



KANSAS CITY  
**SYMPHONY**  
Classical Series

Sunday, April 25, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.  
Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts  
**Michael Stern**, *conductor*

**BÉLA BARTÓK**

Divertimento for String Orchestra

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Molto Adagio
- III. Allegro assai

**EDVARD GRIEG**

*Holberg Suite*, op. 40 "From Holberg's Time"

- I. Prelude
- II. Sarabande
- III. Gavotte and Musette
- IV. Air
- V. Rigaudon

*The 2020/21 Season is generously sponsored by*

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M U R I E L M c B R I E N  
**KAUFFMAN FOUNDATION**

**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 Brauninger**

**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**

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\* Non-Rotating Musician

^ New Member

‡ On Leave of Absence

## BÉLA BARTÓK

### Divertimento for String Orchestra (1939)

25 minutes

Bartók's *Divertimento* for String Orchestra was composed in 1939. It was the last work he wrote before emigrating to the United States. The piece was commissioned by Paul Sacher, a Swiss conductor and patron of the arts who had also commissioned *Music for Strings*, *Percussion and Celesta* in 1936. Sacher provided Bartók with rooms, a piano and an on-call chef at his chalet while Bartók composed the piece. He finished it in just 15 days, and wrote his son the following day, saying "Somehow I feel like a musician of the olden time; the invited guest of a patron of the arts. For here I am, as you know, entirely the guest of the Sachers; they see to everything — from a distance ... The furnishings are not in character, but so much better, because they are the last word in comfort. They even had a piano brought from Berne for me."

The *divertimento* (Italian for "diversion") was a form designed for entertaining performers and listeners that gained popularity in the Classical period, with well-known examples written by Haydn and Mozart. Bartók's foray into the genre displays some neoclassical characteristics, featuring a strict formal fugue and small groups of soloists featured against the backdrop of the rest of the orchestra (reminiscent of the Baroque concerto grosso form). In its modernist harmonies and sharply contrasted dynamics, however, the piece reveals its 20th-century provenance.



The *Divertimento* is cast in three movements following a fast-slow-fast structure. The first movement is a waltz influenced by Magyar folk music in both its modal and chromatically inflected scales and its irregular accents and syncopations. It follows a sonata form structure from the Classical period while playing soloists off the rest of the orchestra like a Baroque concerto. The second movement is slow and dark, perhaps reflecting the events immediately preceding World War II from which Bartók was isolated during his few weeks in the chalet. It also prefigures the darkness and profound grief of his *Sixth String Quartet*, which he began writing as soon as he finished the *Divertimento*. The final movement returns to the diversion, with vigorous dance rhythms, a folk-style theme undergoing multiple transformations, a fiddle-like cadenza, and even a parody of a Viennese polka. This finale radiates a joy we don't typically expect from Bartók. But Paul Sacher wrote that sometimes the reserved composer "laughed in boyish glee," and "when he was pleased with the successful solution of a problem, he actually beamed." *AJH*

## BÉLA BARTÓK

(1881-1945)

Béla Bartók, one of Hungary's most famous composers (along with Franz Liszt, the film composer Miklós Rózsa, and the avant-garde composer György Ligeti), was born in 1881 in present-day Romania. His mother noticed his musical talents very early, recalling that he could

distinguish different rhythms she played on the piano before he could speak in complete sentences. He began formal lessons with her at the age of 5, and gave his first public recital at 11, including one of his own compositions titled *The Course of the Danube*.

Like the Hungarian composer Ernő Dohnányi, four years his senior, Bartók opted to study at the Hungarian Royal Music Academy rather than leave his country for the musical capital of Vienna. At the academy he met Zoltán Kodály, who became a lifelong friend and colleague.

