conservative imperial kapellmeister of Vienna to whom Beethoven had turned for coaching in vocal composition, received the dedication of the Opus 12 sonatas when they were published, and he may well have raised an eyebrow at some of their more daring passages. The critic of Leipzig's *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* certainly did. In June 1799 he found, "after having looked through these strange sonatas, overladen with difficulties, that after diligent and strenuous labor he [the critic] felt like a man who had hoped to make a promenade with a genial friend through a tempting forest and found himself barred every minute by inimical barriers, returning at last exhausted and without having had any pleasure." Perhaps such music is not for everybody, he suggests. "There are always many who love difficulties in invention and composition, what we might call perversities, and if they play these Sonatas with great precision they may derive delight in the music as well as an agreeable feeling of satisfaction. If Herr v. B. wished to deny himself a bit more and follow the course of nature he might, with his talent and industry, do a great deal for an instrument which he seems to have so wonderfully under his control." As it happened, Herr v. B did not so wish, and his Opus 12 sonatas stand not only as beacons of late Classicism but also as harbingers of the "course of nature" to come.

Cello Sonata No. 1 in F major, Opus 5, no.1

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Work Composed: 1796

The eight works for cello and piano by Ludwig van Beethoven—five sonatas, three sets of variations—add up to an unusually interesting volume of chamber music, remarkable not only for the quality and variety of the individual pieces but also for how they illuminate the distance the composer traveled in the 19 years that separate the first works from the last. His two sonatas (Opus 5) and his Variations on a Theme from Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* date from 1796, just when his career as a composer was beginning to take off. In fact, he was not yet earning his living as a full-time composer, and wrote—or at least unveiled—the first two sonatas in Berlin, while touring there as a pianist. Two further sets of variations, both on themes from Mozart's opera *Die Zauberflöte*, followed shortly, the "*Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen*" Variations sometime between 1796 and 1798, and the "*Bei Männern*" Variations in 1801, reaching the era of Beethoven's first two symphonies and the culmination of what is widely considered his early style. Three further works for cello and piano would follow. His A-major sonata (Opus 69), written in 1807–08, is one of the crowning glories of his middle period; and his final two sonatas (Opus 102) were composed in 1815, just as he was entering his visionary late period.

When the two Opus 5 sonatas were published, in February 1797, they bore a dedication to Friedrich Wilhelm II, king of Prussia, a music-loving, cello-playing monarch who was also the dedicatee of Haydn's six *Prussian* Quartets (Opus 50) and Mozart's three *Prussian* Quartets (K. 575, 589, and 590). Beethoven played for him several times during his 1796 visit to Berlin and was the pianist when this piece was premiered at court. The composer's secretary Ferdinand Ries wrote in his *Biographical Reminiscences of Beethoven* (1838) that the cellist on that occasion was "Duport, first cellist of the king." There were two Duport cellists at the court—brothers, both born in Paris. Friedrich Wilhelm II appointed the older, Jean-Pierre, as his orchestra's principal cellist in 1773 and elevated him to become intendant (director of entertainment) in 1787, at which point the younger brother, Jean-Louis, became principal cellist. Both remained until 1806, when they returned to Paris. It is assumed

that Beethoven's cellist was Jean-Louis, who was the first cellist at that time. The king apparently liked what he heard, and Ries reported: "On his departure he received a gold snuff-box filled with *louis d'ors*. Beethoven declared with pride that it was not an ordinary snuff-box, but one that it might have been customary to give to an ambassador."

The F-major cello sonata unrolls over two movements. That strikes one as surprisingly telescoped in comparison to normal sonatas of the day, but in fact the work's slow introduction (Adagio sostenuto) is so substantial as to suggest a movement in its right. That introduction has an improvisatory quality, with themes touched upon but not really developed. When the music breaks into Allegro for the main part of the movement, the theme is entrusted to the piano and is then handed off to the cello. This begins as very Mozartian music, but Beethoven puts his personal stamp on it soon enough thanks to his signature punchiness and his penchant for developing his material at length. Near the movement's end he writes out a cadenza for both instruments; it wends its way into a few measures of enervated Adagio and then on to a Presto conclusion. The second (and concluding) movement is a playful rondo. It keeps up its unflagging energy nearly without a break until, after five minutes or so, the mechanism seems to wind down in a huge *ritardando*. It's a feint, and it makes the final burst of energy seem all the more explosive.

Piano Trio in E-flat major, Opus 70, no.2

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Work Composed: 1808



Beethoven ca. 1805

In late 1808, the Vienna home of Countess Anna Maria von Erdödy resounded with the first performance of Beethoven's two Opus 70 piano trios, which were dedicated to her when they were published in the summer of 1809. An accomplished pianist, she was a devoted friend and supportive patron of Beethoven's at that time—he is said to have referred to her as his "Father Confessor"—and she included his music in her frequent musical soirées, where Beethoven himself sometimes performed. She achieved further immortality in 1815 as the dedicatee of Beethoven's Opus 102 Cello Sonatas, which were premiered at her country house outside Vienna.

The first of the Opus 70 trios is the more famous: the *Ghost* Trio. The second is overwhelmingly genial and warm-hearted: a yin-and-yang dyad. At least on an emotional plane, Opus 70, no.2, seems more connected to the patrician *Archduke* Trio, which lay two years in the future, or, for that matter, to the style of the composer's younger years, although the harmonic subtlety of this trio surpasses anything Beethoven achieved a decade earlier. This work entirely lacks a slow movement, which would have been a natural repository for deep thoughts, and the whole four-movement span remains within the bounds of relatively moderate tempos. An elegant, if not entirely unruffled, introduction launches the piece. Its carefully plotted, step-wise lines in slow but flowing counterpoint, canonic at the outset, invest this opening with a searching quality. This leads to the main section of the movement, a lyrical effusion with an aristocratic bearing. Just before the end, the composer brings back a reminiscence of the "searching music" of the introduction, this time with the scoring altered.

Both of the middle movements are Allegrettos but they have quite different characters. The second movement sounds resolutely old-fashioned, beginning with a modern take on a Baroque gavotte. Major-key variations on this alternate with minor-key sections based on a more vehement element. The marking Allegretto already represents a moderate tempo: adding *ma non troppo* ("but not too much"), as Beethoven does in the third movement, seems not particularly helpful: does he mean that players should shade the Allegretto to the fast or the slow side? Perhaps the former, as this spot in a composition would most characteristically have been the place for a triple-meter minuet—or, at this point in Beethoven's career, a scherzo—and the movement is cast in the meter and structure of those forms, though with the main episode and the "trio" repeated, extending the movement from the usual A-B-A of a scherzo to a five-section A-B-A-B-A structure. But at heart we have no scherzo here. The spirit is Apollonian rather than Bacchic, and the phrases are studiously symmetrical, again displaying something of an antique character.

With the finale, we finally have a full-fledged fast movement. And yet, hardly does it get started with energetic, ascending piano flourishes than the strings pull on the reins, an interruption Beethoven will continue to try out later. In general, though, the movement proceeds apace as it works through its episodes. "It is a continuous, ever mounting bustle and commotion—ideas, images chase by in a restless flight, and sparkle and disappear like flashes of lightning—it is a free play of the most highly aroused imagination": so wrote E.T.A. Hoffmann in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in 1813. Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny maintained that in the G-major section in the middle of this finale Beethoven drew on Croatian melodies that were popular in Hungary, which would have been an appropriate nod from the composer to Countess Erdödy, who belonged to a family of Hungarian aristocrats.

—James M. Keller

James M. Keller, now in his 25th season as Program Annotator of the San Francisco Symphony, is the author of *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford University Press).

