



Kansas City Symphony Announces 2016-17 Season

Highlights include Mozart's Requiem, pianist Emanuel Ax, Boyz II Men, classic films featuring John Williams' scores, and Choral Loft seat upgrades occurring this summer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. | Jan. 18, 2016 — The Kansas City Symphony has unveiled its 2016-17 season, including Classical, Pops and Family Series plus special and holiday concerts. The Symphony also revealed individual seats will replace bench seating in the Helzberg Hall Choral Loft at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts prior to the start of the 2016-17 season.

The 2016-17 season will mark the Symphony's sixth in Helzberg Hall and its 12th with Music Director Michael Stern, who renewed his contract through 2020 back in early October. Together, Stern and Symphony staff have put together a 2016-17 lineup that is sure to delight audiences while also fulfilling the organization's long-term goals for artistic and technical growth. The vast assortment of repertoire and programming not only puts the extraordinarily talented Symphony musicians and Symphony Chorus on display but also promises to appeal to a wide range of preferences.

"Each season we aspire to raise the bar in every respect, and with our 2016-17 season we have again achieved that," says Executive Director Frank Byrne. There is a range and diversity of programming to reach people of all ages and musical tastes. We are proud to have distinguished guest soloists on our stage as well as welcoming artists to make their debuts here. The enthusiasm for our Pops, Family, holiday and Screenland at the Symphony concerts continues to grow, and we take joy in displaying the excellence and flexibility of our marvelous musicians. We are eager to share these great performances with the community."

The Symphony's 2016-17 Classical Series includes 14 concert weekends comprised of 34 composers and 43 works — 16 of which have not been performed since the Symphony was founded. The season also includes five Kansas City Symphony premieres and one world premiere by Einojuhani Rautavaara. Stern calls the upcoming season one of the Symphony's "most mature" to date, a perfect balance of masterworks coupled with fresh, artistic challenges.

"I'm extraordinarily proud of our 2016-17 season," Stern says. "It's an impressive mix, including three great vocal works that are meditations on humanity: Mozart's Requiem, which we will perform in Helzberg Hall for the first time; Britten's *War Requiem*, a towering 20th century masterpiece; and Mahler's ineffably beautiful "Song of the Earth." Superb symphonies by Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Beethoven and Rachmaninoff are joined by works of our time, young American talents, and a world premiere by celebrated Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara. Concertmaster Noah Geller returns as soloist in Bartók's mesmerizing Violin Concerto No. 2 and Principal Flutist Michael Gordon plays Mozart's joyful Concerto in G Major for his Classical Series debut. Multiple remarkable artists and good friends return as well with violinists Stefan Jackiw and Philippe Quint; conductors Bernard Labadie, Asher Fisch and Jun Märkl; mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung; and pianists Robert Levin and Emanuel Ax, to name just a few."

2016-17 Classical Series Highlights

For the 2016-17 season, the Symphony presents three performances of 14 Classical Series programs. Opening Weekend will occur Sept. 30-Oct. 2. Each concert weekend will feature a major work, including:

Sept. 30-Oct. 2: Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony
Oct. 21-23: Mozart's Requiem (featuring the Kansas City Symphony Chorus, led by Charles Bruffy)
Nov. 18-20: Brahms' Second Symphony
Nov. 25-27: Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto and Haydn's 98th Symphony
Jan. 13-15, 2017: Dvořák's Fifth Symphony
Jan. 20-22, 2017: Chopin's First Piano Concerto and Wagner's Suite from *Die Meistersinger*
Jan. 27-29, 2017: Schumann's First Symphony, "Spring"
Feb. 10-12, 2017: Mendelssohn's Fifth Symphony, "Reformation" and Saint-Saëns' First Cello Concerto
Feb. 17-19, 2017: Beethoven's Eighth Symphony and Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto
Feb. 24-26, 2017: Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony and Mahler's *Song of the Earth*
March 24-26, 2017: Sibelius' Second Symphony and Ravel's *Tzigane*
May 5-7, 2017: Britten's *War Requiem* (featuring the Kansas City Symphony Chorus, led by Charles Bruffy)
June 2-4, 2017: Mozart's 16th and 19th Piano Concertos, plus Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*
June 16-18, 2017: Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony and Barber's Violin Concerto

Returning Soloists and Guest Conductors

The Symphony welcomes back a hand-picked collection of world-renowned guest artists for the upcoming season, including returns from violinists Stefan Jackiw, featured in the Opening Weekend (Sept. 30-Oct. 2) and Philippe Quint, who performs on the Season Finale (June 16-18, 2017), plus legendary pianists Emanuel Ax (June 2-4, 2017) and Robert Levin (Nov. 25-27). Additionally, the Kansas City Symphony's own Concertmaster Noah Geller (Jan. 13-15, 2017) and Principal Flutist Michael Gordon (Jan. 27-29, 2017) are featured soloists in the coming season. The Symphony is pleased to announce the debut appearance of guest conductor Cristian Măcelaru (Jan. 13-15, 2017) as well as the returns of celebrated guest conductors Bernard Labadie (Nov. 25-27, 2017), Asher Fisch (Jan. 20-22, 2017) and Jun Märkl (Feb. 10-12, 2017).