In 1903, caught up in a nationalistic fervor sparked by Ferenc Kossuth and his Party of Independence, Bartók composed his first large orchestral work, a symphonic poem inspired by the Hungarian patriot Lajos Kossuth (Ferenc's father). The piece was well received at its premiere. The following year, while vacationing at a resort, he heard a Transylvanian nanny singing folk songs to the children she was watching, and an interest in folk music was sparked. In 1905 Bartók and Kodály began traveling the Hungarian countryside, collecting folk songs and recording them on phonograph cylinders, and making important discoveries in their research. The melodies that Brahms and Liszt had drawn on for their dances and rhapsodies, Bartók and Kodály found, were not in fact Magyar (Hungarian) folk songs but songs of the Roma people. Authentic Magyar melodies were often based on pentatonic scales, like the music of many Asian folk traditions. The pair of researchers published a collection of folk songs in 1906, and continued the work throughout their lives (often on holiday breaks from their teaching careers). In all, they collected over 10,000 songs from Eastern Europe and beyond, contributed greatly to Hungary's understanding of its own musical tradition, and this laid the groundwork for the field we know today as ethnomusicology.



Bartók's study of folk music deeply influenced his own compositions. While his early works drew inspiration from Liszt, Brahms, Strauss and Debussy, as he studied more Magyar music his compositions became tighter and more focused, growing structures out of spare and concentrated materials. He also began incorporating more chromaticism and dissonance. He wrote in 1921, "The old scales that are no longer used in our art music have not lost their vitality. Their renewed application made possible a new kind of harmonic combination. The employment of the diatonic scale in this manner led to a liberation from the petrified major and minor systems with the end result that today every step of the chromatic 12-tone system can be freely utilized on its own." He never advocated for true atonality, however, commenting at one point that he "wanted to show Schoenberg that one can use all twelve tones and still remain tonal."

In the 1920s and 30s, Bartók toured widely as both a pianist and composer, and wrote some of his most famous works, including four of his string quartets, *Music for Strings*, *Percussion and Celesta* and *Divertimento for String Orchestra*. A strong opponent of Nazism and Hungary's alliance with Germany and the Axis powers, Bartók fled Hungary in 1940 and settled in New York City. He was well known in the United States as a pianist, teacher and ethnomusicologist,

but not as a composer. He gave concerts and continued research on folk songs in the libraries of Columbia Records but composed very little.

In the last three years of his life, as his body was ravaged by leukemia (which was not diagnosed until five months before his death), he found a new creative spark and wrote three final masterworks. His Piano Concerto No. 3 was a surprise birthday present for his wife, a pianist. Yehudi Menuhin commissioned a sonata for solo violin. And Serge Koussevitsky, music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, commissioned the Concerto for Orchestra, which was to become Bartók's most famous work after his death. He passed away in September 1945, his funeral drawing only ten people. He was buried in Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York, but in 1988 the Hungarian government and his two sons requested that his remains be returned to Hungary. He was re-interred in a place of honor in Budapest's Farkasréti Cemetery beside the remains of his wife, following a funeral accompanied by full state honors. *AJH*



## EDVARD GRIEG

### *Holberg Suite*, op. 40 “From Holberg’s Time” (1884)

20 minutes

Edvard Grieg composed the *Holberg Suite* in 1884 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754). Holberg was a philosopher, historian and playwright, born in Bergen (like Grieg), who was a founder of modern Danish and Norwegian literature. His writings on natural and common law were required reading for Danish law students, and his comedies had been widely enjoyed for over 100 years. The *Holberg Suite*, subtitled “Suite in the Olden Style,” is a collection of five dances written in Baroque style but featuring Norwegian folk music as a tribute to Holberg and the music of his time.

Grieg originally composed the suite for solo piano; it was one of the compositions he often performed on his concert tours. Its premiere, with the composer at the piano, was given during Bergen’s Holberg celebration. The piece was so well received that Grieg decided to adapt it for string orchestra the following year.

