FEBRUARY 2026

SF SYMPHONY

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Assistant Principal Cello
Karel & Lida Urbanek Chair

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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*

February 2026

2025–26 Season | Vol. V, No. 6

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Cover: Amos Yang, Assistant Principal Cello
Photo: Cody Pickens

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music dance theater

Cal Performances

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

2025–26 Season

The English Concert

Handel's *Hercules*

Harry Bicket, *conductor*

Ann Hallenberg, *mezzo-soprano* (Dejanira)
William Guanbo Su, *bass* (Hercules)
Hilary Cronin, *soprano* (Iole)
Alexander Chance, *countertenor* (Lichas)
The Clarion Choir;
Steven Fox, *artistic director*

A true season highlight! Britain's extraordinary early-music ensemble visits with a concert performance of Handel's musical drama *Hercules*, a showcase for the expressive mezzo-soprano Ann Hallenberg, who sings the demanding role of the hero's wife Dejanira.

ANN HALLENBERG, *MEZZO SOPRANO*

Mar 8
ZELLERBACH HALL, BERKELEY

Opera Parallèle

La Belle et la Bête

Opera Parallèle presents an astonishingly original production of the classic *Beauty and the Beast* tale that blurs the distinctions between cinema and live opera, merging Jean Cocteau's surrealist 1946 film with Philip Glass' mesmerizing 1994 score.

Mar 13–14
ZELLERBACH HALL, BERKELEY

JACK Quartet

The adventurous JACK Quartet visits with a kaleidoscopic program including a world premiere by the Bay Area's own Gabriella Smith; West Coast premieres by Austin Wulliman and Keir GoGwilt; and music by European luminaries Hans Abrahamsen and the late Wolfgang Rihm.

Mar 15
HERTZ HALL, BERKELEY

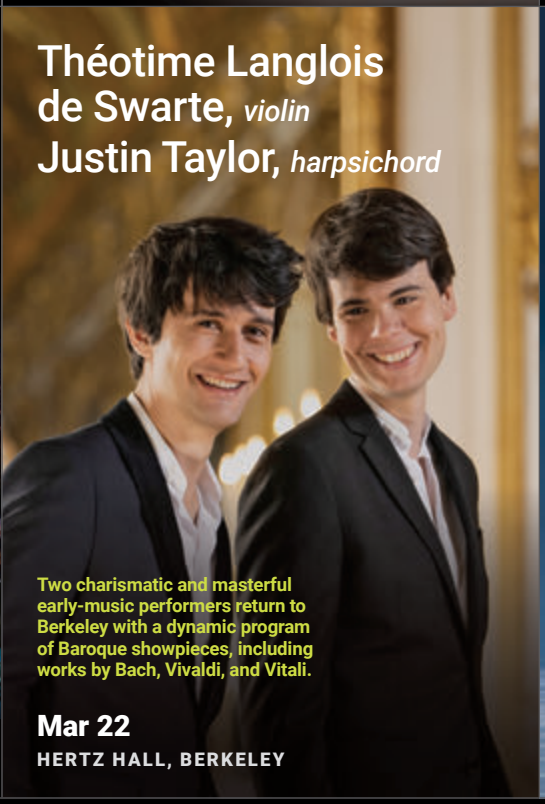
Silkroad Ensemble with Rhiannon Giddens

Sanctuary: The Power of Resonance and Ritual

Visionary musician Rhiannon Giddens leads an accomplished collection of performers steeped in American, South Asian, West African, and southern European musical traditions, in an interactive presentation that explores music as a medium for healing and connection across cultures.

Mar 19–20
ZELLERBACH HALL, BERKELEY

Théotime Langlois de Swarte, *violin*
Justin Taylor, *harpsichord*



Two charismatic and masterful early-music performers return to Berkeley with a dynamic program of Baroque showpieces, including works by Bach, Vivaldi, and Vitali.

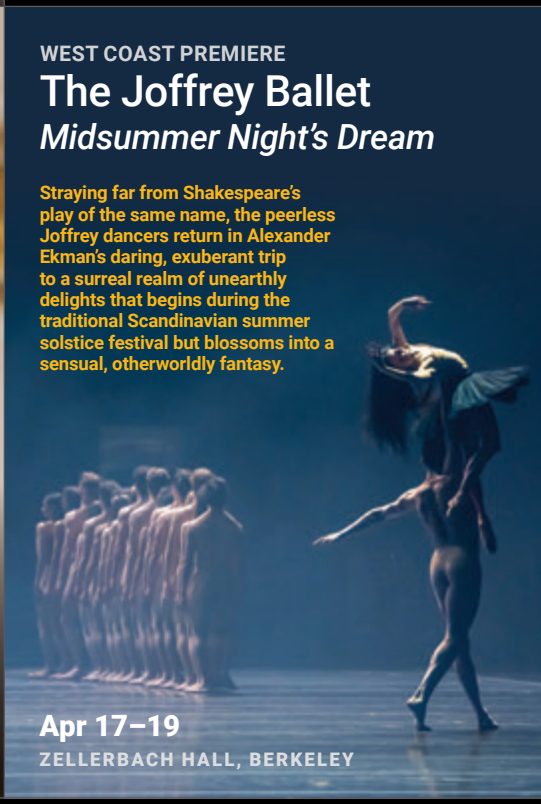
Mar 22
HERTZ HALL, BERKELEY

WEST COAST PREMIERE

The Joffrey Ballet

Midsummer Night's Dream

Straying far from Shakespeare's play of the same name, the peerless Joffrey dancers return in Alexander Ekman's daring, exuberant trip to a surreal realm of unearthly delights that begins during the traditional Scandinavian summer solstice festival but blossoms into a sensual, otherworldly fantasy.



Apr 17–19
ZELLERBACH HALL, BERKELEY

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WELCOME


Cody Pickens

The San Francisco Symphony offers a space to experience inventive projects that embrace curiosity. This month, several artists take the stage in performances that invite us to engage with music in new ways.

In her Great Performers Series recital, Nicola Benedetti reimagines violin showpieces for an intimate "café-style" ensemble of violin, cello, guitar, and accordion. In reconnecting with music from her student days, she hopes to bring audiences "closer to music, closer to us, and closer to each other."

Violinist Alexi Kenney's SoundBox performances reflect his adventurous sense of programming while showcasing the artistry of our San Francisco Symphony musicians in thrilling and unconventional contexts.

Mozart's Requiem is deeply personal for conductor Manfred Honeck, who is inspired by its "message of hope and comfort." His unique presentation brings together Mozart's music and letters with the spiritual traditions of Mozart's time in a fresh approach to the composer's final work.

Each of these performances is a reminder of how great art can take us to new places, provoke deeper thought, and bring us closer together. We're excited to keep expanding what a San Francisco Symphony concert can be for you.

Matthew Spivey
Chief Executive Officer, San Francisco Symphony

Community Connections

Only 26% of first-generation students graduate with a college degree, compared to 60% of students whose parents attended college. **Students Rising Above** (SRA) is determined to change the odds. SRA understands the rewards and obstacles students face in defying expectations, and how their success can lift up entire communities. Since 1998, SRA has helped craft, nurture, and navigate college experiences that lead to meaningful careers.

Students Rising Above empowers students facing systemic barriers to define and find success through education, career, and in life, believing that every student who aspires to go to college should have the opportunity to thrive in higher education and enter economically mobile careers. By 2035, SRA aims to support 2,500 students every year to intentionally use their college experience to unlock more opportunities.

Enlisting comprehensive support, personal relationships, and career guidance, SRA has become one of the most successful college completion programs in the nation, believing that every student who aspires to go to college should have the opportunity to thrive in higher education and enter economically mobile careers. Join SRA as they redefine what's possible for the next generation.

For more information about Students Rising Above, visit studentsrisingabove.org.

The SF Symphony Youth Orchestra recently designated Students Rising Above as a beneficiary of proceeds from the Bay Area Youth Orchestra Festival.

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.






Clockwise from bottom left: Cellists Davis You (Lyman & Carol Casey Second Century Chair) and Barbara Andres (The Stanley S. Lagendorf Foundation Second Century Chair); Horn player Jessica Valeri; Concertmaster Alexander Barantschik (Naoum Blinder Chair) and Assistant Concertmaster Wyatt Underhill (75th Anniversary Chair); Principal Harp Katherine Siochi; Associate Principal Trumpet Aaron Schuman (Peter Pastreich Chair). Photos by Brandon Patoc.

ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

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 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, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

The San Francisco Symphony presents more than 200 concerts and presentations annually for an audience of nearly 350,000 in its home of Davies Symphony Hall and around the Bay Area. A cornerstone of its mission, the San Francisco Symphony provides some of the most extensive education and community programs offered by any American orchestra. The Symphony's free music education experiences engage students in grades 1–12 throughout the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), serving more than 25,000 students annually.

In 2001, the SF Symphony became the first American orchestra to launch its own in-house record label, SFS Media. Recorded live in concert and engineered at Davies Symphony Hall, SFS Media recordings showcase music by contemporary composers as well as core classical masterworks. San Francisco Symphony radio broadcasts, the first in the nation to feature symphonic music when they began in 1926, today carry the Orchestra's concerts across the country. The Symphony launched the groundbreaking multimedia *Keeping Score* series on PBS-TV and the web in 2004; the series was made available for unlimited free streaming on the Symphony's YouTube channel in 2020. In 2014, the Symphony inaugurated SoundBox, an experimental and eclectic live music series, which takes place in an alternative performance space located backstage at Davies Symphony Hall. In 2023, the San Francisco Symphony partnered with Apple for the launch of a new classical music streaming app, Apple Music Classical, and has since released 15 spatial audio recordings of live concert performances through the app. For its adventurous programming, the Symphony has been honored 19 times by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, and the Symphony's recordings have garnered France's Grand Prix du Disque and Britain's *Gramophone* Award, as well as 17 Grammy Awards.

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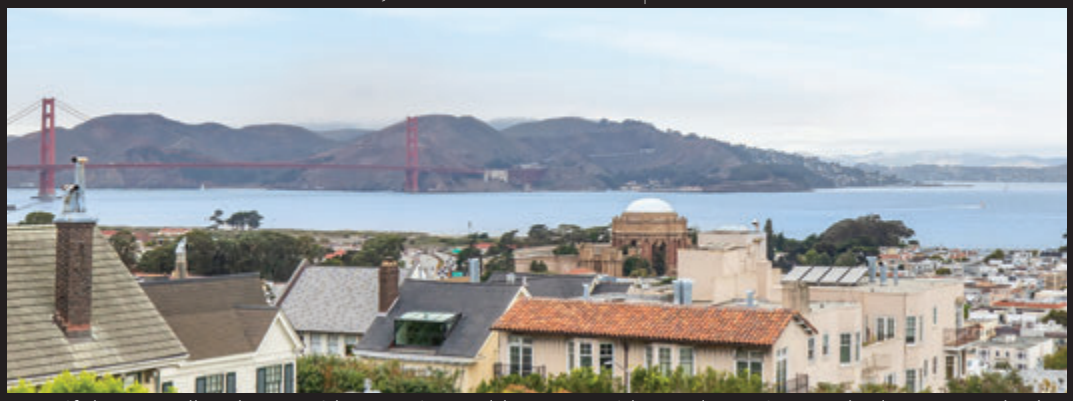

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2457 BAY STREET, SAN FRANCISCO | $6 MILLION

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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*

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

**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
Vacant, *Associate Principal*
Jessie Fellows, *Assistant Principal*
Audrey Avis Aasen-Hull Chair
Olivia Chen
The Eucalyptus Foundation
Second Century Chair
Raushan Akhmedyarova
David Chernyavsky
John Chisholm
Jane (Hyeon Jin) Cho
Cathryn Down
Darlene Gray
Stan & Lenora Davis Chair
Kingston Ho
Kum Mo Kim
Kelly Leon-Pearce
Polina Sedukh
Chen Zhao

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
Sarah Chong
Elizabeth C. Peters Cello Chair
Sébastien Gingras
Penelope Clark Second Century Chair
David Goldblatt
Christine & Pierre Lamond
Second Century 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
Brian Marcus
Orion Miller
S. Mark Wright

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

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
Joshua Elmore, *Principal*
Stephen Paulson, *Associate Principal*
Justin Cummings
Vacant, *Contrabassoon*

HORNS
Diego Incertis Sánchez, *Principal*
Michael Stevens†, *Acting Associate Principal*
Vacant, *Assistant Principal*
Jonathan Ring
Jessica Valeri
Jack Bryant†

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
Vacant, *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*
Bryan Zimmerman, *Stage Technician*

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Cheryl Cain
Phoebe Chee
Tonia D'Amelio
Cara Gabrielson
Ellen Leslie
Jennifer Mitchell
Natalia Salemmo

ALTOS
Marina Davis
Margaret (Peg) Lisi
Brielle Marina Neilson
Leandra Ramm
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
Jack Wilkins

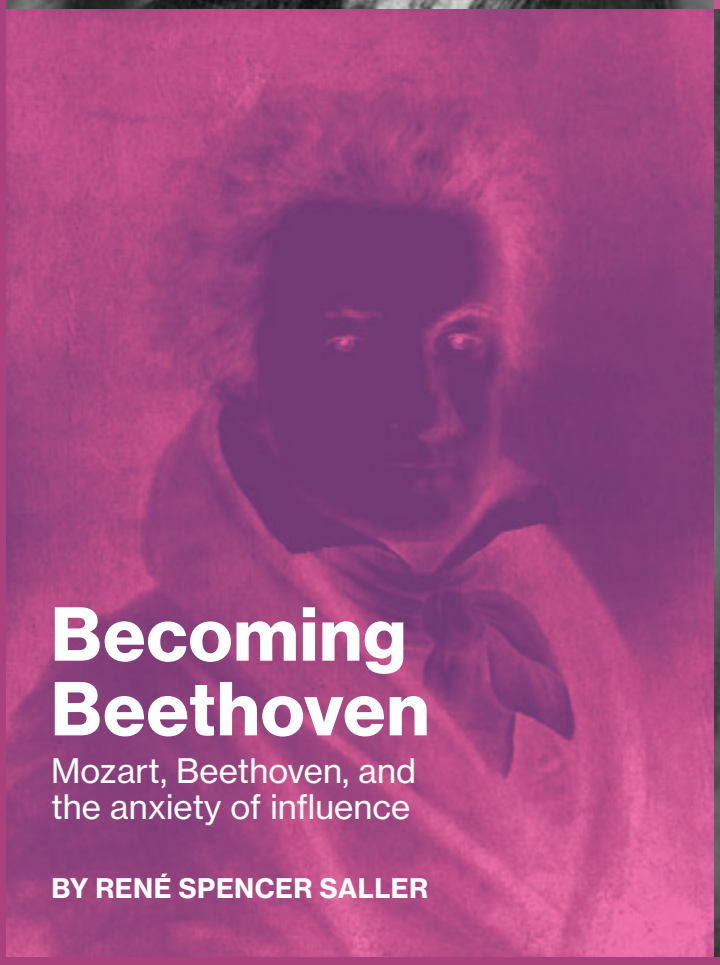
BASSES
Simon Barrad
Adam Cole
Harlan J. Hays
Oliver W. Holt†
Clayton Moser
Matthew C. Peterson*
Chung-Wai Soong
David Varnum
Nick Volkert

Lead support for the San Francisco Symphony's string sections in the 2025–26 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 for the Youth Orchestra Conductor.



