



Kansas City Symphony Unveils Thrilling 2020/21 Concert Season

The 2020/21 season features top classical works, today's leading artists and conductors, first-time performances of core masterworks, music of Queen and John Williams, stars Kenny G and Audra McDonald, timeless films Princess Bride, Star Wars: Return of the Jedi, Jurassic Park, Harry Potter and more

KANSAS CITY, Mo. | March 10, 2020 — The Kansas City Symphony's 2020/21 season is an impressive lineup with popular classical masterworks, exceptional guest artists and favorite films featuring live scores. The 2020/21 season marks a decade of performances in Helzberg Hall at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts and Music Director Michael Stern's 16th season.

"We continue to feature world-class guest conductors and artists alongside our first-rate orchestra," says Executive Director Danny Beckley. "Our 80 full-time musicians are superbly talented, on par with the finest anywhere, and we are so proud they call Kansas City home. It is rewarding to see them aim for new artistic heights each season. The entire season, ranging from cherished favorites to hidden gems, is full of inspiring musical journeys. It's truly an exciting time for music in KC."

The Symphony's three core offerings are the Classical, Pops and Family series, with special presentations and holiday concerts rounding out the season.

"There are so many highlights in our 2020/21 Classical Series," Stern says. "We've invited wonderfully gifted guest conductors Michael Francis, Paolo Bortolameo, Gemma New, Christian Reif and Joshua Weilerstein, who are all superbly accomplished, and Edo de Waart, one of today's most distinguished statesmen, who also makes his debut with us. The list of guest artists also could not be more exciting. Among those visiting will be the extraordinary concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic, Noah Bendix-Balgley, to play his own *Fidl-Fantazye: A Klezmer Concerto*. We also welcome back longtime friends Gil Shaham, Yefim Bronfman, Jeffrey Kahane and Pamela Frank, to name a few."

2020/21 CLASSICAL SERIES

Fourteen concert weekends: 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays.

Three packages are available: Bravo Series (7 concerts), Ovation Series (7 concerts) and Masterworks Series (all 14 concerts). For complete listing and details, visit kcsymphony.org and view the [Classical Series](#) season brochure.

Exciting guest conductor debuts

The 2020/21 Classical Series features established and up-and-coming international guest conductors who are sure to delight audiences. British conductor Michael Francis leads Elgar's First Symphony, which ranges from shadowy, furtive passages to joyous optimism. Respected Dutch conductor Edo de Waart makes his long-overdue Kansas City Symphony debut in a majestic and romantic program featuring Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life) and Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. Chilean guest conductor Paolo Bortolameo directs an exhilarating weekend with Strauss' *Don Juan*. Rising New Zealand conductor Gemma New leads the orchestra as she conducts Saint-Saëns' popular "Organ" Symphony and Sibelius' Violin Concerto. German conductor Christian Reif is on the podium for Mozart's Clarinet Concerto with the Symphony's own Raymond Santos, and Joshua Weilerstein conducts Shostakovich's powerful Fifth Symphony.

Plus, the Symphony performs prized orchestral repertoire such as Brahms' First Symphony, Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* Suites with the famous "Dance of the Knights," Mahler's Fifth Symphony, Stravinsky's *Pétrouchka*, Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* and much more.

Preeminent touring artists

Top guest artists take center stage on the Classical Series, including pianist Yefim Bronfman playing Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto, Gil Shaham performing Brahms' Violin Concerto, Pamela Frank soloing for Bruch's Violin Concerto and Conrad Tao on Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F. Local favorite Jan Kraybill will perform on Saint-Saëns' "Organ" Symphony. Zlatomir Fung — the youngest cellist ever to win first prize at the prestigious Tchaikovsky Competition — joins the orchestra for Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations*.