About the Artists



ALEXANDER BARANTSCHIK

Alexander Barantschik began his tenure as the San Francisco Symphony's Concertmaster in September 2001 and holds the Naoum Blinder Chair. He was previously concertmaster of the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, and Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, and has been an active soloist and chamber musician throughout Europe. He has collaborated in chamber music with André Previn, Antonio Pappano, and Mstislav Rostropovich. As leader of the LSO, Barantschik toured Europe, Japan, and the United States, performed as soloist, and served as concertmaster for major symphonic cycles with Michael Tilson Thomas, Rostropovich, and Bernard Haitink. He was also concertmaster for Pierre Boulez's year-long, three-continent 75th birthday celebration.

Born in Russia, Barantschik attended the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and went on to perform with the major Russian orchestras including the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic. His awards include first prize in the International Violin Competition in Sion, Switzerland, and in the Russian National Violin Competition. Since joining the SF Symphony, Barantschik has led the Orchestra in several programs and appeared as soloist in concertos and other works by Bach, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Beethoven, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Walton, Piazzolla, and Schnittke, among others. Barantschik is a member of the faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he teaches graduate students from around the world in a special concertmaster program. Through an arrangement with the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Barantschik has the exclusive use of the 1742 Guarneri "del Gesu" violin once owned by the virtuoso Ferdinand David, who is believed to have played it in the world premiere of the Mendelssohn E-minor Violin Concerto in 1845. It was also the favorite instrument of the legendary Jascha Heifetz, who acquired it in 1922 and who bequeathed it to the Fine Arts Museums, with the stipulation that it be played only by artists worthy of the instrument and its legacy.



ANTON NEL

Winner of the 1987 Naumburg International Piano Competition, Anton Nel tours as a recitalist, concerto soloist, chamber musician, and teacher. Highlights in the United States include performances with the Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Dallas Symphony, and Seattle Symphony, as well as recitals from coast to coast. He has appeared internationally at Wigmore Hall, the Concertgebouw, Suntory Hall, and major venues in China, Korea, and South Africa.

Nel holds the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Endowed Chair at the University of Texas at Austin, and in the summers is on the faculties of the Aspen Music Festival and School and the Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival. Born in Johannesburg, Nel is also an avid harpsichordist and fortepianist, and is a graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand, where he studied with Adolph Hallis, and the University of Cincinnati, where he worked with Béla Síki and Frank Weinstock. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut in 1994.



PETER WYRICK

Peter Wyrick was a member of the San Francisco Symphony cello section from 1986–89, rejoined the Symphony as Associate Principal Cello from 1999–2023, and retired from the Orchestra at the end of last season. He was previously principal cello of the Mostly Mozart Orchestra and associate principal cello of the New York City Opera. He has appeared as soloist with the SF Symphony in works including C.P.E. Bach's Cello Concerto in A major, Bernstein's Meditation No. 1 from *Mass*, Haydn's Sinfonia concertante in B-flat major, and music from Tan Dun's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* Concerto.

In chamber music, Wyrick has collaborated with Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua Bell, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Yefim Bronfman, Lynn Harrell, Jeremy Denk, Julia Fischer, and Edgar Meyer, among others. As a member of the Ridge String Quartet, Wyrick recorded Dvořák's piano quintets with pianist Rudolf Firkušný on an RCA recording that received the Diapason d'Or and a Grammy nomination. He has also recorded Fauré's cello sonatas with pianist Earl Wild for dell'Arte records. Born in New York to a musical family, he began studies at the Juilliard School at age eight and made his solo debut at age 12.

A MERRY-ACHI CHRISTMAS
THE CONCERT

Sunday, December 1, 2024, at 7:30pm

Mariachi Sol de México de José Hernández
José Hernández musical director

TRUMPETS
José Hernández
Carlos Toledo
Miguel Lopez

VIOLINS
Adrian Grijalva
Adrian Vaca
Fernando Moreno
Patricio Molina
Guadalupe Gonzalez
Nathan Fernandez

HARP
Guillermo G. Acuña

GUITARRON
Arnulfo Sanchez

VIHUELA
José Pérez

GUITAR
Alejandro Asencio

FLOREADOR
Francisco Andrade

DANCERS
Los Lupeños de San José

MANAGER
José Delgado

This evening's program will be announced from the stage.

There will be one intermission.

About the Artists



MARIACHI SOL DE MÉXICO® DE JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

While his family tree is rooted in five generations of mariachi musicians hailing from La Sierra del Tigre region of Jalisco, José Hernández built on that foundation to grow mariachi music in new territories, musical genres, and in the hearts of new audiences. After forming Mariachi Sol de Mexico® in 1981, Hernández led the group to instant and lasting success, playing in sold-out halls, including Madison Square Garden, and in cities including Beijing and Pyongyang. They have been invited to play at the White House for five US presidents.

The ability of Mariachi Sol de Mexico® de José Hernández to blend genres seamlessly is evidenced in their cohesive collaboration with orchestras throughout the United States, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Santa Rosa Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, and Jalisco Symphony. This magic was captured in their 25th-anniversary symphonic album, which led to the first ever mariachi-symphony Grammy nomination. Their work can also be heard in films including *Rango*, *Glory Road*, *Seabiscuit*, and *Don Juan de Marco*.

The versatility of Sol de Mexico® to expand to new audiences has led to collaborations with artists such as the Beach Boys and Willie Nelson. Within the world of Latin music, Sol de Mexico® has played alongside stars such as Vicente Fernandez, Selena, Jose Feliciano, and a record-breaking concert tour with Luis Miguel. The group has been nominated for 10 Grammy and Latin Grammy awards.

When they are not playing for heads of state or global audiences, they can be seen locally, often working with a younger generation of musicians through the Mariachi Heritage Society.

JOSÉ HERNÁNDEZ

José Hernández is an 11-time Grammy Award nominee and a master of mariachi music. He is a world-renowned musician, composer, and music educator who also travels year-round teaching the art of mariachi music to new generations at schools across the United States and Mexico. He is founder of the world-famous Mariachi Sol de México® and America's first all-female professional mariachi ensemble, Mariachi Reyna de Los Angeles®.

Hernández is a fifth-generation mariachi whose passion is to bring mariachi music to audiences around the world. He works tirelessly to inspire and empower the next generation of musicians through the educational initiatives he has founded: the José Hernández Mariachi Nationals and Summer Institute, a mariachi music summer intensive and competition that brings together some of the country's top student mariachi ensembles; and the Mariachi Heritage Society, which teaches mariachi music and folk dancing to new generations. He is also the musical director of several mariachi festivals.

Hernández's musical inspirations are rich and diverse, ranging from Agustín Lara to José Alfredo Jiménez. His 17th CD, *Bailando Sones y Huapangos con el Mariachi Sol de Mexico*, an homage to the significant relationship between mariachi and ballet folklórico, was nominated for both a Latin Grammy and a Grammy. He has also recorded with Selena, Vicente Fernandez, Lola Beltrán, Juan Gabriel, Luis Miguel, Bryan Adams, and the Beach Boys.

LOS LUPEÑOS

Founded in 1969, Los Lupeños de San José is a trailblazer among Mexican folk dance companies in the United States, committed to preserving and enriching the vibrant tapestry of Mexican culture through the art of dance. As a nonprofit organization, their mission centers on sustaining the presentation and education of Mexican folk traditions, fostering a universal appreciation for the folklórico genre.

Guided by core values of artistry, education, and performance, Los Lupeños not only showcases the captivating beauty of traditional dances but also empowers individuals through accessible educational opportunities, nurturing a profound understanding and pride in Mexican heritage. Their vision is to inspire audiences worldwide, celebrating the dynamic and evolving spirit of Mexican folk culture.

