

*Kansas City Symphony*  
**ORCHESTRA ROSTER**

**MICHAEL STERN**, *Music Director*

**GONZALO FARIAS**, *Associate Conductor, David T. Beals III Chair*

**FIRST VIOLINS**

Jun Iwasaki<sup>^</sup>, *Concertmaster*  
*Miller Nichols Chair*  
Stirling Trent, *Associate Concertmaster*  
Chiafei Lin, *Acting Assistant Concertmaster*  
Sunho Kim<sup>‡</sup>, *Assistant Concertmaster*  
Anne-Marie Brown  
Michael Brown<sup>^</sup>  
Betty Chen  
Anthony DeMarco  
Susan Goldenberg\*  
Tomoko Iguchi  
Dorris Dai Janssen  
Filip Lazovski<sup>Δ</sup>  
Vladimir Rykov  
Alex Shum\*

**SECOND VIOLINS**

Tamamo Someya Gibbs, *Principal*  
Kristin Velicer, *Acting Associate Principal*  
Minhye Helena Choi, *Acting Assistant Principal*  
Nancy Beckmann  
Autumn Chodorowski<sup>^</sup>  
Mary Garcia Grant  
Kazato Inouye  
Rena Ishii  
Lisa Jackson<sup>Δ</sup>  
Stephanie Larsen  
Sodam Lim<sup>^</sup>  
Rachel Sandman<sup>Δ</sup>

**VIOLAS**

MingYu Hsu<sup>^</sup>, *Principal*  
Jessica Nance, *Acting Associate Principal*  
Duke Lee, *Acting Assistant Principal*  
Julius Adams<sup>Δ</sup>  
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*  
Nils Aardahl<sup>^</sup>  
Joseph Nuñez<sup>Δ</sup>  
Caleb Quillen  
Richard Ryan  
Nash Tomey<sup>‡</sup>

**FLUTES**

Michael Gordon, *Principal*  
*Marylou and John Dodds Turner Chair*  
Shannon Finney, *Associate Principal*  
Kayla Burggraf Michal

**PICCOLO**

Kayla Burggraf Michal

**OBOES**

Kristina Fulton, *Principal*  
*Shirley Bush Helzberg Chair*  
Alison Chung, *Associate Principal*  
Matthew Lengas<sup>^</sup>

**ENGLISH HORN**

Matthew Lengas<sup>^</sup>

**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*  
George Goad<sup>^</sup>

**TROMBONES**

Roger Oyster, *Principal*  
Porter Wyatt Henderson,  
*Associate Principal*  
Jahleel Smith<sup>Δ</sup>  
Adam Rainey<sup>‡</sup>

**BASS TROMBONE**

Jahleel Smith<sup>Δ</sup>  
Adam Rainey<sup>‡</sup>

**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**

Katie Ventura<sup>Δ</sup>, *Acting Principal*  
Katherine Siochi<sup>‡</sup>, *Principal*

**LIBRARIANS**

Elena Lence Talley, *Principal*  
Fabrice Curtis

Justin White,

*Director of Orchestra Personnel*

Kirsten Loynachan,

*Assistant Personnel Manager*

Tyler Miller,

*Stage Manager*

\* Non-Rotating Musician

<sup>^</sup> New Member

<sup>‡</sup> On Leave of Absence

<sup>Δ</sup> One-Year Member

# GERSHWIN'S *RHAPSODY IN BLUE* AND NIELSEN'S "INEXTINGUISHABLE"

*Friday, March 31, 2023 at 8:00 p.m.*

*Saturday, April 1, 2023 at 8:00 p.m.*

*Sunday, April 2, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.*

HELZBERG HALL, KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

THOMAS WILKINS, *guest conductor*

RAY USHIKUBO, *piano*

**SAMUEL  
COLERIDGE-TAYLOR**

*Suite from Hiawatha, op. 82a*

**I. The Wooing**

**II. The Marriage Feast**

**III. Bird Scene — Conjuror's Dance**

**IV. The Departure**

**V. Reunion**

**GEORGE GERSHWIN**

*Rhapsody in Blue*

Ray Ushikubo, *piano*

**INTERMISSION**

**CARL NIELSEN**

*Symphony No. 4, op. 29, "The Inextinguishable"*

*The 2022/23 season is generously sponsored by  
SHIRLEY and BARNETT C. HELZBERG, JR.*

