



MOBILE
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

SCOTT SPECK
MUSIC DIRECTOR



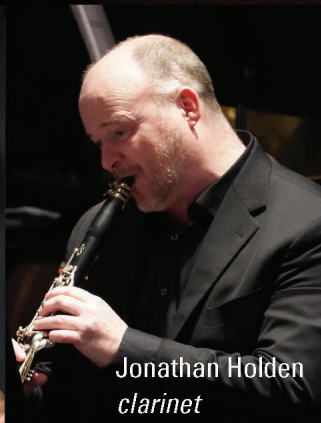
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to hear this!*



Radu Ratoi
accordion



Melissa White
violin



Jonathan Holden
clarinet



Zlata Chochieva
piano



Robert J. Seebacher
guest conductor



Paul Langford
& Kristin Lelm
vocalists



Teresa Cheung
guest conductor

2025-2026 SEASON

in honor of Ann Bartlett Hearin



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WELCOME!

THE MOBILE SYMPHONY

Welcome to the Mobile Symphony!

We hope you'll enjoy the inspiring music that has made us Mobile's flagship arts organization.

If you're a newcomer, check out the advantages of subscribing to our concert series. You can save, enjoy Subscriber benefits and never miss a beat from your very own season seat! Subscribers get more!

You'll notice a long list of donors who make all these wonderful programs possible. Please join them. You have an important part to play in our orchestra! Donors get even more – including parties and events with the orchestra.

Each year we present a casual Beethoven and Blue Jeans concert where we encourage everyone, including the orchestra, to wear jeans. Scott Speck, our music director, always reminds concertgoers they are free to dress however they wish for any concert. We welcome all!

Turn your cell phones off and turn your good manners on. Respect those around you, so everyone has a great concert experience. New security measures are in place. Please be patient as you enter the Saenger.

As you read this program, you'll discover the MSO is so much more than the music you hear today. Our education and outreach programs are unmatched along the Gulf Coast.

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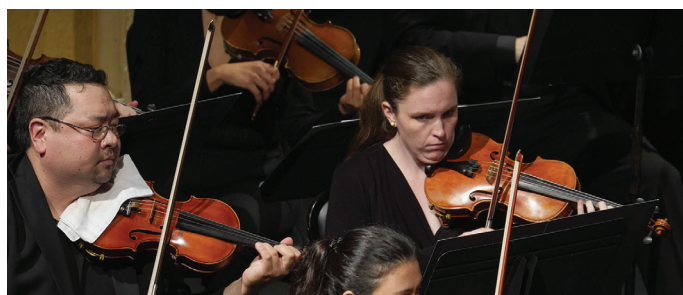
Mobile Symphony Orchestra

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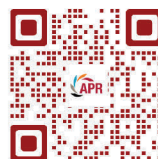
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ABOUT THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

SCOTT SPECK

Dear Friends,

There's a special combustion that happens when the Mobile Symphony begins to play. Our myriad of individual voices become one, and the air itself begins to vibrate. In that moment, we're no longer just listeners and music-makers – we're fellow travelers, launched on a journey that only live music can offer.

This season, the Mobile Symphony takes us on an unforgettable flight. We begin with *Metamorphosis*, where the music of Weber is transformed by Hindemith, and Brahms builds a towering triumph from a whisper. We find rhythmic fire in Piazzolla's tango-inspired concerto and Beethoven's exuberant Second Symphony. We stroll through the bustling streets of Gershwin's Paris, and scale the dramatic heights of Rachmaninoff's thrilling Third Piano Concerto.

Along the way, we explore the elegance of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, the sweeping lyricism of Dvořák's Symphony No. 8, and the rich American language of Florence Price. We find ourselves in the quiet wonder of Tchaikovsky's wintry landscape, filled with longing and light. And we end the season gazing skyward, as Holst's *The Planets* collides with the grandeur of modern film music in a cosmic finale.

Each concert is its own world, and it's alive only in the moment we share it. No recording can capture the way the sound fills the room, or the way it resonates between us. You are a part of that experience – essential to it. With you onboard, the music can fully take off.

This is your orchestra, and the Mobile Symphony is our shared musical vehicle. Thank you for joining us on this extraordinary ride.

Scott Speck

Scott Speck, *Music Director*



Scott Speck joined the Mobile Symphony in 2000 as its first full-time Music Director. Under his leadership the orchestra has grown into one of the Gulf Coast's premier performing arts organizations. Scott is a masterful conductor with a wide-ranging knowledge of repertoire, deep experience in programming, and a terrific sense of what will engage audiences – old and new. His performances with Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Renée Fleming, Joshua Bell, Midori, Evelyn Glennie and Olga Kern have been highlights of his years as music director of the MSO.

Scott also holds positions as Music Director of the Joffrey Ballet, Chicago Philharmonic and West Michigan Symphony. He previously held positions as Conductor of the San Francisco Ballet; Music Advisor and Conductor of the Honolulu Symphony; and Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Opera. During a tour of Asia he was named Principal Guest Conductor of the China Film Philharmonic in Beijing. He was also invited to the White House as Music Director of the Washington Ballet.

In past seasons Scott Speck has conducted at London's Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, New York's Lincoln Center, Chicago's Symphony Center, Washington's Kennedy Center, San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House, and the Los Angeles Music Center. He has led numerous performances with the orchestras of Chicago, Houston, Washington, Baltimore, Paris, London, Moscow and Beijing, among many others.

He is co-author of the world's best-selling books on classical music for a popular audience: *Classical Music for Dummies*, *Opera for Dummies* and *Ballet for Dummies*. He has been a regular commentator on National Public Radio, the BBC and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, broadcast throughout the world.

**Scott can be reached on Facebook, Instagram
and Twitter @scottspeckmusic**



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MOBILE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2025-2026 ROSTER

VIOLIN

Jenny Grégoire
concertmaster
Enen Yu
co-concertmaster
Will Jackson
principal second
Petra Bubanja
Edward Charity
Ken Davis
Ellen Grant
Bret Heim
Grace Kim
Gesa Kordes
Natasha Marsalli
Zully Morales
Maeanna Naffe Callahan
Julianne Odahowski Steele
Stan Roberts
Diane Schmitz
Silvia Suarez Rath
Jennifer Whittle
Lisa Wiggins

VIOLA

Jacob Adams
principal
Courtney Grant
Katelyn Hoag
Jim Lichtenberger
Ashley Overby
Daniela Pardo
Miriam Tellechea

CELLO

Moisés Molina
*principal, The Emily
"Patsy" Stone Fail Chair*
Andrea Beltrán-Landers
Guo-Sheng Huang
Daniel Martinez
Zlatina Staykova
José Sunderland

BASS

Taylor Hollyer
principal
Samuel Dahmer
Sophia Scarano

FLUTE

Andra Bohnet
principal
Travis Jones
Rachel Nozny
piccolo

OBOE

Rebecca Mindock
*principal, The Patty
Malone Chair*
Matthew Fossa
Galit Kaunitz

CLARINET

Jonathan Holden
principal
Richard Jernigan
Kip Franklin

BASSOON

Evelyn Watkins
principal
Kimberly Woolly
Richard Hopkins
contrabassoon

HORN

Mollie Pate
principal
Jon Gannon
associate principal
James Baker
Joey Troia

TRUMPET

Matthew Vangjel
principal
Michael Huff
Peter Wood

TROMBONE

Jonathan Houghtling
substitute principal
Jonathan McNeer
Arie VandeWaa
bass trombone

TUBA

Chester Schmitz
principal

HARP

Katie Ott
principal
Catherine Anderson

TIMPANI

Laura Noah
principal

PERCUSSION

Bryan Dilks
principal
Grant Dalton
Matt Greenwood
Brian Nozny
John Purser
Zachary Webb

PIANO/CELESTA

Robert Holm
principal

ORGAN

Randall Sheets
principal

Strings and percussion personnel are listed alphabetically, following principal players



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cello*

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principal second violin*

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Daniela Pardo, viola

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Kimberly Woolly, bassoon

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Lisa Wiggins, violin

Gaye Lindsey
Guo-Sheng Huang, cello

Anne Low
Ken Davis, violin

Mark Malone
Katie Ott, principal harp

Meagan Malone
Zully Morales, violin

Dr. Elizabeth Mancini
*Rebecca Mindock,
principal oboe*

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Ashley Overby, viola

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principal flute*

Gary & Aven Warner
Michael Huff, trumpet

Sherri & Randy Williams
Richard Jernigan, clarinet

Anonymous
*Enen Yu,
co-concertmaster*

Anonymous
*Jonathan Houghtling,
substitute principal
trombone*

Anonymous
Diane Schmitz, violin

Anonymous
*Arie VandeWaa,
bass trombone*



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Being a Season Ticket Holder is the best way to experience the Mobile Symphony.
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HUGE TICKET SAVINGS – Save up to 25% off the price of regular concert tickets. As a subscriber, you will also be able to bring a friend and purchase their tickets at 20% off the regular price. (Special events not included)

FLEXIBILITY – Have Saturday tickets but can't make it? Simply give us a call by the Friday before the concert and we can exchange your tickets for Sunday and vice versa. No charge. Easy. Simple.

SEAT SECURITY – As an MSO Subscriber, your seat is YOURS for all of the concerts included in your subscription. Plus, you have first choice to keep or upgrade your seats during renewal season.

RED CARPET ACCESS – Whenever we have special concerts that are not part of the regular season, you will be the first to know through our Subscribers-Only Newsletter. In addition, you will have the opportunity to buy tickets before they become available to the general public.

SUBSCRIBER LOUNGE – During intermission, enjoy light snacks, coffee and a cash bar in our Subscriber-Only Lounge located in Room 1927 adjacent to the Saenger Theatre entrance on Joachim Street.

LOCAL DISCOUNTS – Various local merchants have partnered with the Mobile Symphony to provide our subscribers with exclusive

discounts and offers. This means that with your Season Subscription Card, you can take advantage of these great deals throughout the season. Make your concert experience even better when you dine before or after a concert!

PAYMENT PLAN OPTION – Pay off your season ticket purchase in equal, interest-free monthly installments – call (251)432-2010 for this option.

BECOME A DONOR – Would you like to upgrade your concert experience? See (page 66) for information on the perks of becoming a donor!

Become a Subscriber now!
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The Mobile Symphony Orchestra is one of Mobile County's valued resources.
The Mobile County Commission is proud to partner with MSO
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PLAN

YOUR EXPERIENCE

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LEARN MORE. ENJOY MORE.

Enhance your concert experience with Take Note! Join music experts and explore the world of classical music from an in-depth perspective. This informative pre-concert talk begins at 6:30 p.m. before Saturday classical performances and 1:30 p.m. before Sunday classical performances in Room 1927, adjacent to the Saenger entrance on Joachim Street.

**TAKE NOTE! is available for
the following 2025-2026
Season performances:**

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November 8 & 9, 2025

Dreams

January 17 & 18, 2026

Beethoven & Blue Jeans

March 14 & 15, 2026

An American in Paris

April 11 & 12, 2026

The Planets

May 2 & 3, 2026

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MOBILE SYMPHONY BOARD

2025-2026

The Mobile Symphony is one of Mobile's crowning achievements. We should all be proud to enjoy – and support – one of the nation's best regional orchestras. I'm always proud when newcomers are shocked to discover an orchestra of this quality in Mobile. Exceeding expectations is what we do at the MSO!

Sometimes we take our access to world-class musical experiences for granted, but we can't lose sight of the treasure we have and the importance it plays in our community. Our presence, applause and encouragement breathe life into every note and make each performance possible.

When I first heard the orchestra, I too was amazed I could find this quality right here in my hometown. I was blown away by how all these talented musicians, led by Scott, could come together and create a unified sound that transports and inspires all of us. I soon realized that I had a part to play as well. Like many of you I began as a subscriber and loyal audience member. I soon became a donor and then a sponsor. Now I have assumed a leadership role on the board to ensure we keep our beloved MSO healthy and strong.

I encourage you to join the journey from ticket buyer to subscriber to donor. Thank you for your generous support and enthusiasm. It's the foundation upon which the orchestra flourishes.

I also want to congratulate the entire orchestra and its extraordinary musicians. Your dedication, artistry and passion captivate our hearts. I am certain every performance this season will set new standards of excellence.

To all the Mobile Symphony family – supporters, staff and above all, Scott and the musicians – your contributions and talents are deeply valued. Together, we create not only music, but also unforgettable moments of joy, connection and inspiration.

Thank you!

Dr. Richard L. Otts, *Board Chair*



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**MOBILE
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

**SCOTT SPECK
MUSIC DIRECTOR**

MOBILE SYMPHONY STAFF



It is always about the music! Whether it is performing exceptional symphonic music in the concert hall or teaching a child to play a violin in the classroom, everything we do at the Mobile Symphony is about making music. Our reward is the energy and love we feel from the audience and the children in our education programs.

Music has the power to unite, inspire and transcend barriers to bring us together in the sheer joy of listening to our fine Mobile Symphony. Music is not a luxury – but a basic need of human survival. It is how we express feelings when there are no words. Think of the many times music helped us survive and heal after personal or national tragedies.

The Mobile Symphony changes lives and builds community whether it is through the concert experience or an education program. In fact, the quality of our orchestra often surprises guest artists, because very few cities of our size have this quality orchestra and education programs.

Your support is crucial to this success. Join us as we build a stronger community and touch lives in ways nothing else can. Many people were changed when they first heard an orchestra perform, because a teacher or friend invited them to a concert. Please invite a friend to the symphony soon.

Sincerely,

Celia Mann Baehr, President / CEO

MOBILE SYMPHONY STAFF

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Chief Executive Officer*
Celia Mann Baehr

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Orchestra Personnel Manager*
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Cooper Tate

Student Conducting Intern
Jaishon Robinson

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Zully Morales, violin
José Sunderland, cello
Leonard Ligon, bass
Dr. Andrea Beltrán
Landers, cello

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Dr. Andra Bohnet, flute
Dr. Amy Selkirk, oboe
Richard Jernigan, clarinet
Dr. Kristina Nelson, bassoon
Mollie Pate, french horn
Joey Troia, french horn
Dr. Peter Wood, trumpet
Dr. Arie VandeWaa, lower brass
Cooper Tate, lower brass
Dr. Zachary Webb, percussion

MOBILE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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SYMPHONIC INNOVATIONS FUND

Launched by an extraordinary gift from an anonymous donor, Mobile Symphony's Symphonic Innovations Fund is dedicated to performing and commissioning new works. This season we hear Michael Daugherty's *Desi*, an exuberant tribute to the musician and band leader Desi Arnaz, better known as Ricky Ricardo on the sitcom *I Love Lucy*. Born in 1954, Daugherty is a multiple Grammy Award-winning American composer, pianist and teacher.



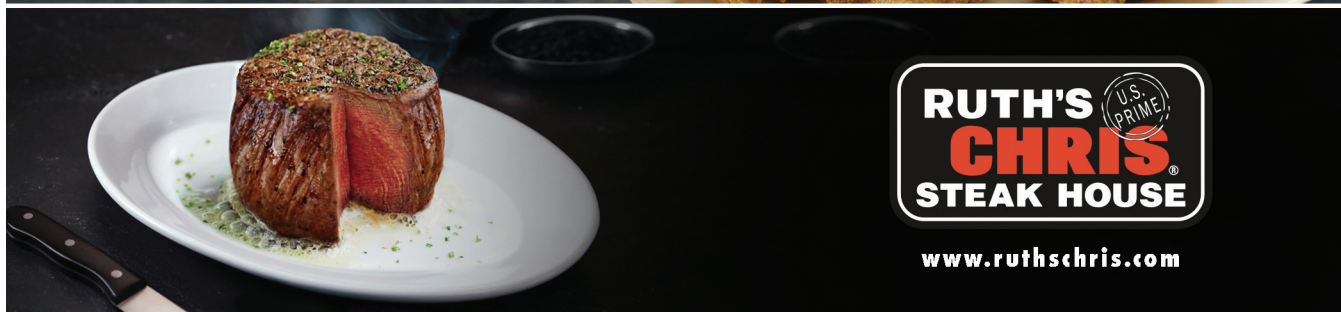
Michael Daugherty

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CORPORATE SPOTLIGHT

For more than a decade, the **ALABAMA POWER FOUNDATION** has provided support and funding for hundreds of worthy projects throughout the state. The foundation focuses its resources on improving education, promoting arts and culture, restoring and enhancing the environment and boosting health and human services. Its mission: to improve the quality of life of Alabamians and to strengthen the communities where they live.

