



KANSAS CITY
SYMPHONY
Classical Series

Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
Michael Stern, *conductor*
Josh Jones, *marimba*

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Concerto in C Major for Piccolo and Orchestra, RV 443

- I. Allegro
- II. Largo
- III. Allegro molto

Josh Jones, marimba

GUSTAV MAHLER

Adagietto from Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor

ULYSSES KAY

Six Dances for String Orchestra

- I. Schottische
- II. Waltz
- III. Round Dance
- IV. Polka
- V. Promenade
- VI. Galop

The 2020/21 Season is generously sponsored by

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Additional support provided by



R. CROSBY KEMPER JR. FUND

Orchestra Roster

MICHAEL STERN, *Music Director*

JASON SEBER, *David T. Beals III Associate Conductor*

FIRST VIOLINS

Sunho Kim, *Acting Concertmaster*

Miller Nichols Chair

Stirling Trent,

Acting Associate Concertmaster

Chiafei Lin,

Acting Assistant Concertmaster

Gregory Sandomirsky‡

Associate Concertmaster Emeritus

Anne-Marie Brown

Betty Chen

Anthony DeMarco

Susan Goldenberg*

Tomoko Iguchi

Dorris Dai Janssen

Vladimir Rykov

Alex Shum*

SECOND VIOLINS

Tamamo Someya Gibbs, *Principal*

Kristin Velicer, *Acting Associate Principal*

Minhye Helena Choi,

Acting Assistant Principal

Nancy Beckmann

Mary Garcia Grant

Kevin Hao ‡

Kazato Inouye

Rena Ishii

Stephanie Larsen

Francesca Manheim

VIOLAS

Matthew Sinno, *Acting Principal*

Jessica Nance, *Acting Associate Principal*

Duke Lee, *Acting Assistant Principal*

Kent Brauningner

Sean Brumble

Marvin Gruenbaum

Jenifer Houck

Jesse Yukimura

CELLOS

Mark Gibbs, *Principal*

Robert A. Kipp Chair

Susie Yang, *Associate Principal*

Richard Hill Chair

Alexander East, *Assistant Principal*

Maria Crosby

John Eadie

Lawrence Figg

Rung Lee*

Meredith McCook

Allen Probus

DOUBLE BASSES

Jeffrey Kail, *Principal*

Evan Halloin, *Associate Principal*

Brandon Mason ‡

Caleb Quillen

Richard Ryan

Nash Tomey

FLUTES

Michael Gordon, *Principal*

Marylou and John Dodds Turner Chair

Shannon Finney, *Associate Principal*

Kayla Burggraf

PICCOLO

Kayla Burggraf

OBOES

Kristina Fulton, *Principal*

Shirley Bush Helzberg Chair

Alison Chung, *Associate Principal*

CLARINETS

Raymond Santos, *Principal*

Bill and Peggy Lyons Chair

Silvio Guitian, *Associate Principal*

John Klinghammer

E-FLAT CLARINET

Silvio Guitian

BASS CLARINET

John Klinghammer

BASSOONS

Ann Bilderback, *Principal*

Barton P. and Mary D. Cohen Chair

Thomas DeWitt, *Associate Principal*

Maxwell Pipinich

CONTRABASSOON

Thomas DeWitt

HORNS

Alberto Suarez, *Principal*

Landon and Sarah Rowland Chair

David Sullivan, *Associate Principal*

Elizabeth Gray

David Gamble

Stephen Multer,

Associate Principal Emeritus

TRUMPETS

Julian Kaplan, *Principal*

James B. and Annabel Nutter Chair

Steven Franklin, *Associate Principal*

Brian Rood ‡

TROMBONES

Roger Oyster, *Principal*

Porter Wyatt Henderson,

Associate Principal

Adam Rainey

BASS TROMBONE

Adam Rainey

TUBA

Joe LeFevre, *Principal*

Frank Byrne Chair

TIMPANI

Timothy Jepson, *Principal*

Michael and Susan Newburger Chair

PERCUSSION

Josh Jones^, *Principal*

David Yoon, *Associate Principal*

HARP

Katherine Siochi, *Principal*

LIBRARIANS

Elena Lence Talley, *Principal*

Fabrice Curtis

* Non-Rotating Musician

^ New Member

‡ On Leave of Absence

ANTONIO VIVALDI**Concerto in C Major for Piccolo and Orchestra, RV 443 (1729)****12 minutes**

Among his more than 500 concertos, Vivaldi only wrote three for the “flautino,” a high-pitched recorder that is the equivalent of today’s piccolo. The circumstances surrounding the composition and premiere of this concerto in C major are unknown, though we do know that in the late 18th century the transverse flute (which is used today) replaced the flautino in general use, and a new edition of the concerto was published for piccolo.