HOLIDAY CIRQUE
THE CONCERT

Monday, December 2, 2024, at 7:30pm

Ming Luke conducting
Troupe Vertigo
San Francisco Symphony

Holiday Cirque

TROUPE VERTIGO
Aloysia Gavre artistic director and choreographer
Rex Camphuis technical director
Lindsey Covarrubias aerialist
Chanel Pepper aerialist
Bailey Lisa Silides batons
Helen Wonjila foot juggler
Vladislav Myagkostupov juggler
Jordie Campbell aerialist
Ermiyas Muluken Sima ladder and rolla bolla
Kevin Carpenter hand balancer

Featuring

DON SEBESKY *Christmas Scherzo*

JEFF TYZIK Selections from *Nutcracker Mini Jazz Suite*

DUKE ELLINGTON & BILLY STRAYHORN Selections from *The Nutcracker Suite*

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Fantasia on *Greensleeves*

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY Selections from *The Nutcracker,* Opus 71

LEON JESSEL *Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*

ROBERT WENDEL *Caribbean Sleigh Ride*

JOHN WILLIAMS "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas" from *Home Alone 2*

LEROY ANDERSON *Sleigh Ride*

MYKOLA LEONTOVICH "Carol of the Bells"

There will be one intermission.

About the Artists



MING LUKE

Ming Luke serves as music director and principal conductor of the Nashville Ballet, education director for the Berkeley Symphony, and music director for the Las Cruces (New Mexico) Symphony, Merced Symphony, and Berkeley Community Chorus and Orchestra. He has also appeared with San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, New York City Ballet Orchestra, San Diego Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, and Bolshoi Orchestra, and collaborated with leading choreographers including Mark Morris, Christopher Wheeldon, Justin Peck, Alexei Ratmansky, Cathy Marston, Benjamin Millepied, and David Dawson. His recent performances at Classical Tahoe were broadcast on PBS, and as a pianist, he has soloed with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, and San Francisco Ballet Orchestra. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut with a virtual Chinese New Year concert in January 2021 and made his live debut in December 2023.

Luke has been recognized nationally for his work in music education and has designed and conducted more than 150 education concerts and programs with organizations including the Berkeley Symphony, Houston Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, and San Francisco Opera. He has served on grant panels for the National Endowment of the Arts and the Grants and Cultural Committee of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission. He holds a master of fine arts in conducting from Carnegie Mellon University and a bachelor of music in music education and piano pedagogy from Westminster Choir College.

TROUPE VERTIGO

Fusing together elements of cirque acrobatics, classical dance, and contemporary theater, Troupe Vertigo brings audiences on a spellbinding journey through the world of artistic movement. Consisting of world-class aerial artists, contortionists, and ballet dancers, the Los Angeles–based company was founded in 2009 by artistic director Aloysia Gavre, formerly of Cirque du Soleil, and technical director Rex Camphuis, whose background is with the fabled Pickle Family Circus.

Troupe Vertigo's 2024–25 season includes performances with the Utah Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Hartford Symphony, Eugene Symphony, Pacific Symphony, and Buffalo Philharmonic. Recent seasons have brought them to the Detroit Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Tucson Symphony, Utah Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Fort Worth Symphony, Florida Orchestra, and Vancouver Symphony. They made their San Francisco Symphony debut in December 2023.

The company is known for their collaborative custom thematic programs from *Cirque España*, *Cirque Noir*, *Cirque Goes to Broadway*, *Cirque Goes to Hollywood*, and *Cirque Dances featuring The Firebird*, to complete cirque-ballet presentations of *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *Cinderella*. The ensemble premiered its first offering, *Big Top for a New Generation*, in 2010 at the Ford Amphitheater, and has gone on to present *Nighthawks: A Film Noir Circus*, inspired by American jazz, Edward Hopper paintings, and crime novels. In 2016 they brought *Tableaux*, featuring five women grappling with the constrictions of society, to life at the Bootleg Theater in Los Angeles.

Rex Camphuis and Aloysia Gavre, a husband-and-wife team, frequently bring their gifts and knowledge to the film and television industry, most notably with Rebel Wilson's aerial performance in *Pitch Perfect 2* and with Reese Witherspoon and Christoph Waltz in the film *Water for Elephants*. Their unique perspective on the circus arts has led to speaking engagements with the Center Theater Group Los Angeles, Directors Lab West, TEDx, and the Chicago Contemporary Circus Festival, as well coverage in *Dance Teacher Magazine* and the book *Ordinary Acrobat*.



THE COLORS OF CHRISTMAS
THE CONCERT

Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at 7:30pm
Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at 7:30pm

Gail Deadrick conducting
Peabo Bryson vocalist
Jackie Evancho vocalist
Jennifer Holliday vocalist
BeBe Winans vocalist
The Bay Area Super Choir
Jeffery Williams director
San Francisco Symphony

ACT I

Carol of the Bells

A Child is Born / Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

This Christmas

The Christmas Song

I'll Be Home for Christmas

Someday at Christmas

My Favorite Things

My Christmas Prayer

Silent Night

Caroling, Caroling

And I'm Telling You

Intermission

ACT II

Are You Ready For a Miracle?

Never Saw a Miracle

A Whole New World

Jingle Bells

Wishing You a Merry Christmas

All I Ask

What's Goin On / Mercy Mercy

O Holy Night

Joy to the World

The concert on December 4 is presented in partnership with

sfac
san francisco
arts commission

About the Artists



GAIL DEADRICK

A native of Los Angeles, Gail Deadrick began studying classical piano at age four. She became the musical director for Natalie Cole in 2000, winning a Grammy Award as coproducer eight years later for her *Still Unforgettable* album.

From 1994–99, Deadrick was musical director and pianist for *The Colors of Christmas* tour, which featured Patti Austin, Philip Bailey, Peabo Bryson, Sheena Easton, Roberta Flack, James Ingram, Melissa Manchester, Aaron Neville, Jeffrey Osborne, and Deniece Williams. She made her San Francisco Symphony debut in December 1994.

Deadrick's talent suits a diverse range of musical styles, including R&B, gospel, jazz, and musical theater. She has accompanied or conducted singers Nancy Wilson, Esther Phillips, Barbara Morrison, Thelma Houston, Johnny Gill, Brenda Russell, Shirley Caesar, and Daryl Coley. She has also toured with Gladys Knight, Dionne Warwick, Roberta Flack, Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis, Jr., The Original 5th Dimension, the Pointer Sisters, and Maureen McGovern with the Duke Ellington Orchestra.

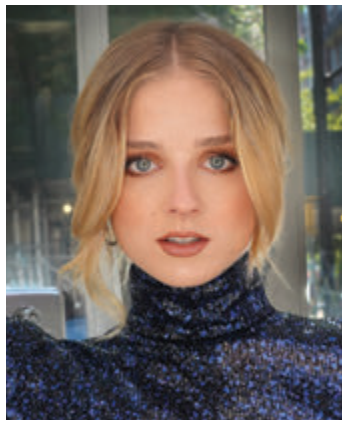


PEABO BRYSON

Peabo Bryson is one of the premier male vocalists in contemporary music. Thanks to his rich, almost operatic voice, the two-time Grammy Award winner has enjoyed an ongoing career despite changing musical trends. With 20 albums to his credit, he is the first artist in music history to have separate recordings topping four different charts. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut in December 1993.