Established in 1990 **THE CARING FOUNDATION OF BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF ALABAMA** supports many organizations and initiatives statewide that seek to improve the health, wellness and education of Alabamians with a special focus on children. Through one of its corporate values, "Give Back to the Community", Blue Cross is proud to be a partner with the Mobile Symphony and applauds its efforts to make music education and outreach programs accessible to schools and communities that have limited access to the fine arts.

RED OR WHITE is a unique combination of a wine store, wine bar and private dining area. Born 21 years ago in downtown Fairhope and shortly after in the Mobile location, we are now also in Birmingham. We have some of the most talented chefs in the area, so whether you need some wine, a gift, or a bite to eat, please come and see us.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA with nearly 14,000 students is a dynamic community of leaders and learners who support and challenge one another to be actively engaged citizens who advance the Gulf Coast region and the world. South fosters an environment that couples engaging learning experiences with high-level research, enabling our faculty and students to be leaders in their disciplines. A beautiful 1,200-acre campus includes new facilities and resources for teaching, housing and recreation, health sciences, the arts, engineering, computer science and athletics. Jaguar athletes compete in 17 NCAA Division I sports, including baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, soccer, softball, tennis, track and field, and volleyball. USA Health, through Children's & Women's Hospital, University Hospital, Mitchell Cancer Institute, physicians groups and the Whiddon College of Medicine — and supported by the College of Nursing and the Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions — provides care across our region and is a training ground for future physicians and healthcare professionals.

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WKRG News 5 is proud to sponsor the Mobile Symphony Orchestra along with other art and culture organizations in our community. WKRG News 5 brings local news, weather and sports coverage you can count on to the entire Gulf Coast. It's also the home of America's most watched network, CBS, but that's not all! They also broadcast the Gulf Coast CW which is "Always Entertaining" and MeTV Gulf Coast, the home for classic television. WKRG News 5 is operated by Nexstar Media Inc.



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You've got to hear this!



Metamorphosis

PROGRAM

SCOTT SPECK, conductor

Saenger Theatre

Saturday, October 11, 2025 at 7:30 P.M. | Sunday, October 12, 2025 at 2:30 P.M.

Carl Maria von Weber
(1786-1826)

Overture to *Der Freischütz*

10 minutes

Paul Hindemith
(1895-1963)

Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes
by Carl Maria von Weber
Allegro
Scherzo (Turandot): Moderato--Lively
Andantino
Marsch

22 minutes

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Symphony No. 1, C minor, op. 68
Un poco sostenuto-- Allegro
Andante sostenuto
Un poco allegretto e grazioso
Adagio- Più andante; Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

45 minutes

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PROGRAM NOTES

OVERTURE TO DER FREISCHÜTZ

CARL MARIA VON WEBER

BORN: Nov. 18, 1786 | Eutin, Germany
DIED: June 5, 1826 | London, United Kingdom

Few works in the orchestral canon usher in the world of German Romantic opera with such dramatic flourish and evocative power as Carl Maria von Weber's Overture to *Der Freischütz*. Premiered in Berlin on June 18, 1821, *Der Freischütz* (*The Marksman* or *The Freeshooter*) stands as a cornerstone of 19th-century music, its overture serving both as a compelling prologue to the opera and a popular concert staple in its own right. This overture is more than a mere curtain-raiser; it is a microcosm of the opera's supernatural intrigue, folk-inspired melodies and brooding emotional landscape.

Carl Maria von Weber occupies a pivotal place in music history as a founding figure of Romanticism in music. His influence is felt in the works of Wagner, Mendelssohn and Berlioz, and his vision for a distinctly German operatic tradition paved the way for generations to come. Prior to Weber, the prevailing operatic forms in Germany were heavily influenced by Italian and French models. With *Der Freischütz*, Weber married the traditions of German folk legend, the evocative power of orchestration and a sense of place rooted in the mysterious forests of central Europe.

Weber's life was marked by both artistic triumph and personal struggle. A prodigious talent from an early age, he experienced success as a pianist, conductor and composer. His own fascination with folk tales, the supernatural and the dramatic possibilities of the orchestra culminated in *Der Freischütz*, his most enduring stage work. The opera's libretto, by Johann Friedrich Kind, is based on a German folk legend and weaves a narrative of love, fate, and diabolical bargains.

The story of *Der Freischütz* centers on Max, a forester who, to win the hand of his beloved Agathe, must prove his marksmanship in a shooting contest. Tempted by dark forces,

he agrees to cast seven magic bullets – six of which will unerringly find their mark, but the seventh is controlled by the devil himself. The plot unfolds in the shadowed woods, where fate, love and the supernatural collide. The opera's music is infused with hunting calls, rustic dances and ominous sonorities, evoking both the pastoral beauty and lurking dangers of the German forest.

The overture to *Der Freischütz* is masterfully constructed, encapsulating the opera's principal themes and its unique atmosphere. Weber's orchestration is both vivid and suspenseful, foreshadowing key moments and emotional turning points of the drama. Weber's overture is remarkable for its sophisticated handling of the orchestra. The writing for winds – especially the horns – is notable for its color and idiomatic brilliance, evoking hunting horns and the natural world. The interplay of woodwinds and strings, the bold use of brass, and the dramatic contrasts of dynamics and texture all contribute to an atmosphere that is both cinematic and psychologically charged.

Weber's harmonic language is adventurous, with abrupt modulations and chromatic passages that suggest the uncanny and the supernatural. His rhythmic vitality, especially in the allegro sections, propels the music forward with an energy that is both exhilarating and ominous.

The premiere of *Der Freischütz* was a sensation, vaulting Weber to international fame and establishing him as a leading light of German Romanticism. The overture quickly entered the concert repertoire, admired for its narrative economy and emotional impact. Audiences were captivated by its vivid characterizations, atmospheric scene-painting, and irresistible melodies.

Carl Maria von Weber's Overture to *Der Freischütz* stands at the threshold of Romantic opera, a work that captures the spirit of a new age in music. With its masterful orchestration, evocative themes, and dramatic arc, the overture is a testament to Weber's genius and to the enduring

power of storytelling through music. Whether heard as an introduction to the opera or as a concert piece, the Overture to *Der Freischütz* continues to thrill, enchant, and inspire audiences nearly two centuries after its creation.

SYMPHONIC METAMORPHOSIS OF THEMES BY CARL MARIA VON WEBER

PAUL HINDEMITH

BORN: Nov. 16, 1895 | Hanau, Germany
DIED: Dec. 28, 1963 | Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Hindemith is without question one of the most significant composers of the first half of the 20th century, and one who stands almost alone in the breadth of his achievement. He espoused a musical philosophy that was founded in deep reverence of discipline, musicality, craftsmanship, mastery and respect for past musical traditions, and commitment to the education and training of students. He composed in almost every musical genre, and while certainly a “modern” composer, whose compositions explore a shifting degree of dissonance, his works draw upon almost every genre and compositional technique in music history. He emphasized fundamentals of musicianship for all and demonstrated that in his pedagogical works and in his own formidable performance skills. He wrote as solicitously and appropriately for young children as he did for professional performers. Trained primarily as a violinist—later switching to viola—he played in professional string quartets and remarkably taught himself to play credibly on most of the orchestral instruments, the better to compose the series of solo sonatas that he wrote for most of them.

During the thirties he fell into disfavor with the Nazi government and emigrated; his wife was part Jewish and his earlier musical style was rather dissonant, both bad in National Socialists eyes. Ironically, by the time he fled his style was really couched in a more conservative, acceptable idiom, but no matter. Ultimately he took a position at Yale University in 1940, became an

American citizen, and established an influential career as a teacher of theory and composition – even leading the early music ensemble. His music – though part of the standard repertoire of the century – came to be viewed as somewhat passé by the young Turks of the fifties. When apprised that they had referred to his works as “old iron,” he famously observed that it was better to be “old iron” than new “bull s—.” In 1953 he retired to a small village in Switzerland, where he lived until his death in 1963. Never a controversial figure, he was the epitome of a solid musical citizen of genius who cultivated a dedicated artistic engagement with his public. He was dedicated to musical craftsmanship and reaching out to his public, no matter its level of musical sophistication. Interesting enough, for a man who had devised a complete “system” for modern composition and wrote fairly consistently therein, his music garnered much acclaim and popular appeal.

During his lifetime he was interested in composing in almost every genre, even opera, and left behind a very large corpus of compositions whose popularity with almost all musicians and performing groups still flourishes. His chamber music is an impressive and important contribution, for he wrote for an amazing variety of small ensembles. While his music has been evergreen of faculty and student performances in colleges and conservatories since his arrival in this country at the beginning of World War II, his contributions to large ensembles, including opera, while respected, is of somewhat lesser importance. In 1951 he did make a major contribution to the repertoire of the concert band in his *Symphony in Bb*, commissioned by the US Army Band. Symphonic audiences know him best for his symphony, “*Mathis der Mahler*,” (1935) extracted from the opera of the same name, and for the suite, *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes* by Carl Maria von Weber.

The work stems from 1940, the time of the composer’s immigration to the United States, and stems from discussions with Leo Massine, a well-known figure in the ballet world. Massine wanted a ballet suite based upon melodies by von Weber, but the initial efforts by Hindemith were stillborn and

the collaboration was dropped. Evidently, Massine wanted more von Weber and less of Hindemith—his pungent, modern style was too much for the traditionalist. Moreover, Hindemith was not at all happy with Massine’s proposed sets and costumes based upon the art of Salvador Dali. Luckily, the material was kept, and latter reworked by 1943 into four large movements for symphony orchestra. The material (actually, Hindemith borrowed more than just “themes”) is derived primarily from piano duets by von Weber with which Hindemith was very familiar, having played them with his wife on more than one occasion. Other material stems from von Weber’s incidental music for a play by Gozzi based upon the same *Turandot* legend made so famous in Puccini’s opera. Later, others choreographed the new version of the work, but those attempts have never enjoyed the enthusiastic reception of the purely symphonic presentation. It is probably the composer’s most popular composition.

Cast in four movements, the first movement is a vigorous march whose melodies sound vaguely Shostakovichian at times, but certainly more turgid and complex. Dissonant, thick textures alternate with simple little winsome tunes imaginatively orchestrated. After all the modernity and harmonic complexity, it is a true Hindemith hallmark when the movement ends on a powerful, simple major triad. The second movement—first heard in the solo flute—is based upon a real Chinese folk song—listen for the “black notes only” pentatonic scale. Those of a “certain age” (you know who you are) may note its similarity to a novelty pop tune from 1960. The tune is passed around the orchestra to almost every instrument or section, accompanied by an ever-changing weft of rhythms and secondary material, but the tune is always there and never hard to spot. Near the middle, after a descending “vortex” like a musical whirlpool, Hindemith—always the contrapuntalist—changes the whole texture and weaves a fugato, begun by the solo trombone, followed by almost everyone sequentially, and even includes brilliant sections for percussion alone. A solemn chord ends it all.

The third movement quietly features a few straightforward themes cast in variety of textures, often featuring the woodwinds, with little of the searing modern dissonances of the first movement. The last movement is rightly well known, and opens with a short energetic statement from the brass, and a mysterious procession starts, heard first in oboe. Based originally on a funeral march, the composer uses the main tune at twice the original speed, but if you listen carefully the source mood is evident. This mood doesn’t last long though, for a cascade of twittering notes accompanies a heroic theme of affirmation first heard in the horns. The rousing drive to the end is led by virtuoso horn calls and celebratory support from all.

SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN C MINOR, OP. 68

JOHANNES BRAHMS

BORN: May 7, 1833 | Hamburg, Germany

DIED: April 3, 1897 | Vienna, Austria

“This is a chosen one.” Robert Schumann so characterized Johannes Brahms in his famous article that introduced the young Brahms to the public. Little did he know! Brahms went on to become the last great successor of the artistic mantle of musical Classicism that led from Joseph Haydn, through Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. That’s taking the rather narrow view, of course, for there were others who followed who revered the classical attributes of restraint, balance, clarity of form, elegance, and general equipoise that came to characterize the collective features that came to be known as classical style. And they stand in clear contrast to the sweeping trends and excesses of music Romanticism that came to dominate European music until the cataclysm of World War I.

Simply put, the composers of the nineteenth century after Beethoven tended to divide themselves into two groups. The progressives were true “Romantics,” and were greatly influenced by the extra-musical ideas that were the subjects of contemporary literature, poetry, and painting, among others. They devised new genres, such as the tone poems of Smetana and Liszt, the music dramas of Wagner, and the characteristic piano pieces of Chopin. Much of this music, to use a phrase still common among seekers of meaning in

music, was about “something”—meaning something familiar to human experience. Liszt and Wagner, et al, while respecting the music of the past, saw no future in continuing that tradition.

Others, Brahms most significantly, still adhered strongly to the musical philosophically oriented musical style of Beethoven. He and other conservatively minded musicians held that the traditional forms of sonata, concerto, and symphony had not nearly exhausted their viability, and that music should continue to speak in an integrated language that referred to itself, alone, and certainly not to extra-musical ideas. So, he and his ilk continued to write “pure,” or “abstract” music, like sonatas and symphonies (a so-called symphony is just a sonata for orchestra). Today, most of those who compose, perform, and listen to art music see no contradiction at all in valuing both broad aesthetic viewpoints—so we enjoy the best of both worlds.

The example of Beethoven’s music loomed overwhelming for Brahms, and he waited for decades to essay his first symphony, completing it in 1876, when he was 43 years old. Brahms was probably the most conscientious and self-critical of all the great composers, and worked on this symphony for about two decades. It garnered sufficient early success to be deemed the “Tenth,” referencing Beethoven’s nine in that genre, although

it really bears more comparison with Beethoven’s fifth symphony. It has stood the test of time sufficiently to no longer bear comparisons to any of Beethoven’s works, and is now one of the monuments of the greatest musical compositions of Western Civilization.

It begins austerely and rather abstractly timpani pounding away—with simple musical elements that come to permeate the entire first movement. This slow introduction is soon followed by the faster movement proper, which weaves a tapestry of motivic manipulation, thorough integration of ideas, and masterful polyphonic textures. You’re not likely to walk away whistling the tunes, but rather with the feeling that you have heard music that offers more details to enjoy than one listening can absorb. The second movement opens with an incredibly rich, warm statement by the string section. A subsequent theme is intoned by the solo oboe and then the solo clarinet. Brahms works through these ideas in the same contemplative, pastoral mood and before long, the solo horn announces the coda. But, we’re glad that the composer takes his time in gently bringing this meditation to a profound and tranquil end. The third movement is a happy jaunt through nature, opening with the solo clarinet. Other ideas are heard, but the initial tune returns from time to time to keep us on track. A skipping middle section in six-eight time provides some diverting, yet optimistic activity, but soon our familiar first section returns—suitably varied, of course. And then this sunny diversion is over before you know it.

Notwithstanding the treasures of the first three movements, the last movement is the star of this symphony. It begins ominously, and with a bit of uncertainty as to where it will take us, but that is soon cleared up by the glorious solos in the horn (inspired by the Swiss alphorn – think of Ricola commercials on TV) and flute. The famous trombone chorale is heard, letting us know that this is serious stuff, and then we’re ready for the main event. A rich, hymn-like theme is heard in the low register of the strings (you’ll be able to sing this one), and we’re off. What follows is a treasure trove of distinct and ingratiating themes, all of which are worked through such as to engender an almost overwhelming anticipation of the spacious and grand ending. The chorale, first heard softly at the beginning in the trombones, is reserved for a monumental rendition at the end – an almost overwhelming statement of joy, power and triumph of the good.