As in Vivaldi’s Concerto for Two Trumpets and Orchestra that we performed last week, this concerto uses the ritornello form, in which the strings play repeated refrains interspersed with freer music featuring the soloist’s virtuosity. In this case, the music for the piccolo is particularly virtuosic. Most of its solo passages in the first movement consist of running sixteenth notes that sometimes span nearly two octaves in a single measure. To be fair, it’s not all running sixteenth notes; occasionally there are sixteenth triplets, which are even faster. The second slow movement is a gorgeous showcase for the soloist’s lyrical abilities. The third movement brings more running sixteenth notes, more triplets, and lots of trills, with some of the soloistic sections sounding like precursors to the cadenza, which became standard in concertos of the Classical period.

On our program today, the part of the solo piccolo is played by Principal Percussionist Josh Jones, on marimba instead of piccolo. (One advantage: No need to pause for breath! One disadvantage: Notes two octaves apart are almost four feet from each other!) Josh won our principal percussion audition in March 2020, less than 48 hours before Kansas City went into lockdown, and we are delighted to welcome him to the Helzberg Hall stage. *AJH*

ANTONIO VIVALDI**(1678-1741)**

Composer, virtuoso violinist, opera impresario, music teacher, Catholic priest — Antonio Vivaldi’s career was certainly multifaceted. He was born (and lived much of his life) in Venice; his father, a professional violinist himself, taught the young Antonio to play the violin and toured with him around the city. At the age of 15, Vivaldi began studying to become a priest, and was ordained ten years later and given the nickname “The Red Priest” due to the color of his hair. Shortly afterward, however, he was given a dispensation from celebrating Mass (a sort of “excused absence”), due to his poor health and, possibly, due to his habit of composing during the service. He remained a devout Catholic throughout his life, however, and took his status as a “secular priest” very seriously.



In 1703, Vivaldi was appointed violin master at an orphanage called the Pio Ospedale della Pietà (Devout Hospital of Mercy) in Venice, where he was to work in various capacities throughout his life. The orphanage provided housing and education to children who were abandoned or orphaned, and while boys learned a trade and were required to leave when they turned 15, girls received musical education and often remained as members of the orchestra and choir. The musical ensembles of the orphanage were renowned throughout Europe, and Vivaldi composed much of his music for them, including concertos, oratorios, cantatas and other sacred vocal works. The orphanage's records show payments to Vivaldi for 140 concertos written in the ten years between 1723 and 1733.

Opera was the most popular musical form of entertainment in Venice in the early 1700s, and another of Vivaldi's roles was as both a composer and a presenter of operas. He wrote around 50 operas, though only 16 survive in their complete form, and as an impresario presented many more.

In the late 1720s he wrote what were to become his most famous works, a set of four violin concertos collectively known as *The Four Seasons* that is an early example of programmatic music. The concertos, each a musical depiction of a different season of the year, reproduce in music water in brooks, different species of birdsong, dogs, mosquitoes, shepherds, storms, dancers, hunters, frozen landscapes and more. These and other concertos helped to establish the fast-slow-fast three-movement concerto format that became standard in the Classical and early Romantic periods.

In 1740 Vivaldi moved to Vienna, hopeful of staging operas there as well as obtaining a position as composer in the imperial court. But the emperor died shortly after his arrival, and Vivaldi himself fell ill and died in poverty in July 1741. His music was relatively unknown after his death until a revival of interest throughout the 20th century and discovery of many works thought to be lost. Today he is remembered for his exuberant music and for his influence on other composers, including Johann Sebastian Bach. *AJH*



GUSTAV MAHLER

Adagietto from Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor (1901-02)

9 minutes

An oasis of calm in the roiling waters of the Fifth Symphony, Mahler's Adagietto is elegant music filled with grace. The movement is scored for strings and harp, creating a soft intimate atmosphere imbued with delicious longing. Ethereal harp notes emerge from the gauzy string palette, with the sound building across a beautiful arc and eventually returning to the ether, suspended in time and space.

The Adagietto was reportedly composed as Mahler's declaration of love for Alma Schindler, a gifted young pianist and a composer herself. The two had met at a mutual friend's house on November 7, 1901 and Mahler proposed marriage just weeks later. Despite an age difference of 19 years, the couple was engaged on December 23, 1901 and married on March 9, 1902.