*The Classical Series is sponsored by the*

**MURIEL MCBRIEN**  
**KAUFFMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION**

*The concert weekend is sponsored by*

**BEBE and GRAHAM HUNT and THE CURRY FAMILY FOUNDATION**

*Friday's concert is sponsored by*

**BERYL RAFF and PAUL RUSSELL**

*Guest conductor Thomas Wilkins is sponsored by*

**BERNIE and SALLY JEZAK**

*Guest artist Ray Ushikubo is sponsored by the*

**ALMY LEGACY FUND**

*Additional support provided by*



R. CROSBY KEMPER, JR. FUND



### THOMAS WILKINS, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Devoted to promoting a lifelong enthusiasm for music, Thomas Wilkins brings energy and commitment to audiences of all ages. He is hailed as a master at communicating and connecting with audiences. Wilkins is principal conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, the Boston Symphony's artistic advisor for education and community engagement and principal guest conductor of the Virginia Symphony, and holds Indiana University's Henry A. Upper Chair of Orchestral Conducting established by the late Barbara and David Jacobs. He completed his long and successful tenure as music director of the Omaha Symphony at the close of the 2020/2021 season. Other past positions have included resident conductor of the Detroit Symphony and Florida Orchestra (Tampa Bay) and associate conductor of

the Richmond (Virginia) Symphony. He also has served on the music faculties of North Park University (Chicago), the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

Following his highly successful first season with the Boston Symphony, the Boston Globe named him among the "Best People and Ideas of 2011." In 2014, Wilkins received the prestigious "Outstanding Artist" award at the Nebraska Governor's Arts Awards for his significant contribution to music in the state. A notable honor came in 2018 when Wilkins received the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society conferred by Boston's Longy School of Music. In 2019 the Virginia Symphony honored Wilkins with their annual Dreamer Award. Further recognition of his accomplishments came in 2022 when the Omaha Entertainment and Arts Awards presented him with their Lifetime Achievement Award for Music, the Boston Conservatory awarded him an honorary doctorate and he was recipient of the League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton Award.

Wilkins has led orchestras throughout the United States, including the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cincinnati Symphony and National Symphony. Additionally, he has guest conducted the Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras, the symphonies of Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Baltimore, San Diego, Seattle, Louisiana, North Carolina and Utah, and the Buffalo and Rochester philharmonics, as well as at the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago.

With a strong commitment to community, Wilkins has participated on several boards of directors, including the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, the Charles Drew Health Center (Omaha), the Center Against Spouse Abuse in Tampa Bay, and the Museum of Fine Arts and the Academy Preparatory Center in St. Petersburg, Florida. Currently he serves as chairman of the board for the Raymond James Charitable Endowment Fund and as national ambassador for the nonprofit World Pediatric Project headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, which provides children throughout Central America and the Caribbean with critical surgical and diagnostic care.

A native of Norfolk, Virginia, Wilkins is a graduate of the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music and the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He and his wife Sheri-Lee are the proud parents of twin daughters, Erica and Nicole.



### RAY USHIKUBO, PIANO

Ray Ushikubo is a Japanese-American pianist and violinist who has soloed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, performed on the stages of Carnegie Hall and Walt Disney Concert Hall and appeared on NBC's "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno." Since his solo orchestral debut at age 10 with the Young Musicians Foundation Orchestra in Los Angeles' Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Ushikubo has soloed with the Charlotte, Fort Collins, Hilton Head, Modesto, Pasadena and San Diego symphony orchestras; the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; and the Buffalo, Los Angeles and Reno philharmonics.

A recipient of the 2014 Davidson Fellow Laureate Award, Ushikubo also won the 2017 Hilton Head International Piano Competition and the 2016 Piano

Concerto Competition at the Aspen Music Festival and School, where he soloed with the Aspen Conducting Academy Orchestra. He entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2018, studying piano with Robert McDonald and violin with Shmuel Ashkenasi and Pamela Frank.