Becoming Beethoven

Mozart, Beethoven, and the anxiety of influence

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

AFTER HEARING MOZART'S C-MINOR PIANO CONCERTO for the first time, Beethoven supposedly exclaimed to a colleague, "We shall never be able to do anything like that!"

For many composers—and artists in general—the line between legacy and burden is blurry at best. What happens when a creative influence doesn't inspire so much as inhibit? Harold Bloom wrote two books on the topic, *The Anxiety of Influence* and *The Map of Misreading*. In them, the late literary theorist argued that the strongest poets are the ones who misread their fearsome forebears, usually as a subconscious defense mechanism against the ego-corroding force of influence. This productive misunderstanding helps the strongest, most original poets protect their developing egos and reclaim their creative mojo. Replace "poet" with "composer," and Bloom's theory works equally well.

Bloom reframes the issue of influence in Freudian terms, but you don't need to review your Psych 101 notes to understand the related concept of ambivalence. Most of us know what it feels like to admire someone who makes us feel inferior by comparison—for me, if you must know, it's Jan Swafford and the late Michael Steinberg—so we get why the ego might develop defense strategies against this profuse admiration. Kill your idols, as the '80s punk slogan goes. It's never quite that easy, alas. Your idols might be dead already.

As a teenager in his native Bonn, Beethoven was urged by his patron Count Waldstein to make a pilgrimage to Vienna and "receive the spirit of Mozart at Haydn's hands." Although he dutifully complied, the pressure made him queasy. On the one hand, he wanted to enter the pantheon; on the other hand, he needed to assert his independence. Just as Beethoven's looming presence would both inspire and inhibit his successors—"Who can do anything after Beethoven?" Schubert famously griped—Mozart provoked a similar ambivalence in Beethoven.

Although Beethoven pored over Mozart's scores from early adolescence and would later study with Mozart's mentor and champion, Joseph Haydn, no one knows whether Beethoven and Mozart actually met. Swafford, who wrote comprehensive biographies of both composers, believes that it's possible, although most of their reported exchanges seem to be fabricated. Beethoven did take in some Mozart performances, both in Bonn and Vienna. But regardless of whether theirs was a literal or a purely parasocial relationship, the connection started during Beethoven's childhood. Beethoven's drunken wastrel of a father tried to transform himself from a small-time music instructor into Leopold Mozart, the consummate stage dad, while positioning the young Beethoven, who was about 14 years Mozart's junior, as the hot new talent. Given expert guidance and instruction, the child might have been capable of taking on the prodigy circuit, but his father lacked Leopold's entrepreneurial drive and discipline. Beethoven's father seldom saw anything through, aside from the brutal beatings that he regularly inflicted on his children. He was a burden, not a provider.

Beethoven might not have been swanning around the continent and hobnobbing with royalty as a child and teenager, but he understood that he needed to sound as Beethovenian as Mozart sounded Mozartian. Paradoxically, he became most distinctively himself when he learned so much Mozart that he could channel him almost intuitively, improvise on his themes, lift his harmonic shifts, quote lines from his operas—the one form where Beethoven comes up short. (Don't fight me, *Fidelio* fans: I'm confident that Beethoven, who adored *Die Zauberflöte*, would agree.)

If the Bloomian or Freudian interpretation feels needlessly combative to you, you're not alone. Some of us perceive creative influence as a source of joy, a way to converse and commune with formative paternal and (not that Bloom ever fully acknowledged them) maternal figures. Often the dynamic of influence seems less like a competition designed to vanquish and subjugate the problematic precursor and more like a posthumous collaboration. The most loving response to a work of art, or a sunset, or a child, or an ailing parent, is close attention. When we focus fully on another human being or on something created by another human being—large language models need not apply!—we escape the constraints of consciousness and time. Often, as Beethoven found in Mozart, we discover an ally, not an authority figure or a rival. Instead of punishment and endless one-upmanship, this form of influence offers sustenance and support.

We don't need to kill our idols, or even maim or disfigure them. We can follow the lead of Beethoven, who undercut the occasional snippy comment—he allegedly told his student Carl Czerny that Mozart's playing was fine but choppy, lacking any legato—with the only tribute he cared about, the musical kind. His many quotations from Mozart scores aren't the main reason that music writers invariably refer to Beethoven's Mozartian tendencies. Beethoven immersed himself so completely in Mozart's sound world that he could recreate it in his own singular language. This degree of devotion is

MOZART AND BEETHOVEN AT THE SF SYMPHONY

FEB 5–7
Bicket Conducts All-Mozart
Mozart Symphonies Nos. 34 and 38, and opera arias with Golda Schultz

FEB 8
Yefim Bronfman Piano Recital
Beethoven *Appassionata* Sonata and works by Schumann, Brahms, and Debussy

FEB 19–21
Van Zweden Conducts All-Beethoven
Beethoven Symphonies Nos. 2 and 7

FEB 25
Shenson Spotlight Series: Mao Fujita Piano Recital
Beethoven Piano Sonata No. 1 and works by Wagner, Berg, and Brahms

FEB 26–27, MAR 1
Honeck Conducts Mozart's Requiem
Beethoven *Coriolan* Overture, Haydn Symphony No. 93, and Mozart Requiem (dramatic production conceived by Manfred Honeck)

For more on **Mozart**, head to Davies Symphony Hall's First Tier lobby for **Requiem Reflections**, an exhibit connecting Mozart's Requiem with the universal questions it stirs. On view through March 4.

best described as love.

On a sketch in C minor from 1790, the year before Mozart's premature death, Beethoven dashed off a note, to himself and to posterity: "This entire passage has been [inadvertently] stolen from the Mozart Symphony in C ["Linz"]." He then made a few minor adjustments to the passage before signing it "Beethoven himself."

Whether Beethoven "misread" Mozart to enact his Mozartian magic is immaterial. For almost his entire life he was pitted against his near-contemporary, and people continued to compare them long after their respective deaths. We compulsively play the same dumb rhetorical games with different artificial binaries—Beatles vs. Stones, Kendrick vs. Drake, boxers vs. briefs—as if a fondness for one thing precludes appreciation of the other. Declaring our allegiance to Mozart instead of Beethoven, or vice versa, narrows our range of experience and deprives us of pleasure.

In his critical reappraisal of Beethoven, the late musicologist Richard Taruskin lamented what he called the "newly sacralized view of art" and blamed Beethoven for turning concert halls into museums or temples. He was right to question the Romantic myths surrounding Beethoven's life and career, the overwhelming tendency to present his struggles as heroic, his suffering as unique and transcendent. But Taruskin also felt that Beethoven's influence stifled his successors more than it freed them to pursue their own creative paths. Through no fault of his own, the fallible human being became a godlike authority, a scary dad, a mentor-cum-tormentor of future generations.

If you were expecting a sassy Taruskinesque takedown, sorry to disappoint. Although we do Mozart and Beethoven no favors when we turn them into distant unknowable gods, we also gain nothing by trashing them. Besides, if there's anything sillier than worshiping the dead, it's fighting the dead, or even defending them. The best will survive our blather. After all, they survived one another.

René Spencer Saller is a Contributing Writer for the San Francisco Symphony and the main program annotator for the Dallas Symphony. She has also written for the St. Louis Symphony and Tippet Rise Art Center.

Eiichi Ikeda

Four Questions For
Pianist Mao Fujita

Tell us a little about what you're playing in your Spotlight Series recital.
In this recital, I will play pieces that Beethoven, Berg, and Brahms wrote when they were still young. We know how great they all became later, but even in these early works you can already feel the strong energy that shaped their future music. In Beethoven's Opus 2, no.1, the famous "Fate" motif already appears. Berg's Twelve Variations were written when he had just started studying with Schoenberg, and you can hear his early but very beautiful harmonic ideas. And in Brahms's First Sonata, you can hear a motif that seems inspired by Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* [Sonata], but it also has Brahms's own rhapsodic style. These works are full of character and are very exciting to perform.

What inspired you to pursue a career in classical music?
From a very young age, classical music was simply a natural part of my life. Just like brushing my teeth, eating meals, or going to sleep, making music was something I did every day without question. While my friends were playing together or enjoying games, I was practicing the piano. It was always a joy, and it is still so.

What's your routine like on concert days?
The concert requires an intense amount of concentration, so I try to sleep as much as possible before performing. When I go on stage, I play with the feeling that I am giving my whole life to the music.

What influences your creativity and artistic expression?
I don't have many hobbies outside of music, but I really enjoy visiting museums and seeing great works of art. I also love reading books. You know, manga is big in Japan, which is where I was born and grew up, but it's not enough for me. I prefer reading texts and creating the images in my own mind; imagining the scenes for myself helps nurture my inspiration and creativity.

Mao Fujita makes his debut at the San Francisco Symphony in a Shenson Spotlight Series recital, February 25.

MEET THE MUSICIANS

Yuhsin Galaxy Su

Clarinet

Yuhsin Galaxy Su joined the San Francisco Symphony as Second Clarinet at the beginning of the 2024–25 season. She makes her Symphony solo debut in this month's Lunar New Year concert.

What was the first concert you played with the San Francisco Symphony?
My first concert with the San Francisco Symphony was Music from Studio Ghibli with Joe Hisaishi. Growing up, I listened to his music and watched Studio Ghibli films, so performing with him was an incredibly special and surreal experience.

How did you begin playing your instrument?
In Taiwan, music schools require students to have both a primary and a secondary instrument. I initially majored in piano, with clarinet as my secondary instrument. I've always loved both, but when I was 14, I made the switch to major in clarinet and moved to the United States to continue my studies. But even now, I continue to play and perform on the piano regularly.

Did you have some especially influential teachers or mentors?
I studied with Yehuda Gilad at the Colburn School for my master's degree, and he has been one of the most profoundly intelligent and caring mentors I've had. His guidance shaped not only my playing but also my approach to music and life. Without a doubt, he transformed my perspective in the most incredible way.

What kind of clarinet do you play?
I recently bought a Buffet Tosca clarinet, and I love how it feels to play. It's incredibly responsive, with a warm, resonant tone that projects brilliantly. It's an instrument that truly inspires me every time I play it.

Do you have other musical activities outside the Symphony?
I play a lot of piano and accompany at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, which allows me to stay engaged in the broader musical community. Last October, I performed Copland's Clarinet Concerto with the Reno Chamber Orchestra.

Can you tell us a little about your life outside the Symphony?
Running is a big part of my daily routine—I go for a run first thing in the morning. I also love to cook and bake, often creating my own recipes for dishes I enjoy. On a nice sunny day, I love to take a walk to Arsicault Bakery for my favorite almond croissants!

What's your concert day routine?
I start the day with a morning run, followed by coffee and peanut butter toast—my go-to breakfast. After warming up on clarinet, I practice piano and take a walk in a nearby park. I like to cook dinner at home before heading to the concert. Afterward, I like to treat myself to a small glass of wine and watch some *Friends* before heading to bed.

Why is an orchestra an important cultural pillar in a city like San Francisco?
The San Francisco Symphony is a vital part of the city's cultural fabric. It brings world-class music to the community, fosters creativity, provides music education, and supports the local economy. Most importantly, it keeps classical music alive in innovative and exciting ways, ensuring its relevance for generations to come.

CALENDAR


NICOLA BENEDETTI
FEB 1

FEB 1
Chamber Music at Davies Symphony Hall
with **SF Symphony Musicians**
LUIGI BOCCHERINI String Quintet in D major, Opus 37, no.2
ARTHUR FOOTE Piano Quartet No. 1 in C major
GEORGE ENESCU String Octet in C major

FEB 1
Great Performers Series
Nicola Benedetti violin
Plínio Fernandes guitar
Hanzhi Wang accordion
Adrian Daurov cello
Featuring chamber arrangements of works by MARIA THERESIA VON PARADIS, HENRYK WIENIAWSKI, MANUEL PONCE, NICCOLÒ PAGANINI, PABLO DE SARASATE, VITTORIO MONTI, ERNEST BLOCH, CLAUDE DEBUSSY, and traditional folk music

FEB 5–7
Harry Bicket conductor
Golda Schultz soprano
Samuel White tenor
San Francisco Symphony
Music of WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Serenade in D major, K.239, *Serenata notturna*
Symphony No. 34
Symphony No. 38, *Prague*
Selections from *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Don Giovanni*

FEB 6–7
SoundBox: Dream Awake
Alexi Kenney curator
Musicians of the San Francisco Symphony

FEB 8
Great Performers Series
Yefim Bronfman piano
ROBERT SCHUMANN Arabesque in C major, Opus 18
JOHANNES BRAHMS Piano Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Opus 5
CLAUDE DEBUSSY *Images* for Piano, Set 2
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Opus 57, *Appassionata*


GOLDA SCHULTZ
FEB 5–7

FEB 14
Music for Families: Music of the Heart
Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser conductor
San Francisco Symphony

FEB 19–21
Jaap van Zweden conductor
San Francisco Symphony
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Symphony No. 2
Symphony No. 7

FEB 25
Shenson Spotlight Series
Mao Fujita piano
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Piano Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Opus 2, no.1
RICHARD WAGNER *Ein Albumblatt*
ALBAN BERG Twelve Variations on an Original Theme
JOHANNES BRAHMS Piano Sonata No. 1, Opus 1
RICHARD WAGNER (trans. Franz Liszt) *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde*

UPCOMING COMMUNITY CHAMBER CONCERTS

Feb 22 at 2:30pm
SFPL Parkside Branch

Learn more:
sfsymphony.org/CommunityChamber

FEB 26–27, MAR 1
(Open Rehearsal on Feb 26)
Manfred Honeck conductor
Ying Fang soprano
Sasha Cooke mezzo-soprano
David Portillo tenor
Stephano Park bass
Adrian Roberts narrator
San Francisco Symphony Chorus
Jenny Wong director
San Francisco Symphony
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN *Coriolan* Overture
JOSEPH HAYDN Symphony No. 93 in D major
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Requiem, K.626 (dramatic production conceived by Manfred Honeck)
Inside Music Talks by Laura Stanfield Prichard (Prior to Open Rehearsal); The Very Rev. Dr. Malcolm Clemens Young, Dean of Grace Cathedral (Prior to each performance)


JAAP VAN ZWEDEN
FEB 19–21

FEB 28
Lunar New Year: Year of the Horse
Mei-Ann Chen conductor
George Gao erhu
Yuhsin Galaxy Su clarinet
San Francisco Symphony

For complete details and calendar, visit sfsymphony.org.
Buy tickets online or through the Symphony Box Office: 415.864.6000.