From ominous beginning to exultant end, this glorious work is ample evidence of Brahms’ almost unique combination of profound, emotional feeling combined in eloquent restraint with highest intellectual techniques. It illustrates perfectly why so many orchestral musicians unhesitatingly cite this composer as their deep, personal favorite of them all.

—Wm. E. Runyan
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SPECK SPEAKS METAMORPHOSIS

When Paul Hindemith borrowed a few themes from Carl Maria von Weber for his *Symphonic Metamorphosis*, he didn’t just dress them up – he gave them a full personality transplant. What began as a proposal for a classically inspired score turned into a Technicolor orchestral romp. The music was originally intended for a ballet, until choreographer Leonid Massine insisted on a strict adherence to Weber’s original. Hindemith, a man of many talents and exactly zero tolerance for nonsense, walked away and wrote the piece his own way.

The result is one of the most joyfully unbuttoned works of the 20th century.

You can hear the bones of Weber’s music if you squint, but mostly it’s Hindemith cutting loose – transforming 19th-century dances into boisterous, rhythmically charged symphonic fireworks. It’s music with serious craft and zero self-seriousness, the sound of a composer letting the orchestra stretch its legs.

And for that reason, *Symphonic Metamorphosis* has always been a favorite of orchestra musicians everywhere. Year after year, this piece has risen to the top of the Mobile Symphony musicians’ wish list – requested literally dozens of times by our own players. This season, the wish comes true!



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Bohemia

with Jonathan Holden, *clarinet*

PROGRAM

ROBERT J. SEEBACHER, guest conductor
JONATHAN HOLDEN, clarinet

Saenger Theatre

Saturday, November 8, 2025 at 7:30 P.M. | Sunday, November 9, 2025 at 2:30 P.M.

Leoš Janáček
(1854-1928)

Lachian Dances

I. Old Fashioned Dance (Starodávný)
III. Town Piper (Dymák)
VI. Handsaw Dance (Pilky)

11 minutes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Clarinet Concerto, A major, K. 622

Allegro
Adagio
Rondo—Allegro

23 minutes

Jonathan Holden

INTERMISSION

Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

Symphony No. 8, G major, op. 88

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Allegretto grazioso – Molto vivace
Allegro ma non troppo

34 minutes

Andra Bohnet

The Laura Lee Pattillo Norquist Charitable Foundation

Flowers in the Saenger Theatre arcade are provided by Elizabeth's Garden

PROGRAM NOTES

LACHIAN DANCES

LEOŠ JANÁČEK

BORN: July 3, 1854 | Hukvaldy, Czechia
DIED: Aug. 12, 1928 | Moravská Ostrava, Czechia

Leoš Janáček, one of the Czech Republic's most celebrated composers, is renowned for his ability to weave the vibrant threads of Moravian and Czech folk music into symphonic works. Among his earliest and most beloved orchestrations is the *Lachian Dances* (*Lašské tance*), a suite that radiates with rustic charm, earthy rhythms and the emotional vitality of Silesian folk tradition. Composed in the late 19th century, these dances serve not only as a homage to the music and customs of the Lachia region but also as a testament to Janáček's burgeoning creative voice – one that would eventually reshape Czech music.

Born in 1854 in the Moravian village of Hukvaldy, Leoš Janáček's early life was steeped in the folk customs, melodies and dialects of his homeland. He developed a keen interest in the ethnography of Moravia and Silesia, recording and studying local songs and dances with a scientific precision rare among composers of his era. His fascination with the rhythms and inflections of spoken language, as well as the musical identity of different Czech regions, profoundly influenced his compositional style.

By the 1880s, Janáček was already a prominent figure in the musical life of Brno, having founded a school of organists and become deeply involved in choral and instrumental music. *The Lachian Dances*, completed in their original form in 1889 and later revised in 1925, were Janáček's first major orchestral success, signaling a new direction in Czech music and laying the groundwork for his later masterpieces.

Lachia is an area in the Silesian part of Moravia, nestled in the northeast of the Czech Republic, bordering Poland. Its music is characterized by vivacious dances, robust folk songs and lively instrumental traditions. The region's inhabitants, known as Lachians, celebrate a rich tapestry of

rituals—harvest festivals, weddings, and seasonal gatherings—each accompanied by music and dance that reflect both joy and communal spirit.

Janáček's *Lachian Dances* is a collection of six orchestral pieces inspired by these folk traditions. Rather than quoting folk melodies verbatim, Janáček distilled the spirit of the dances, capturing characteristic rhythms, melodic turns, and the distinctive flavor of Lachian musical idiom.

The suite comprises six distinct dances, each with its own mood and character. We'll hear three of them in this concert.

- First Dance: Starodávný (The Old-Fashioned Dance) – This opening movement is imbued with a stately, processional quality, evoking the dignified air of traditional village ceremonies. The melodies unfold with rustic elegance, punctuated by vibrant woodwinds and buoyant rhythms.

- Third Dance: Dymák (Town Piper) – Named after a popular spinning dance, this movement features swirling melodies and driving rhythms, conjuring images of whirling couples and lively village festivities.

- Sixth Dance: Pilky (Handsaw Dance) – The suite concludes with a brisk, energetic finale, propelled by sharp accents and vibrant orchestral colors. The music builds in excitement, culminating in a jubilant close that captures the essence of a lively village celebration.

Janáček's approach to folk music was both innovative and deeply authentic. Unlike composers who merely quoted folk tunes for local color, Janáček internalized and transformed the spirit of Moravian and Silesian music. He absorbed the subtle nuances of folk rhythms and embedded them within sophisticated orchestral textures. Janáček invites us to share in the spirit of Lachia – to celebrate, reflect, and dance in the company of friends and neighbors, real or imagined.

CLARINET CONCERTO IN A MAJOR, K. 622

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

BORN: Jan. 27, 1756 | Salzburg, Austria
DIED: Dec. 5, 1791 | Vienna, Austria

During his relatively brief life Mozart composed at an amazing rate, and so today we are blessed with a multiplicity of his works in almost all musical genres. His operas, of course, are his most important contributions, but they are followed close in significance by his concertos. Collectively, they defined the form and set the mark for all composers who followed. Mozart wrote over twenty concertos for piano, about a dozen for various stringed instruments, and roughly the same number for wind soloists. The clarinet concerto was his last, written in the final year of his life along with the immortal *Magic Flute* and the Requiem Mass. Composed for Anton Stadler, a well-known virtuoso in Vienna, the concerto received its first performance there in October of 1791, just a couple of months before Mozart's death.

The work, while certainly not without its difficulties, is notable for the consistent lyricism—indeed, at times poignance – that is pervasive throughout. It certainly does not anticipate the shallow brilliance and virtuosity that often came to characterize many of the concertos of the following romantic period. This masterpiece is Mozart in his maturity, written at the height of his powers. It is infused throughout with a delicate balance between the dramatic needs of contrasting a soloist with an orchestra on the one hand, and the almost chamber-like intimacies of the solo passages on the other. This is especially true of the incredibly lyrical slow movement – which many will recognize from its dramatic use some years ago in the film, *Out of Africa*.

It is written in the conventional three movements of a concerto, but there is nothing conventional about the nuanced and imaginative way that Mozart coordinates the solo clarinet with the orchestra, as well as exploiting the virtues of the instrument. Things to listen for in

all three movements include the marvelous changes in register, from low to high, that engender so much tonal contrast, as well as the clever dialogues between soloist and orchestra. The latter characteristic is especially true in the last movement. Here, in a fashion that is not found to this degree even in the piano concertos, the two instrumental forces wittily exchange comments in a kind of gay banter.

The historical evidence is clear that Mozart loved rich, dark musical textures, and we know that he loved the clarinet. He exploited that instrument's expressive possibilities to the utmost in this work, so beloved by clarinetists everywhere – and left us with some of his last musical thoughts before his tragic death.

SYMPHONY NO. 8 IN G MAJOR, OP. 88, B. 163

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

BORN: September 8, 1841 | Nelahozeves, Czechia

DIED: May 1, 1904 | Prague, Czechia

Dvořák is the preëminent Czech composer of the 19th century, and perhaps of all of his successors, as well. This is no small achievement, considering the number of great musicians – Mozart, for example – who thought of Bohemia as the most musical country in Europe. Even today, one can hardly get on a streetcar in Prague without stepping around a double bass. Americans today, if they think of Czech music at all, other than two works by Smetana, it is of the music of Dvořák. They know little of the other composers of the incredible musical wealth of Bohemia – including Fibich, Ostrčil, Janáček, Foerster, Hába, and Martinů – just to name a few. Dvořák owed his initial recognition to Johannes Brahms, who encountered his music somewhat early in Dvořák's career, and saw to it that he was enabled to spend time in Vienna for further study. While Dvořák's fundamental stylistic orientation is like the older composer in its classical restraint and dedication to traditional forms, his compositions are unmistakably Czech in myriad subtle ways. Turns of harmony, melody and rhythm firmly establish Dvořák's ethnicity, even within the disciplined tradition of musical composition leading back to, say, Beethoven.

Like Brahms, Dvořák wrote stunningly well in the genres of string quartets, sonatas and symphonies. But unlike Brahms, he also wrote tone poems, and was an active and successful opera composer, although only his *Rusalka* is widely known in this country. He was interested in almost every genre, and few of his contemporaries composed successfully in as many different ones as did Dvořák.

He clearly thought of himself as a champion of Czech music, and he incorporated significant Bohemian musical, literary and historical elements into his works. His Slavonic Rhapsodies, tone poems, operas, and songs – the list goes on and on – all are heavily infused with Bohemian melodies, linguistic inflections and characteristic rhythms, and national legends and stories. These essential elements of his artistic voice are near the core of his attractiveness to audiences worldwide – not just in his homeland. As deeply rooted as he is in the Czech musical tradition, it would be a mistake to consign him primarily to the category of “nationalist” composers. For Dvořák was a clear adherent of the artistic thinking of those composers of the 19th century who were firmly rooted in the tradition of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven (and later, Mendelssohn and Brahms) as a fundamental way of composing. That is, they favored classical forms and designs, integrated development of musical ideas, and in general, a restrained and balanced expression that placed strong emphasis on music as an abstract art.

Dvořák wrote nine symphonies, but Americans are most familiar with Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, “From the New World.” His first four symphonies were not published in his lifetime, nor were they generally recognized until the 1950s. But, his sixth, seventh, and eighth symphonies are becoming as popular in this country as the beloved ninth. It was the sixth (1880) that first brought him international recognition and acclaim as a symphonist; but it is the eighth that has come to take a place of “second to none,” in popularity. It's a work of genial warmth and suffused throughout with the color and melodious qualities so associated with Dvořák.

The first movement opens with a wonderfully melancholy theme in G minor played by the cello section; it's not the main theme, however, but little matter. Dvořák full well knows its value, and it marks off each of the three main sections of the movement. The end of it concludes with an ingratiating move to G major, carried by warm brasses. The main theme is now here, and it's a little “chirpy” birdlike theme, first heard in the flute. By and by other important material comes to fore, but not in the traditional key for these later ideas, but in the increasingly popular key with the romantic composers, two steps higher. It too, is in a minor key, and you'll hear it first in the woodwinds. Dvořák brings in a few other concluding ideas, and then the melancholy theme from the opening announces the development, which, though appropriately stormy and fragmented, as these things tend to be, always bears the clarity and tunefulness typical of the composer. Powerful trumpets and trombones again intone the opening idea to mark the recap, followed shortly by the main theme. We heard it first in the flute, but this time it's played by the English horn, making its only appearance in the symphony. The second theme gets a good going over as this shortened reprise burns to an uplifting conclusion.

The second movement is most easily heard as an ingratiating series of variegated moods, musical ideas, and instrumental color. It's usually foolish to read too much into abstract music, but there is no doubt here, of the evocation of Bohemian local color in the beautiful episodes that seem to explore the rural life, stunning natural beauty, and the indigenous musical life of Dvořák's homeland.

Dances are what we expect usually in third movements, and Dvořák provides two: a pensive, melancholic waltz, playing bookends for a warm folkdance in the middle, in the same waltz time. After the return of the first waltz, a short, cheerful coda built around the second tune, but now in duple, not waltz time, takes us gently to the end.

There's no mistaking the beginning of the last movement – a brilliant fanfare in the

trumpets leads to the theme. First heard in the cellos, it is a broad, sonorous melody derived from the theme that we heard way back in the first movement in the flute. It's based upon the three notes of the G major triad, and Dvořák shows us the master he is, by wringing every possible use out of it. The movement is a series of marvelously creative variations on this simple theme. After the leisurely announcement by the cello section, and further restatements in the strings ... Bam! The tempo takes off in a fury, driven

by hysterical trills in the horns, followed by virtuoso filigree in the solo flute. Soon the next variation appears, a rather heavy marching affair that sounds vaguely like Janissary music (18th-century Turkish effects found in Mozart, Beethoven and others). After some allusions to the opening fanfare, the strings revert to the peaceful statement of the main theme, enhanced by a little Rossinian flute obbligato, and the mood continues – teasing us by building up the “calm before the storm” that everyone in

the house knows is going to burst out at any moment. On and on the teasing goes, softer and softer – then: the hysterical horn trills burst in, and we're off to the races, faster and faster, and an apotheosis of Bohemian dancing fury that has few equals in the literature. It's easy to see why this great symphony – from the “Old World,” as it were – is the favorite Dvořák symphony of many.

–Wm. E. Runyan
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ROBERT J. SEEBACHER, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Mobile audiences know **Robert J. Seebacher** for his years as music director of the Mobile Symphony Youth Orchestra, and we're happy to welcome him back as guest conductor for this amazing concert.

Robert J. Seebacher is Music Director and Conductor of the Johnson City Symphony Orchestra in Tennessee, National Endowment for the Humanities Associate Professor of Music, Director of Instrumental Programs, and Music Program Chair at Centre College in Kentucky, and Assistant Conductor of the National Chorale in New York. Previously, he was Music Director of the Mobile Symphony Youth Orchestra and Director of Orchestras and conductor of opera at the University of South Alabama. He has appeared with the Lexington Philharmonic, Youngstown Symphony, Salt Lake Symphony, Warren Philharmonic, and Mobile Symphony Orchestras.

He has conducted numerous All-State and Honors Orchestras and Bands in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Alabama. His

guest artist collaborations have included those with Chee-Yun, Béla Fleck, Mark O'Connor, Midori, The Harlem Quartet, The Canadian Brass, Arlo Guthrie, Lynn Harrell, Bella Hristova, David Ludwig, Joseph Schwantner, Valentina Lisitsa, Gregory Turay, Billy McLaughlin, Kevin Thompson, Tessa Lark, Reginald Smith Jr., and Melissa White.

For the past 20 years, Dr. Seebacher has been the Assistant Conductor for the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre's summer production of “It's a Grand Night for Singing,” which won two regional Emmy awards in 2017.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Music Education (cum laude) from Youngstown State University, a master's degree in Orchestral Conducting from Bowling Green State University, and a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Kentucky.

Dr. Seebacher has participated in training workshops at The Cleveland

Institute of Music and The School of Music, Theatre, and Dance at the University of Michigan. He conducted the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra as part of their inaugural conducting symposium. His teachers include William B. Slocum, Stephen L. Gage, John Nardolillo, Emily Freeman Brown, and Gustav Meier.



JONATHAN HOLDEN, CLARINET

Jonathan Holden is Principal Clarinetist of the Mobile Symphony Orchestra. He is also Associate Professor of Clarinet at Florida State University. Born in Great Britain, he moved to the United States to complete his training and now lives with his family in Tallahassee, Florida.

A noted artist-pedagogue, Holden performs frequently in many settings and mentors young performers and music

educators through to the doctoral level. He made his concerto debut in England at age seventeen and has since played and taught on four continents. Overseas appearances include chamber music tours of Brazil and Panama, a solo tour in Israel, where he performed Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's Clarinet Concerto, and solo performances in China.