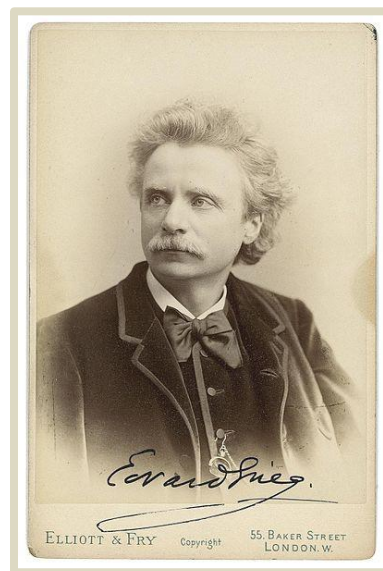
The *Holberg Suite* opens with a sprightly, energetic prelude. The more reserved sarabande follows, moving in a stately manner through the triple meter Spanish dance form. The third movement, a French gavotte, is a bouncy dance characterized by two strong upbeats. In the middle of the gavotte comes a musette, with a slightly slower tempo and different character, accompanied by a bagpipe-like drone on the cellos’ two lowest strings. (This drone is perhaps a nod to Grieg’s Scottish origins — his great-grandfather emigrated from Scotland after the Battle of Culloden in 1746.) An air marked “Andante religioso,” with a freer form, spins out a long melancholy melody. The finale is another French dance, this time a lively rigaudon that sets a violin and a viola soloist against the texture of the full string orchestra as in a Baroque concerto grosso. *AJH*



## EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)

Edvard Grieg was a Norwegian composer, pianist and a founder of the Norwegian nationalist school of music. He received his first musical instruction from his mother, a piano teacher, and was persuaded by a family friend to enroll at the Leipzig Conservatory. While he enjoyed his piano studies and the cultural life of the city, he disliked the discipline of his classes and later recalled, “I must admit ... that I left Leipzig Conservatory just as stupid as I entered it.”

In the spring of 1860, while still a student, Grieg contracted two lung diseases, pleurisy and tuberculosis. He survived but suffered from poor respiratory health for the rest of his life due to a collapsed left lung and a bent spine.



In 1864 Grieg met young Norwegian nationalist composer Rikard Nordraak (the composer of the Norwegian national anthem), who encouraged him to incorporate Norwegian folk music into his compositional style. Grieg wrote of Nordraak, “Through him I first learned to know the northern folk tunes and my own nature.” The Norwegian folk melodies and rhythms enabled Grieg to create a distinctive nationalist sound. He wrote that “the traditional way of life of the Norwegian people, together with Norway’s legends, Norway’s history, Norway’s natural scenery, stamped itself on my creative imagination from my earliest years.”

Grieg’s most famous work, the Piano Concerto in A Minor, was composed in 1868 and marked his breakthrough as a composer of international importance. Despite his poor health, Grieg gave frequent concert tours throughout Scandinavia, Europe and England, often performing the Piano Concerto along with his solo piano works.

Grieg met many musical luminaries of the time as well as other famous figures in his travels: Liszt (who sight-read the piano concerto when Grieg met with him), Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Saint-Saëns, Frederic Delius, Percy Grainger, Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame), the playwright Henrik Ibsen (who commissioned Grieg to compose incidental music for his play “Peer Gynt”), and even Queen Victoria of England, for whom Grieg and his wife, a soprano, performed in Windsor Castle in 1897.

Grieg died of heart failure in Bergen, his hometown, in September 1907. His last words were reportedly “Well, if it must be so.” His funeral drew more than 30,000 mourners, and was accompanied (at the composer’s request) by his *Funeral March in Memory of Rikard Nordraak* as well as the “Funeral March” from Chopin’s Piano Sonata No. 2.

During Grieg’s lifetime and following his death, he was celebrated throughout Bergen. There are multiple statues of him in the city, and his name graces many of its institutions: one of its largest



hotels (Quality Hotel Edvard Grieg), its largest concert building (Grieg Hall), its music school (Grieg Academy) and its professional choir (Edvard Grieg Kor).

Grieg's music was an acknowledged influence on Béla Bartók, as well as Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy. Bartók declared to a conductor friend, "Grieg has to be taken seriously. He is one of the most important composers of the turn of the century. Don't you know that he was among the first who cast off the German yoke?" Ravel said of the composer, "The generation of French composers to which I belong has been strongly attracted to his music. There is no composer to whom I feel a closer affinity — besides Debussy — than Grieg." *AJH*



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