Ushikubo enjoys performing in a variety of settings. He performed as piano soloist at the Los Angeles Japanese American Cultural and Community Center for a peace ceremony honoring victims of the bombing of Hiroshima. He has also appeared as a guest artist on Rob Kapilow's "What Makes It Great?" series at the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts; on San Diego's Mainly Mozart series, "Mozart and the Mind"; and at the Griffith Observatory as part of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's "Immortal Beloved" celebration. He has been featured as a Young Artist in Residence on American Public Radio's "Performance Today," and he has been featured several times on National Public Radio's "From the Top." He has also been highlighted as a speaker on TEDx Redmond.

Ushikubo began studying the piano at age 5 and the violin at age 6. His past teachers have included Robert Lipsett, Ory Shihor and Aaron Rosand. His other interests include golfing, watching movies and listening to heavy metal music.

**SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR****Suite from *Hiawatha* (1898)****18 minutes**

*Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, gong, suspended cymbals, tam-tam, tambourine, tom-tom, triangle, harp and strings.*

**THE STORY**

In 1855, the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published his epic poem “The Song of Hiawatha.” Despite mixed critical reviews, the poem enjoyed a great degree of popularity. Several decades later, a young Black British composer read the poem and was immediately captivated. The 22-year-old Samuel Coleridge-Taylor set to work composing a cantata, with text from the poem, entitled *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast*. Coleridge-Taylor was coming off a great success earlier in the year with his orchestral *Ballade in A Minor*, and interest in the new composition was high. Strapped for cash, the composer sold the rights for 15 guineas, having no way of knowing he would have earned thousands had he kept the rights. The score was published prior to the premiere and sold so many copies — 200,000 by an early count — that his publisher commissioned a sequel (*The Death of Minnehaha*) before a single note of the piece had been performed.

So much hype attended the premiere, on November 11, 1898, that many people were turned away at the door. Two people who did attend, though, were Sir Hubert Parry, a composer and music historian, and Sir Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame). Parry wrote that the performance was “one of the most remarkable events in modern English musical history.” Sullivan later wrote in his diary, “Much impressed by the lad’s genius. He is a *composer*, not a music-maker. The music is fresh and original — he has melody and harmony in abundance, and his scoring is brilliant and full of colour — at times luscious, rich and sensual. The work was very well done.” The cantata was an immediate success, and for the next 50 years it was rivalled only by Handel’s *Messiah* and Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* as the most-performed choral work in England.

Coleridge-Taylor started arranging a suite of music from the cantata for a ballet performance in 1912, but left it unfinished, as only a piano sketch, at his premature death. Percy Fletcher, a fellow British composer, orchestrated it and published in 1919 the suite you’ll hear today.

**THE MUSIC**

The Suite has five movements. “The Wooing” represents Hiawatha’s introduction to Minnehaha, a lovely young woman from an enemy tribe. “The Marriage Feast” begins with a fanfare in the woodwinds and a drum roll, and features a central section marked “poco pomposo” (a little pompously). The third movement has two sections: “Bird Scene,” with twittering woodwinds, and “Conjurer’s Dance,” in which Hiawatha hunts down a troublemaker. “Departure” dramatizes Hiawatha’s leave-taking of his people — “I am going, O my people / On a long and distant journey; / Many moons and many winters / Will have come, and will have vanished / Ere I come again to see you.” The final movement, “Reunion,” builds to a glorious C-major finish. **AJH**

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

**SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875-1912)****Known for:**

- *Ballade in A Minor* (1898)
- *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast* (1898)
- *Symphonic Variations on an African Air* (1906)