Holden has given clinics, master classes, and performances at over 50 colleges

and universities in the US and overseas, including Vanderbilt and Northwestern universities, and the national conservatories of Paris and Rio De Janeiro. Holden is a passionate collaborative musician and a new music advocate, performing chamber works at conferences, festivals, and recital halls throughout the US, often presenting newly commissioned music. Together with colleagues, he gave international premiere

performances of *Triple Set* by Pierre Jalbert, and *Fluteball* by Ricardo Lorenz at the International Clarinet Association's *Clarinetfest* conference.

An experienced orchestral clarinetist, Holden has performed with over twenty professional orchestras throughout the United States, including the Sarasota Orchestra, the Louisiana, Fort Wayne, and Orlando Philharmonic orchestras, and the Grand Rapids and Baton Rouge Symphony orchestras. In 2019, he played Principal Clarinet with the Joffrey Ballet in its premiere run of the opera *Anna Karenina* at Chicago's Auditorium Theatre. 2025 marked his twentieth season as Principal

Clarinet of the West Michigan Symphony.

Holden appears on several studio albums. His 2018 solo album, *Notes from Home* (Centaur Records), celebrates music of the British Isles. A 2020 review of that album in *Fanfare Magazine* cites his "richness of tone, technical address, and sophisticated musicality," offering the recording as a contributor to "one of the great ages of wind playing." Holden's forthcoming album, *American Notebook*, will complement the first album and feature music by American composers.

Holden is a D'Addario Woodwinds Artist and a Selmer Paris Performing Artist.



FROM OUR GUEST CONDUCTOR, ROBERT J. SEEBACHER

Imagine the feeling of pride and joy you might experience while visiting a Gulf Coast beach, enjoying the Mobile Mardi Gras, or simply dining outdoors in February. These warm sentiments of home are exactly what Antonín Dvořák felt in 1889 when he composed his eighth symphony. Bookended by the foreboding Seventh and the homesick melancholy of the Ninth, the Eighth Symphony stands out as a bright, sunny work brimming with Bohemian spirit and nationalistic pride.

While certainly progressive in many respects, Symphony No. 8 in G Major retains the traditional four-movement form. Dvořák's innovative presentation of lush melodies and vibrant orchestral textures remind us that he was truly a master of his craft. The pensive opening quickly gives way to a joyful bird call in the flute, capturing the love of nature innate to Dvořák's more programmatic works. The symphony begins to churn and flow, much like the Moldau River visible from the composer's countryside home in Nelahozeves.

The subsequent movements are infused with dance-like rhythms reminiscent of the exhilarating furiant and gallops found in many of Dvořák's mature works. Even the

third movement, where we might expect a scherzo, instead offers a slower, reflective waltz through the Czech forests. Finally, the fourth movement opens with a heralding trumpet call, summoning us to a great celebration. What follows is a vivid musical gathering filled with love, contentment, and pure joy. The conclusion of Dvořák's Eighth is perhaps his most thrilling finale, a reflection of a man overflowing with happiness.

But before we experience Dvořák's great Op. 88, today's concert begins with another Bohemian master: Leoš Janáček. In my humble view, Janáček is one of the most underrated composers. I've always been drawn to his work and absolutely adore the excitement he creates. As you'll hear in his *Lachian Dances*, Janáček often uses harsh dissonance and bold timbres – sounds that make an immediate impact. After tensing our emotional core, his music releases into passages of striking beauty. The three dances we've selected – an Old-Fashioned Dance, The Town Piper, and the comic, handsaw dance *Pily* – depict humble scenes from a rustic Bohemian village.

One of the greatest treasures of our region is the wealth of world-class artists

who call it home. The Mobile Symphony Orchestra is filled with these incredible musicians. Tonight, nestled between our two Bohemian masterpieces, we feature one of the finest clarinetists in the country: the MSO's own Jonathan Holden. He brings us Mozart's astoundingly virtuosic Clarinet Concerto.

Mozart first heard the newly invented clarinet at the age of seven, sparking a lifelong fascination with the instrument. It's fitting that, after featuring it prominently in his symphonies and operas, he would write a fully realized concerto, using its larger-ranged cousin, the basset horn, at the end of his short life. Elegance, grace and sublime beauty define this staple of the concerto repertoire.

The common thread running through tonight's program is mastery. We present works by three composers at the peak of their creative powers. In the hands of Mr. Holden and the phenomenal musicians of the Mobile Symphony Orchestra, these Bohemian Inspirations will come to life, filled with the same awe and joy these composers so masterfully captured generations ago.

– Robert J. Seebacher

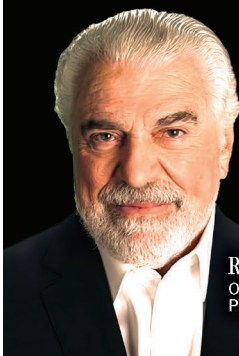
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PROGRAM

TERESA CHEUNG, guest conductor
KRISTIN LELM AND PAUL LANGFORD, vocalists

Saenger Theatre

Saturday, December 13, 2025 at 7:30 P.M | Sunday, December 14, 2025 at 2:30 P.M

<i>Christmas Overture</i>	Jeff Tyzik
<i>White Christmas</i>	Leroy Anderson, arr. Paul Langford Kristin Lelm & Paul Langford
<i>Sleigh Ride</i>	Leroy Anderson, arr. Paul Langford Kristin Lelm & Paul Langford
<i>Troika from Lieutenant Kije Suite</i>	Sergei Prokofiev
<i>Let it Snow</i>	Sammy Cahn, Jule Styne, arr. Paul Langford Kristin Lelm
<i>The Man with the Bag</i>	Irving Taylor, Dudley Brooks, Hal Stanley, arr. Paul Langford Paul Langford
<i>Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah</i>	arr. Paul Langford
<i>Little Jack Frost Get Lost</i>	Seger Ellis, Al Stillman, arr. Paul Langford Kristin Lelm & Paul Langford
<i>Waltz of the Snowflakes</i>	Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

INTERMISSION

<i>God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen</i>	arr. Paul Langford
<i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i>	arr. Paul Langford Kristin Lelm & Paul Langford
<i>O Holy Night</i>	Adolphe Adam, arr. Paul Langford Kristin Lelm
<i>Silent Night</i>	Franz Gruber, arr. Paul Langford Kristin Lelm & Paul Langford
<i>Stille Nacht</i>	Franz Gruber, arr. Chip Davis and Calvin Custer
<i>Grown Up Christmas List</i>	David Foster, arr. Paul Langford Kristin Lelm
<i>Christmas Eve - Sarajevo 12/24</i>	arr. Todd Sheehan
<i>Christmas Singalong</i>	arr. John Finnegan

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PAUL LANGFORD, ARRANGER AND VOCALIST

Born and raised in Hong Kong, now Chicago-based singer, composer, arranger, orchestrator, conductor, producer and keyboard player **Paul Langford** has been creating a more musical world for over 30 years. His published works (Hal Leonard, Shawnee Press, Walton Music, Oxford University Press, Alfred Music, Hal Leonard Publications) have been performed by the San Antonio, Calgary, West Michigan, Pensacola, North Charleston, Dubuque, Des Moines, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Cheyenne, Anderson (IN), Carmel (IN), Las Cruces symphonies (among others),

Voices of Liberty (EPCOT), multiple Disney parks worldwide, and by choirs, jazz bands and other ensembles spanning the globe. Paul has been a vocal and piano guest artist in studio and live performance with headline and Grammy Award-winning artists David Foster, Yolanda Adams, Kenny Rogers, Heather Headley, Abraham Laboriel, Michael Bublé, Josh Groban and Celine Dion, and he's been honored to perform for Presidents Bush and Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama. Paul is a regular guest music director and arranger for Chicago A Cappella, and as owner

and creative director of Paul Langford Studios, a state-of-the-art Chicagoland recording facility, Paul produces, engineers, composes, and plays for a variety of leading artists, corporate clients, and television/film projects. On the road, Paul is an in-demand music educator, guest conductor, respected band and vocal ensemble leader, and invited singer and pianist with orchestras and vocal groups across America and the globe.

KRISTIN LELM, VOCALIST

Soprano **Kristin Lelm** has been thrilling audiences for more than a decade. She is a regular member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Chicago Acappella and a former member of the Grant Park Chorus and Lakeside Singers (Chicago) and has made numerous appearances at the famed Ravinia Festival in Highland Park, IL. She has also guested with

the Peoria Symphony Orchestra with Broadway sensation Ashley Brown. Her charity event appearances include Ronald McDonald House Charities, Ralph Lauren Gala for TCW Magazine Foundation, and Northwestern Hospital Fundraiser (Chicago). Internationally, Kristen has sung in Italy and Denmark with the Danish military brass band Slesvigske Musikkorps,

and the Queen's Royal Guard Band: Den Kongelige Livgarde. She has performed as a recitalist and soloist all over the U.S., including opera arias, jazz, musical theatre, pop and ensemble singing of all kinds.



TERESA CHEUNG, GUEST CONDUCTOR



Teresa Cheung is in frequent demand for symphonic, choral, opera and ballet productions throughout the United States, Canada and Hong Kong. Following an acclaimed 13-season tenure as Music Director of Pennsylvania's Altoona Symphony Orchestra, she was appointed Resident Conductor of the Endless Mountain Music Festival in 2022.

Teresa Cheung made her debut with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in January 2025. Her recent engagements have found her on the podia of the Amarillo, American, Bakersfield, Chappaqua, Mid-Texas, Mobile, New Amsterdam (NYC), Phoenix, Portland, Stamford, Venice and Western Michigan symphony orchestras, Evansville, Fort Wayne and Rochester

philharmonic orchestras, Pennsylvania Centre Orchestra, Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, New York City Ballet, Brooklyn's Regina Opera and the Hong Kong Sinfonietta. Additionally, she often appears as conductor for colleges and universities and with All State/All County orchestra festivals. She has also served as a conducting clinician for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' "Meet the Artist" program.

Widely known for her creative concert programming, collaborative projects and community outreach initiatives, Teresa Cheung is also a passionate advocate for music education for all ages. During her tenure in Altoona, she created numerous outreach programs that engaged area

children and high school musicians and choristers, ballet companies and civic organizations.

Under her leadership, the ASO also performed with university instrumental and choral ensembles from Penn State University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Juniata College. Her vision of extending the Altoona Symphony's artistry and reputation beyond Central Pennsylvania led to the filming of Dvorák's *New World*, an acclaimed joint-project with the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts' Humanities on the Road program that was broadcast throughout Pennsylvania in December 2011. Another highlight of Ms. Cheung's novel interdisciplinary projects was the North American premiere of F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* on Halloween 2017, reuniting the original symphonic score of Hans Erdmann with the silent film in Berndt Heller's reconstruction.

Teresa Cheung began her career as Resident Conductor of the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra, where she was also conductor of the Evansville Philharmonic Youth Orchestra and Evansville Philharmonic Chorus. Among her many artistic initiatives, she led the Evansville Philharmonic Youth Orchestra on its first international concert tour to Japan in 2002. Subsequently, she served as Resident Conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra and Assistant Conductor for the Bard Music Festival and SummerScape.

A native of Hong Kong, Teresa Cheung received her master's degree in conducting from the Eastman School of Music. She is also the recipient of the JoAnn Falletta Conducting Award for the most promising female conductors.

**FROM OUR GUEST CONDUCTOR
TERESA CHEUNG**

I was thrilled when I received the invitation to return to the Mobile Symphony for the 2025 Christmas concert. Mobile is such a heartwarming city, and I so enjoy working with the wonderful staff and musicians of MSO. To me, there's simply no better way to celebrate the holiday season!

I would like to share a story about our guest artists this season: I first encountered Paul Langford's arrangements firsthand when I was conducting another MSO holiday concert a few years ago. I was struck by how imaginative and colorful his arrangements are. After some inquiry, I found out that Paul is every bit as multifaceted himself as a vocalist and pianist as he is with his writing. It was then I decided we must find an opportunity to collaborate.

Perhaps the one thing that struck me most is how Paul and I actually crossed paths decades ago in a place far away from Mobile. When I called Paul for the first time, he greeted me in Cantonese, which is the language I grew up with! Unbeknownst to me, Paul spent his formative years in Hong Kong just as I did! People often talk about the six degrees of separation in life. For us musicians, it often feels like the angle gets even smaller! In addition, I look forward to making music with Paul's musical partner Kristin Lelm for the first time. I hope you will enjoy the music we bring to you during this magical time of the year!

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Honoring Ann Bartlett Hearin

The 2025-2026 Mobile Symphony season is performed in honor of longtime Mobile Symphony supporter Ann Bartlett Hearin. A Mobile native who has called Point Clear home for more than 30 years, Ann attended Sweet Briar College and worked in New York for Condé Nast. On returning home, she worked as a symphony supporter, raising money from local businesses. Now, she is quick to lend her financial support to keep the orchestra growing and its quality high. "I give because God gave to me," she noted. "I know my donations to the Mobile Symphony are used to enrich the cultural life of our area, and I encourage everyone to support the Mobile Symphony."



DREAMS

with Melissa White
violin



PROGRAM

SCOTT SPECK, conductor
MELISSA WHITE, violin

Saenger Theatre

Saturday, January 17, 2026 at 7:30 P.M | Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 2:30 P.M

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)	Overture to <i>La Forza del Destino</i>	8 minutes
Florence Price (1887-1953)	Violin Concerto No. 1, D major Tempo moderato Andante Allegro	30 minutes
	Melissa White	

INTERMISSION

Peter Illyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)	Symphony No. 1, G minor, op. 13 "Winter Dreams"	44 minutes
	Allegro tranquillo Adagio cantabile ma non tanto Scherzo Finale	



The Shirk Family Foundation

Joanna Mayson Cunningham

Violin Concerto No.1, D major by Florence Price presented under license from G. Schirmer Inc. and Associated Music Publishers, copyright owners

Flowers in the Saenger Theatre arcade are provided by Rose Bud Flowers

PROGRAM NOTES

OVERTURE TO LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

GIUSEPPE VERDI

BORN: Oct. 10, 1813 | Le Roncole, Italy

DIED: Jan. 27, 1901 | Milan, Italy

The 19th century was an opera-mad time. With most composers giving it a shot, simply because, as Willie Sutton famously said, “That’s where the money is.” And fame, too. However many were composed, the operatic field was dominated by two artists who still are at the top of the repertoire: Wagner and Verdi. But that’s about all that these two luminaries had in common. Their differences are legion. It suffices to say that Wagner was not exactly a loyal, solid family man, whereas Verdi stuck with his wife and simple country home to the end of his long life. Wagner was a cosmopolitan man of the world, and Verdi was the only major composer who was a dedicated farmer. There’s more, but the important differences lay in their operas.

Verdi was a child of his Italian operatic tradition – to mention only his immediate predecessors: Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. The music was simpler than Wagner’s – carried by memorable melody – the structure straightforward, and the use of the orchestra was masterful, but strictly accompanimental. The plots focused upon real human beings of the real world entwined in deep conflict over the eternal themes of love, jealousy, hate and power.

By the 1860s Verdi had conquered the world of Italian opera and was rapidly gaining influence in opera houses all over Europe, even including the formidable Parisian opera establishment. His rousing successes in the 1850s include works still central in the international operatic repertoire: *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, *La Traviata*, and *Un Ballo in Maschera*. After these masterpieces his rate of composition fell off somewhat, ending with the great works of his later years: *Aida*, *Othello* and *Falstaff*. In between there falls *Don Carlos* (1867) and *La Forza del Destino* (1862).