Bryson, who is also a songwriter and producer, was born in 1951, in Greenville, South Carolina. He spent much of his childhood on his grandparents' farm in nearby Mauldin. He caught his first break in a recording session for Atlanta's Bullet, a subsidiary of Bang Records, where he soon signed a contract as a writer, producer, songwriter, performer, and arranger. In 1976 he released his self-titled debut, which featured nearly all original songs (some co-written with Thom Bell) and a young Luther Vandross among the background vocalists. From that point on, Bryson produced a string of major R&B and crossover hits, including "Feel the Fire," "I'm So Into You," "Tonight I Celebrate My Love," "If Ever You're in My Arms Again," and "Can You Stop the Rain."

A skilled actor, Bryson starred in the touring production of the Tony Award–winning *Raisin* and played the role of The Wizard on tour with *The Wiz*. In 1998 he appeared in the Michigan Opera Theater's 100th anniversary production of *Porgy and Bess*.



JACKIE EVANCHO

Jackie Evancho is a Platinum-selling recording artist who first became a worldwide sensation at the age of 10 with her debut performance of "*O mio babbino caro*" on season 5 of NBC's *America's Got Talent*. *Billboard* has twice included Evancho on its list of "music movers-and-shakers under the age of 21." In just over a decade, she has made 10 chart-topping albums and DVDs, headlined three successful PBS television specials, appeared in the film *The Company You Keep* with Robert Redford, and sung for presidents and other world leaders.

Evancho has recorded or performed with Tony Bennett, Barbra Streisand, Plácido Domingo, Josh Groban, Chris Botti, Joshua Bell, Il Volo, David Foster, Andrea Bocelli, and José Carreras, among others. In 2020 she appeared as The Kitty on Fox's *The Masked Singer*, where she immediately became a crowd favorite through her vocals and playful persona. During the pandemic, she explored a new direction and began songwriting. In doing so, she realized that she wanted to pay homage to one of the greatest song writers of our time, Joni Mitchell. Her most recent album, *Carousel of Time*, does that and has received high praise from the music industry. She previously appeared at Davies Symphony Hall in 2012 and makes her San Francisco Symphony debut with these performances.



JENNIFER HOLLIDAY

Jennifer Holliday's inimitable voice has riveted the hearts of audiences from around the world. Her professional journey began while singing in her church choir one Sunday in Houston, when she was discovered by *A Chorus Line* dancer Jamie Patterson. She made her Broadway debut in 1980 in the revival of *Your Arms Are Too Short to Box With God.*

Holliday was then invited to participate in *Dreamgirls*, which won her a Grammy Award for "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" and a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical. Her second album, *Say You Love Me*, won her a second Grammy. From 1985 to 1992, she had five Top 10 singles on the R&B and Dance Charts. Holliday's voice appears in film soundtracks for *In the Mood*, *I'm Gonna Git You Sucka*, *The Five Heartbeats*, *Amazing Grace*, *Why Did I Get Married*, and *The Rising Place*, and her television appearances include *Ally McBeal*, *Love Boat*, *American Idol*, *The Masked Singer*, and *Touched by an Angel*.

In 2014 Holliday released her first album in two decades, *This Song is You*, landing her back in the Top 20 R&B charts, and she released her first single in 20 years, "So in Love," which charted in the Top 5 on the R&B Indie Charts. In 2016 she returned to the theater in the Broadway revival of *The Color Purple*. She is a longtime dedicated supporter of the LGBTQ+ community and also supports the MS Society and advocates for mental health and suicide prevention. She made her San Francisco Symphony debut in December 2009.



BEBE WINANS

Benjamin "BeBe" Winans is a six-time Grammy Award winner and the seventh child and youngest male of the Detroit-based first family of gospel music. He is known as an inspirational R&B vocalist and songwriter who, along with his musical partner and sister CeCe Winans, is among the first true Christian crossover artists to hit the mainstream. In addition to his Grammy Awards (three solo and three with CeCe), he has won 10 Dove Awards, six Stellar Awards, four NAACP Awards (three with CeCe and one with 3WB with brothers Marvin and Carvin), and three Soul Train Music Awards (two of them with sister CeCe). He has had nine Gold and Platinum recordings with CeCe, and his single from the album *He Promised Me* reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* Gospel airplay charts. As a solo artist, Winans has released seven albums with guest appearances from Eric Clapton, Stevie Wonder, David Foster, Anita Baker, Whitney Houston, and other members of the Winans family.

The musical *Born for This: The BeBe Winans Story*, cowritten and directed by Charles Randolph-Wright with book, music, and lyrics cowritten by Winans, received critically-acclaimed productions at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta and Arena Stage in Washington, DC. As an actor, Winans has appeared with Denzel Washington in *The Manchurian Candidate* and in *The Color Purple* on Broadway. BeBe and CeCe Winans are the first brother-and-sister to have a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut in December 2015.

THE BAY AREA SUPER CHOIR

The Bay Area Super Choir consists of choirs, vocalists, and ministers from across the Bay Area. The initiative was inspired by the vision of director and founder Pastor Jeffery Williams during a birthday celebration held in his honor. Since its inception, the group has united to perform at various events and to exalt the name of Jesus. The primary objective of the Bay Area Super Choir is to bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and affiliations who share a passion for singing, thereby creating an inclusive space where all can use their talents to glorify God.

Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Board of Governors of the San Francisco Symphony gratefully acknowledge the support of the San Francisco Arts Commission.

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arts commission

In founding the San Francisco Symphony in 1911, San Francisco's civic leaders sought to create a permanent orchestra in our music-loving city. For more than 85 years, the SF Symphony has partnered with the SFAC to enrich and serve its vibrant community through music. The partnership dates back to 1935, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt encouraged all cities to support local symphonies believing that music was good for the soul of the people. San Franciscans followed suit and passed an historic charter amendment allocating funds to support the Symphony.

Through this mutually beneficial partnership, Arts Commission funding contributes to the Symphony's community programs, supports concerts such as Día de los Muertos and Lunar New Year, and helps bring a broad audience to experience its music and programs. This partnership also enables the Arts Commission to distribute funds to support and strengthen cultural equity throughout the city. The SF Symphony is honored to partner with the SFAC to continue its work as San Francisco's orchestra.

Holidays with the Symphony

A Merry-Achi Christmas
December 1

Holiday Cirque
December 2

The Colors of Christmas
December 3–4

Handel's *Messiah*
December 6–7

Deck the Hall
December 8

Holiday Brass
December 11



***The Muppet Christmas Carol*— In Concert**
December 12 & 14

Holiday Gaiety
December 13

Peter and the Wolf
December 15

Holidays with Boyz II Men and the SF Symphony
December 17–18

***Elf*— In Concert**
December 19–21

sfsymphony.org/holidays

SF SYMPHONY

HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*
THE CONCERT

Friday, December 6, 2024, at 7:30pm
Saturday, December 7, 2024, at 7:30pm

Stephen Stubbs conducting

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL *Messiah*, A Sacred Oratorio (1741)

Part One

Intermission

Part Two

Part Three

Amanda Forsythe soprano
John Holiday countertenor
Aaron Sheehan tenor
Douglas Williams baritone
San Francisco Symphony Chorus
Jenny Wong director

Text begins on page SFS16.



Virgin and Child with Angels Dancing in a Landscape, etching by Daniel Hopfer, 1530s.

These concerts are sponsored by the James Schwabacher Vocal Artists Fund.

AT A GLANCE

George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* premiered in Dublin in April 1742. Originally presented as an Easter oratorio, it gradually became more closely associated with Christmastime, and today performances are a winter holiday tradition for orchestras and choruses throughout the world.

The text was adapted for Handel by Charles Jennens (1700–73), who creatively assembled passages from the King James Bible and Book of Common Prayer into a three-part libretto. Part One includes the prophecy of Christ's birth and the Nativity story, including such highlights as "For unto us a Child is born." Part Two tells of his life on earth and the spreading of his message by the Apostles, ending with the famous "Hallelujah" chorus. Part Three focuses on the response of believers and the promise of salvation, with the aria and trumpet solo "The trumpet shall sound" and a glorious Amen.