Dutch conductor Willem Mengelberg described Mahler's intent with the Adagietto:

"Instead of a letter, he sent her this manuscript without further explanation. She understood and wrote back that he should come! Both have told me this ... If music is a language, then this is proof. He tells her everything in tones and sounds in music."

ETW

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911)

Born into a Jewish family in Bohemia (then in the Austrian Empire, now in the Czech Republic), Gustav Mahler was the second of 14 children. Like so many composers, Mahler showed musical talent at a relatively early age and began piano lessons at age 6. He was admitted to the Vienna Conservatory in 1875 and attended Vienna University a few years later, studying music, history, and philosophy.

Known today for his monumental symphonies, Mahler was most highly regarded during his own lifetime as a conductor. He began his conducting career in 1880 with a job at a summer theater, moving almost yearly to successively larger opera houses. From Bad Hall, he went to Ljubljana, Olomouc, Vienna, Kassel, Prague, Leipzig, and Budapest. His growing prominence led to an appointment at the Hamburg Opera in 1891, where he stayed until 1897. Converting to Catholicism to obtain the much-coveted post as director of the Vienna Opera, Mahler launched into his duties with zeal, greatly raising the artistic standards.

It was in late 1901 that the intense and celebrated Mahler met Alma Schindler, a vivacious pianist and composer nearly 20 years his junior. The triumphant premiere of his Fourth Symphony was still reverberating when the two became engaged after less than two months of courtship. They had two daughters, the eldest dying of diphtheria at age 4. Theirs was not an idyllic marriage and had as many moments of despondency as elation.

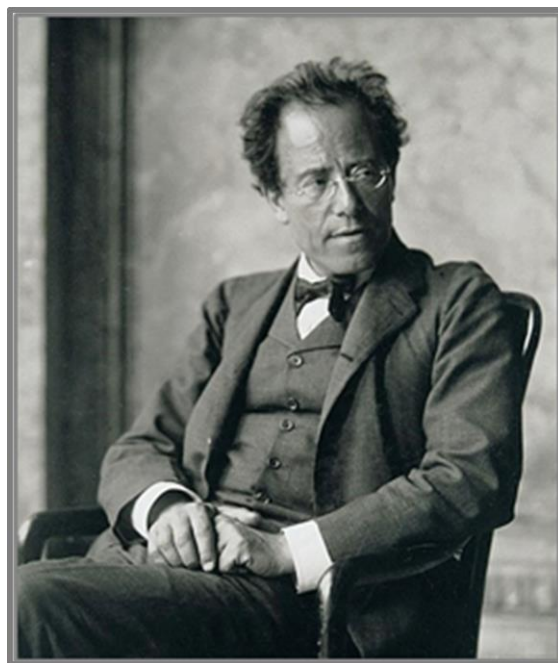


Photo by Moritz Nähr

Frequently subjected to anti-Semitic attacks in the press and newly diagnosed with a heart disease, Mahler resigned from the Vienna Opera in 1907 to conduct a season at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, earning critical and popular acclaim. He returned to New York in 1910 to lead the New York Philharmonic. Falling seriously ill in February 1911, he went to Paris for an unsuccessful treatment and was then taken to Vienna where he died in May 1911 at age 50.

Mahler's conducting duties engulfed his time during the concert season so composing was largely relegated to the summer months, often spent in pastoral lakeside settings. His oeuvre is essentially comprised of symphonies and songs but that simple categorization does not capture the substantial overlap and blending of genres that characterize his music. Exploiting the full array of orchestral colors and sometimes incorporating non-standard instruments such as cowbells, mandolin, guitar and an enormous hammer, Mahler embraced the totality of expression possible through music. As he famously said, "A symphony must be like the world. It must contain everything." *ETW*



ULYSSES KAY

Six Dances for String Orchestra (1953-54)