Pops Series and Family Series Highlights

The Symphony's four-concert Pops Series, led by the Symphony's new Assistant Conductor Jason Seber, provides season ticket holders the option to attend on Friday or Saturday evenings. This season's Pops Series is a perfect blend of entertaining live music and nostalgia. The Symphony kicks off its Pops Series with smooth R&B harmonies and iconic '90s love songs (think: "I'll Make Love to You") as Boyz II Men takes center stage (Oct. 28-29). Then, in January, audiences of all ages will appreciate the old-school classics of Frank Sinatra and friends as Steve Lippia sings hits from the American Songbook (Jan. 6-7, 2017). Fans of John Williams' movie scores will be in heaven for the 2016-17 season as the Symphony presents three Screenland at the Symphony movies featuring his unforgettable soundtracks. Pops Series subscribers will have one of these three 2016-17 Screenland at the Symphony presentations, namely — "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" (Feb. 3-4, 2017) — included in their season ticket package, and they will receive a subscriber discount if they choose to add either of the other special movie showings. And rounding out the 2016-17 Pops Series is a tribute to James Bond, a shaken-not-stirred toast to the world's most famous spy with music from "Casino Royale," "Goldfinger," "Diamonds are Forever," "Skyfall" and more (April 14-15, 2017).

The Symphony's 2016-17 Family Series focuses on fun while using some of the world's best music to slyly slip in some educational elements all in one hour's time. Beginning with the Branson, Mo., sensation, Buckets 'N Boards, (Sept. 18), the Family Series also includes a Platypus Theatre production, Presto, Mambo!, featuring vibrant music from Latin America (Jan. 8, 2017). The Symphony presents its own semi-staged world premiere production of the Jules Verne story, "Around the World in 80 Days" with help from local theatre artist Alex Espy and friends (March 5, 2017). The Family Series season ticket package includes the full-length version of the Symphony's cherished Christmas Festival as well.

Holiday and Special Concert Highlights

Hallelujah! The 100-year-old tradition continues as the Independence Messiah Choir joins the Symphony and Symphony Chorus for four performances of Handel's *Messiah* (Dec. 1-4) under the baton of guest conductor Laurence Cummings. The Symphony's Christmas Festival, Kansas City's grandest holiday concert with songs of the season and a visit from Santa, also returns for seven performances (Dec. 15-20).

The Symphony announces several special concerts available for subscribers to add on, starting with the Music of Led Zeppelin (Sept. 9). The Screenland at the Symphony Series is back again at Halloween time with a showing of the Lon Chaney-edited 1929 silent horror film classic, “Phantom of the Opera” with spooky improvised accompaniment by Dorothy Papadakos on the Julia Irene Kauffman Casavant Organ (Oct. 27). The original, ultimate adventure film, “Raiders of the Lost Ark” with one of the world’s favorite movie heroes, Indiana Jones, and John Williams’ epic scores is another Screenland at the Symphony offering (Nov. 10 and 12). For the holidays, contemporary pianist and singer/songwriter Jim Brickman will perform with the Symphony (Dec. 9) along with a special Screenland at the Symphony showing of “Home Alone” (Dec. 21 and 22) featuring the music of John Williams.

Upgrades to Choral Loft Seating

By the time the 2016-17 season begins, audiences will be able to enjoy the new upgrades to the Helzberg Hall Choral Loft seats. In response to many comments, the Symphony is taking the initiative, working with the Kauffman Center, to replace the Choral Loft benches with comfortable, individual seats like those found elsewhere in Helzberg Hall. This upgrade will allow concertgoers to experience all the benefits of the Choral Loft’s up-close view and sound with even greater comfort.

March 15 Deadline

The 2016-17 season ticket renewal process begins immediately. Subscribers will receive renewal packets in the mail shortly, with options to renew online, in person or over the phone. The Classical, Pops and Family subscriber renewal deadline is March 15. New subscribers may purchase subscriptions now, with exact seating beginning after March 15. Single tickets go on sale in July. For more information, call the Symphony Box Office at (816) 471-0400 weekdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. or visit kcsymphony.org.

View the 2016-17 Season Brochure

For additional concert descriptions and pricing, view the 2016-17 season brochure online [here](#).

About the Kansas City Symphony and Chorus

Founded in 1982, the Kansas City Symphony has established itself as a major force in the cultural life of the community. Praised for performances of uncompromising standard, the orchestra is the largest in the region and enjoys a national reputation under the artistic leadership of Music Director Michael Stern. The Kansas City Symphony Chorus is a volunteer, 160-member ensemble led by multi-Grammy® Award-winning conductor, Charles Bruffy, that continues its long tradition of excellence as the choral voice of the Kansas City Symphony. The Kansas City Symphony performs more than 100 concerts each year, while also serving as the orchestra for the Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and it often welcomes guests of international acclaim as part of its Classical and Pops Series.

Complementing its full schedule of concerts, the Symphony enriches the lives of Kansas City residents by providing music education opportunities for children and adults, such as KinderKonzerts, Young People’s Concerts, an instrument petting zoo and concert comments. Highlights each season include a range of free master classes, events and concerts reaching more than 200,000 community members, including the annual Bank of America Celebration at the Station concert each Memorial Day weekend and Symphony in the Flint Hills every summer. Additionally, the Symphony has released five CDs with Reference Recordings — Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, the Grammy®-winning Britten’s Orchestra, an Elgar/Vaughan Williams project, *Miraculous Metamorphoses* that highlights composers Hindemith, Prokofiev and Bartók, and most recently, the Grammy®-nominated Saint-Saëns Symphony No. 3, “Organ.” Two additional projects have been recorded and slated for future release, including the music of contemporary composer Adam Schoenberg (recorded June 2014) and Holst’s *The Planets* (recorded January 2015).

The Symphony and Michael Stern also have recorded for the Naxos label. Kansas City Symphony performances can be heard locally each week on KCUR 89.3 FM, Kansas City’s NPR affiliate. More information on the Kansas City Symphony is available at kcsymphony.org