Messiah, A Sacred Oratorio

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Born: February 23, 1685, in Halle, Margraviate of Brandenburg
Died: April 14, 1759, in London

Composed: 1741
SF Symphony Performances: First—December 1925. Alfred Hertz conducted with the San Francisco Municipal Chorus and Lorna Lachmund, Paul Althouse, Belle Montgomery, and Arthur Middleton as soloists. Most recent—December 2023. Jonathan Cohen conducted with the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and Joélle Harvey, Jennifer Johnson Cano, Nicholas Phan, and Michael Sumuel as soloists.
Instrumentation: 4 vocal soloists (soprano, alto [countertenor], tenor, and bass [baritone]), chorus, 2 oboes, bassoon, 2 trumpets, timpani, basso continuo (harpsichord and organ), and strings
Duration: About 150 minutes (including intermission)


George Frideric Handel

George Frideric Handel was at heart a man of the theater, whether the opera stage or the "ecclesiastical theater" of the oratorio. He infused everything he wrote with drama. That's one of the qualities that makes his music so memorable: his arias, vocal ensembles, and choruses, not to mention his concertos, sonatas, and sinfonias, contain emphatic turns of phrase that engrave themselves on the mind. In an age that valued adherence to Classical standards and, by extension, did not disdain a certain interchangeability of style, Handel exhibited brash independence of musical character. In his mature works, he rarely sounds like anybody else. "Handel understands effect better than any of us," wrote Mozart, one of his dedicated admirers. "When he chooses, he strikes like a thunderbolt." Other qualified listeners concurred. When asked to name the all-time greatest composer, Beethoven exclaimed, "Handel—to him I bow the knee." (Lying on his deathbed, Beethoven asked for a volume of Handel to console him.)

Handel's oratorio *Messiah* dates from a crucial moment in his career. The work's success in turn proved crucial to the history of the oratorio as a genre. While Handel composed his first oratorios during his early years in Rome, he did not write an oratorio in English until he composed *Esther* in 1718, by which time he had already achieved distinction as an opera composer. Italian opera would be his principal concern for 36 years, during which time he rode both the waves of success and the troughs of indifference that seem always to have marked the topsy-turvy world of lyric theater. By the late 1730s, however, Handel had his fill with the high-stress management of opera productions, and the opera he wrote for the 1740–41 season, *Deidamia*, was his last.

Just then he received an invitation to produce a series of concerts in Dublin in 1741, and the idea of a change of scenery appealed to him. He traveled from London to Dublin in mid-November 1741 and remained until August 13, 1742. The high point of Handel's Dublin season was without a doubt the premiere of his new oratorio *Messiah*. He had composed it while still in London during the summer of 1741, over the course of about three weeks. His librettist, Charles Jennens, had been pressed into service to assemble a text for the new work. This he apparently did in the early summer of 1741, drawing creatively on Biblical passages from the Books of Isaiah, Haggai, Malachi, Matthew, Luke, Zechariah, John, Psalms, Lamentations, Hebrews, Romans, I Corinthians, and Revelation to create a loose story comprising historical narrative about the life of Jesus and reflections on his life by Christian believers. He organized his texts in three discrete sections, the first relating to the prophecy of Christ's coming and the circumstances of his birth, the second to the vicissitudes of his life on earth, and the third to the events surrounding the resurrection and the promise of redemption. With the libretto in hand, Handel leapt into action on August 22. He finished the draft of Part One on August 28, of Part Two on September 6, and of Part Three on September 12—and then he took another two days to polish details on the whole score.

This prodigious pace was not exceptional for Handel, and it is no more than Romantic fantasy to view it (as it once was routinely) as a fever of divine inspiration peculiar to the composition of *Messiah*. At least some of Handel's fluency can be attributed to the fact that *Messiah* borrows liberally (albeit ingeniously) from his earlier vocal works. As further evidence of Handel's facility, the composer allowed himself about a week's rest after finishing *Messiah* before embarking on his next oratorio, *Samson*, which he wrote in the relatively leisurely span of five weeks.

Handel's Dublin season began auspiciously with performances of several earlier works—*L'Allegro*, *Acis and Galatea*, *Esther*, *Alexander's Feast*—that paved the way for the excitement attending the premiere of *Messiah*. An open rehearsal on April 9 was followed by two official performances, on April 13 and June 3. The first performance was given as a benefit, organized with the assistance of the Charitable Musical Society, "For Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer's Hospital in St. Stephen's street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay" (as *The Dublin Journal* announced it a couple of weeks in advance). After the open rehearsal *The Dublin News Letter* pronounced that the new oratorio "in the opinion of the best judges, far surpasses anything of that Nature, which has been performed in this or any other Kingdom." *The Journal* concurred that it "was allowed by the greatest Judges to be the finest



Charles Jennens, librettist of Handel's *Messiah*

Composition of Musick that ever was heard, and the sacred Words as properly adapted for the Occasion." It continued with a bit of advice for persons lucky enough to hold tickets for the official premiere, a matinee on April 13: "Many Ladies and Gentlemen who are well-wishers to the Noble and Grand Charity for which this Oratorio was composed, request it as a Favour, that the Ladies who honour this Performance with their Presence would be pleased to come without Hoops as it will greatly encrease the Charity, by making Room for more Company." To which it added in a follow-up article: "The Gentlemen are desired to come without their Swords', to increase audience accommodation yet further." *Messiah* was an immense success, and its reputation spread quickly to London, which had to wait nearly a year to hear it, and where some controversy erupted over whether sacred texts had a place in an "entertainment."

AN ENDURING CLASSIC

The work gradually established itself as a classic. It was revived in London in 1745, again in 1749, and again in 1750—in this last year at both Covent Garden and as a benefit for the Foundling Hospital, which would make *Messiah* performances an Easter tradition. By the 1750s *Messiah* was becoming widely performed. For many of the early productions Handel revised his score, largely to fulfill the practical demands of differing soloists and instrumental ensembles, although partly (many argue) to reflect his changing conception of the piece. Surely no work in the standard repertory offers so vast a buffet of performing possibilities to choose from. From one version to the next, we find variations in which numbers are sung and in what order, which solo parts are assigned to which vocal soloist, even which competing versions of individual movements should be used. There are no easy answers, although performers should not discount that practical considerations are as important today as they were in Handel's time.

In the 1780s England began giving free rein to presenting *Messiah* with ever-increasing masses of performers: 513 in Westminster Abbey in 1784, 616 the next year, and so on until the forces reached 1,068 musicians in 1791, when an ecstatic Franz Joseph Haydn happened to be in attendance. That marked a temporary climax in *Messiah* interpretation for Londoners, but by that time the Handel mania had begun to radiate out from London to Birmingham, Sheffield, York, and Manchester, all homes to major choral societies. The piece was also becoming famous elsewhere. It was an Englishman—Michael Arne, son of the composer (and Handel contemporary) Thomas Augustine Arne—who introduced *Messiah* to Germany, leading a performance in Hamburg in 1772. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach introduced it to Berlin audiences three years later, in a German translation, and in 1777 it reached Mannheim.

In other European countries, Handel remained a harder sell. The French viewed his music as simply not to their taste. Hector Berlioz dismissed Handel as "a barrel of pork and beer," and *Messiah* didn't get a French performance until 1873. The Italians seem to have lost track of Handel almost entirely once he completed his apprentice years in their country. America showed enthusiasm, as might be expected from a land still dominated by British cultural taste, and already in the 1770s and '80s *Messiah* had become a staple of concert life in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, sometimes with the more modest American equivalent of the familiar massed forces of Britain.