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CHAMBER MUSIC
THE CONCERT

Sunday, February 1, 2026, at 2:00pm

Musicians of the San Francisco Symphony

LUIGI BOCCHERINI

String Quintet in D major, Opus 37, no.2 (1787)
Allegro vivo
Pastorale: Amoroso, ma non lento
Finale: Presto

Dan Carlson violin
In Sun Jang violin
Gina Cooper viola
Amos Yang cello
Charles Chandler double bass

ARTHUR FOOTE

Piano Quartet in C major, Opus 23 (1890)
Allegro comodo
Scherzo: Allegro vivace
Adagio, ma con moto
Allegro non troppo

Kelly Leon-Pearce violin
Gina Cooper viola
David Goldblatt cello
June Choi Oh piano

Intermission

GEORGE ENESCU

Octet for Strings in C major, Opus 7 (1900)
Très modéré
Très fougueux
Lentement
Moins vite, animé, movement de valse bien rhythmé

Jessie Fellows violin
Olivia Chen violin
Jeein Kim violin
Jane Cho violin
Katie Kadarauch viola
Katarzyna Bryla viola
Anne Richardson cello
Sarah Chong cello

String Quintet in D major, Opus 37, no. 2

LUIGI BOCCHERINI

Born: February 19, 1743, in Lucca, Italy
Died: May 28, 1805, in Madrid
Work Composed: 1787

Luigi Boccherini

One of the premiere cellists of his time as well as an astonishingly fecund composer, Luigi Boccherini grew up in an artistic family. His father was a singer and a double bass player, his brother a ballet dancer and poet (who penned the libretto for Haydn's oratorio *Il ritorno di Tobia*), and his sister a solo dancer who worked in Vienna. After studying cello in Rome, Boccherini returned to his native Lucca, where one of his mentors was Giacomo Puccini, a local organist and (unbeknownst to him) great-grandfather of *the* Giacomo Puccini. Soon the young cellist was touring farther afield in Italy, and then to such destinations as Vienna and Paris. He was acclaimed as a phenomenal soloist, though a few listeners complained about the harsh vehemence of his playing.

He had intended to travel from Paris to London, but at the last minute he changed his plans and journeyed south to Spain. It was a fateful decision, and Spain would become his center of operations for the rest of his career. In 1770 he was named composer "chamber virtuoso" of Infante Luis Antonio Jaime de Boubón in Aranjuez, and shortly after Luis's death in 1785 he accepted a position as staff composer to Crown Prince Wilhelm of Prussia, who had long admired Boccherini's work and was amenable to an arrangement whereby he might fulfill his duties long-distance from Spain. The composer also maintained relationships with the Spanish kings Carlos III and Carlos IV, the latter being a particular enthusiast of music. Boccherini's final years were difficult. His royal patrons were dying off and it was a far from ideal time for royalty in general, what with the French Revolution and all that. Members of the Bonaparte family eventually took Boccherini under their wing, to a degree, but he finished his days in straitened circumstances in a small apartment in Madrid. His estate included two Stradivari cellos.

Boccherini is most famous for chamber music, including 100 string quartets and nearly 150 string quintets. The work played on this concert is the second in a set of three quintets composed, or at least copied out in the surviving holograph, in 1787—the first being dated January, the second February, and the third March. Boccherini's string quintets are typically scored for two violins, viola, and two cellos. This set, however, calls for the combination of two violins, viola, cello, and obbligato double bass, standing as a unique triptych in his vast output. This D-major quintet was not published until 1811/12, when the Parisian firm of Pleyel issued it in the more standard layout with two cellos and also provided an alternate part for "alto violoncello," with which it could be played by two violins, two violas, and one cello. Still, the composer's autograph score leaves no doubt that he intended the instrumentation used here.

Boccherini's style typically includes rhythmic syncopation (sometimes repeated over and over), short melodic phrases, abrupt changes in texture and dynamics, and a preponderance of filigree in the principal melodic lines, which tend to unroll over harmonies that are not inherently complex. These traits are especially prominent in the first and third movements, and the first also includes some characteristic writing in which several string instruments join to impersonate the strummed chords of a guitar—surely popular with Spanish listeners. In between comes a lilting Pastorale, its rustic character reinforced by drones in the lower parts that imitate a bagpipe or hurdy-gurdy. Throughout this quintet, Boccherini is careful to include passages to spotlight his own instrument, the cello.

Piano Quartet in C major, Opus 23

ARTHUR FOOTE

Born: March 5, 1853, in Salem, Massachusetts
Died: April 8, 1937, in Boston
Work Composed: 1890

Arthur Foote

Arthur Foote was the first American composer writing under the influence of classical European models to achieve eminence without the benefit of European training. After completing a harmony course at New England Conservatory, he headed to Harvard, where he studied with the distinguished composer John Knowles Paine (to whom he would dedicate his Piano Quartet), led the Harvard Glee Club, and, in 1875, became the first recipient of a master's degree in music from an American university. He traveled to Europe eight times in the period 1876 to 1896. During his first visit he attended the inaugural season of Richard Wagner's Bayreuth Festival, and over the years he imbibed the vibrant concert culture of Germany, Great Britain, and France. In Paris in 1883, he took a few formal lessons from the eminent Hungarian pianist Stephen Heller (focusing on Heller's compositions), the brief "exception that proves the rule" when it comes to his all-American education.

His principal teacher was the Boston musician B.J. (Benjamin Johnson) Lang, who earned a footnote in music history by conducting the world premiere (in 1875, in Boston) of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1. Lang was acclaimed as a pianist and organist, and Foote followed his lead by working as a church organist, serving in the loft at Boston's First Unitarian Church for 32 years (1878–1910). He was a founding member of the American Guild of Organists in 1896 and served as its president from 1909 to 1912. Nonetheless, he viewed piano as his principal instrument, and for many years he enjoyed a busy concert career as a pianist in both solo recitals and chamber music.

Foote became especially associated with the Boston-based Kneisel Quartet and its first violinist, Franz Kneisel, who was concertmaster of the Boston Symphony and a leading force in

American chamber music. Foote recalled in his memoirs:

> In the wonderful days of the Kneisel Quartet (say, 1890 to 1910) I played with it a good many times, chiefly at first performances of my own compositions. Not only had I the honor and happiness of having a hearing for my Violin Sonata, Piano Trio in B-flat, Piano Quartet and Quintet, and String Quartet, but also learned much from Kneisel through his suggestions as to practical points in composition, and I became aware of a different and higher standard of performance through my work with him in rehearsal.

Foote completed the Piano Quartet in August 1890 and unveiled it in Boston on April 21, 1891, assisted by members of Kneisel's foursome. In 1893, he and the Kneisels would include this work in a program at the Chicago World's Fair, and by the time he retired from the concert stage, Foote logged 40 performances of the piece.

His music displays a conservative bent. This was his authentic voice and did not reflect a lack of interest in modernist tendencies taking place during his lifetime. In a memorial tribute penned in 1937, the Boston music critic Moses Smith cited a friend who "was amazed by Foote's curiosity about what was happening among European composers of the advance guard," and specifically about "Alban Berg, a composer whose training and artistic methods were at the furthest remove possible from those of Foote." In another obituary, the composer Frederick Jacobi wrote, "In Arthur Foote, American music has lost its last Victorian." Though not on the cutting edge even in 1890, the Piano Quartet impresses with its technical fluency and warmhearted spirit. The eminent 19th-century chronicler John Sullivan Dwight particularly praised the work's finale: "Clear, spontaneous, consistent, well wrought, especially in the contrapuntal passages near the end, it satisfied the musical sense."

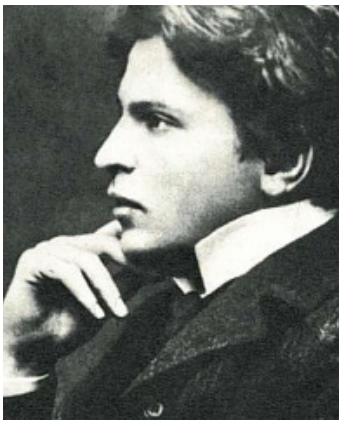
Octet for Strings in C major, Opus 7

GEORGE ENESCU

Born: August 19, 1881, in Liveni Vîrnav, Romania
Died: May 4, 1955, in Paris
Work Composed: 1900

If you were to look for the village of Liveni Vîrnav on a modern map of Romania, you would not find it. It changed its name in the last century to honor its most celebrated native son, which is why today that spot on the map is identified by the name George Enescu. He began studying violin at the age of four and was only seven when he entered the Vienna Conservatory. After completing his studies there in 1893, he moved to Paris, where the Conservatory ushered him through the composition studios of both Jules Massenet and Gabriel Fauré. France and Romania exerted roughly equal pull on him through much of his career, but when the Communist Party assumed control following World War II, he left Romania for good and lived his remaining decade in exile.

He flourished as a performer—as a violinist, a pianist, a chamber musician, and a conductor. While on tour in San Francisco in 1925, he met the youngster who would become his most acclaimed pupil, Yehudi Menuhin. Indeed, Menuhin would be one of the few to benefit from his expertise on an extended, first-hand basis, since Enescu avoided teaching commitments apart from



George Enescu

master classes.

Early in his career, Enescu proved chameleon-like in essaying the various musical approaches then prominent: incorporating folkloric elements into classical works, building on the Germanic solidity of Schumann and Brahms, exploring transparent textures *à la* Saint-Saëns and Fauré, developing a sort of neo-Classicism some years before Stravinsky and Prokofiev looked in that direction. Post-Wagnerian chromaticism came to the fore in his Octet for Strings (1900, apparently premiered that December 18 in Paris) and his Symphony No. 1 (1905), as did the chromatic modernity of Richard Strauss in his Symphony No. 2 (1914).

The Octet suggests a personal style not yet fully formed, particularly in its tendency to make sudden allusions to definable styles of other composers—its occasional Wagnerisms and Dvořákisms, but especially its Brahmsisms and Wolfisms. On the other hand, this early work also suggests a distinctive voice that would become pervasive in ensuing works. "What is important in art is to vibrate oneself and make others vibrate," he would later observe; and, on another occasion, "Something trembles in my heart incessantly, both night and day." A sense of nervous energy, of fluttering, underscores page after page of the Octet. The work's drama is borne proudly by a "double string quartet" that can approach symphonic textures. At the end of the first movement, a big-boned piece in sonata form that shows off the composer's adeptness with tightly knit linear (sometimes even canonical) writing, the second cello sustains a low B (achieved by tuning the bottom string down) for 10 measures, as the music winds down and fades away above it.

The second section—the Octet's four parts are not separated decisively—is marked *Très fougueux* (Very Impetuous), an unusual but absolutely apt descriptive for this music of propulsive rhythms and often angular melodies. The slow third section (Lentement) strikes a more muted pose, again with suggestions of canon in its interweaving lines; and yet the frequently pulsating lower lines convey even here an underlying tension notwithstanding the remarkable beauty of its melodies. Only in the final minutes of the movement does the mood change, with the upper voices finally expressing only optimism as the lower voices accompany with light-hearted pizzicatos. But the levity is short-lived, and the transition to the fourth section injects the sense of anxiety that will be familiar by now. The craggy principal theme of this finale gives way to sort of drunken waltz.

– James M. Keller

James M. Keller served as the San Francisco Symphony's Program Annotator from 2000 until his retirement at the end of last season and continues as a Contributing Writer to the program book. He is the author of *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford University Press).

About the Artists

Dan Carlson joined the San Francisco Symphony in 2006. He currently serves as Principal Second Violin, occupying the Dinner & Swig Families Chair. He previously served as rotating concertmaster for the New World Symphony and he has made solo appearances with the Phoenix Symphony, Chicago String Ensemble, New World Symphony, and the Prometheus Chamber Orchestra. A graduate of the Juilliard School, he has performed chamber music extensively throughout New York.

In Sun Jang joined the San Francisco Symphony first violin section in 2011 and was previously a concertmaster with the New World Symphony. A top prizewinner at the International Henryk Szeryng Violin Competition, she has soloed with the New World Symphony, Puchon Philharmonic, and the Nanpa Festival Orchestra. She is a graduate of the Juilliard School and New England Conservatory.

Gina Cooper joined the San Francisco Symphony viola section in 1992, having served previously as a member of the Buffalo Philharmonic. A native of Ardsley, New York, she began her musical studies on piano and holds a master's degree from the Yale School of Music.

Amos Yang joined the San Francisco Symphony in 2007 as Assistant Principal Cello and holds the Karel & Lida Urbanek Chair. He was previously a member of the Seattle Symphony and a member of the Maia String Quartet. Born and raised in San Francisco, he was a member of the SF Symphony Youth Orchestra and San Francisco Boys Choir, and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School.

Charles Chandler joined the San Francisco Symphony bass section in 1992 and previously served as associate principal bass of the Phoenix Symphony. The first member of the SF Symphony Youth Orchestra to join the SF Symphony, he graduated from the Juilliard School.

Kelly Leon-Pearce joined the San Francisco Symphony second violin section in 1990 and previously served as a substitute with the New York Philharmonic and associate concertmaster of the Aspel Festival Orchestra. As a founding member of the Persichetti Quartet, she played the cycle of Persichetti quartets at Kennedy Center and a Bartók cycle at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She holds degrees from the Juilliard School.

David Goldblatt joined the San Francisco Symphony cello section in 1978 and holds the Christine & Pierre Lamond Second Century Chair, having previously played in the Pittsburgh Symphony. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, he has also performed with the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia and Santa Fe Opera Orchestra. He is currently a coach for the SF Symphony Youth Orchestra.

June Choi Oh has performed with the New York Philharmonic's chamber music series and at the United Nations, Chicago's Dame Myra Hess Concert Series, Germany's Kieller Schloss, Holland's Stadsgehoorzall, Canada's Victoria Music Festival, and Aspen Music Festival. As a soloist, she has appeared with the New Haven Symphony, Aspen Concert Orchestra, and Filarmonica de Jalisco. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School.

Jessie Fellows is Assistant Principal Second Violin of the San Francisco Symphony and holds the Audrey Avis Aasen-Hull Chair. Prior to her appointment, she performed frequently with the St. Louis Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Born into a musical family, she began her studies at the age of three under the direction of her mother in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Olivia Chen joined the San Francisco Symphony's second violin section at the beginning of the 2023–24 season and holds the Eucalyptus Foundation Second Century Chair. She served as concertmaster of the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra and has also performed with the New York String Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and with the Baltimore Symphony. Chen pursued her undergraduate studies at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, where she won the Marbury Violin Competition, the Melissa Tiller Violin Prize, and the Sidney Friedberg Prize.