La Forza del Destino (The Force of Destiny) was first performed in St. Petersburg,

Russia, with several important productions following soon thereafter, including one in New York City in 1865. Verdi often made revisions to his operas, for a variety of reasons, including censorship, specific demands based upon venue (notably Paris), specific singers’ abilities and preferences – all common during those times. The 1869 revision of the opera included a new overture, which stands almost alone among overtures to Verdi operas as a concert favorite. Its popularity stems from the powerful drama imbued in the music from the very first imposing notes in the brass. There is a case to be made that the three chords are a rare example of a musical symbol in Verdi, in this instance, depicting the inevitable power of “fate,” – hence the title of the opera. The plot of the opera is not untypical of the composer, being a thicket of doomed love, vicious wars, hidden identities, duels, vows to enter a monastery, ethnic hatred, and, of course, tragic death at the end.

The afore-mentioned octaves in the brass open the work with a steely powerful effect, followed by the famous, uneasy and ominous main theme in the basses: four little ascending notes that tell us much. What follows is a well-wrought compendium of several of the main tunes from the opera, woven together somewhat like the tedious, complicated – almost risible plot. But, the musical logic of Verdi’s best-known overture is superb, and a truer reflection of the dramatic power and melodic riches of one of Italy’s greatest composers could not be essayed. Musical dark and light alternate, as the melodies from the opera intertwine, leading to the thundering conclusion that never fails to rouse.

–Wm. E. Runyan

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VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 1

FLORENCE PRICE

BORN: April 9, 1887 | Little Rock, Ark.

DIED: June 3, 1953 | Chicago, Ill.

Florence Beatrice Price is a luminous figure in American music history – a composer whose works blend classical forms with the spirituals, dances and folk melodies of her heritage. In recent years, Price’s music has



emerged from decades of neglect to claim its rightful place in concert halls around the world. Among her most remarkable creations is the Violin Concerto No. 1, a work that encapsulates her unique artistic voice and the groundbreaking spirit that animated her entire career.

Born in Little Rock, Ark., Florence Price displayed prodigious talents from a young age, attending the New England Conservatory of Music at just 16, one of the few Black students in her class. There, she studied composition and organ. Despite the formidable obstacles of racism and sexism stymieing her path, Price persevered, moving to Chicago in the 1920s – a city that would foster her creativity and provide a vibrant community of Black artists and intellectuals.

Price’s body of work includes symphonies, chamber music, choral settings and songs. In 1933, when her Symphony in E minor was premiered by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, she achieved a historic breakthrough as the first African American woman to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra. Throughout her life, Price incorporated elements of African American musical traditions – including spirituals, dance rhythms and blues – into her classical compositions, forging a singular American sound.

Price composed her Violin Concerto No. 1 in 1939, a period of heightened creativity and professional achievement. The work was commissioned by the violinist Minnie Cedargreen Jernberg, who premiered the

piece, but the concerto quickly faded into obscurity. For decades, the score was presumed lost, only to be rediscovered in 2009 among a trove of Price's manuscripts in an abandoned house in Illinois.

The concerto's rediscovery has fueled renewed performances and scholarship, allowing audiences to appreciate this vital part of Price's output. The Violin Concerto No. 1 exemplifies Price's mature style: lyrical, richly orchestrated and deeply evocative of her Southern roots.

Price's concerto is cast in the traditional three-movement format, yet her personal voice permeates every bar:

- Tempo moderato
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro

Each movement unfolds with its own character, yet all are united by Price's gift for melodic invention and emotive color.

The concerto opens with sweeping gestures in the orchestra, soon giving way to the entrance of the solo violin. The movement reveals Price's affinity for late Romantic idioms – lush harmonies, soaring melodic lines, and dramatic dialogue between soloist and ensemble. Yet, woven into these textures are subtle nods to African American folk music. Rhythmic syncopations and pentatonic melodies lend the music a distinctly American flavor, while the violin's lyricism conjures both virtuosity and introspection.

Marked "Andante," the second movement is the emotional heart of the concerto. Here Price's gift for song shines brightest, as the violin unfurls a melody reminiscent of spirituals – achingly beautiful, tinged with longing and hope. The orchestration is delicate and transparent, allowing the soloist's voice to float above a gentle accompaniment. This movement is often described as hymn-like, invoking the sacred music traditions that influenced Price throughout her life.

The concerto concludes with an energetic, dance-like finale. Syncopated rhythms and lively orchestral colors evoke the character of the juba, a traditional African American dance. The violin leaps and spins through virtuosic passagework, with dazzling runs and playful exchanges with the orchestra.

Florence Price's Violin Concerto No. 1 is more than a remarkable work of art – it is a testament to the resilience and ingenuity of a composer who forged a path in the face of adversity. The concerto embodies Price's vision of an American music that embraces the voices and traditions that shaped her life. For many decades, Price's music was marginalized due to institutional biases against Black composers and women. The recent rediscovery and revival of her works have revealed a treasure trove of compositions that expand and enrich the canon of American classical music.

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 1 in G minor, Op. 13 "Winter Dreams"

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

BORN: May 7, 1840 | Votkinsk, Russia

DIED: Nov. 6, 1893 | St. Petersburg, Russia

Few works in the symphonic repertoire evoke the soul of a nation and the stirring introspection of youth as powerfully as Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 1 in G minor, Op. 13, subtitled "Winter Dreams." Completed in 1866 and later revised, this symphony marks the first major orchestral statement by the young Russian composer. While later overshadowed by his more mature works, "Winter Dreams" remains a vivid portrait of Tchaikovsky's burgeoning genius – a blend of Russian lyricism, vivid orchestration, and personal longing.

Tchaikovsky composed his First Symphony amid a period of both promise and struggle. In 1866, he was a recent graduate from the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, having studied under Anton Rubinstein. At the time, the Russian musical world was divided between the academic conservatism of the Conservatory and the "Mighty Handful" – a circle of nationalist composers led by Balakirev. Tchaikovsky sought to forge his own voice, merging the discipline of his education with the expressive, folk-inspired spirit of Russian music.

The young composer took a teaching post at the newly founded Moscow Conservatory, plunging into a hectic schedule that left him little time or energy for composition. Yet, inspired by the bleak beauty of Russian winters and the poetic isolation of his own life, Tchaikovsky conceived a symphony he called "Winter Daydreams" (Zimniye

gryozy). He imagined it as a musical landscape painting – a journey through frosty forests, lonely snowscapes, and dreams tinged with melancholy.

However, the creation of this symphony was fraught with challenges. Tchaikovsky agonized over orchestration and structure, and his self-doubt was compounded by the negative critiques of his teachers, especially Nikolai Zarembo, who dismissed the symphony's originality and technique. The composer revised and reworked the score, at times so anxious that he suffered from insomnia and hallucinations. Ultimately, he completed the first version in early 1866 and presented it to Rubinstein and Zarembo, who suggested further changes. Tchaikovsky obliged, but the first performance, conducted by Nikolai Rubinstein in Moscow on February 15, 1868, was only partially successful. Not until the revised version of 1874 did the symphony begin to gain a foothold in the repertoire.

Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 1 is cast in four movements:

- I. Dreams of a Winter Journey
(Daydreams on a Winter Road): Allegro tranquillo
- II. Land of Desolation, Land of Mists:
Adagio cantabile ma non troppo
- III. Scherzo: Allegro scherzando giocoso
- IV. Finale: Andante lugubre – Allegro maestoso

The first two movements bear evocative titles, which Tchaikovsky retained in later revisions, hinting at the programmatic inspiration underlying the symphony. The work as a whole, however, remains abstract and symphonic in construction, blending Western forms with a distinctively Russian melodic and harmonic language.

For Russian audiences, the symphony was a revelation. Here was a work that spoke in a distinctly Russian voice while embracing the discipline of Western form. The melodic and harmonic idioms – folkish yet sophisticated – paved the way for a new generation of Russian composers. The evocative titles of the first two movements suggest a narrative, yet the symphony remains open to the listener's imagination, inviting personal reflection on the landscapes, both external

and internal, that inspire “winter dreams.” While Tchaikovsky himself would later view his First Symphony with a mixture of pride and embarrassment – pride for its originality, embarrassment for its technical flaws – it is clear that “Winter Dreams” laid the groundwork for his subsequent masterworks. The symphony displays the characteristics that would become hallmarks

of Tchaikovsky’s style: memorable melodies, rich harmonies, dramatic contrasts, and a profound emotional directness.

Symphony No. 1 “Winter Dreams” is more than a chronicle of a young composer’s search for his voice; it is a testament to the power of dreams, memory and landscape in the creation of art. Tchaikovsky’s music draws upon the essence of the Russian soul

– its melancholy, its grandeur, its yearning for beauty in the harshest of seasons. As we listen, we are transported through snowy vistas and distant reveries, guided by the hand of a composer whose winter dreams would soon blossom into some of the most beloved works in the symphonic canon.

MELISSA WHITE, VIOLIN



Mobile audiences know the amazing violinist **Melissa White** as a founding member of The Harlem Quartet. The group performed with the orchestra and in memorable small concerts in schools across south Alabama. They were an instant hit, and we are thrilled to have Melissa return as our guest soloist.

American violinist Melissa White has enchanted audiences and critics around the world for her “warmly expressive and lyrical...glittering” playing (*Chicago Classical Review*) and for “making her

violin sing elegantly” (*Aspen Times*). Ms. White’s rapid rise as a soloist has captured the attention of orchestras and audiences worldwide, many of whom already know her for her successes as a founding member of the Grammy-winning Harlem Quartet.

Orchestral highlights of the 2024-25 season included performances with the Baton Rouge, Delaware, Hilton Head, Jackson, Rogue Valley, and Springfield Symphony Orchestras, Orchestra Iowa, and the Cape Town Philharmonic. In addition to her role as the Joyce C. Willis Artist

in Residence at the Hartford Symphony last season, other recent orchestral performances for Ms. White include features with the Philadelphia Orchestra (with Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducting), the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Chicago and Northwest Sinfoniettas, the Charlotte, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Richmond, and West Virginia Symphony Orchestras, and the Aspen, Brevard, Chautauqua, and Heartland Festival Orchestras.

Beyond orchestra and recital appearances, Ms. White relishes the opportunity

to perform in chamber music settings alongside close friends and colleagues. In June 2023, she joined the Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective at London's Wigmore Hall together with Hilary Hahn, and Ms. White reunited with the ensemble for performances in the 2023-24 season from Germany to major series along the East Coast. She also collaborated with the DUBHE Ensemble in the summer of 2023 at the National Orchestra Institute + Festival and appeared with them at Chicago's Harris Theater last season. Other recent chamber music engagements beyond the Harlem Quartet include collaborations at Festival Napa Valley, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the Sarasota Music Festival.

A first-prize laureate in the Sphinx Competition, she has performed with such leading U.S. ensembles as the Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston Pops, the Louisville Orchestra, and the Atlanta, Baltimore, Colorado, Detroit, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras. Internationally, she has appeared as soloist with Poland's Filharmonia Dolnoslaska; with the Colombian Youth Orchestra in a tour of that country; with the Czech National Philharmonic; and as a recitalist in Baku, Azerbaijan, and Jelenia Gora, Poland. Her film credits include a violin solo in the soundtrack to Jordan Peele's 2019 psychological thriller *Us*; and in addition to her numerous classical performances she has also performed alongside several pop artists including Pharrell, Bruno Mars, Alicia Keys, and Lauryn Hill.

Ms. White is a founding member of New York-based Harlem Quartet, where since 2006 her passion and artistry have contributed to performances hailed for "bringing a new attitude to classical music, one that is fresh, bracing and intelligent" (*Cincinnati Enquirer*). Together with Harlem Quartet, she has appeared in many of the country's most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall, the White House, and the Kennedy Center; and toured throughout the U.S., as well as in Europe, Africa, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Harlem Quartet has collaborated closely with leading jazz musicians including Chick Corea and Gary Burton with whom their recording, "Mozart Goes Dancing" won three Grammy Awards, including the Grammy for Best Instrumental Composition in 2013. Harlem Quartet was named quartet-in-residence at Montclair State University in fall 2021 and has served as the visiting quartet-in-residence at the Royal College of Music in London since 2016. In 2024, Harlem Quartet took home a Grammy for Best Classical Compendium for their work on "Passion for Bach and Coltrane," with Imani Winds, A.B. Spellman, and jazz trio Alex Brown, Edward Perez, and Neal Smith.

A passionate educator, Ms. White currently serves as Music Artist Faculty at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. In the fall of 2022, she also joined the Music Faculty at the University of Buffalo as Professor of Music.

Born and raised in Lansing, Michigan,

she received her bachelor's degree in Music from The Curtis Institute of Music and master's degree in Music from New England Conservatory, where her teachers included Jaime Laredo, Ida Kavafian, Donald Weilerstein, and Miriam Fried.

Find out more about Melissa at melissawhiteviolin.com

A NOTE FROM VIOLINIST MELISSA WHITE

Florence Price's music is soulfully lyrical, full of unpredictable twists and turns – like a spellbinding movie. She writes in a way that allows each section of the orchestra to shine while giving the soloist space to soar, sing and showcase their technical prowess. I absolutely love playing her music. It makes me feel like I'm singing the blues in the form of a classical violin concerto – it's emotionally raw, exquisitely crafted and full of spirit. Her writing carries the weight of her personal story and cultural identity, while offering moments of joy, tenderness and fiery virtuosity. As an African American violinist, it's incredibly powerful to stand on stage and bring to life the music of an African American woman whose voice was nearly forgotten. Playing her work feels like an act of both celebration and restoration – honoring her legacy while adding my own voice to the ongoing story she helped shape. I'm honored and absolutely thrilled to be performing her Violin Concerto No.1 with the Mobile Symphony this season!

SPECK SPEAKS A YOUNG COMPOSER FINDS HIS VOICE

Tchaikovsky called his First Symphony Winter Dreams, but he might as well have called it Winter Nightmares. Always an insecure composer, he was plagued by self-doubt, anxiety, insomnia and depression while writing it, trying to win the approval of his former teachers. And they didn't hold back. One of them called the score "atrocious," which – knowing Tchaikovsky – probably haunted him for months. But buried in all that anxiety is a young composer starting to sound like himself.

His music is pure melancholy, wrapped in beauty and feeling.

The first movement opens like a snow globe – delicate and full of potential. But it's the slow movement that really lingers. It begins with restraint, breathing gently, then gradually unfolds into a glowing climax – horns rising in unison, like warmth breaking through frost. And even then, it never loses its intimacy. When the finale bursts out in a boisterous, folksy celebration, it's as if Tchaikovsky suddenly remembered that he

could have fun. He later claimed he'd rather forget the piece altogether. Fortunately, the music doesn't agree.

It's no secret that at the Mobile Symphony, we absolutely love Tchaikovsky. He speaks to something deep and human – longing, beauty, vulnerability and joy – all wrapped in unforgettable melody. No matter how many times we play his music, it always feels personal.

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PROGRAM

SCOTT SPECK, conductor
RADU RATOI, accordion

Saenger Theatre

Saturday, March 14, 2026 at 7:30 P.M | Sunday, March 15, 2026 at 2:30 P.M

Zoltán Kodály
 (1882-1967)

Dances of Galanta

15 minutes

Lento
 Allegretto moderato
 Allegro con moto, grazioso
 Allegro
 Allegro vivace

Astor Piazzolla
 (1921-1992)

Aconcagua: Concerto for Bandoneon

23 minutes

Allegro marco
 Moderato
 Presto

Radu Ratoi

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven
 (1770-1827)

Symphony No. 2, D major, op. 36
 Adagio Molto – Allegro con brio
 Larghetto
 Scherzo. Allegro
 Allegro molto

32 minutes

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PROGRAM NOTES

DANCES OF GALANTA

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

BORN: Dec. 16, 1882 | Kecskemét, Hungary

DIED: March 6, 1967 | Budapest, Hungary

Although many of his works are popular concert pieces in this country, perhaps the greatest knowledge of Kodály in the USA is through his music education materials in our public schools, where he is highly influential. Born in what was the sprawling Austro-Hungarian Empire, he spent his childhood in Galanta, a small town near Bratislava, in present-day Slovakia. Educated in Budapest, he built a distinguished career as ethnomusicologist, composer and educator. Around 1905 he began his field trips to record on wax cylinders the folk songs of the Slavic world and later wrote a PhD dissertation on the subject. Concomitantly, he began his career as composer; in addition to Hungarian folk elements, his encounter with the music of Debussy on a trip to Paris was a shaping influence on his musical style. He met a young Bela Bartók early on, and they became life-long friends and enthusiastic mutual supporters. Among his illustrious students one can name Eugene Ormandy and Antal Doráti. Some of Kodály's more significant works include the opera, *Háry János*, the *Missa Brevis* and his *Psalmus hungaricus*.