Back to England. The grand Handel festivals at Westminster Abbey dropped off after 1791 but started again in 1834, presenting Handel spectacles to a new generation of listeners and sparking the *Messiah* tradition. Armed with cheaply printed scores or librettos, audiences devoutly followed the performances of their favorite choral societies. The Crystal Palace in London became the site of choice for Handel displays in the second half of the 19th century. In 1883 Sir Michael Costa stood on the podium before an ocean of 500 players and 4,000 singers. Behind him was an audience of 87,769. Thomas Edison's phonograph had just been introduced, and somebody thought to record one of these mammoth Handel performances. The Edison cylinder made at the Crystal Palace on June 29, 1888, a similarly grandiose interpretation of the composer's *Israel in Egypt*, became not only the first recording of classical music ever made, but also the first on-location recording. It had to be on location, of course, since 4,500 performers could not quite have fit into a recording studio.

This account hardly begins to suggest the scope of what must be classical music's most beloved masterpiece. *Messiah* has captivated audiences since it was first heard, and it has been reinvented often since, made new to meet the exigencies of specific performers and evolving generations. Through all its changes it has remained pure, powerful, and moving: a classic.

—James M. Keller

James M. Keller, now in his 25th season as Program Annotator of the San Francisco Symphony, is the author of *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford University Press) and is writing a sequel volume about piano music.



The chapel of the Foundling Hospital in London, where *Messiah* was performed every year from 1750–59 (pictured in 1808).

Messiah

Text taken from the Scriptures by Charles Jennens (1700–73)

PART ONE

Sinfonia

Accompagnato (tenor)
Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God:
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her iniquity is pardoned.
The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
(Isaiah 40:1–3)

Aria (tenor)
Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain. (Isaiah 40:4)

Chorus
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Isaiah 40:5)

Accompagnato (baritone)
Thus saith the Lord of Hosts:
Yet once a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns and the earth, the sea, and the dry land, all nations I'll shake; and the desire of all nations shall come.
The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; even the messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in, behold,
He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. (Haggai 2:6–7, Malachi 3:1)

Aria (countertenor)
But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire. (Malachi 3:2)

Chorus
And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Malachi 3:3)

Recitative (countertenor)
Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, "God with us." (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23)

Aria (countertenor) and Chorus
O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion get Thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: Behold your God!
Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (Isaiah 40:9, 40:1)

Accompagnato (baritone)
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.
And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isaiah 60:2–3)

Aria (baritone)
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light.
And they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

Chorus
For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called: Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace! (Isaiah 9:6)

Pifa (orchestra)

Recitative (soprano)
There were shepherds abiding in the field,
keeping watch over their flock by night. (Luke 2:8)

Accompagnato (soprano)
And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them,
and the glory of the Lord shone round about them,
and they were sore afraid. (Luke 2:9)

Recitative (soprano)
And the angel said unto them: Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:10–11)

Accompagnato (soprano)
And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heav'nly host, praising God, and saying:
(Luke 2:13)

Chorus
"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth,
good will toward men." (Luke 2:14)

Aria (soprano)
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King com'th unto thee.
He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. (Zechariah 9:9–10)

Recitative (countertenor)
Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. (Isaiah 35:5–6)

Aria (countertenor and soprano)
He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.
Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him all ye that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest.
Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him; for He is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
(Isaiah 40:11, Matthew 11:28–9)

Chorus
His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. (Matthew 11:30)

Intermission

PART TWO

Chorus
Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

Aria (countertenor)
He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.
He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting. (Isaiah 53:3, John 1:6)

Chorus
Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;
He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. (Isaiah 53:4–5)

Chorus
And with His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

Chorus
All we, like sheep, have gone astray,
we have turned ev'ry one to his own way;
and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

Accompagnato (tenor)
All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn;
they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying: (Psalm 22:7)

Chorus
He trusted in God that He would deliver Him;
let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him. (Psalm 22:8)

Accompagnato (tenor)
Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness;
He looked for some to have pity on him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him. (Psalm 69:20)

Aria (tenor)
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow. (Lamentations 1:12)

Accompagnato (soprano)
He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken. (Isaiah 53:8)

Aria (soprano)
But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. (Psalm 16:10)

Chorus
Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory?
The Lord of Hosts: He is the King of Glory.
(Psalm 24:7–10)

Aria (soprano)
How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. (Romans 10:15)

Aria (baritone)
Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and His anointed. (Psalm 2:1–2)

Chorus
Let us break their bonds asunder,
and cast away their yokes from us. (Psalm 2:3)

Recitative (tenor)
He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn,
the Lord shall have them in derision. (Psalm 2:4)

Aria (tenor)
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (Psalm 2:9)

Chorus
Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.
The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!
(Revelation 19:6, 11:5, 19:16)

PART THREE

Aria (soprano)
I know that my Redeemer liveth,
and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:
And tho' worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.
For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. (Job 19, 25–26, I Corinthians 15:20)

Chorus
Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (I Corinthians 15:21–22)

Accompagnato (baritone)
Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. (I Corinthians 15:51–52)

Aria (baritone)
The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall be chang'd.
(I Corinthians 15:52)

Chorus
Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.
Blessing, and honour, glory, and pow'r be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (Revelation 5:9, 12–13)

Chorus
Amen.

About the Artists



STEPHEN STUBBS

Stephen Stubbs won a Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording and maintains a busy calendar as a guest conductor specializing in Baroque opera and oratorio. He began his career as an opera conductor at the 1987 Bruges Festival, which led to the founding of the ensemble Tragicomedia. Since 1997 he has codirected opera productions at the biannual Boston Early Music Festival, where he serves as artistic codirector. BEMF has been nominated for six Grammy Awards and won a Grammy for their recording of Charpentier's *La descente d'Orphée aux enfers.* Stubbs is also the founding director of Pacific MusicWorks, a touring company with a core group of musicians who have worked together for more than 15 years.

Stubbs has conducted Handel's *Messiah* with the Seattle Symphony, Houston Symphony, Alabama Symphony, Edmonton Symphony, and Symphony Nova Scotia. Other guest conducting appearances include the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, Musica Angelica, and Early Music Vancouver. On the opera stage, he has made multiple appearances with Opera Omaha, as well as with Seattle Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and Dutch National Opera. He makes his San Francisco Symphony debut with these performances.



AMANDA FORSYTHE

Amanda Forsythe is a regular soloist with Baroque ensembles and festivals including Les Talens Lyriques, Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, Boston Early Music Festival, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, Tafelmusik, Apollo's Fire, Opera Prima, Pacific Musicworks, Early Music Vancouver, and Philharmonia Baroque. This season she performs with the Chicago Symphony, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Victoria Symphony, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Boston Baroque, Tucson Baroque Festival, and Boston Early Music Festival. In recent seasons she has also appeared with the Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Orchestra Sinfonica Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Moscow Philharmonic, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, Academy of Ancient Music, St. Louis Symphony, Music of the Baroque, and Lucerne Symphony Orchestra. She makes her San Francisco Symphony debut with these performances.

Forsythe sang Euridice on the recording of Charpentier's *La descente d'Orphée aux enfers* with the Boston Early Music Festival that won a Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording. Her discography includes more than 25 albums and DVDs, many of them premiere recordings. Forthcoming discs include Handel's *Roman Cantatas*, Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*, and a solo Telemann album.



JOHN HOLIDAY

Highlights of John Holiday's 2024–25 season include roles at Boston Lyric Opera, Berlin Comic Opera, Bavarian State Opera, and a tour with the English Concert to Carnegie Hall and the Barbican. He also performs with the New Jersey Symphony, Apollo Chamber Players, gives a solo recital at Wolf Trap, and recently appeared on NPR's *Tiny Desk Concerts*. He makes his San Francisco Symphony debut with these performances.