Jeein Kim joined the San Francisco Symphony first violin section at the beginning of the 2024–25 season. She was previously a member of the Korean National Symphony and has been a substitute musician with the Chicago Symphony. As a soloist, she has performed with Praha Hradec Kralove Philharmonic, Yonsei University Orchestra, Prime Philharmonic Orchestra, JK Chamber Orchestra, and Northwest Sinfonietta. She studied at Yale School of Music, New England Conservatory, and Yonsei University. She has won top prizes at the Menuhin Competition, Seoul International Music Competition, and Northwest Sinfonietta Youth Competition.

Jane (Hyeon Jin) Cho joined the San Francisco Symphony second violin section in the 2025–26 season. She was a finalist in the 2022 International Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition and has performed as a substitute musician with the New York Philharmonic. She studied at the Royal College of Music in London and the Juilliard School.

Katarzyna Bryla joined the San Francisco Symphony viola section beginning with the 2022–23 season. She was born into a family of musicians and has earned more than two dozen awards in the United States, France, and her native Poland. In 2019 she became a coprincipal violist of Orchestra of St. Luke's and has also been a member of the New York City Ballet Orchestra and the New York Pops.

Anne Richardson joined the San Francisco Symphony as Associate Principal Cello beginning in the 2024–25 season and holds the Peter & Jacqueline Hoefer Chair. She was most recently an academy fellow with the Bavarian Radio Symphony and has performed with the Verbier Festival Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and Pittsburgh Symphony. As a soloist, she has appeared with the Louisville Orchestra, Massapequa Philharmonic, Bryan Symphony Orchestra, and Juilliard Orchestra. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, she studied at the Juilliard School and the University of Michigan.

Sarah Chong joined the San Francisco Symphony cello section in September of this year and holds the Elizabeth C. Peters Cello Chair. A Bay Area native, she began her musical studies with Jihee Kim, and received her bachelor's degree from Northwestern University. As an avid chamber musician, she has performed at the St. Paul String Quartet Competition, Fischoff Chamber Music Competition, the Meadowmount School, and Music@Menlo, and spent years under the guidance of the Dover Quartet.

AN EVENING WITH NICOLA BENEDETTI
GREAT PERFORMERS SERIES

Sunday, February 1, 2026, at 7:30pm

Nicola Benedetti violin
Plínio Fernandes guitar
Hanzhi Wang accordion
Adrian Daurov cello

ATTRIB. MARIA THERESIA VON PARADIS (arr. J. Pochin & J. Morgan)	*Sicilienne* (1924)
HENRI WIENIAWSKI (arr. Stephen Goss)	Polonaise *de concert*, Opus 4 (1852)
MANUEL PONCE (arr. Paul Campbell)	*Estrellita* (1912)
NICCOLÒ PAGANINI	Cantabile in D major, Opus 17 (ca. 1823) Caprice No. 1 in E major, Opus 1 (1802) Caprice No. 24 in A minor, Opus 1 (1817)
PABLO DE SARASATE (arr. Stephen Goss)	*Navarra*, Opus 33 (1889)

Intermission

TRADITIONAL (arr. Brìghde Chaimbeul)	A' Choille Ghruamach (Air) Skye Boat Song Hacky Honey Reel
VITTORIO MONTI	*Czardas* (1904)
ERNEST BLOCH (arr. Simon Parkin)	*From Jewish Life: Prayer* (1924)
CLAUDE DEBUSSY (arr. Simon Parkin)	*Beau soir* (1878)
PABLO DE SARASATE (arr. Stephen Goss)	*Carmen* Fantasy, Opus 25 (1881)

About the Program

The music you will hear tonight is intended as a thank you to you all: audiences I have known and been supported by for over 22 years; people of all ages from around the world who share with me a deep love of classical music and the violin; people whose children I have taught after concerts and whose curiosity of the arts I share. This selection of music combines warm and uplifting virtuosity with seductive romance, but we have also discovered an innocent sweetness in much of this repertoire—a sentiment quite hard to come by in this time.

The ensemble combination of violin, guitar, accordion, and cello came to me in the middle of the night. The standard violin and piano duo has a formality I knew wasn't right, and this line-up of instruments delivers a communal, conversational, "café-appropriate" sound; a sound with the flexibility to work across genres, cultures, and performance environments. The guitar and accordion are beloved around the world, and in the masterful hands of Plínio Fernandes and Hanzhi Wang these intelligent, creative arrangements have breathed new life into virtuosic violin classics and seductive, lilting melodies. The cello—an instrument I secretly wished I had learned as a child—brings an indispensable resonance, a grounding and an irresistible soulfulness.

Although this formation of musicians, the combination of their instruments and the written arrangements were all brand new, things always have a way of coming back around. For me this is particularly true of my time at the Yehudi Menuhin School. As we began our first play-through for a small invited audience in order to test out this eclectic mix of pieces in front of a real—not just imagined—public, I realized just quite how much relevance this program has to that time in my life. I learned all the virtuosic pieces for the first time when in my early teens at the school, studying with professor Natasha Boyarsky. The first time I tackled a technique called "fingered octaves" (using alternating pairs of fingers for each successive double-stop) was in **Wieniawski's Polonaise *de concert***, learned aged 13.

The first time I attempted a tremolo (bowing very fast with very little bow to give a shivering, exciting effect), which we aptly called "as fast as possible till your muscle tires," was in ***Navarra*** by **Pablo de Sarasate** (1844–1908), learned aged 12. And the first time I learned to trust muscle memory from hours of practice, accepting I had to play passages much faster than my brain could think, was in **Sarasate's *Carmen* Fantasy**, learned aged 14. I acquired not only the fundamentals of technical playing, but also understood how to deepen the fire, passion, and sonority of playing and interpreting music. As young students, our minds were filled with elaborate tales of the composers we played. Take the wild and formidable Wieniawski (1835–80): a musical prodigy and polymath in the truest, deepest sense. Composer, virtuoso, showman and genius, his unruly, unpredictable nature, combined with his prestige and sophistication, conjured up colorful, wild images in my young mind. Then there was Sarasate's noble, somewhat aloof demeanor: his blinding virtuosity, technical skill, and relentless touring schedule served as an inspiration for many an hour of practice. But as we continued to address these pieces this time around, each time we'd begin, I became increasingly comfortable with really playing within a group. I was struck by the innocent, romantic purity of the music: charm and delight and smiles and uplift and so, so many opportunities to enjoy ourselves.

As you listen to Sarasate's *Navarra*, you will hear quick decisions leading to shifts in rubato, color, and phrase emphasis. As we practiced, you can imagine us smiling and laughing as we pushed our tempos to the limit—not to mention that closing tremolo until muscles ache—and gave our all, interpreting the Northern Spanish jota dance. But although a fun, fulfilling yet challenging time was had in tackling all those notes and basking in all that charm, it is the slow, luscious, emotional writing that has had my heart from my first days learning the violin.

I would love to believe the ***Sicilienne***, written in the earthy key of E-flat major, was composed by the pianist and composer **Maria Theresia von Paradis** (1759–1824), blind from a young age and uniquely gifted. But this is sadly untrue. In fact **Samuel Dushkin**, a 20th-century violinist who thought a romantic "rediscovery" tale might bring extra attention and notoriety to this music, claimed to have unearthed the lost "Sicilienne by Paradis" for the world. In actuality, it is an adaptation by Dushkin—though quite a significant one—of the Larghetto from Carl Maria von Weber's Violin Sonata, Opus 10, no.1 (1810). I'm sure the false attribution helped Dushkin with the initial popularity of his *Sicilienne*, but its continued beloved status has little if anything to do with that. It is the tenderness, sweetness, and sincerity of the piece that has us all still playing it, singing it, and being moved by it. This arrangement by Juliet Pochin and James Morgan, with its interwoven lines and mastery of register and texture, was a joy to learn.

Estrellita, written by Mexican composer **Manuel Ponce** in 1912—arranged by my good friend Paul Campbell—along with ***Beau soir*, a *mélodie*** penned by a 16-year-old **Claude Debussy** (1862–1918) and arranged here by Simon Parkin, all share a sentimentality, a romanticism, and a longing and nostalgia for times gone by. Ponce (1882–1948) speaks of the pain and anguish of someone asking their all-seeing guiding star above whether their love will ever be requited, and Paul Campbell's string writing is sumptuous and full while retaining the song's simplicity across all four instruments.

Beau soir advises us "to savour the gift of life while we are young and the evening fair." Its subtlety is always difficult to interpret, but the challenge is even greater with four diverse instruments serving very different purposes. Of all the works on this program, this one probably saw us experiment with the most wildly different approaches.

I fell in love with **Ernest Bloch** (1880–1959) at the Menuhin School: in my secret desire to play the cello, through the abundance of cellists around, and with the amount of Bloch's music that was being played. I remember hearing ***Prayer*** for the first time in a lunchtime concert and wondering why I'd never come across this sound before. The theme's recapitulation is assigned by our masterful arranger Simon Parkin to its rightful place: the hands of our cellist who plays it with such freedom, yet integrity, after we have done our best to match the cello's depth and sonority.

I could not pull together a collection of music intended as a gift for audiences without featuring Scotland—this comes in my collaboration with leading Scottish smallpipe player **Brìghde Chaimbeul** for the arrangements of **A' Choille Ghruamach (Air)**, **Skye Boat Song**, **and Hacky Honey Reel**. Although the choice of songs was guided by Brìghde, and we discussed our way through a whole list of options, the Skye Boat Song was my request. I played it on repeat when my baby girl was tiny, and it calmed her right down. Brìghde, luckily, liked the idea. This song is therefore dedicated to my daughter.

We hope you feel closer to music, closer to us and closer to each other by the end of tonight's performance. Thank you so much, from the bottom of my heart, for being here and choosing to spend tonight with us.

– Nicola Benedetti

About the Artists

NICOLA BENEDETTI

This season, Nicola Benedetti has embarked on her first solo tour in over a decade, combining virtuosic and seductive romantic works in arrangements with guitar, accordion, and cello. She also returns to the New York Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and Berlin Radio Symphony. She made her San Francisco Symphony debut on New Year's Eve of 2012.

Winner of the 2020 Grammy Award for Best Classical Instrumental Solo, as well as Best Female Artist at both 2012 and 2013 Classical BRIT Awards, Benedetti records exclusively for Decca. In 2021, *BBC Music Magazine* named her "Personality of the Year" for her online support of many young musicians during the pandemic.

In 2019, she established the Benedetti Foundation, which delivers transformative experiences through mass music events and unites those who believe music is integral to life's education. In its first four years, the foundation has worked with close to 70,000 participants of all ages and levels, instrumentalists and non-instrumentalists alike, across 105 countries. Its free online educational video resources have had more than six million views.

Benedetti was appointed a CBE in 2019, awarded the Queen's Medal for Music in 2017, and an MBE in 2013. In addition, she holds the positions of vice president of the National Children's Orchestras; "big sister" for Sistema Scotland; and patron of the National Youth Orchestras of Scotland's Junior Orchestra, Music in Secondary Schools Trust, and Junior Conservatoire at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. In 2022, Benedetti became the festival director of the Edinburgh International Festival, becoming both the first Scottish and first female director since its beginning in 1947.

PLÍNIO FERNANDES

Born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil, Plínio Fernandes fuses classical guitar with Brazilian folk music. An exclusive Decca Gold recording artist, he released his debut album, *Saudade,* in 2022, which reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* Traditional Classical Albums Chart. His second album, *Bacheando*, released in September 2023, explores Bach's influence on Brazilian music and contrasts with his recently released EP, *Cinema*.

Highlights of Fernandes's 2025–26 season include this tour with Nicola Benedetti, debuts at National Sawdust, Smith Square London, Eindhoven Muziekgebouw, stART Festival, Kissinger Sommer Festival, as well as with the Bournemouth Symphony and Oxford Philharmonic. Other recent highlights include debuts at the BBC Proms, Lucerne Festival, Ravinia Festival, and Amsterdam Concertgebouw, as well as with the BBC Concert Orchestra, and a recital tour of the United Kingdom with Sheku Kanneh-Mason.

Fernandes appeared on *Forbes*'s "Brazil's Under 30" list, was named a "rising star" by Classic FM, and recently received the Revelação Award at the 30th Annual Prêmio da Música Brasileira. A passionate advocate for music education, he was invited to join London Music Masters as an ambassador, and is involved with performing, teaching, and guiding young musicians in schools. He makes his debut at the San Francisco Symphony with this performance.

HANZHI WANG

Hanzhi Wang was the first accordionist to win a place on the roster of Young Concert Artists, first to be named *Musical America*'s "New Artist of the Month," and first to release a solo CD on Naxos. She holds the Ruth Laredo Prize and Mortimer Levitt Career Development Award for Women Artists of YCA.

Wang has given recitals at UC Santa Barbara's Lively Arts, Stanford Live, Bravo! Vail, Krannert Center, and Candlelight Concert Society. She has also appeared as soloist with the Oregon Music Festival, Victoria Symphony, Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Iris Orchestra, Hawaii Symphony, Erie Philharmonic, and Reno Chamber Orchestra.

Wang earned her bachelor's degree at the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music. She completed her master's degree and soloist diploma at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with the renowned accordion professor Geir Draugsvoll. She makes her debut at the San Francisco Symphony with this performance.

ADRIAN DAUROV

Adrian Daurov solos this season with the Chamber Orchestra of New York at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, tours with Nicola Benedetti, and appears at the Chicago Chamber Music Society alongside the Euclid Quartet.

A native of Saint Petersburg, Russia, he made his debut at 15 with the Saint Petersburg State Symphony, and subsequently earned top prizes at Bulgaria's First International Music Competition, the Netherlands' Peter De Grote International Music Competition, and New York's LISMA International Music Competition. He went on to study at the Juilliard School, and was appointed principal cello of the Chamber Orchestra of New York, a position he still holds.

Recent seasons have included performances with the Dayton Philharmonic, Berkshire Symphony, Altoona Symphony, Bozeman Symphony, Kalamazoo Symphony, Longwood Symphony, and Wyoming Symphony, among others. He makes his debut at the San Francisco Symphony with this performance.

SF SYMPHONY

Mozart's Requiem

A glorious choral work in a new light

February 26–27, March 1

Lead support for the San Francisco Symphony Chorus this season is provided through **a visionary gift from an anonymous donor**.

Inside Music Talks are supported **in memory of Horacio Rodriguez**.