Dances of Galanta was composed in 1933, and of course, reflects the music of his boyhood home in Slovakia. By the time of its composition, Kodály was the world's leading expert on this musical culture, and the work is an authentic and sympathetic treatment of it. Strictly speaking, *Dances of Galanta* is not a suite of dances, but rather, is really a tone poem – a single movement work cast in episodes. It was commissioned for the 80th anniversary of the Budapest Philharmonic Society. Much of the musical material in the work is based upon eighteenth-century Hungarian tunes called verbunkos. Literally, these are “recruiting” songs used by the Austro-Hungarian army to entice young villagers into enlisting. About a dozen members of the

hussars (Hungarian light cavalry) led by a sergeant would literally dance, accompanied by Gypsy musicians, at first slowly and then increasingly faster. Finally, the music would drive to a frenetic conclusion, replete with leaps and much clicking of spurs – a sure fire enticement to lead young men into military service. While not very convincing today as elements of national policy, these verbunkos are the central musical element of *Dances of Galanta*. It doesn't hurt to close your eyes and envision the robust ceremony behind the music.

–Wm. E. Runyan

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CONCERTO FOR BANDONEÓN "Aconcagua"

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

BORN: March 11, 1921 | Mar del Plata, Argentina

DIED: July 4, 1992 | Buenos Aires, Argentina

Astor Piazzolla's Concerto for Bandoneón and Orchestra, popularly known as the "Aconcagua" Concerto, stands as a monumental summit in the landscape of 20th-century music. Named after the highest mountain in the Americas, it is a towering achievement in the world of tango and concert repertoire alike. This ambitious work, completed in 1979, is widely celebrated as the masterwork of Piazzolla's concert music, encapsulating the power, poetry and relentless innovation of the composer who transformed tango from a dance form into a vibrant, deeply expressive art music.

Astor Piazzolla was born in Argentina and raised partly in New York, where he absorbed jazz, classical and Latin American influences. Returning to Argentina in his teens, Piazzolla began his musical career as a bandoneón player – a type of button accordion central to tango. He quickly established a reputation as a virtuosic performer and innovative arranger.

Piazzolla's early studies with the legendary composer Alberto Ginastera, followed by lessons with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, fused his love of tango with the

rigor of European classical forms and contemporary harmonies. Boulanger, recognizing his authentic creative voice, famously encouraged Piazzolla to embrace the tango as the wellspring of his originality. Thus began his life's work: the creation of "Nuevo Tango," an evolution of tango that integrated jazz harmonies, counterpoint, extended forms, and classical techniques.

The Concerto for Bandoneón and Orchestra was commissioned by the Banco Provincia de Buenos Aires for the Buenos Aires Philharmonic. Piazzolla crafted the solo bandoneón part for himself and infused the score with the rhythmic energy, melodic lyricism and bittersweet nostalgia characteristic of his mature style. The work is scored for solo bandoneón, string orchestra and percussion, with optional parts for piano and harp that lend added color and dimension to the orchestration.

The concerto unfolds in three movements, adhering loosely to the classical concerto form but imbued with Piazzolla's inimitable idiom:

- Allegro marcato
- II. Moderato
- III. Presto

Each movement reflects a different aspect of tango – its fire, sensuality and virtuosity – while pushing the genre beyond its traditional limits.

Today's performance is transcribed and arranged for accordion, as the piece is frequently played today. Radu Ratoi has joined other world-class accordionists to make this a signature piece. Though the bandoneón and accordion share a similar physical appearance and mechanism, their sound and cultural associations differ. The bandoneón's distinctly nasal, haunting timbre is at the heart of tango's inimitable sound. However, the accordion possesses its own expressive palette, marked by a broader dynamic range, a more robust attack and a subtly different touch.

When interpreted on accordion, the piece retains its emotional immediacy while gaining new dimensions of color, texture and meaning. Each performance is a

testament to the adaptability of Piazzolla's genius – and to the enduring power of music to transcend boundaries, whether of instrument, genre or geography.

SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN D MAJOR, OP. 36

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

BORN: December 1770 | Bonn, Germany

DIED: March 26, 1827 | Vienna, Austria

The years 1801-02 marked the nadir of Beethoven's emotional life, as he grappled with the reality of his increasing and permanent deafness. His despair was total, and the prospect of suicide is clearly implied in the documentary evidence. Tumultuous and bitter family feuding entered into this cruel time, but the famous "Heiligenstadt Testament" records his final triumph over the depression and his resolve to live and compose. That he did and soon received a prized engagement to compose an opera, and an important concert of his compositions followed shortly thereafter, as well. This historic concert featured his oratorio, *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, the First Symphony the Third Piano Concerto (with the composer at the piano), and the Second Symphony.

For such a grand and ingratiating work, the second unfortunately stands understandably in the shadow of later symphonies far more familiar to today's concert audiences. Nevertheless, it would be a serious mistake to relegate it to the realm of "youthful" works. Not at all a "farewell" to the eighteenth century, as his First Symphony has sometimes been characterized, the second is the creation of

a composer of genius who had already spent almost a decade in Vienna – the musical capital of Europe – successfully building his reputation as a powerful, formidable and expressive composer primarily of piano and chamber music works. He had fast become the beloved composer of the corpus of works that still stands squarely at the center of his enduring reputation and popularity. Symphony No. 2 (composed largely during 1802) is yet again prima facie evidence of the ability of artists to soar above sorry personal circumstances and produce works that totally transcend the emotions of their peculiar state. Mozart was a case in point, and here in his Second Symphony, Beethoven has created a most sunny, cheerful and expansive exploration of optimism – all during his low moods grappling with his growing deafness.

This is not a lightweight work, though, for it totally prepares us for the monumental Third Symphony. It begins with a Haydn-like slow introduction that portends the scope of things to come. After several dramatic moments – some of which may remind us of jagged gestures in the Ninth Symphony, the introduction glides effortlessly into the cheerful opening. The themes are also Haydn-like, simple and often based on triads, but there is a decided difference in the intensity and brilliance in which Beethoven characteristically works out his material. It's clearly the Beethoven we all know and love.

The ensuing larghetto is from the untroubled world of his contemporary, Franz Schubert – a mellifluous and tuneful affair that takes

little of what we have come to expect in Beethoven's intense and often tragic slow movements. A string of ingratiating melodies, often involving warm, romantic clarinets, walks us along in a floating mood of serenity.

The third movement, as one would expect, is a scampering scherzo, a modest little one at that, characterized by quick alternations of high and low, loud and soft, and frequent changes of instrumental color. The middle part is a leisurely, flowing affair that provides the requisite contrast to the bustling bookends of the form.

The last movement is an expansive forward-looking exercise in the Beethoven style with which we are so familiar. It opens with a bumptious "hiccupping" theme that is unusual, to say the least. This is not the time nor place to explore various theories of its origin as an onomatopoeic rendition of Beethoven's infamous digestive problems. However, suffice it to say, it's clearly a case in point of the composer's well-known coarse sense of humor. All of this aside, whatever its origin, it provides perfect fodder for the composer's consummate skill in constructing a rousing finale out of almost any little musical idea. The movement drives to conclusion exhibiting most of the marvelous traits of the mature Beethoven, but to most listeners, in a relatively unfamiliar work.

– Wm. E. Runyan

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RADU RATOI, ACCORDION

Praised for his originality, versatility, virtuosity in the Classical and contemporary repertoire, **Radu** is the winner of some of the most important accordion competitions. In 2024, he won the YCA "Susan Wadsworth" International auditions in New York, USA, one of the most important auditions worldwide for young instrumentalists.

As a paramount gratification for his professional activity, he won the Leonie Sonning Music Prize -Talent Prize, one of the most prestigious awards in Denmark. As well, he holds one of the most important

Art Award in the Republic of Moldova "Master in Arts", offered by the president of the country, Maia Sandu, for outstanding achievements. Since 2024, Radu was appointed as a soloist with The National Chamber Orchestra of Moldova. Playing solo and chamber, having collaborations with various artists and orchestras, Radu is giving unbelievable concerts worldwide, attracting the public with his musicality, technique and charisma.

Radu Ratoi (born in 1998) started accordion at the age of 6, feeling inspired

since his first lesson. Radu describes the accordion as "an instrument with almost unlimited possibilities." That we can also see on stage – people who know already Radu's style, are always amazed by his way of playing and feeling the accordion. His main goal is to prove to the world that the accordion is underestimated and has unthinkable possibilities in all the musical genres. With his transcriptions of J.S. Bach, D. Scarlatti, J.P. Rameau, F. Liszt and many more, he reinvented and improved the accordion repertoire.



Radu's stage career started at seven years old, being on stage for concerts and contests. He attended "Alexei Starcea" School of Arts in his hometown, Chisinau, in the Republic of Moldova. Afterwards he continued his undergraduate studies at the Centre of Excellence in Artistic Education "Stefan Neaga", in the same city. Being still in Moldova, he started to participate in international well-known competitions.

At 18 years old, he won most of the European competitions with the Junior categories, such as Coupe Mondiale, Trophy Mondiale, Castelfidardo, etc. He won these competitions both in Classical Music categories, and in Virtuoso/Entertainment Music categories, being the first who achieved both these titles. In 2018 he got the "Excellence Diploma" from the President of the Republic of Moldova. Next step on his path was "The Royal Danish Academy of Music" in Copenhagen, Denmark. Between 2018 and 2020, he won the six most important competitions in the world – Coupe Mondiale, Klingenthal Accordion Competition, Trophy Mondiale, Arrasate Accordion Competition, PIF

Castelfidardo, and Moscow Accordion Competition. This was a worldwide performance, being the first and only one who won all these awards in Classical and Entertainment Music. In total, until now he has won more than 60 national and international awards.

Radu recorded his accordion CD "Greatest Organ Works arranged for Accordion" in 2022, with pieces by J.S.Bach and F.Liszt. In 2023, Radu arranged and recorded "12 Transcendental Etudes" by F. Liszt. In his stellar career as a soloist he has performed in some of the most important concert halls in the world: Berlin Philharmonic, Radio Concert House Copenhagen, Victoria Concert Hall, Tivoli Hall Copenhagen, Aram Khachaturian's Concert Hall in Yerevan, Harbin Concert Hall and many others.

Radu is playing a Pigini Nova - RR – specially built and modified for him. He is represented worldwide by Young Concert Artists, Inc.

Find out more about Radu at raduratoi.com

SPECK SPEAKS REINVENTING TRADITION



If you only know Beethoven as the stormy genius shaking his fist at fate, his Second Symphony might catch you off guard. It's cheerful, unpredictable and occasionally ridiculous – in the best way. Written during one of the darkest times of his life, it somehow ends up sounding like a celebration. The last

movement, in particular, is so full of musical jokes and mischief that early listeners must have assumed he was making fun of them. One bewildered critic described the entire symphony as "a hideously writhing, wounded dragon that refuses to die" – an insult for sure, but

also a clear sign that Beethoven had already left his century behind.

And one century later, in another hemisphere, Astor Piazzolla was busy doing for tango what Beethoven did for the symphony – dragging it into new territory. His Aconcagua Concerto, named after Argentina's highest peak, takes a dance form usually associated with smoke-filled clubs, and turns it into a glorious orchestral landscape. The music doesn't climb Aconcagua so much as whirl around it, weaving passion, elegance, and just enough danger to keep you on the edge of your seat.

Beethoven and Piazzolla came from different worlds, but they shared the same fearless drive to reinvent tradition. We hope that in playing them side by side for you, we can help each composer to illuminate the other.



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with Zlata Chochieva,
piano

PROGRAM

SCOTT SPECK, conductor
ZLATA CHOCHIEVA, piano

Saenger Theatre

Saturday, April 11, 2026 at 7:30 P.M | Sunday, April 12, 2026 at 2:30 P.M

Michael Daugherty
(b.1954)

*Desi**

5 minutes

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

An American in Paris

17 minutes

INTERMISSION

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

Piano Concerto No. 3, D minor, op. 30
Allegro ma non tanto
Intermezzo: Adagio
Finale: Alla breve

32 minutes

Zlata Chochieva



Lowell & Bobette Friedman



Zlata Chochieva appears by arrangement with Arts Management Group, Inc.

**The presentation of this work is made possible by a generous
donation to MSO's Symphonic Innovations Fund*

Flowers in the Saenger Theatre arcade are provided by Elizabeth's Garden

PROGRAM NOTES

DESI

MICHAEL DAUGHERTY

BORN: April 28, 1954 | Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Michael Daugherty is one of the most imaginative and distinctive voices in contemporary American music. Known for his playful, vibrant orchestrations and his unique ability to draw inspiration from American pop culture, Daugherty has consistently created works that are both engaging and thought-provoking. *Desi* is one such work – a whirlwind of musical energy that pays tribute to one of television’s most iconic figures while also exploring the crosscurrents of jazz, Latin rhythms, and classical tradition.

Born in 1954 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Michael Daugherty has built a career as a composer, educator and advocate for contemporary music. His compositions draw from a wide array of American influences – ranging from comic book heroes and futuristic visions to the legends of Route 66. Whether writing for full orchestra, wind ensemble or chamber groups, Daugherty brings a sense of theatricality and wit to his music. He has received numerous awards, including several Grammy Awards, and his works are performed by leading ensembles across the globe.

At the heart of *Desi* lies a vibrant homage to Desi Arnaz, the Cuban American entertainer best known for his role as Ricky Ricardo on the legendary TV sitcom *I Love Lucy*. Arnaz was not just a charismatic on-screen performer but also a talented bandleader and producer who helped shape the sound and style of popular music in the mid-20th century. Daugherty’s *Desi* channels this infectious energy, blending the rhythms and sounds of Latin jazz with the bright, bustling spirit of postwar America.

Desi is a single-movement work for wind ensemble. From the very first measure, the piece bursts onto the scene, propelled by driving rhythms and a kaleidoscopic palette of instrumental color. Daugherty weaves together syncopated percussion, brassy fanfares and lively woodwind passages,

capturing the irrepressible energy of a big band in full swing.

Rhythm is the heartbeat of *Desi*. The score calls for an extensive battery of percussion instruments – congas, bongos, timbales, maracas, cowbells, and more – evoking the distinctive sound of Afro-Cuban music. These instruments do not merely provide background color; they are central to the musical fabric, driving the action forward and creating moments of both excitement and playful suspense.

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

George Gershwin

BORN: Sept. 26, 1898 | New York, N.Y.

DIED: July 11, 1937 | Los Angeles, Cal.

After the rousing success of *Rhapsody in Blue* Gershwin’s financial security was assured; he moved his family to a spacious apartment in a fashionable section of the Upper West Side, and began to not only collect art, but began to paint, himself. He established his place in the smart set of New York society – no party was complete without George at the piano surrounded by his admirers, as well as the usual social butterflies. Oh, to have been a “fly on the wall” for those affairs! He continued to compose for the musical theatre, but began in earnest serious composition lessons, as well – and with some distinguished composers, including Wallingford Riegger and Henry Cowell.