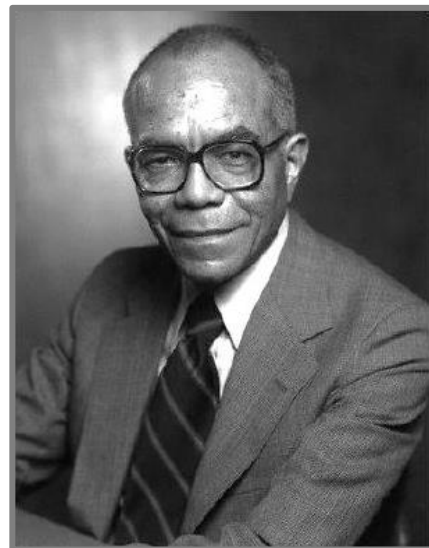
19 minutes

Kay's Six Dances for String Orchestra, which bear the alternate title *American Dances*, were written in 1953 and 1954, shortly after he had returned to the United States from studying in Rome. A friend of Kay's, who was a producer at CBS Radio, asked him to compose a piece for a program called "String Serenade." The idea of writing dances was suggested to Kay by the context of a light music program that aired on Sunday afternoons. The original composition, performed by the studio orchestra, consisted of just two dances. Kay composed another two dances for the same program six months later, but still felt that the four "seemed a little brief," and eventually added two more to complete the work. The full set was not recorded until nearly 20 years after the initial performance. In 1983, the Houston Ballet used all six dances for a ballet production; Kay was pleased with the choreography, though he admitted he had "never thought" of the Dances actually being danced to.

The Six Dances are a colorful set of short pieces influenced by Paul Hindemith's neoclassical style. Kay generally preferred to work in traditional forms without programmatic associations, and the Six Dances follow this pattern, fusing dance forms from a variety of immigrant cultural traditions with a distinctive American sound. *AJH*

ULYSSES KAY
(1917-1995)

Ulysses Simpson Kay, Jr., was one of the leading Black composers of the 20th century. He grew up in a musical family, which included the famous jazz musician Joe “King” Oliver (Kay’s uncle), and learned to play piano, violin and saxophone. He studied composition at some of the United States’ most prestigious music schools, including the Eastman School of Music, Yale and Columbia. Kay also studied in Rome on a series of scholarships that included a Fulbright and two first-place finishes in the Prix de Rome. In the 1950s and 60s, Kay worked as a music consultant for BMI, the major U.S. performing rights organization at the time. In 1958 he was invited to be one of four composers to travel to the Soviet Union as part of the new cultural exchange agreement, along with Roy Harris, Peter Mennin and Roger Sessions. (The corresponding Soviet delegation, which traveled to the U.S. the following year, included Dmitri Kabalevsky and Dmitri Shostakovich.) Kay was well-known enough to appear in an Ebony magazine advertisement for Lucky Strike cigarettes in 1960. He began teaching composition in 1965, and taught until retiring in 1989. Upon his retirement he received congratulatory letters from John Corigliano, George Crumb and Leonard Bernstein.



Kay completed nearly 140 compositions during his lifetime, including operas and works for orchestra, chorus and chamber ensemble. His most famous composition, *Of New Horizons*, was written in 1944 when he was in the U.S. Navy during World War II. The piece was premiered by the New York Philharmonic, and performances followed by the Detroit Symphony and the Juilliard Orchestra, the latter marking Kay’s Carnegie Hall debut. Kay’s final opera, which premiered four years before his death, told the story of Frederick Douglass and was financed by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Kay’s wife Barbara was deeply involved in the civil rights movement, advocating for racial equality both in the couple’s hometown in New Jersey and on multiple trips to the American South. Barbara was arrested in Mississippi in 1961 for challenging segregation and spent four months in jail as a result.

When Kay died in 1995, the New York Times published an obituary, noting that “Mr. Kay was invariably described by critics as one of America’s leading black composers. Although the description was limiting, Mr. Kay readily accepted it on the ground that it reflected the comparative dearth of classically trained black composers since World War II and an honest critical attempt to recognize his contributions to contemporary American composition.” *AJH*

Program notes written by AJ Harbison (AJH) and Eric T. Williams (ETW).

JOSH JONES
PRINCIPAL PERCUSSION

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Josh Jones started hitting things at age 2 and received his first drum set at age 3. He began his formal studies in percussion with the Percussion Scholarship Program under the direction of Chicago Symphony percussionist Patricia Dash and Chicago Lyric Opera percussionist Douglas Waddell. He earned his bachelor's degree from the DePaul School of Music and was an orchestra fellow with both the Detroit and Pittsburgh symphonies. In 2020, Jones joined the Kansas City Symphony as principal percussionist.

Jones has been featured at Carnegie Hall, on radio and television, and has had two short documentaries made about his musical development and experience. He has also authored a percussion method book series, "Spatial Studies for Hitting Things," and writes musical and philosophical blogs on his website, drummojo.com. Jones enjoys giving back to the community as well as mentoring young musicians and traveling.



For more about Josh Jones, check out his recent video interview with Kansas City Symphony Personnel Manager Justin White on MySymphonySeat.org.