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BICKET CONDUCTS ALL-MOZART
THE CONCERT

Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 7:30pm
Friday, February 6, 2026, at 7:30pm
Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 7:30pm

Harry Bicket conducting

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Serenade No. 6 in D major, K.239, *Serenata notturna* (1776)
Marcia maestoso
Menuetto
Rondo: Allegretto–Adagio–Allegro

Alexander Barantschik violin
Dan Carlson violin
Yun Jie Liu viola
Scott Pingel bass

Symphony No. 34 in C major, K.338 (1780)
Allegro vivace
Andante di molto
Finale: Allegro vivace

Intermission

"*Giunse alfin il momento ... Deh vieni, non tardar*"
from *Le nozze di Figaro*, K.492 (1786)
"*Temerari! Sortite ... Come scoglio*" from *Così fan tutte*, K.588 (1789)

Golda Schultz soprano

"*Don Ottavio, son morta ... Or sai chi l'onore*" from *Don Giovanni*, K.527 (1787)

Golda Schultz soprano
Samuel White tenor

Symphony No. 38 in D major, K.504, *Prague* (1786)
Adagio–Allegro
Andante
Finale: Presto

The February 6 concert is presented in partnership with

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These concerts are made possible by the Matthew Kelly Family Foundation.

These concerts are generously sponsored by the Athena T. Blackburn Endowed Fund for Russian Music.

At A Glance

This week **Harry Bicket** returns to the San Francisco Symphony with a program spanning most of **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**'s career – from the lively ***Serenata notturna*** and **Symphony No. 34** from his days in Salzburg, to selections from his three da Ponte operas of the late 1780s – ***Le nozze di Figaro***, ***Così fan tutte***, and ***Don Giovanni***—sung by soprano **Golda Schultz**.

Completing the program is the ***Prague*** **Symphony No. 38**, written for the Bohemian capital where Mozart enjoyed even greater popularity than he did throughout his life in Austria.

Serenade No. 6 in D major, K.239, *Serenata notturna*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born: January 27, 1756, in Salzburg
Died: December 5, 1791, in Vienna

Work Composed: 1776
SF Symphony Performances: First – February 1955. Enrique Jordá conducted. Most recent – May 2022. Bernard Labadie conducted.
Instrumentation: solo string quartet, timpani, and strings
Duration: About 14 minutes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Among his more obvious gifts as a composer—craftsmanship, virtuosity, melodic ingenuity—Mozart excelled at making everything look easy. The Italians, who mastered the art of effortless elegance centuries ago, have a word for this quality: *sprezzatura*. Whatever you call it—coolness, swag, drip—it's the antithesis of sweaty striving. Sprezzatura might as well be synonymous with Mozart, lord of the light touch, the transparent textures, the coloratura pure as birdsong.

Elegant but never uptight, *Serenata notturna* was originally intended as dinner music. As W.H. Auden wryly quipped in a poem about Mozart's divertimentos, "while bottles were uncorked, / Milord chewed noisily, Milady talked." Mozart understood the assignment, but he cared too much about his craft to crank out aural wallpaper. He always composed to amuse—himself, if no one else was listening.

In 1776, when he completed this serenade, he was 20 years old and already a seasoned pro, though still based in his native Salzburg. Starting at age seven, he had spent at least half his time concertizing throughout the continent: part curiosity, part virtuoso, and entirely under the control of his domineering stage dad, Leopold. When he returned home from tour, he joined his father as a court musician for the Prince-Archbishop. At 16 the younger Mozart was appointed court concertmaster, although he had already been doing the job without pay for three years.

He more than earned the modest salary he eventually received. Between 1773 and 1776, he composed a staggering number of masses, symphonies, serenades, concertos, and assorted chamber works, all of exceptional quality. His dream was to ditch sleepy Salzburg and become a full-time opera composer, but he lacked the funds to strike out on his own. In the meantime, he focused on making each composition, no matter how trivial, as perfect as possible. The preening aristocrats might not have noticed the quality of *Serenata notturna* over their chatter and clatter, but if he resented the commission you'd never know it. It's nearly as exquisite as his most famous serenade, *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, completed 11 years later.

THE MUSIC

A serenade originally referred to instrumental music performed outdoors, often in tribute to someone. During the 18th century the serenade was popular throughout Europe, but Mozart re-invented the genre and expanded its relevance. This serenade, in fact, was probably meant for a pre-Lenten celebration indoors, in chilly January.

Ingeniously scored for an orchestra of strings plus timpani and a solo group consisting of two violins, viola, and double bass, *Serenata notturna* (Leopold may have been responsible for the redundant title) is unusually short but long on charm. In the opening movement, a majestic march, a mock-heroic motif punctuates longer, more lyrical lines. In the first of many humorous moments, the timpani bumble into the string's genteel exchanges like drunken uncles at a wedding. Next, a pastoral minuet pivots to a contrasting trio, as the rival violins unfurl melodies of interlocking loveliness. Finally, the saucy, scampering Rondo ratchets up the delirium with more comical contrasts, reinforced once again by those hell-raising timpani.

Symphony No. 34 in C major, K.338

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Work Composed: 1780
SF Symphony Performances: First – March 1955. Enrique Jordá conducted. Most recent – September 2007. Michael Tilson Thomas conducted.
Instrumentation: 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings
Duration: About 22 minutes

In late August 1780, when Mozart composed his Symphony No. 34, he was still an overworked court musician in Salzburg. Despite a major promotion from concertmaster to court organist, he was unhappier than ever and often at odds with his boss, Archbishop Colloredo, who wanted him to produce more sacred music. The archbishop would fire Mozart less than a year later, allowing him to escape his father's direct control and finally begin the next stage of his life, as a freelance composer in Vienna.

The last symphony that Mozart composed in Salzburg, Symphony No. 34, appears to have received its premiere at court sometime in early September, although the precise date is unknown. Mozart brought the manuscript with him to Vienna and presented it on several occasions, including its first documented performance in April 1781, but the score remained unpublished until after his death.

The manuscript suggests that Mozart intended to include a minuet after the first movement but apparently changed his mind: he crossed out 14 measures on the back of the page where the

opening Allegro vivace ends. A couple of torn-out pages suggest that Mozart may have continued writing in this vein only to abandon the effort. Instead, he cast the symphony in three movements, a practice that would not have seemed especially unusual at the time.

THE MUSIC

Austrian symphonic conventions of the early Classical period associated the key of C major with trumpets, fanfares, flourishes, and pomp aplenty. Often intended for momentous occasions, these compositions balance ceremony and celebration. Mozart would go on to write two more C-major symphonies in this general character, Nos. 36 and 41.

The opening Allegro vivace hits like a gulp of champagne on an empty stomach, all sparkles, bubbles, and bliss. Propelled by headlong rhythms and rolling-thunder timpani, it could serve as the soundtrack to a sexy French farce. Somewhat unusually, no clear melody or theme emerges for the first 35 or so march-like measures. Mozart substitutes a deliciously drawn-out vamp, a series of endless ascending arpeggios and repeated notes. The development section presents all new material instead of developing ideas from the introduction in the usual way.

The central movement, in F major, is scored for strings—marked *sotto voce*, the instrumental equivalent of a whisper—with divided violas and a single bassoon (which Mozart added in 1786) doubling the cello and bass. Elegant but mischievous, the Andante di molto sings in long, lustrous lines, like a chorus of soubrettes recruited from the comic operas. Balance, grace, and symmetry reign supreme as rising melodies give way to falling melodies, and vice versa.

The finale is another propulsive Allegro vivace in the home key, only this time the meter is a rollicking 6/8. The mood is zany and a little scattershot, in the spirit of opera buffa. It's a reminder that we're here to party, or at least to dance, if only in our minds.

Selections from *Le nozze di Figaro*, K.492 *Così fan tutte*, K.588 *Don Giovanni*, K.527

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Works Composed: *Le nozze di Figaro*: 1786; *Don Giovanni*: 1787; *Così fan tutte*: 1789

SF Symphony Performances: "*Deh vieni, non tardar*" from *Le nozze di Figaro*: First – October 1923. Alfred Hertz conducted with Claire Dux as soloist. Most recent – July 1968. Arthur Fiedler conducted with Nancy Burns as soloist.

"*Come scoglio*" from *Così fan tutte*: First – December 1970. Seiji Ozawa conducted with Jane Marsh as soloist. Most recent – January 1973. Seiji Ozawa conducted with Leontyne Price as soloist.

"*Don Ottavio, son morta...*" from *Don Giovanni*: First San Francisco Symphony Performances

Instrumentation: Soprano (Susanna/Fiordiligi/Donna Anna), tenor (Don Ottavio), 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings

Total Duration: About 20 minutes

Mozart collaborated on three Italian-language operas with the Venetian poet and adventurer Lorenzo da Ponte (1749–1838), a former priest who ran afoul of the Vatican's celibacy requirement. When their partnership began, Mozart was 30 years old, cash-strapped but confident that *Le nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*), their new four-act opera buffa, would be a hit. Da Ponte based the libretto on a racy, anti-aristocratic French drama by Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais, which was banned by the censors in the court of Emperor Joseph II until 1784, when Mozart first read it.

Lorenzo da Ponte

The unexpected success of *Figaro* in Prague inspired Mozart to visit that city and accept a commission for a second collaboration with da Ponte: *Il dissoluto punito, o sia il Don Giovanni* (The Punished Rake, or Don Juan), usually shortened to *Don Giovanni.* Da Ponte, who described his libretto as a *dramma giocoso*, or tragicomedy, was friends with the notorious libertine Giacomo Casanovo, the rumored real-life model for the fictional Don Giovanni.

Così fan tutte, the final joint project, finds composer and librettist at the peak of their powers. The title, though difficult to translate, means something like "All Women Are Like That." Despite the unfair generalization, the work never stoops to mockery or misogyny, thanks to Mozart's delicately nuanced score. With its copious commedia dell'arte tropes, da Ponte's libretto is ludicrous even by the standards of opera buffa: two pairs of interchangeable lovers, a dash of cuckoldry, wacky disguises, hijinks galore. But behind the froth and frivolity is a sly self-awareness. A meta-opera, *Cosí fan tutte* spoofs the form while simultaneously fulfilling all the formal desiderata, much like a Shakespeare sonnet or a peak *Simpsons* episode.

THE MUSIC

In "*Deh vieni, non tardar*," the maidservant Susanna—disguised as her Countess boss in an elaborate ruse to thwart the philandering Count—notices her fiancé, Figaro, hiding nearby. Unaware that she sees him watching, he assumes that her ardent bridal aria concerns the Count and burns with jealousy. Susanna teases him by adopting a snooty-rich-lady persona, complete with fancy little trills and other aristocratic affectations. As she inhales the night air, however, her impulse to make mischief gives way to something deeper, more sensuous and instinctive: listen to the way her voice deepens and throbs with the words *foco* (fire) and *notte* (night). Surprising even herself, her feelings for Figaro burn through all her playful artifice, leaving behind nothing but pure desire.

"*Come scoglio*," from *Così fan tutte,* is sung by Fiordiligi, who remains righteous in her defense of monogamy against a pair of Albanian playboys who are actually her lover and her friend's lover in disguise. According to established lore, Mozart was annoyed by Adriana Ferrarese del Bene, the soprano for whom the role was originally created, because she habitually dropped her chin and threw back her head at the lower and higher ends of her vocal range. By demanding a relentless series of extreme leaps in this aria, he was effectively making her bob her head up and down like a chicken. Even so, he doesn't make Fiordiligi fully ridiculous. Sure, she's a little grandiose, but she's also passionate and persuasive, endowed with vast stores of what we now call main-character energy.

In the dramatic accompagnato recitativo "*Don Ottavio, son morta ... Or sai chi l'onore*," from *Don Giovanni*, the virtuous Donna Anna tells her fiancé, Don Ottavio, about her attempted

rape by Don Giovanni, who then killed her father. As she recounts these violent events, she relives the trauma, growing progressively more enraged until her horrified lover ditches his pacifist principles and agrees that vengeance is the only honorable response. As you might expect from an opera about the moral ruin of a sexual profligate, the score is dark, intense, and dramatic.

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

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Work Composed: 1786
SF Symphony Performances: First – December 1930. Basil Cameron conducted. Most recent – April 2022. Gustavo Dudamel conducted.
Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings
Duration: About 27 minutes


Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

By 1786, life in Vienna had grown increasingly difficult for Mozart. His recent turn toward darker, deeper, more complicated music wasn't winning him fans; his infant son had recently died; debts were piling up. But if the Viennese seemed to be souring on his work, the Bohemians couldn't get enough of him. In January 1787 he traveled to Prague to attend one performance of *Figaro* and conduct another. His latest opera was a sensation there. As he boasted in a letter to his father, "Everyone was writing about it, talking about it, humming it, whistling it, and dancing it."

At a different concert around the same time, Mozart led the premiere of his Symphony No. 38, which he'd finished a month earlier, in Vienna. Busy with other projects, he hadn't written a symphony for three years, and he was eager to break new ground.

THE MUSIC

Although his father had advised him more than once to dumb things down, Mozart no longer cared about playing it safe. His style had grown more contrapuntal, chromatic, and structurally daring. The *Prague* is also much more difficult than Mozart's earlier symphonies, at least from a performer's perspective. All but the most technically gifted musicians struggled to follow the score, bristling with tricky syncopation and bravura passagework.

Cast in three movements, each in sonata form, the *Prague*, like Symphony No. 34, forgoes the conventional minuet. It is set in D major, traditionally the key of victory, majesty, and celebration, but the music often veers into D minor, which typically held gloomy or even demonic associations for Mozart and his contemporaries. It's no accident that so many Requiems, including Mozart's own unfinished one, are set in D minor.

Prague is one of only three Mozart symphonies that begin with a slow introduction. In this case, the Adagio voices a regal, deceptively simple statement in the home key before fluctuating to minor, a stylistic preview perhaps of *Don Giovanni*. As the tempo quickens to Allegro, the intricate counterpoint of the development section allows for new harmonic explorations before the closing D-major cadence. If all of Mozart's repeat marks are observed, this is the longest symphony movement of the era—even longer than the monumental first movement of Beethoven's *Eroica*, composed 17 years later.

The central Andante is set in G major. Here Mozart weaves together three connected but contrasting thematic ideas: a graceful, cantabile melody; a more tempestuous, dramatic part; and a charming colloquy between strings and woodwinds. Lyrical and serene, the slow movement feels like a refreshing break after all the preceding complexity, but it's no less ambitious, thanks to its chromatic violins and unexpected harmonies.

The dazzling, sometimes dissonant Presto returns to the rich syncopation and major-minor volatility of the first movement. The delightful tune at the beginning quotes from a *Figaro* duet. At times, the winds (especially the flute) seem to dominate, and then Mozart switches up the texture, alternating between full orchestra and unadorned strings. After a bracing development section, Mozart teases us with a "false recapitulation," offering an apparent reprise of the main theme and then returning with the development. By the time the real conclusion arrives, we embrace it as a long-lost friend.

– René Spencer Saller

René Spencer Saller is the main program annotator for the Dallas Symphony and has also written for the St. Louis Symphony and Tippet Rise Art Center. Formerly music critic and editor for *The St. Louis Riverfront Times*, she won first prize in the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies Awards.