In recent seasons, Holiday has appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Wolf Trap Opera, Handel and Haydn Society, Dutch National Opera, and Arizona Opera. In addition to concerts and recitals, he has curated *The John Holiday Experience* to showcase his affinity for many different styles including classical, pop, jazz, and R&B.

Holiday has been the recipient of numerous awards including the 2017 Marian Anderson Vocal Award; the 2014 Richard Tucker Foundation's Sara Tucker Award; and first place wins at the 2013 Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition, 2012 Sullivan Foundation Awards, and 2011 Dallas Opera Guild Vocal Competition. He was selected among WQXR's "20 for '20 Artists to Watch," nominated for "Newcomer of the Year" by the German magazine *Opernwelt,* and listed as one of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts' 100 honorees for 2018.



AARON SHEEHAN

Aaron Sheehan made his professional operatic debut with the Boston Early Music Festival in the 2005 world premiere staging of Mattheson's *Boris Gudenow*, and went on to further roles with BEMF in Lully's *Psyché*; Charpentier's *Actéon*; Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*; Steffani's *Orlando*; Desmarest's *Circé*; and Handel's *Acis and Galatea*.

Sheehan appears on more than 35 recordings, including Handel's *Acis and Galatea* with Boston Early Music Festival, Rameau's *Le Temple de la Gloire* and Handel's *Saul* with Philharmonia Baroque, and Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* with Boston Baroque. He sang the title role in BEMF's recording of Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux enfers*, which won Best Opera Recording at the 2015 Grammy Awards.

Recent appearances include the Seattle Symphony, Armenian Philharmonic, Smithsonian Museum, American Bach Soloists, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, and National Symphony Orchestra of Peru. He has also been heard with Pacific Music Works, Blue Heron Choir, Bach Collegium San Diego, Paul Hillier's Theater of Voices, Royal Opera at Versailles, Tanglewood Music Festival, New Zealand Festival of the Arts, San Francisco Early Music Festival, and Vancouver Early Music Festival. He makes his San Francisco Symphony debut with these performances.



DOUGLAS WILLIAMS

Douglas Williams has appeared in leading opera roles including Figaro in *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Milwaukee Symphony, Don Giovanni with Opera Atelier, and Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* with the Munich Philharmonic. Recent highlights include the premiere of a new work by Matthew Barnson with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and a debut recording of Henry Desmarest's *Circé* with the Boston Early Music Festival. In concert, he has appeared with the Berlin Philharmonic, NDR Radio Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Detroit Symphony, National Symphony, and Nashville Symphony. He makes his San Francisco Symphony debut with these performances.

Williams has also been cast in opera productions by choreographers Mark Morris and Sasha Waltz, and he is currently creating a choreographic *Die schöne Müllerin* for himself and three dancers. In chamber music, he has sung with Igor Levit and the Jack Quartet at the Tanglewood Festival, with the Signal Ensemble in the world premiere of Charles Wuorinen's *It Happens Like This*, and recently as a guest recitalist with the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. He trained at the New England Conservatory and Yale School of Music.



JENNY WONG

Jenny Wong is Chorus Director of the San Francisco Symphony, as well as the associate artistic director of the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Recent conducting engagements include the Los Angeles Philharmonic Green Umbrella Series, Los Angeles Opera Orchestra, the Industry, Long Beach Opera, Pasadena Symphony and Pops, Phoenix Chorale, and Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles.

Under Wong's baton, the Los Angeles Master Chorale's performance of Frank Martin's Mass was named by Alex Ross one of ten "Notable Performances and Recordings of 2022" in the *New Yorker*. In 2021 she was a national recipient of Opera America's inaugural Opera Grants for Women Stage Directors and Conductors. She has conducted Peter Sellars's staging of Orlando di Lasso's *Lagrime di San Pietro*, *Sweet Land* by Du Yun and Raven Chacon, and Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and Kate Soper's *Voices from the Killing Jar* with Long Beach Opera in collaboration with WildUp. She has prepared choruses for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, including for a recording of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 that won a 2022 Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance.

A native of Hong Kong, Wong received her doctor of musical arts and master of music degrees from the University of Southern California and her undergraduate degree in voice performance from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She won two consecutive world champion titles at the World Choir Games 2010 and the International Johannes Brahms Choral Competition 2011.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY CHORUS

The San Francisco Symphony Chorus was established in 1973 at the request of Seiji Ozawa, then the Symphony's Music Director. The Chorus, numbering 32 professional and more than 120 volunteer members, now performs more than 26 concerts each season. Louis Magor served as the Chorus's director during its first decade. In 1982 Margaret Hillis assumed the ensemble's leadership, and the following year Vance George was named Chorus Director, serving through 2005–06. Ragnar Bohlin concluded his tenure as Chorus Director in 2021, a post he had held since 2007. Jenny Wong was named Chorus Director in September 2023.

The Chorus can be heard on many acclaimed San Francisco Symphony recordings and has received Grammy Awards for Best Performance of a Choral Work (for Orff's *Carmina burana*, Brahms's *German Requiem*, and Mahler's Symphony No. 8) and Best Classical Album (for a Stravinsky collection and for Mahler's Symphony No. 3 and Symphony No. 8).

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John Wilson
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The Adoration of the Shepherds, painting by Sebastiano Conca, 1720.
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Digital image courtesy of Getty's Open Content Program.

HOLIDAY BRASS
THE CONCERT

Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 7:30pm

Edwin Outwater conducting
Musicians of the San Francisco Symphony

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(arr. Timothy Higgins)

Allegro from *Brandenburg* Concerto No. 3
in G major, BWV 1048 (ca. 1721)

ARCANGELO CORELLI
(arr. Timothy Higgins)

Selections from *Christmas Concerto*, Opus 6, no.8
(ca. 1690)

Pastorale
Vivace–Grave–Allegro
Vivace

FRANCIS POULENC
(arr. Timothy Higgins)

Quatre petites prières de Saint François d'Assise (1948)
(Four Little Prayers of Saint Francis of Assisi)

Salut, Dame Sainte
Tout puissant Dieu
Seigneur, je vous en prie
Ô mes très chers frères

TYLMAN SUSATO
(arr. John Iveson)

Dance Suite (1551)

Intermission

Program continues on next page.

TRADITIONAL
(arr. Phil Snedecor)

Il est né, le divin Enfant (ca. 1862)
(He is born, the divine Child)

VICTOR HERBERT
(arr. Bill Holcombe, Jr.)

March of the Toys (1903)

VINCE GUARALDI
(arr. Brandon Ridenour)

"Christmastime is Here" and "Skating"
from *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965)

WILLIAM BERRY

A Partridge in a Pear Tree (2005)

***Sleigh Ride* Suite**

LEOPOLD MOZART
(arr. Timothy Higgins)

Die musikalische Schlittenfahrt (1755)
(The Musical Sleigh Ride)

SERGEI PROKOFIEV
(arr. Timothy Higgins)

Troika from *Lieutenant Kijé* Suite, Opus 60 (1934)

LEROY ANDERSON
(arr. John Wasson)

Sleigh Ride (1948)



About the Conductor



EDWIN OUTWATER

Edwin Outwater regularly works with the world's top orchestras, institutions, and artists to reinvent the concert experience. His ability to cross genres has led to collaborations with Metallica, Wynton Marsalis, Renée Fleming, and Yo-Yo Ma. He is music director of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and music director laureate of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony.