First-ever Kansas City Symphony presentations and world premieres

The Symphony performs two major works for the first time. In the fall, Stern conducts the orchestra for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, which feels like an extension of his popular Ninth Symphony with overarching themes of hope and peace. In the spring, the Symphony presents Berlioz's lush, large-scale *Roméo et Juliette* — a wonderful interpretation of the timeless tale of young love turned tragic. Both pieces feature the Kansas City Symphony Chorus led by Charles Bruffy.

"We're featuring two mammoth works with the Symphony Chorus: Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, a towering musical achievement, and Berlioz's larger-than-life *Roméo et Juliette*," Stern adds. "We're also presenting two world premieres plus the legendary music of Schumann, Mahler, Beethoven, Rimsky-Korsakov and many more. This is a season we never could have presented 15 years ago, and that is very gratifying."

2020/21 SYMPHONY POPS SERIES

Four concert weekends: 8 p.m. Fridays; 7 p.m.

Saturdays; Sunday matinees.

- Bohemian Rhapsody: Queen's Greatest Hits (Sept. 18-20)
- Audra McDonald with the Kansas City Symphony (Nov. 13-15)
- The Music of John Williams (Feb. 12-14, 2021)
- Cirque Goes Broadway: Troupe Vertigo (April 16-18, 2021)

2020/21 SYMPHONY FAMILY SERIES

Four concert weekends: 2 p.m. Sundays

- Buckets N Boards (Sept. 27)
- Halloween Symphony Spooktacular! (Oct. 25)
- Christmas Festival (Dec. 20)
- Symphony's Wild Adventure (Feb. 28, 2021)

David T. Beals III Associate Conductor Jason Seber and guest conductors lead the 2020/21 Symphony Pops and Family series along with special and holiday concerts. The Symphony Family Series is perfect for introducing children ages 4-13 to symphonic music, including the full-length Christmas Festival. Each child season ticket is only \$10 with the purchase of an adult season ticket. For complete details, visit kcsymphony.org and view the [Pops and Family](#) season brochure.

SPECIAL CONCERTS

- Film + Live Orchestra — Star Wars: Return of the Jedi in Concert (Sept. 9-11 and 13)
- Richard Marx (Oct. 1)
- Silent Film + Live Organ: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Oct. 29)
- Film + Live Orchestra — Jurassic Park in Concert (Jan. 8-10, 2021)
- Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince™ in Concert (Jan. 21-24, 2021)
- Film + Live Orchestra — The Princess Bride (May 7-9, 2021)

HOLIDAY CONCERTS

- Handel's Messiah (Dec. 4-6)
- Holidays with Kenny G (Dec. 9-10)
- Christmas Festival (Dec. 18-21)
- Film + Live Orchestra: Home Alone (Dec. 22-24)

The Symphony also presents special and holiday concerts each season. Subscribers can add on these concerts when buying 2020/21 season tickets. Single tickets for most concerts go on sale in July. The Symphony will announce the remainder of the 2020/21 season, including free Happy Hour Series concerts, in July when single tickets become available. April 1 is the subscriber renewal deadline for the 2020/21 season.

Season ticket holders enjoy many benefits, including access to the best available seats at the best prices, free ticket exchanges for most concerts, subscriber discounts on additional ticket purchases, the opportunity to reserve parking in advance and much more. To renew or learn more about becoming a Kansas City Symphony season subscriber, visit [kcsymphony.org](https://www.kcsymphony.org) or call the Symphony Box Office at (816) 471-0400.

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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 130 concerts each year, often welcomes guests of international acclaim as part of its Classical and Pops Series, and serves as the orchestra for the Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

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 250,000 community members, including the annual Bank of America Celebration at the Station concert each Memorial Day weekend and performing at Symphony in the Flint Hills every summer.

The Symphony has released seven highly praised CDs to date with Reference Recordings. The latest release features Holst's *The Planets* and *The Perfect Fool*. The Symphony and Michael Stern also have recorded for the Naxos label. Kansas City's NPR affiliate, KCUR 89.3 FM, broadcasts Kansas City Symphony performances each week. More information on the Kansas City Symphony is available at [kcsymphony.org](https://www.kcsymphony.org).

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