Texts and Translations

"Giunse alfin il momento ... Deh vieni, non tardar" from *Le nozze di Figaro*, K.492

Susanna

Giunse alfin il momento, che godrò senz'affanno
in braccio all'idol mio. Timide cure, uscite dal mio petto, a turbar
non venite il mio diletto! Oh, come par che all'amoroso foco
l'amenità del loco, la terra e il ciel risponda, come la notte i furti
miei seconda!

At last comes the moment, when I can freely rejoice
in my lover's arms. Timid worries, leave my heart, and do not
return to spoil my happiness. Oh how the beauty of this place,
the earth and the sky, seem to echo the fire of love!
How the night conspires with my secret desires!

Deh, vieni, non tardar, o gioia bella,
vieni ove amore per goder t'appella,
finché non splende in ciel notturna face,
finché l'aria è ancor bruna e il mondo tace.
Qui mormora il ruscel, qui scherza l'aura,
che col dolce sussurro il cor ristaura,
qui ridono i fioretti e l'erba è fresca,
ai piaceri d'amor qui tutto adesca.
Vieni, ben mio, tra queste piante ascose,
ti vo' la fronte incoronar di rose.

Come, do not delay, oh bliss,
Come where love calls you to joy,
Before heaven's torch shines bright in the sky,
While the air is still dark and the world quiet.
Here the stream murmurs, here the breeze plays;
Their sweet whispers refresh the heart.
Here flowers smile and the grass is cool,
Here everything invites love's pleasures.
Come, my dearest, and amid these sheltered trees
I will crown your brow with roses.

"Temerari! Sortite ... Come scoglio" from *Così fan tutte*, K.588

Fiordiligi

Temerari! Sortite
Fuori di questo loco! E non profane
L'alito infausto degli infami detti
Nostro cor, nostro orecchio e nostri affetti!
Invan per voi, per gli altri invan si cerca
Le nostre alme sedur: L'intatta fede
Che per noi già si diede ai cari amanti,
Saprem loro serbar infino a morte,
A dispetto del mondo e della sorte.

Bold intruders, leave this place!
Do not poison our hearts, ears, and affections
with your horrible words.
It's useless for you or anyone
to try to tempt our souls.
The faithful promise
we have sworn to our dear lovers,
we will keep until death,
no matter what the world or fate may do.

Come scoglio immoto resta
Contro i venti e la tempesta,
Così ognor quest'alma è forte
Nella fede e nell'amor.

Like a fortress stands firm
against wind and storms,
this heart remains strong
in faith and in love.

Con noi nacque quella face
Che ci piace, e ci consola,
E potrà la morte sola
Far che cangi affetto il cor.

In our hearts we built a flame
that warms and comforts us;
Only death itself
could change our devotion.

Rispettate, anime ingrate,
Questo esempio di costanza;
E una barbara speranza
Non vi renda audaci ancor.

Respect this model of faithfulness
you ungrateful souls;
Don't let false hope
make you bold again.

"Don Ottavio, son morta... Or sai chi l'onore" from *Don Giovanni*, K.527

Donna Anna
Don Ottavio, son morta!

Don Ottavio, I'm dying!

Don Ottavio
Cosa è stato?

What has happened?

Donna Anna
Per pietà.. soccorretemi!

Please, help me.

Don Ottavio
Mio bene, fate coraggio!

My love, be strong.

Donna Anna
Oh dei! Quegli è il carnefice
del padre mio!

Oh God!
That man murdered my father!

Don Ottavio
Che dite?

What are you saying?

Donna Anna
Non dubitate più. Gli ultimi accenti
che l'empio proferì, tutta la voce
richiamar nel cor mio di quell'indegno
che nel mio appartamento...

There is no doubt. The parting words
of that wicked man, the sound of his voice,
brought back the memory
of him entering my room…

Don Ottavio
O ciel! Possibile
che sotto il sacro manto d'amicizia...
ma come fu? Narratemi
lo strano avvenimento:

Oh heaven! Is it possible
that beneath the mask of friendship…?
But how?
Tell me what happened.

Donna Anna
Era già alquanto
avanzata la notte,
quando nelle mie stanze, ove soletta
mi trovai per sventura, entrar io vidi,
in un mantello avvolto,
un uom che al primo istante
avea preso per voi.
Ma riconobbi poi
che un inganno era il mio.

It was late at night.
As misfortune would have it,
I was alone in my room.
I saw a man enter,
wrapped in a cloak.
At first glance
I thought it was you.
But then I realized
I was mistaken.

Don Ottavio
con affanno
Stelle! Seguite!

Good lord—
go on!

Donna Anna
Tacito a me s'appressa
e mi vuole abbracciar; sciogliermi cerco,
ei più mi stringe; io grido;
non viene alcun: con una mano cerca
d'impedire la voce,
e coll'altra m'afferra
stretta così, che già mi credo vinta.

Silently he came toward me and tried to embrace me.
I struggled to break free and he held me more tightly.
I shouted, but no one came.
With one hand,
he stifled my cries.
With the other, he pressed me
so close to him, I thought it was hopeless.

Don Ottavio
Perfido!.. alfin?

Horrible man! And then?

Donna Anna

Alfine il duol, l'orrore	Finally, the pain and horror
dell'infame attentato	of this terrible assault
accrebbe sì la lena mia, che a forza	gave me strength.
di svincolarmi, torcermi e piegarmi,	By twisting and struggling,
da lui mi sciolsi!	I forced myself free from him.

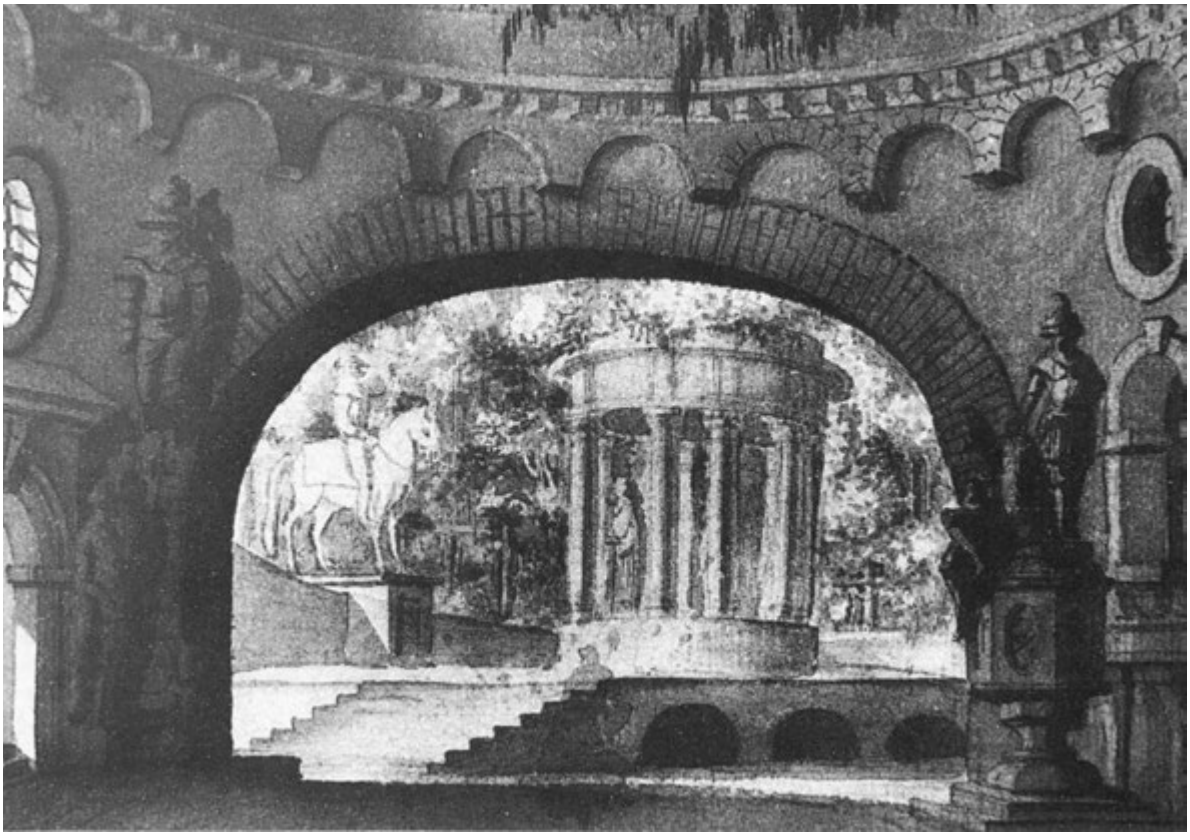
Don Ottavio

Ohimè! Respiro!	Oh God, I can breathe again.

Donna Anna

Allora	Then I screamed even louder and called for help.
rinforzo i stridi miei, chiamo soccorso;	The criminal fled. Boldly I followed him
fugge il fellon; arditamente il seguo	into the street to stop him.
fin nella strada per fermarlo, e sono	I was the assailer of my assailant.
assalitrice ed assalita: il padre	My father ran out and demanded his identity.
v'accorre, vuol conoscerlo e l'indegno	The wicked man,
che del povero vecchio era più forte,	stronger than my poor old father,
compiè il misfatto suo col dargli morte!	completed his crime by killing him.
Or sai chi l'onore	Now you know who tried
Rapire a me volse,	to dishonor me,
Chi fu il traditore	who the traitor was
Che il padre mi tolse.	who stole my father from me.
Vendetta ti chiedo,	I ask you for vengeance,
La chiede il tuo cor.	your own heart demands it.
Rammenta la piaga	Remember the wound
Del misero seno,	in the dying man's chest;
Rimira di sangue	Look at the ground
Coperto il terreno.	soaked with blood.
Se l'ira in te langue	Remember, and if anger still sleeps in you,
D'un giusto furor.	let justice awaken it.

Graveyard set design for *Don Giovanni*, Prague, 1790s



About the Artists

HARRY BICKET

Harry Bicket studied at the Royal College of Music and the University of Oxford, where he was an organ scholar at Christ Church. He is an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music and was awarded an OBE in the 2022 Queen's Birthday Honours. In 2007 he was appointed artistic director of the English Concert, one of Europe's finest period orchestras, and is also music director of Santa Fe Opera.

This season, Bicket makes his Zurich Opera debut, returns to the Chicago Symphony, and tours Europe and the United States with the English Concert, alongside their regular London series and Handel *Messiah* performances in Madrid and Barcelona. Bicket is a regular guest at the Metropolitan Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago, and has also led multiple productions with Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Paris Opera, and Bavarian State Opera. In the United Kingdom, he made his Glyndebourne Festival debut in 1996 in Peter Sellars's landmark production of *Theodora*, and has made numerous appearances with the English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, and Opera North. On the concert stage, he has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, Houston Symphony, Detroit Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Seattle Symphony. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut in March 2001.

Bicket is a prolific recording artist and has made numerous recordings with the English Concert. His discography also includes five recordings with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, including one with mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson that was nominated for a Grammy Award.

GOLDA SCHULTZ

South African soprano Golda Schultz trained at the Juilliard School and with the Bavarian State Opera's Opernstudio. Her early successes included appearances at the Salzburg Festival, Glyndebourne Festival, Metropolitan Opera, and Vienna State Opera. She has gone on to appear at the Paris Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, and Dallas Opera, and has become a regular presence at the Met.

Schultz's 2025–26 season includes Zurich Opera, her house debut at Teatro Real, and a return to Munich Festival Opera. In concert, the season brings a European tour with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, culminating in a return to the BBC Proms; Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Berlin Philharmonic; and Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* with the New York Philharmonic.

Recent highlights include appearances with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Boston Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Philadelphia Orchestra. In 2020, she starred in BBC's Last Night of the Proms with the BBC Symphony. She made her San Francisco Symphony debut in September 2022.

Schultz's debut solo album, *This Be Her Verse* on Alpha Classics, explores the worlds and inspirations of female composers from the Romantic era to present day. Her second and most recent release, *Mozart, You Drive Me Crazy!*, examines the complexities of the female experience in the three Mozart/da Ponte operas and won the 2025 Opus Klassik Solo Vocal Recording of the Year Award.

SAMUEL WHITE

Samuel White recently served as an Adler Fellow with San Francisco Opera and was a participant in the Merola Opera Program, where he performed Bacchus in the final scene of Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the Schwabacher Summer Concert, and the title role in an excerpt from Massenet's *Werther* for the Grand Finale concert. He has debuted at Wexford Festival Opera and covered roles at Glimmerglass and Santa Fe Opera.

Originally from Columbia, South Carolina, White completed his studies at Florida State University, Ohio State University, and Manhattan School of Music. In addition to his training with Merola, he has joined the Aspen Music Festival and Lyric Opera Studio Weimar. He makes his San Francisco Symphony debut with this performance.

YEFIM BRONFMAN
GREAT PERFORMERS SERIES

Sunday, February 8, 2026, at 7:30pm

Yefim Bronfman piano

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Arabesque in C major, Opus 18 (1839)

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Piano Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Opus 5 (1853)
- Allegro maestoso
- Andante espressivo
- Scherzo: Allegro energico
- Intermezzo: (Rückblick) Andante molto
- Finale: Allegro moderato ma rubato

Intermission

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Images, Book Two (1907)
- Cloches à travers les feuilles
  (Bells heard through the leaves)
- Et la lune descend sur la temple qui fût
  (And the moon sets over the temple that was)
- Poissons d'or (Goldfish)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Opus 57, *Appassionata* (1853)
- Allegro assai
- Andante con moto–
- Allegro ma non troppo–Presto

Arabesque in C major, Opus 18

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Born: June 8, 1810, in Zwickau, Saxony
Died: July 29, 1856, Endenich, near Bonn
Work Composed: 1839

Robert Schumann

As of the winter of 1838–39, Robert Schumann didn't have much to show for himself. Now in his late 20s, his plans to light up the world as a pianist had fizzled, done in by a lack of performing talent plus a self-inflicted hand injury. Robert's erstwhile piano teacher Friedrich Wieck, dismayed by his brilliant daughter Clara's determination to marry his unimpressive former student, began resorting to borderline guerilla warfare to thwart the young couple's hopes. Frustrated, Robert left Leipzig to try his fortunes in Vienna, where he hoped to relocate his budding *New Journal for Music* (*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*) and possibly achieve a whiff of financial respectability. "You'll regret ever having come here," said publisher Tobias Haslinger. He was right. Unable to navigate Vienna's toxic combination of censorship and intransigent bureaucracy, Robert was back in Leipzig by April 1839.

But he was not empty-handed. He had composed a bouquet of fine keyboard works during his Vienna sojourn, among them the exquisite Arabesque in C major, Opus 18, written with Clara's sterling pianism in mind. While it's true that Schumann dismissed the Arabesque as a lightweight trifle written for money rather than artistic satisfaction, it nevertheless marks an important milestone in his compositional career, as it imparts a newfound graciousness to his writing while resisting the popular salon style of the day.