Recent appearances include performances with New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, Seattle Symphony, and the New World Symphony, as well as the Royal Philharmonic in a multi-concert series opening the Steinmetz Hall in Florida. He also served as a producer and musical advisor for the National Symphony Orchestra's 50th Anniversary Concert at the Kennedy Center. In December 2022, he premiered *A Christmas Gaiety* at the Royal Albert Hall with Peaches Christ and BBC Concert Orchestra, and returned in 2023.

Outwater holds a long association with San Francisco Symphony since making his debut in November 2001. In the 2022–23 season, he led the first Symphony performances of Gabriel Kahane's *emergency shelter intake form* in collaboration with the composer and a program with Seth MacFarlane, and in 2024 led the Symphony in a collaboration with Sting. He was formerly San Francisco Symphony Resident Conductor, Director of Summer Concerts, and Music Director of San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra.

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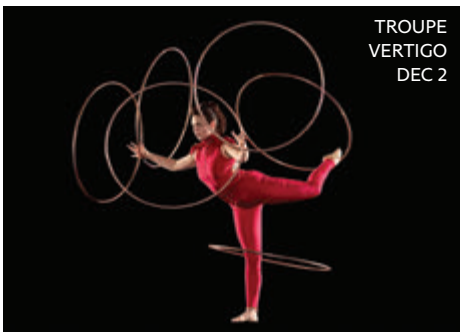
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Chamber Music at the Legion of Honor
Alexander Barantschik violin
Peter Wyrick cello
Anton Nel piano
Music by LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

DEC 1
A Merry-Achi Christmas
Mariachi Sol de México® de José Hernández

DEC 2
Holiday Cirque
Ming Luke conductor
Troupe Vertigo
San Francisco Symphony

DEC 3–4
The Colors of Christmas
Gail Deadrick conductor
Peabo Bryson vocalist
Jackie Evancho vocalist
Jennifer Holliday vocalist
BeBe Winans vocalist
Bay Area Super Choir
Jeffery Williams director
San Francisco Symphony

DEC 6–7
Stephen Stubbs conductor
Amanda Forsythe soprano
John Holiday countertenor
Aaron Sheehan tenor
Douglas Williams bass
San Francisco Symphony Chorus
Jenny Wong director
San Francisco Symphony
GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL *Messiah*

DEC 8
Deck the Hall
Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser conductor
San Francisco Ballet School
San Francisco Boys Chorus
Young Women's Choral Projects
Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir Quartet
Kugelplex Klezmer Ensemble
Members of Troupe Vertigo
San Francisco Symphony

DEC 11
Holiday Brass
Edwin Outwater conductor
Members of the SF Symphony
Works by J.S. BACH, CORELLI, POULENC, GUARALDI, PROKOFIEV, and more


THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL— IN CONCERT DEC 12 & 14

DEC 12 & 14
The Muppet Christmas Carol—In Concert
Susie Benchasil Seiter conductor
San Francisco Symphony

DEC 13
Holiday Gaiety
Edwin Outwater conductor and co-emcee
Peaches Christ co-emcee
Alex Newell vocalist
Latrice Royale drag performer
Lady Camden drag performer
Nikola Printz mezzo-soprano and aerialist
SF Gay Men's Chorus
Jacob Stensberg director and conductor
Sister Roma drag performer
Kylie Minono drag performer
San Francisco Symphony

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SF Public Library Richmond Branch

DEC 10 at 5:00pm
SF Public Library Excelsior Branch

JAN 11, 2025 at 2:00pm
SF Public Library Ingleside Branch

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DEC 15
Radu Paponiu conductor
SF Symphony Youth Orchestra
SERGEI PROKOFIEV *Peter and the Wolf*

DEC 17–18
Holidays with Boyz II Men and the SF Symphony
Edwin Outwater conductor
Boyz II Men
San Francisco Symphony


BOYZ II MEN DEC 17–18

DEC 19–21
Elf—In Concert
John Debney conductor
San Francisco Symphony

For complete details and calendar, visit sfsymphony.org.
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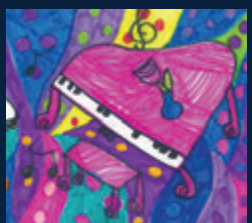
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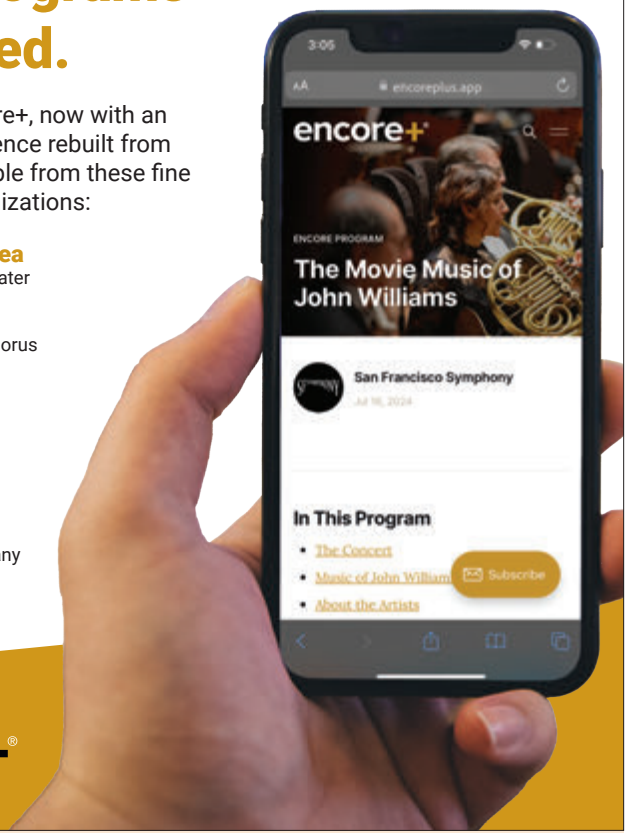
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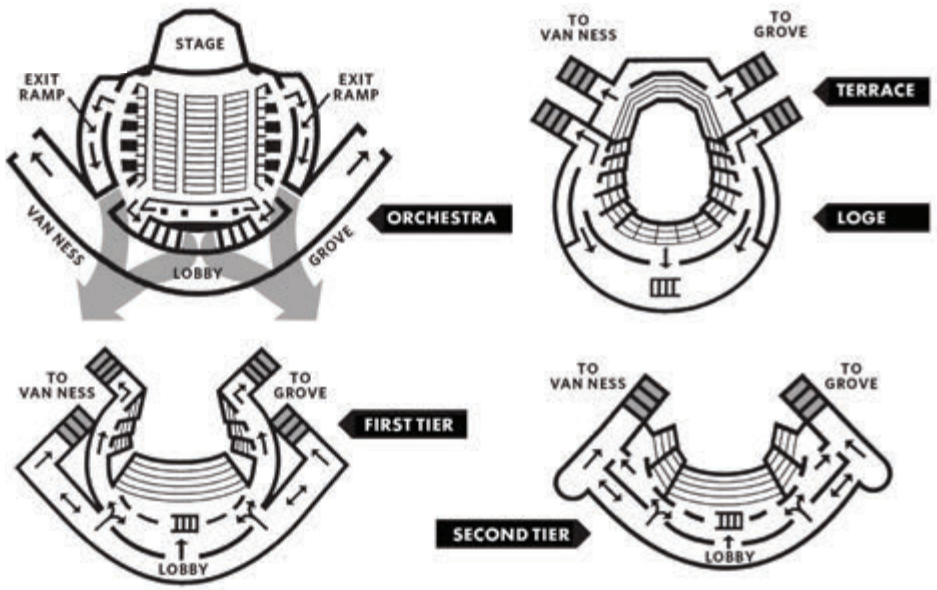
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