In the early Spring of 1928 through June, he and his family traveled to Europe, where he met many of the most distinguished composers of the time: Ravel, Berg, Prokofiev, Milhaud, Poulenc and others. By then he had composed his Concerto in F, which he heard, along with the *Rhapsody in Blue*, at a concert given in his honor. He evidently was anticipating details of the composition of a tone poem about Paris, for he dug around in Parisian garages and brought home with him used taxi horns that were used in the première performance. That took place on Dec. 13, 1928, with Walter Damrosch conducting the New York Philharmonic. The eminent music critic and composer, Deems Taylor, and Gershwin had been in Paris at the same

time, and had met at several parties in the city. Later, in the fall, they went over the completed score and collaborated to create a detailed program or story for Gershwin’s inspiration. The program is too long to repeat here in its entirety, but it may be paraphrased somewhat like this:

In early summer an American is walking down the Champs-Élysées, enjoying the sounds of the city, including taxi horns, passing by a café and hearing a tune from the old century in the trombones. He continues walking with a new theme in the clarinet. Yet a new walking theme takes him across the Seine to the Left Bank, where perhaps a whiff of anise muddles him a bit – accompanied by the little cadenza in the solo violin. (The attentive listener here may think of Debussy, and the composer more or less acknowledged it.) Our hero becomes a bit homesick, and we hear the blues, but as he sinks lower he is rescued by the Charleston, announced by a pair of trumpets. Various previous tunes are recapped, as the American obviously decides to enjoy Paris, and the “orchestra, in a riotous finale decides to make a night of it.”

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3 IN D MINOR, OP. 30

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

BORN: April 1, 1873 | Semyonovo, Russia

DIED: March 28, 1943 | Beverly Hills, Cal.

Like J. S. Bach, who upon his death was looked upon as a more-or-less old fuddy-duddy (now we know better, of course), Rachmaninoff has borne his share of criticism for having composed in a hopelessly old-fashioned style, long after its relevance. His compositions are the last major representatives of vivid Russian Romanticism – long after that style was presumed dead and buried. Yet, like Bach, his musical genius, his talent and his strong belief in the validity of his art led him to create a legacy that took “old-fashioned-style” to a natural and valid high point of achievement. While a child of the nineteenth century, he died almost at the midpoint of the twentieth, secure in his success, and secure in the world’s enduring appreciation of his “dated” style.

Rachmaninoff wrote four piano concertos, the first was a student composition (later revised) from 1896, and the last was composed in 1926 (revised in 1941). The third concerto was completed in the fall of 1909, the composer having written it in the peace and quiet of his wife's country estate in Russia. By that time, Rachmaninoff was an international celebrity, with an impressive list of significant and popular compositions under his belt. As one of the world's recognized virtuosos of the piano, he wrote his piano concertos primarily for himself and envisioned the third as a centerpiece of his upcoming first American tour. Accordingly, the première took place in New York City in November of 1909; a second performance followed a couple of months later, with the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Gustav Mahler.

The work has always been considered a difficult one, but so are all his concertos. What is of interest is that, for all the power, grandeur, and virtuosity required in the concerto, it starts almost contemplatively, with a simple, but unmistakably melancholic, theme. To open a big Russian concerto in such a modest, and unassuming fashion was a shrewd move on the composer's part; it's an imaginative way to toy with the audience and allow for ample expansion of the idea as the movement progresses. The piano soon gives up the theme to the orchestra and goes on to a veritable cascade of rapid

figurations. Soon, a lush modulation leads to a happier key, introduced by a brief little march-like figure, and the second theme elegantly glides in. The development starts almost literally like the beginning, and Rachmaninoff works his way through the material as only he can do. Virtuoso writing for the soloist takes us through one big climax after another, literally rocking the piano with technical demands. Finally, an impressive cadenza tops out the storm and raises the ante even further. The cadenza's import more or less takes the place of an extended recapitulation. You do hear the opening material one more time, almost as an allusion to a recap, but it's brief, and before you know it, the movement ends quietly with a soft scamper, so typical of the composer.

The second movement begins with a substantial introduction for the orchestra, alternatively featuring purely string sound and rich wind choir scoring. Eventually, the piano enters with a flourish and then settles down for the luxurious Rachmaninoff melody. But, eventually, in true fashion, the composer cannot restrain himself, and impassioned figurations and climaxes sound as if we're in one of the bookend fast movements. It's as if there's a scherzo in the middle, but it's a creative touch, and brings some useful contrast to an intense slow movement. Eventually things settle down again, and we hear familiar pensive textures and melodic ideas from the opening. And

then, without warning, some demonstrative drum-like figures in the piano lead right into the brisk last movement.

It's a sparkling affair, and the beginning is redolent of the inimitable heritage of Rachmaninoff's Russian predecessor, Rimsky-Korsakov. Variation follows variation in this exploration of a seemingly infinite display of almost every kind of virtuoso figuration a pianist can dash off. Here, as in so much of this concerto, one can from time to time also sense the shadow of another great predecessor – the incomparable Franz Liszt. In this movement as well, we experience the familiar – and necessary, too – quiet moments of respite from the relentless energy of the drive forward. Ever the craftsman, Rachmaninoff makes use of material from earlier movements – sometimes almost hidden, sometimes more evident. As is almost always the case with our composer, the driving web of figurations finally flows into the moment that everyone is waiting for: the soaring reappearance of the “big Rachmaninoff tune.” It's a perfect cap for a beloved work couched in rich, lush textures, and of almost unparalleled melodic sweep, the lyricism of which seems to unfold in growing cascades of sound.

–Wm. E. Runyan

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ZLATA CHOCHIEVA, PIANO

Pianist **Zlata Chochieva** is celebrated worldwide by critics and audiences alike as one of the most extraordinary artists of her generation. Described as “reminiscent of Sergei Rachmaninov's playing,” she was hailed for combining “the overwhelming power of Martha Argerich with the subtle, refined tonal sensitivity of her mentor Mikhail Pletnev” — a highlight from a rave review in the *Berliner Morgenpost*, following her stunning all-Rachmaninoff performance at the Konzerthaus Berlin in 2023. Her acclaimed recording of the Chopin Études, selected by Gramophone as one of the 10 greatest Chopin recordings (alongside

Argerich, Pollini and Rubinstein), was recognized by Jeremy Nicholas as “one of the most consistently inspired, masterfully executed, and beautiful-sounding versions I can recall.”

Following her Carnegie Hall debut in the past season, Chochieva performs in 2025-2026 at major venues including the Cologne Philharmonie, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and as part of the prestigious *World Master Pianists* series at deSingel in Antwerp and in the Netherlands. She also appeared as soloist with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, Mobile Symphony

Orchestra, Norrköpings Symfoniorkester and Aachen Symphony Orchestra. The season features extensive touring across the world — from Europe to the United States and South Africa.

Recording exclusively for Naïve Records, her latest orchestral album with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra — featuring works for piano and orchestra by Rimsky-Korsakov, Prokofiev and Tsfasman — received 5-star reviews from *BBC Music Magazine* and *Musica*. Her most recent solo release, *Im freien*, was met with critical acclaim and named an Editor's Choice by Gramophone.



Her album (re)creations, recorded during the pandemic for Accentus and featuring transcriptions by Rachmaninov, Liszt and Friedman, was awarded the prestigious German Record Critics' Award (*Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik*).

Zlata made her first stage appearance at the age of four and gave her orchestral debut just three years later, performing a Mozart concerto at the Grand Hall of the Moscow State Conservatory. Since then, she has performed at leading international venues including the Philharmonie de Paris, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Konzerthaus Berlin, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Herkulesaal Munich, Teatro La Fenice in Venice,

Victoria Hall in Geneva, Tivoli Concert Hall in Copenhagen, Casa da Música in Porto and Taiwan's National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts.

From a young age, she distinguished herself as a top-prize winner in more than 15 international piano competitions.

With an extensive and diverse concerto repertoire of around 60 works, Zlata Chochieva has appeared with major orchestras such as the Russian National Orchestra, Russian State Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Munich Chamber Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan. She has collaborated with conductors

including Tugan Sokhiev, Mikhail Pletnev, Vladimir Spivakov, Dmitry Matvienko, Marzena Diakun and Christian Øland.

A devoted chamber musician, she has performed with Stephen Kovacevich, Lynn Harrell, Gilles Apap, Vilde Frang, Wenzel Fuchs and Jacquelyn Wagner, among others.

A protégé of Mikhail Pletnev at the Central Special Music School, she also studied with Pavel Nersessian at the Moscow State Conservatory. She completed her studies at the Mozarteum University Salzburg with Jacques Rouvier and was subsequently his assistant for several years.

In 2025, Zlata Chochieva was appointed Professor of Piano at the Hochschule der Künste Bern (HKB).

Zlata was born in Moscow to Ossetian parents and now resides in Berlin. Among other languages, she speaks Ossetian — a lesser-known language recognized for its cultural significance. In addition to her performing career, her current main passion is film scoring, which she is exploring for the first time this year.

In 2018, she established the International Festival at Rachmaninov's estate in Ivanovka and serves as its director. She is an ambassador for Bärenreiter Verlag.

Find out more about Zlata at

zlatachochieva.com

SPECK SPEAKS GERSHWIN'S LOVE LETTER TO PARIS



George Gershwin went to Paris looking for lessons with Maurice Ravel. But after hearing Gershwin play, the great French composer famously declined, saying, "Why become a second-rate Ravel, when you're a first-rate Gershwin already?" That may be the most flattering rejection in music history — and Gershwin, to his credit, took the hint. Instead of staying to study, he wandered the city, soaked up the atmosphere, and came home with *An American in Paris*.

You can hear everything he loved about the place: the glamour, the clamor, the

sense of endless possibility. You can also hear homesickness creeping in through the back door, not to mention the thrill of a budding love affair. But it's the taxi horns that seal the deal — literal Parisian taxi horns that Gershwin selected and carefully scored into the piece. It's not a parody or a pastiche. It's a love letter, written in jazz, nostalgia and traffic.



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A large, stylized graphic of a musical staff with various notes and symbols, including a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The staff is blue and curves upwards from the bottom left towards the top right, with several musical notes and symbols scattered along it.

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THE PLANETS

PROGRAM

SCOTT SPECK, conductor
MOBILE'S SINGING CHILDREN

Saenger Theatre

Saturday, May 2, 2026 at 7:30 P.M | Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 2:30 P.M

Hans Zimmer
(b. 1957)

Music from *Interstellar*, *Inception*, *Dune*, *Top Gun: Maverick*

25 minutes

INTERMISSION

Gustav Holst
(1874-1934)

The Planets

Mars, the Bringer of War
Venus, the Bringer of Peace
Mercury, the Winged Messenger
Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
Uranus, the Magician
Neptune, the Mystic

51 minutes

Jim and Karen Atchison
Anne Low



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PROGRAM NOTES

THE PLANETS, OP. 32, H. 125

GUSTAV HOLST

BORN: Sept. 21, 1874 | Cheltenham, United Kingdom

DIED: May 25, 1934 | London, United Kingdom

Gustav Holst is one of England's most revered composers, creator of musical works in great variety: choral music, songs, band music, orchestral works, ballet and more. His musical purview was remarkably diverse, and his compositions are frequently performed and appreciated in Great Britain. His popularity there bears comparison with his good friend and fellow composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams. In this country, those who frequent professional orchestra concerts know Holst through his most popular orchestral work, *The Planets*.

Born of Scandinavian descent in rural England to a musical, middle-class family, Holst received a musical education early, playing the violin and piano, and later taking up the trombone, the mastery of which his father thought would help his asthma. Holst worked for a while as village organist and choirmaster before attending the Royal College of Music, where he met his life-long friend Vaughan Williams. sic in private girls' schools.

The musical life of Great Britain in those days was strongly influenced by a new appreciation and re-examination of the native musical treasures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as a fascination with traditional English folk tunes – these influences were significant in the lives of both composers. Of course, he was well aware of the major compositions of contemporary composers like Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Ravel and Richard Strauss, and these figured in his artistic development, as well. Two rather unusual, but important influences in his life and works were Hindu religion and philosophy, and astrology. His association with astrology began during a trip to Spain in 1912, when a friend of his inspired the interest, and Holst maintained an interest in the subject – reading fortunes along the way – for the rest of his life.

It is that interest in astrology – not astronomy – that is central to his composition of *The Planets*. Holst began the work about 1913, gradually completing it by 1917. The first performance was given privately in 1918, and word of mouth raised public expectations for the first public performance in 1920. Originally entitled *Seven Pieces for Large Orchestra*, the suite suggests to many his familiarity with Schoenberg's similar use of the phrase. Others see inspiration derived from Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* or Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. Holst's pictorialism is less specific than these, but spectacularly vivid, nonetheless. Indeed, compositions for a large and varied orchestra were all the rage in the late romantic era, with Richard Strauss, Mahler and Stravinsky, among others, as models. In addition to the usual full orchestra, Holst's score calls for woodwinds in fours – including at times, alto flute, two piccolos, and the (really) rare bass oboe. The brass section features six horns, four trumpets, and, in addition to the standard bass tuba, a smaller, tenor tuba. There's an organ and a celesta, and for the final movement, a wordless women's chorus – à la Debussy.

The order and number of the seven movements has generated much discussion with the actual planets and their number and position. It's all irrelevant, for Holst's work has to do with the astrological signs – of which there are seven – and not with how we define what planets are, or their respective positions with relation to the sun, even what conditions may or may not be on them. So, the order of movements, beginning with Mars, stems from the astrological succession.

Holst chose the relatively unusual time signature of five-four time for this ominous evocation of war, beginning with a hypnotic rhythm, repeated over and over, as chords constantly grow and threaten, until they are practically howling. Following a reiteration of the driving, repeated rhythm in the strings, the rarely used small, or tenor tuba, is featured along the trumpets in punchy fanfares. This is the original Darth Vader and the Death Star music! The dreary, desolate

landscape of destruction in war is admirably depicted in a bleak, slower middle section before a repeat of the opening hammering material. This gripping evocation of war ends with dramatic, blunt hammer strokes, separated by pauses that leaves no doubt of the utter destruction and obliteration of war.

Venus, bringer of peace, answers a call from the solo horn, and we are ushered into a tranquil world aptly evocative of the Roman goddess of love and beauty, astrologically associated with harmony and balance. A gentle succession of woodwind passages and lush string sonorities, enhanced by the exotic sound of the celesta create a marvelous respite from Mars. Holst's familiarity and obvious respect for the music of Debussy seems clear, here in this floating serenity. Although, it must be said, the solo cello sounds suspiciously like some passages in compositions of Holst's best friend, Vaughan Williams.

Mercury zips by next, in a quicksilver movement befitting the winged messenger of the gods. In astrology, Mercury also is the symbol of rationality and mentality. Cascades of scales and twittering rhythms carry thought along like lightening. The magic celesta part is reminiscent of Richard Strauss' *Rosenkavalier*, and our ubiquitous cell phone beeps, as well.

Another quick movement follows, this time a tribute to Jupiter, the "bringer of jollity." Jupiter was considered the ruler of the gods, and the planet, Jupiter, ruler of all the other planets. Merrymaking and gambling play a part in his personality, as well, and the latter aspect comes into play in the jaunty opening tunes, one zippy and syncopated, and the other a rather thumping waltz. But in the middle, we are treated to a noble and exalting tune as only the Edwardians can compose – definitely fit for a king (of some kind). It's a glorious melody that came to be adapted later by Holst as a church hymn, to the text, "I Vow to My Country," and is sung and revered in Great Britain. The raffish tunes return, and the movement ends.

Saturn, the “Bringer of Old Age” is ushered slowly in by two cold, cold static woodwind chords, endlessly repeated. After some ominous string comments, the brass intone a stately procession. In astrology Saturn is the founder of social order and civilizations, charged with duty, responsibility, and discipline. The brass evidently carry this duty heavily as they plod to a climax, gradually subsiding into a dissolution borne by the strings and oscillating woodwinds that floats timelessly and without emotion into an apparent infinity.

Four imposing notes slowly and loudly announced by the brass are the motif of “Uranus the Magician.” They return throughout the movement in a remarkable variety of guises. But the movement proper is a stomping, tramping march dedicated to the guardian of genius and discovery and associated with sudden and unexpected changes. The march is somewhat redolent of any number of French antecedents – those

of Delibes and Dukas, or even Berlioz may come to mind. The bassoon trio sets us off on this little rollicking affair – interrupted from time to time by those four identifying notes. The orchestra builds the march almost out of control, only to subside. The four-note motto is heard again in soft, pizzicato notes in the harp. The bassoons make a half-hearted attempt to resume the march but fail. The brass loudly play the motto again and finally harp and strings end this enigmatic paean to the clever “Magician.”