Cast in a five-part rondo form, the Arabesque consists of three iterations of a reprise interleaved with two contrasting episodes, the whole capped off by an unexpectedly dreamy coda that might remind listeners of the song cycles yet to come. The reprise itself is in a basic three-part form, characterized by rippling pianistic figurations that ornament, without hiding, a gently bouncing melody. The first episode is a songlike affair, characterized by long silky phrases in flowing rhythm, while the second suggests a march, with its sturdy theme and dotted rhythms.

For those who are curious about how things worked out: once Clara came of age she and Robert were married—amid a typhoon of resistance from Wieck—and soon became the "first couple" of European music, she as one of the finest pianists of the age and he as, well, Robert Schumann.

Piano Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Opus 5

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Born: May 7, 1833, in Hamburg
Died: April 3, 1897, in Vienna
Work Composed: 1853

Johannes Brahms

A sloppy, poorly-dressed man who slouched around Vienna while dripping cigar ashes from his bushy, unkempt beard. Lifelong bachelor, lion of Vienna's musical establishment, and a bonafide grump who once left a party offering an apology to anyone he had managed *not* to offend.

But that's Brahms later in life. In his salad days he was winsome and clean-shaven, so fit that he chose to hike up the Rhine Valley on his way to Düsseldorf for his career-making meeting with Robert and Clara Schumann in September, 1853. He was a downright spectacular pianist, one of those who could turn a piano into an orchestra as he unleashed torrents of octaves and thick chords with apparent nonchalance. He had already composed three sonatas for solo piano— the only ones he would ever write— that were equally broad-shouldered and vigorous.

The Schumanns found him dazzling. "Fated to give us the ideal expression of the times," gushed Robert, describing his new protégé as "a young blood at whose cradle graces and heroes mounted guard." Before too long Brahms met Hector Berlioz, who described him as "this diffident, audacious young man who has taken it into his head to make a new music." Another early friend, the magisterial violinist-composer Joseph Joachim, recalled that "never in the course of my artist's life have I been more completely overwhelmed." On the other hand, a first encounter with Franz Liszt went poorly when Brahms nodded off while Liszt was playing his own Sonata in B minor.

No early Brahms work better exemplifies that breathtaking promise than the F-minor piano sonata. In this expansive five-movement work we hear the voice of the master symphonist to come, as yet unrealized but nevertheless unmistakable. The sonata opens with a frank display of physical power, via a theme that vaults over multiple piano registers, much like the thunderbolts that open Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* sonata. Brawny to be sure, but this is no mere muscle fest; the movement is elegantly constructed from a few materials, most of which can be traced back to the opening statement. (That practice was to become a Brahms trademark, in that often the first thing you hear is the seed from which the rest springs.)

If the first movement prefigures the taut organization of the Third Symphony and its ilk, the second-place Andante espressivo anticipates the exquisite intermezzos of Brahms's later years, its falling-in-thirds opening paragraphs balanced by an intervening *Poco più lento* (A little more slowly) that sets up a tender dialog between the two hands. Although the movement starts out as a classic three-part form, Brahms adds an extended coda that is for all intents and purposes an altogether new fourth section, lyrical at first and then building to a majestic outburst; the movement

ends with a sense of heroic nobility.

Brahms, tongue firmly in cheek, would one day describe the second piano concerto's tumultuous second movement as "a little wisp of a scherzo." He might have applied that quip to this sonata's scherzo, which is likewise neither remotely little nor wispy. Like the scherzos in Brahms's later works, it's a three-part affair in which the turbulent outer sections flank a sustained, noble trio section, during which we hear some bass figures that sound remarkably like the famous four-note motif in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

The F-minor sonata dispenses with tradition by being laid out in five movements rather than the usual four. The "extra" movement is the fourth-place Intermezzo, a relatively free-form affair that takes the four-note Beethoven motif on an extraordinary journey. The finale that follows is a magnificently constructed rondo that bypasses the form's inherent tedium, almost inevitable as multiple instances of the core reprise pile up. Only a few composers have been able to fashion rondos that avoid predictability, and they've been our most celebrated: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven. But even at the tender age of 20, Brahms proves he's equal to the challenge with this expansive, highly varied, and remarkably *unpredictable* rondo that ends with a grandiose statement of its theme, now in a sturdy, optimistic major mode to bring the giant sonata to an appropriately brilliant close.

Images, Book Two

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Born: August 22, 1862, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France
Died: March 25, 1918, in Paris
Work Composed: 1907

Claude Debussy

No word raised Debussy's hackles more than "impressionism," and with good reason. The term was coined in the 1870s to describe specific techniques in painting and had little, if any, direct application to music. Semantics aside, Debussy detested such superficial labels slapped on his work by sloppy commentators, who typically used "impressionist" as a code for "wispy and washy." Debussy's catalog encompasses a wide range of styles and moods: neoclassical precision rubs shoulders with antiquarian fantasy, abstract formal logic with free-form improvisation, cutting-edge modernism with pristine tradition. He was a very great composer indeed, and to file him away with a convenient soundbite is an injustice to the magnitude of his achievement.

That said, no Debussy work invokes visual associations more than the six *Images* for solo piano, of which the second set of three is less performed but no less remarkable. The first of those, "Bells heard through the leaves," makes a compelling claim for the fusion of visual and sonic: how can bells be "heard" through leaves? One of Debussy's gamelan-inspired works, the piece employs highly sophisticated technique that manifests as untroubled simplicity, mirroring Debussy's observations about the Javanese people: "Their academy is the eternal rhythm of the sea, the wind in the leaves, thousands of tiny sounds which they listen to attentively without ever consulting arbitrary treatises."

Debussy's fascination with ancient Greece is on display in "And the moon sets over the temple that was." Elusive, enigmatic, and ambiguous, it fragments its materials and keeps its surprisingly dissonant harmonies unsettled. Likely to puzzle listeners on first acquaintance, it's a treasure chest of allusion, suggestion, and association that, upon further exploration, may well become altogether fascinating.

The set concludes with "Goldfish," but let's steer clear of cute little fishes in a bowl, given the original impetus of a Japanese lacquer panel featuring two gold-painted fish. A frankly virtuoso showpiece, its quicksilver shifts and bouncy elasticity are as feline as they are piscine.

Piano Sonata No. 23 in F minor, Opus 57, *Appassionata*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Baptized: December 17, 1770, in Bonn
Died: March 26, 1827, in Vienna
Work Composed: 1804–06

Ludwig van Beethoven

It opens with a wily feint. A downright tuneless melody, really just a stop-and-go unrolling of a triad, pauses on a half-cadence. Silence. Then it all happens again, but this time shifted upwards by a semitone, the shortest distance there is. Another silence. It drops back down and repeats the original phrase's half cadence. It could be an aimless sketch, a doodle, a half-aware improvisation.

Except that it's nothing of the sort. Beethoven is neither doodling nor improvising. He is planting the seed of a great tree that will grow from that disarmingly inconsequential shift of a semitone. He confirms his intentions by stating the semitone motion, now flipped upside down and in the bass, three times. It's almost as though he's telling us: "Yes, it's just a little nothing, a trifle, a soupçon of piffle. Now you just hear what I'm going to do with it!"

Much as in the Fifth Symphony with its signature four-note opening gambit, Beethoven builds the *Appassionata* almost exclusively from materials mined from its opening idea. The first movement eschews easy-listening contrasting themes in order to focus on this one motive, spinning everything out of its implications, rethinking it, revisiting it, reviewing it. Just as an expression of technical skill alone it is flabbergasting; as a listening experience it is unforgettable in its unflagging drive, perfectly sustained drama, and soaring flights to the outermost boundaries of the piano's capabilities.

Beethoven takes a gentler approach for his Andante con moto middle movement, a set of variations on—here it is again—a deliberately nondescript theme. In fact, the melodic contour is so limited that one wonders how Beethoven will extract any worthwhile variations from the thing. But of course he does.

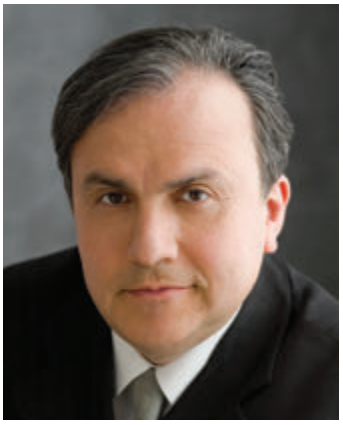
The volcanic Allegro ma non troppo erupts suddenly, blasting

past the usual decorous break between movements. Thrilling, virtuosic, and propulsive, the finale also provides a breathtaking demonstration of rondo form. No chance of ennui arising here; from the first geyser-like phrase of the rondo theme to the steeplechase of the concluding Presto, surely this stands among the most dazzling concluding movements in all keyboard literature.

– Scott Foglesong

Scott Foglesong is a Contributing Writer and Inside Music Speaker for the San Francisco Symphony and chair of music theory and musicianship at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He also writes program notes for the California Symphony, Oregon Symphony, and Grand Teton Music Festival, among other organizations. As a pianist, he studied at the Peabody Conservatory and SFCM.

About the Artist



YEFIM BRONFMAN

Internationally recognized as one of today's most acclaimed and admired pianists, Yefim Bronfman stands among a handful of artists regularly sought by festivals, orchestras, conductors, and recital series.

Following summer festival appearances in Vail, Tanglewood, and Aspen, Bronfman's 2025–26 season began with an extensive tour of China, Japan, and South Korea. In Europe, Bronfman can be heard this season with orchestras in London, Kristiansand, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, Dresden, and on tour with the Israel Philharmonic. A special trio project with Anne-Sophie Mutter and Pablo Ferrández continued with performances in Switzerland, Spain, Germany, and France last fall. With orchestras in North America, he returns to New York Philharmonic, Rochester Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra (in Miami), Pittsburgh Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, and Montreal Symphony. In recital, Bronfman can be heard in Prague, Milan, Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County, Charlottesville, and Toronto.

Bronfman has been nominated for six Grammy Awards, winning in 1997 with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic for their recording of the three Bartók piano concertos. His prolific catalog includes works for two pianos by Rachmaninoff and Brahms with Emanuel Ax, the complete Prokofiev concertos with the Israel Philharmonic, and the soundtrack to Disney's *Fantasia 2000*.

Born in Tashkent in the Soviet Union, Yefim Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, where he studied with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the United States, he studied at the Juilliard School, Marlboro School of Music, and Curtis Institute of Music, with Rudolf Firkusny, Leon Fleisher, and Rudolf Serkin. A recipient of the Avery Fisher Prize, in 2010 Bronfman was further honored as the recipient of the Jean Gimbel Lane prize in piano performance from Northwestern University and in 2015 with an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut in January 1981.

MUSIC OF THE HEART
MUSIC FOR FAMILIES

Saturday, February 14, 2026, at 2:00pm

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser conducting

KYLE GORDON	*L is For Love*
PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY	Love Theme from *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy-Overture (1880)
GIACOMO PUCCINI	"*O mio babbino caro*" from *Gianni Schicchi* (1918) **Vuyiswa Sigadi** soprano
LÉO DELIBES	Pavane from *Le Roi s'amuse* (1882)
SERGEI PROKOFIEV	The Ridiculous Fellows from *The Love for Three Oranges Suite*, Opus 33b (1921)
LEONARD BERNSTEIN	"Maria" from *West Side Story* (1957) **Sid Chand** tenor
SERGEI PROKOFIEV	Excerpt from *The Montagues and the Capulets* from *Romeo and Juliet* Suite No. 2, Opus 64 (1938)
EDWARD ELGAR	G.R.S. from *Enigma* Variations, Opus 36 (1899)
GEORGE GERSHWIN	"Bess, You Is My Woman Now" from *Porgy and Bess* (1935) **Vuyiswa Sigadi** soprano **Elijah Cineas** bass-baritone
RICHARD WAGNER	Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde* (1865)
SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR	Reunion from *Hiawatha* Suite, Opus 82a (1900)

The Music for Families Series is supported by

Chevron

Welcome to the Orchestra!

Welcome to your San Francisco Symphony! We are so glad you are here with us! Today is Valentine's Day, and we have chosen to bring you music that is all about love and stories of love. Some you will be familiar with and some will be new! Something special happens in this concert – sometimes it is just the orchestra alone, but sometimes there will be singers as well!

Kyle Gordon is an Los Angeles–based composer. In addition to writing music for big Hollywood movies, he also writes orchestral music for the concert hall. His piece ***L is For Love*** is one such example, a romantic love song in the old, grand Hollywood style.

Romeo and Juliet by **Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840–93) is based on Shakespeare's play about two teenagers in love who can't be together because their families are enemies. This music depicts the famous love theme and also the clash of swords when the two families fight.

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was an Italian opera composer. This aria, ***"O mio babbino caro,"*** is sung by a young woman, begging not to be separated from her love. It is one of the most famous songs in opera.

Pavane by **Léo Delibes** (1836–91) is a slow and stately dance. It is often sung with the French words "*Belle qui tiens ma vie*," which mean "Beauty, who holds my life."

We promised this concert was about all different types of love. This next piece is from an opera by **Sergei Prokofiev** (1891–1953). It is all about love. But a surprising one. It's called ***The Love for Three Oranges***!! And who doesn't love oranges?

"Maria" is from the famous musical ***West Side Story*** by **Leonard Bernstein** (1918–90), which was inspired by *Romeo and Juliet.* Maria is a version of Juliet, with whom Tony (singing this song) is in love.

Prokofiev also wrote a ballet version of ***Romeo and Juliet.*** This movement shows the two warring families. You can see their swords dancing in the strings of the orchestra as they go up and down.

Edward Elgar (1857–1934) was an English composer who wrote a big piece about all his friends! One of his friends had a dog, and Elgar wrote music not for his friend... but for the pup they both loved, the beloved bulldog named Dan. See if you can hear Dan woof in this short piece!

Porgy and Bess by **George Gershwin** (1898–1937) is an American opera set in Charleston, South Carolina. This is the most famous love duet between the two main characters.

Liebestod comes from the opera ***Tristan und Isolde*** by **Richard Wagner** (1813–83), about a magic love potion. This is the climax of the opera, where Isolde dies, but her love for Tristan is transformed into something beautiful and everlasting.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912) was a British composer who was very interested in Native American legends. In this scene from his ***Hiawatha*** **Suite**, the Native leader rows his canoe into the sunset. It is called **Reunion** and is about being reunited with those you truly love!

– Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser

SFSKids.org

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 8–13. Students can use the website for self-directed learning, while teachers or parents can use the site 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 launched 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.

About the Artists

DANIEL BARTHOLOMEW-POYSER

A passionate communicator, Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser brings clarity and meaning to the concert hall, fostering deep connections between audiences and performers. He has been the San Francisco Symphony's Resident Conductor of Engagement and Education since 2021, and recently extended his contract through the 2026–27 season. Bartholomew-Poyser is concurrently the Barrett Principal Education Conductor and Community Ambassador of the Toronto Symphony, Artist in Residence and Community Ambassador of Symphony Nova Scotia, and Principal Youth Conductor and Artistic Partner of Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra. He previously served as assistant conductor of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and associate conductor of the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra. Bartholomew-Poyser has performed with the Detroit Symphony, Carnegie Hall Link-Up Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Symphony, Edmonton Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic, Chicago Philharmonic, was cover conductor with the Washington National Opera in 2020, and was music director of the Kennedy Center Summer Music Institute in 2022.

Recently, Bartholomew-Poyser debuted with the New York Philharmonic and New Jersey Symphony in addition to making his debut at the Hollywod Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in an all-Tchaikovsky program. Host of the Canadian Broadcasting Company's weekly radio show *Centre Stage*, he also serves on the board of the Conductor's Retreat at Medomak in Michigan. He is the subject of a multi award-winning CBC documentary *Disruptor Conductor*, focusing on his efforts to extend the boundaries of the orchestral music world through concerts for neurodiverse, incarcerated, African diaspora, and LGBTQ2S+ populations.

Bartholomew-Poyser earned his bachelor's degree in music performance and education from the University of Calgary and his master of philosophy in performance from the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England.

VUYISWA SIGADI

American and South African soprano Vuyiswa Sigadi was born in Des Moines, Iowa, spent much of her early musical training in Dallas with her father, and began vocal studies with her mother. During her high school years, she discovered a deep passion for opera and classical singing. Sigadi has won multiple awards from the Texas Music Educators Association and State Solo and Ensemble Contest, and was a gold medalist in the NAACP's ACT-SO competition, a National YoungArts winner, and a first place winner of the 2025 American Protégé Competition, which led to a debut at Carnegie Hall.

Sigadi earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she studied with César Ulloa and was selected for Craig Terry's Beyond the Aria concert. She was a finalist in the Schmidt Vocal Competition and has appeared in operatic productions, including *Acis and Galatea* as Galatea. This spring, she will make her role debut as Lisette in *La rondine* with the SFCM Opera Theater. She makes her San Francisco Symphony debut with this concert.

SHIDDHARTH CHAND

Shiddharth (Sid) Chand is a tenor of New Zealand Fijian-Indian heritage. Most recently, he performed the title role in Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Opera and was named a Manetti Shrem Opera Program Fellow at Festival Napa Valley.

Chand won first place in the inaugural Auckland Opera Studio Aria Scholarship Competition, and was a finalist in the Nicholas Tarling Aria Competition and Lockwood New Zealand Aria Competition, where he was honored with the John Bond Award for Most Promising Voice.

Shiddharth is supported by the Dame Kiri te Kanawa Foundation, Circle100 Foundation, New Zealand Opera Foundation Trust, and Mardell Cosgrove Trust. He makes his San Francisco Symphony debut with this concert.

ELIJAH CINEAS

Elijah Cineas is a baritone from Southern California. He has performed in both opera and musical theater, with companies including Opera Santa Barbara, Lyric Opera Orange County, and Opera Italia, among others. His most recent credits include The King of Spades in Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges* and Paris in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*.

Cineas is an alumnus of the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University, Long Beach, and is currently studying at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut at the Deck the Hall concert last December.

SF SYMPHONY

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MEET THE MUSICIANS

Amos Yang

Assistant Principal Cello
Karel & Lida Urbanek Chair

A San Francisco native, Amos Yang joined the SF Symphony in 2007.

What was your first concert with the SF Symphony?
It was a European festivals tour in 2007, which was already scary, and we were playing Shostakovich Five, Tchaikovsky's First Symphony, and Mahler Seven. I was hired as Assistant Principal, but sat at the first stand as Associate Principal for that tour.

How did you begin playing the cello?
I'm so grateful to have been born and raised here in San Francisco. I began cello studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with a now legendary cello guru, Irene Sharp, but we were her first crop of kids. In 1981 I joined the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra in its inaugural year as an 11-year-old. I was promptly kicked out of the YO by Jill Brindel, a future colleague of mine, but I auditioned back in with the understanding I would try a little harder the second time!

What were your next steps in becoming a professional musician?
After leaving San Francisco, I studied at both the Juilliard School and the Eastman School of Music. My important teachers were Channing Robbins, Paul Katz, Steve Doane, and Joel Krosnick—formerly of the Juilliard String Quartet. I also studied abroad in London for one year and then joined a string quartet that had a residency at the Peabody Conservatory and later the University of Iowa. After that, I played in the Seattle Symphony for several years.

What kind of cello do you play?
I play mainly on a Carlo Giuseppe Testore cello from the 1690s, owned by the Symphony. It's a wonderful "old man" made in Milan, and I'm one of maybe 20 people or so that have put their voice into this instrument. It has such amazing layers and a warmth that is just fantastic. The Symphony acquired it for me, they sent me out to Chicago and put me in a room with seven instruments and said, "pick one of these, Amos." But I didn't trust myself, so I brought three consultants: my brother, who's a violinist in the Rochester Phil, and two colleagues from the Chicago Symphony who play on very old instruments. I also own a cello made by Robert Brewer Young, who is a friend, and it's a new instrument I hope in 300 years will sound equally as good as the Testore.

What about your bows?
I own a bow by Nikolaus Kittel who was a great Russian maker in the 1800s. For many years we had the world's Kittel expert, Kenway Lee, here in San Francisco, so many of us in the Symphony and in the Bay Area have bows by this unique and rare maker.

What other musical activities do you pursue?
I love teaching, it's one of the things I feel responsible for. I draw from all the wonderful things Irene Sharp gave me, and my coaches at Tanglewood gave me, and my teachers from Juilliard gave me, and try to keep the tradition alive. I also love chamber music—it's nice to play smaller scale concerts and repertoire so that your voice is highlighted in a different way.

What do you enjoy besides music?
Family time is really important to me, even though we're empty nesters. We recently sent our youngest off to UC Santa Barbara. And I love biking—if you're out late in San Francisco, you might see me on Twin Peaks or in Golden Gate Park because I like riding at night.

INFORMATION

WHILE YOU ARE HERE

Please silence and store all electronic devices during the concert.
No outside food in the hall.

Late Arrivals and Re-Entry:
All SF Symphony concerts start promptly. Ushers will seat latecomers at the earliest possible seating break. Patrons who exit seating during a performance will be reseated at an appropriate interval. If you exit the hall at intermission or at any time during the performance, please have your ticket with you for re-entry.
Elevators: Grove St and Van Ness Ave lobbies for access to Orchestra, First and Second Tiers; Loge elevator at Loge entrance, Orchestra level center.
Restrooms: Street level: adjacent to Box Office, men's and women's; First and Second Tier: women's at Orchestra Left/Van Ness side, men's at Orchestra Right/Grove side; Loge corridor: women's at Grove side, men's at Van Ness side. All-gender restrooms are located at street level on the Orchestra Left/Van Ness side.
Drinking Fountains: On Orchestra level near elevators, on other levels in inner corridors and near restrooms.
Coat Check: Available at Box Office entrance. Oversized items larger than approximately 14"x14"x6" are not allowed inside the hall.

Lost and Found:
Email WMPAC-LostAndFound@sfgov.org or visit sfwmpac.org/lost-found.
Courtesy Phones: Located in the Grove Street lobby.
Smoking: Permitted only on Grove Street outdoor terrace.
Please avoid wearing perfume or cologne as a courtesy to those with allergies.
Patrons, Attention Please! Fire Notice: There are sufficient exits in these buildings to accommodate the entire audience. The exit indicated by the lighted "Exit" sign nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. In case of fire, please do not run – walk through that exit.
First Aid: Near Van Ness Ave lobby, street level.
Rules of Conduct: To provide a safe and pleasant concert experience for all, we ask visitors to abide by policies outlined in the Rules of Conduct for patrons and guests of the SF Symphony. For more information, visit sfsymphony.org/Code-of-Conduct.

ACCESSIBILITY

Facilities: Street level access on Grove Street at Main Entrance via Box Office Doors; direct access to all elevators; special seating designated "wheelchair" space. Braille elevator signage; restrooms and drinking fountains for patrons with disabilities.

Assistive Listening Devices are available at coat check, near Box Office.
Large-print or Braille programs: Call 415.503.5416 at least 15 business days prior to the performance for which you request large-print or Braille programs. Program available for pick up at Box Office one hour prior to concert.

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Front of House: 415.503.5325
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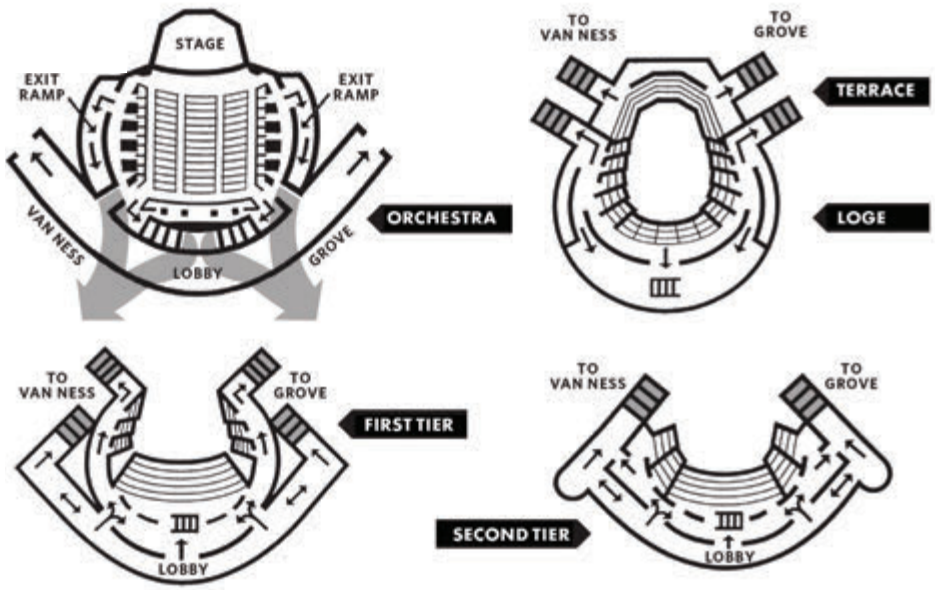
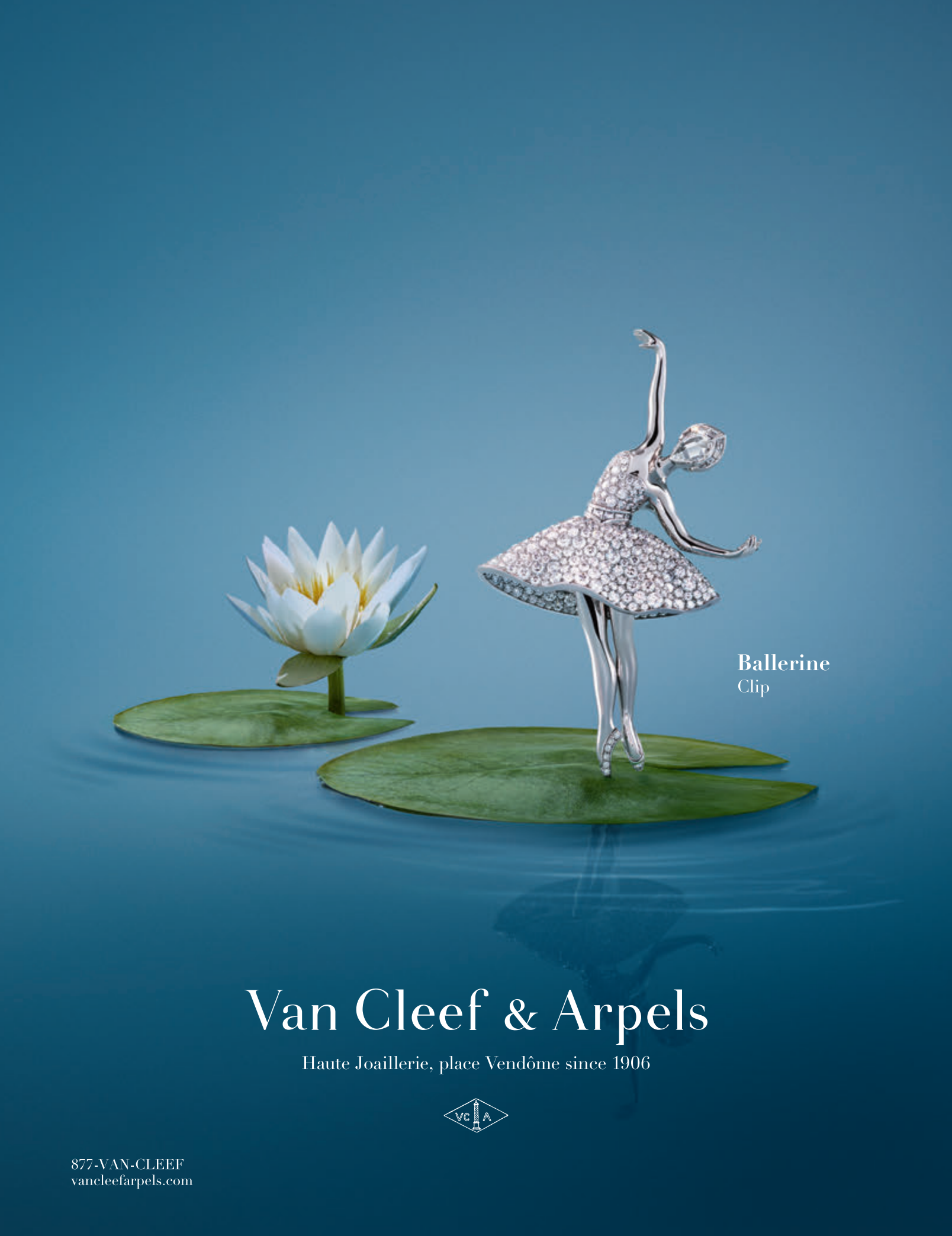
Monday–Friday, 10am–6pm,
Saturday, Noon–6pm and through the first intermission where there are performances. Sundays two hours before the performance through the end of intermission. 415.864.6000 sfsymphony.org
Ticket Turn-in: If you are unable to attend a concert, please call the Box Office (415.864.6000) as far in advance as possible (up to one hour prior to the performance) to offer your tickets for resale. Their value is a tax-deductible contribution to the Symphony.
Radio Broadcasts: Sunday evenings at 7pm on Classical KDFC 90.3 San Francisco, 89.9 Napa, 103.9 Monterey, 102.5 Ukiah and 104.9 San Jose. The SF Symphony Radio Series is distributed nationally and internationally by the WFMT Radio Network.

In an emergency:
Follow any lighted exit to the street.
Do not use elevators or lobby stairs.
Walk, don't run.

Exit Diagram

DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL





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