The remarkable fact of the last movement, “Neptune the Mystic” is simply that it was composed more than 100 years ago. Holst dispenses with so many of the rational and organizing principles of music and wonderfully creates an atmosphere of not only the mystic, but also of the traditional characteristics associated with the planet Neptune: illusion, confusion and deception. Meter (yes, it is the same five-four of the first movement – but can you

easily hear it, really?), chord “progressions,” melodies, form, shape – all play minimal to non-existent roles, here at the end. Rather, the composer uses exotic successions of harmonies and fragments of non-traditional scales to create the floating sound that envelops us. Imaginative orchestration in the great tradition of Rimsky-Korsakov, Stravinsky and Debussy clearly affirms Holst’s mastery. This is truly “space music” long before the advent of the clichés with which we are all familiar. As the orchestra gradually fades into nothingness, only the wordless chorus (he had used it in an earlier work) is left, gradually vanishing from our hearing. It is the only truly human element that stays with us as the composer’s exploration of our humanity writ in the heavens fades. The conceit is that perhaps – they don’t end.

– Wm. E. Runyan

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MOBILE’S SINGING CHILDREN

Directed by Katie Hoitt, **Mobile’s Singing Children** is the premier youth chorus on the northern Gulf Coast. Advanced studies in music theory, sight singing and intense rehearsal time enable performers to sing music of the highest quality. The Concert Choir anchors a group

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Since its founding in 1977, MSC has toured and performed in Europe, Canada and numerous states in the U.S. The choir was featured on National Public Radio’s “From the Top” and named Official Children’s Choir for Mobile’s Tri-Centennial

Celebration Silver Anniversary Concert Series. As the official children’s choir for the Mobile Symphony, MSC has performed in MSO concerts as varied and holiday events and the monumental *Carmina Burana*.



SPECK SPEAKS WHAT DOES SPACE SOUND LIKE?



What does space sound like? For Gustav Holst, writing in the shadow of World War I, the answer was mythic and symbolic—each planet a distinct force of personality, drawn not from science but astrology. A century later, Hans Zimmer has brought his own vision of the cosmos to life through his film music, giving modern space epics their emotional weight and sonic identity. This program pairs two radically different approaches to the same timeless fascination: how to make music worthy of the stars.

Zimmer's film scores aren't traditional melodies with themes and variations –

they're immersive soundscapes that pulse, shimmer and swell. *Interstellar* evokes the fragility of human emotion stretched across light-years. *Dune* taps into a mythic, windswept austerity that feels ancient and futuristic all at once. *Inception* explores layered realities through rhythm and scale, while *Darkstar* from *Top Gun: Maverick* echoes the thrill and solitude of pushing past Earth's edge. Taken together, these pieces give us a modern musical language for the unknown.

Zimmer's approach to scoring space isn't about spectacle – it's about scale, and how tiny we often feel within it. He uses time itself as a musical device: ticking clocks, decaying echoes, long-held chords that stretch beyond gravitational pull. His music reflects the vastness of space not with grandiosity, but with a kind of suspended awe. It draws us in not by sounding "galactic," but by reminding us how human we remain, even in orbit.

When Holst's *The Planets* arrives in the second half, it feels almost like stepping through a telescope into another universe. His music is more direct, more theatrical – but no less cosmic. Each movement builds a world out of pure orchestral color: the menace of Mars, the tranquility of Venus, the grandeur of Jupiter, the solemnity of Saturn, the eerie fade of Neptune. And when heard after Zimmer's futuristic sound worlds, Holst's suite glows in a new light – not as a relic of the past, but as part of an ongoing musical conversation with the stars.

Both composers give us soundtracks for the vast and unknowable. Yet where Zimmer often conjures the disorientation of space – with all its silence and loneliness – Holst gives us an ordered cosmos, filled with symbolism and meaning. The pairing reminds us that our fascination with the stars has always been both scientific and spiritual – and that music, more than any other art form, can hold both at once.

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Mobile Symphony is the most important source of music education in our community. More than 15,000 children and young people experience, create and learn music through the MSO's award-winning programs. Our education programs reach students throughout the Mobile Bay area, especially those whose families are least able to afford music lessons and quality arts experiences for their children.

Music learning supports ALL learning. Study after study shows adding music to a child's education develops a long list of skill sets that improves learning across all subject areas, carrying through to success in college and the workforce. Musical kids develop better language skills, increase their IQ, score better on tests, excel at math and gain the discipline to learn difficult skills. We spend almost one-fifth of our budget on education – much more than most orchestras or other local arts organizations. Here are just a few of the ways we make a difference:

- First and second graders in participating schools receive music classes all year through the symphony's award-winning Preludes classes. Our Strings in Schools program offers the only weekly string instrument instruction in Mobile and Baldwin County public elementary schools.
- Internationally acclaimed musicians like last season's Randall Goosby and Ilmar Gavilán, Grammy-winning Harlem Quartet, pianist Aldo López-Gavilán, Renée Fleming, international mandolinist Avi Avital and local professional ensembles perform for area students in their schools.
- Instrument and tuition scholarships, \$10 student tickets and free children's concert tickets on Sundays through Big Red Ticket (sponsored by Alabama Power Foundation and the Figures Foundation) make classical music accessible to all families.
- Mobile Symphony Youth Orchestra – the region's top youth orchestra – offers high-level instruction and performance opportunities resulting in success on stage and in life.
- You can help support student success and keep this amazing-outreach going by contributing today. Every gift makes an impact in the lives of the young people we teach in Mobile and Baldwin counties.

Find out more at MobileSymphony.org or call us at 251-432-2010 or daniela@mobilesymphony.org

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PRELUDES – Mobile Symphony professional instructors teach weekly general music classes at nine participating elementary schools. These classes reach more than 1,400 1st and 2nd grade students and show how integrating music and music education in the classroom can help in all subjects, making a more well-rounded student.

STRINGS – Students in our 25 participating public schools can sign up for group lessons in violin, viola or cello. Taught by professional musicians, these weekly classes are available in grades 2-9 and cover everything from basic string technique to more advanced music concepts, note reading and aural skills.

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IN-SCHOOL PERFORMANCES Professional Mobile Symphony ensembles perform for school assemblies throughout the school year. These performances introduce students to orchestral instruments in a fun and casual manner



and expose young audiences to classical music, helping them connect it to more familiar genres. MSO guest artists frequently visit area schools to perform, discuss music with older students and coach young musicians.

INSTRUMENT PETTING ZOO

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BIG RED TICKET – Mobile Symphony's Big Red Ticket program, underwritten by The Alabama Power Foundation and The Figures Foundation, provides any K-12 students (ages 5-18) with free admission to MSO Sunday classical matinee performances when accompanied by a paying adult. The following performances are eligible for Big Red Ticket admission. Please no babies in arms.

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IVAN DEL PRADO, MUSIC DIRECTOR



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Sunday, November 16, 2025 - 2:30 P.M
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Friday, December 5, 2025 - 7:00 P.M
Holiday Concert - Foley, Alabama, Civic Center

Sunday, April 26, 2026 - 2:30 P.M
Season Finale - Saenger Theatre

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IVAN DEL PRADO, MUSIC DIRECTOR



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Del Prado has been guest conductor for numerous orchestras around the world and has been praised by critics for his masterful interpretation on both standard Romantic

literature and works from the 20th Century. His versatility spans the genres of symphony, opera and ballet. Opera has given del Prado the opportunity to collaborate with outstanding artists such as Maestro Luigi Alba, José Carreras and Victoria de Los Angeles. Ballet has taken him to conduct the Deutsch Staatsoper Unter den Linden Ballet and the Cuban National Ballet in international tours.

Education has been a central focus in Ivan del Prado's career, and he was founder of the Cuba National Youth Orchestras. Most recently he was an adjunct professor at the University of Southern Mississippi and artistic director of the Premier Orchestral Institute, a project of the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra.

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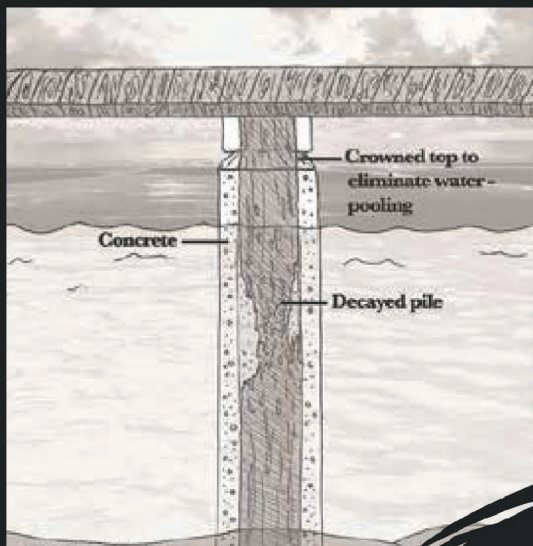
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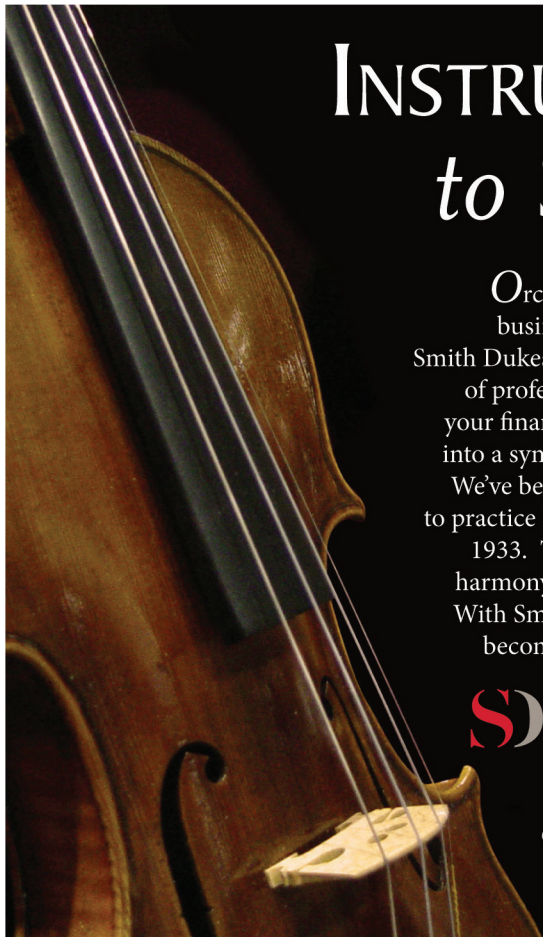
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MOBILE SYMPHONY PROGRAM

2025-2026 SEASON
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ABOUT THE SAENGER

A JEWEL OF MOBILE'S HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

The Mobile Symphony has performed in the historic Saenger Theatre since 1997. Built as part of a chain of Saenger Theatres along the Gulf Coast, Mobile's Saenger opened on January 19, 1927, and hosted everything from vaudeville shows to silent films. It also was the setting for the first America's Junior Miss pageant in 1958. Construction cost approximately \$500,000 and took a year to complete. The Saenger's style was intended to resemble European opera houses and the decoration was inspired by classical Greek mythology and Mobile's coastal location.

The theater was closed in 1970 and later, like many of America's grand movie palaces, was prepared for demolition. On the eve of its destruction, the University of South Alabama bought the Saenger, and the theater was renovated and reopened as the USA Saenger Theatre, a performing arts center.

In 1999, the City of Mobile purchased the Saenger from USA. A nonprofit organization, the Centre for the Living Arts, Inc., was formed in 2000 to operate the theater. The CLA, with generous donations from the community, restored the historic building to its former glory at a cost of about \$6 million. In early 2013, the CLA ended its contract and management of the Saenger. It is now in the hands of OVG, Oak View Group.

In 2014, the Mobile Symphony was pleased to donate a new \$373,000 acoustical shell to the City of Mobile for use in the Saenger Theatre. The shell consists of movable white panels that are situated around and above the orchestra during a performance. This structure optimizes the sound of our musicians so that the softest stroke of a bow can be heard in the farthest seat.



PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

PERSONAL PROPERTY – We regret that the management cannot be responsible for patrons' personal apparel or property. Lost and found inquiries may be directed to the Mobile Symphony Box Office, (251) 432-2010.

CELL PHONES, PHOTOGRAPHY & RECORDING – As a courtesy to other patrons, please turn off or silence all electronic devices during performances. The use of cameras and recording devices in any form during a Mobile Symphony Orchestra performance is not allowed and may be a violation of federal copyright laws.

RESTROOMS – Restrooms are located in the Saenger Theatre Arcade and on the mezzanine and balcony levels.

SMOKING – The Saenger Theatre is a smoke-free facility.

FIRE NOTICE – The exit sign nearest the seat you occupy is the shortest

route to the street in the event of fire or other emergency. Please follow the instructions of ushers or other theatre personnel.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES – Beverage service is available in the lobby before performances and during intermission. Alabama law prohibits the sale of alcoholic beverages to minors. No outside food or beverages may be brought into the theatre. No food is allowed in the theatre during the performance.

LATECOMERS – Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of Mobile Symphony management during appropriate pauses in the program. MSO policy is to begin performances at the advertised curtain time.

NO BABIES IN ARMS – We recommend ages 5 and up. All patrons must have a ticket to enter the theatre and occupy their own seat.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS – Wheelchair seating locations are available upon request from the Mobile Symphony Box Office. Patrons with special needs are encouraged to contact the Mobile Symphony Box Office in advance by calling (251) 432-2010.

MSO TICKET POLICY – *All ticket sales are final.* There are no cash, check or credit card refunds for returned tickets, coupons or gift certificates. Exchanges are offered to MSO Subscribers only. Special rules and regulations apply to all exchanges. MSO Subscribers have the option to donate tickets back as a tax-deductible donation. Please call the MSO Box Office at (251) 432-2010 for more information.



SAENGER SECURITY POLICIES

To ensure everyone has a safe, enjoyable, and seamless experience, please review the following important information and updated Saenger Theatre policies before your visit.

SCREENING AND CLEAR BAG POLICY

All guests will be screened by walk-through magnetometers and may also undergo additional wand screening. To enhance security and expedite entry, the Saenger Theatre has implemented a clear bag policy. **All bags are subject to search upon entry.**



Clear bags no larger than 12" x 6" x 12" will be permitted.

Medically necessary bags are exempt from this policy but will be subject to search.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

- Non-clear bags
- Backpacks
- CamelBak type packs
- Fanny packs
- Flasks
- Knives, including small pocket knives
- Firearms (permitted or not) or weapons of any kind
- Video or audio recorders, I-pads, tablets or lap-computers
- Professional quality camera equipment or bags
- Selfie sticks/poles
- Glass, plastic or metal containers
- Food, except for certain medical conditions
- Seat cushions
- Laser pointers
- Signs, posters, banners or flags
- Parcels, packages or any items the contents of which are not displayed
- Gifts of any kind for the entertainer(s)

Subscribers will still be able to visit and return from the Subscriber Lounge during intermission.

Any prohibited items will need to be returned to your vehicle or disposed of before entering.



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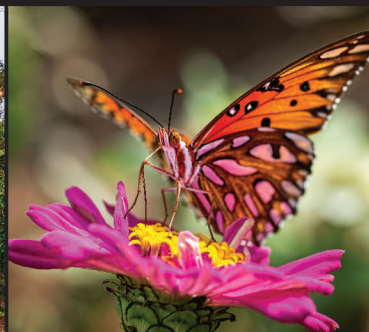
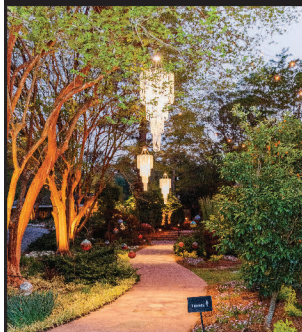
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