- Not to be confused with the British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in London in 1875, the son of Alice Martin and Daniel Taylor, a doctor from Sierra Leone. Taylor left England to take a position in Gambia and Alice subsequently married a railway worker, settling in Croydon, a suburb of London. Growing up in a white working-class household, Coleridge-Taylor displayed musical talent early, training as a singer and violinist. Extended family and patrons paid his tuition at the Royal College of Music, where fellow students included notables Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Leopold Stokowski. Violin and piano lessons led to a scholarship and composition studies with Charles Villiers Stanford.
- Championed by Edward Elgar, Coleridge-Taylor composed *The Song of Hiawatha*, a trilogy of cantatas that propelled the young composer to fame but not fortune — needing cash, he sold the rights to the most popular section of the work for just £15. His newfound popularity as a composer and conductor led to three tours of the U.S. in 1904 (when he met President Theodore Roosevelt), 1906 and 1910, promoted by the Coleridge-Taylor Society which was formed to advance his music in America. During his last tour, some people referred to him as “the Black Mahler”; Gustav Mahler was then music director of the New York Philharmonic.
- Coleridge-Taylor married Jessie Walmisley, a fellow student at the Royal College of Music, in December 1899. The couple had two children, Hiawatha and Avril, who both pursued musical careers.
- It is amazing that Coleridge-Taylor found opportunity to compose close to 100 works, given the demands on his time from an active conducting and teaching career taken on to meet financial obligations. At one time or another, Coleridge-Taylor served as professor at the Crystal Palace School of Music, Trinity College of Music in London and Guildhall School of Music, as well as conductor of the Handel Society. He worked constantly, frequently traveling to far-flung engagements, with adverse impact on his health. He collapsed in a railway station in August 1912, dying soon afterwards from pneumonia at the age of 37.
- As a Black composer, Coleridge-Taylor fought prejudice, developing relationships with activists Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois and Paul Laurence Dunbar, and serving as the youngest delegate to the first Pan African Congress in London in 1900, attended by many prominent Black civil rights leaders. He explored his father’s racial heritage by drawing on African and West Indian influences to create his own unique musical voice. He published *Twenty-Four Negro Melodies* in 1905 and stated his aim in the introduction: “What Brahms has done for the Hungarian folk music, Dvořák for the Bohemian, and Grieg for the Norwegian, I have tried to do for Negro melodies.” **ETW**



## GEORGE GERSHWIN

### *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924)

15 minutes

Solo piano, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 2 alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, 3 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, gong, snare drum, triangle, banjo and strings.

### THE STORY

George Gershwin was riding a rising wave of popularity in 1923. Singer Al Jolson had made his song “Swanee” into a hit that sold more than 1 million copies of sheet music and stimulated demand for more. Early success on Broadway brought Gershwin additional renown and he came to the attention of jazz bandleader Paul Whiteman. In its early days, jazz was considered disreputable by many people and Whiteman, despite his considerable financial success with jazz, sought respect. Toward that end, he organized a concert intended to demonstrate jazz’s sophistication, called “An Experiment in Modern Music.” Whiteman later commented, “We were trying to get a favorable hearing from the most hidebound creatures in the world — educated musicians. It was educated musicians who scorned Wagner, resisted Debussy, and roasted Chopin.” Whiteman asked Gershwin to compose a concerto bridging the jazz and classical worlds. While Gershwin aspired to write “serious” music, he was in the midst of writing a Broadway show, *Sweet Little Devil*, and didn’t commit to the request.

Late on January 3, 1924, George and his brother Ira were playing billiards with a friend when Ira read an article in the New York Tribune stating “George Gershwin is at work on a jazz concerto” for Whiteman’s concert at Aeolian Hall on February 12. Caught off-guard, Gershwin contacted Whiteman who persuaded the overbooked composer to follow through on the commission by having superb arranger Ferde Grofé (perhaps best known for his own *Grand Canyon Suite*) orchestrate the work for the Palais Royal Band. On January 7, while on a train to Boston, Gershwin envisaged *Rhapsody in Blue*:

It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang, that is so often so stimulating to a composer — I frequently hear music in the very heart of the noise . . . And there I suddenly heard, and even saw on paper — the complete construction of the Rhapsody, from beginning to end. No new themes came to me, but I worked on the thematic material already in my mind and tried to conceive the composition as a whole. I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance.

Writing in great haste, Gershwin delivered piano score pages to Grofé daily in order to speed the work along. Several of the solo piano passages were not even written out: Whiteman had to wait for Gershwin to nod his head in order to cue the band at the premiere.

Reportedly joining the critics in the audience was a vast array of musical luminaries including composers Sergei Rachmaninoff, Igor Stravinsky and John Philip Sousa; violinists Jascha Heifetz, Fritz Kreisler and Mischa Elman; and conductors Leopold Stokowski, Walter Damrosch and Willem Mengelberg. While the critics were divided

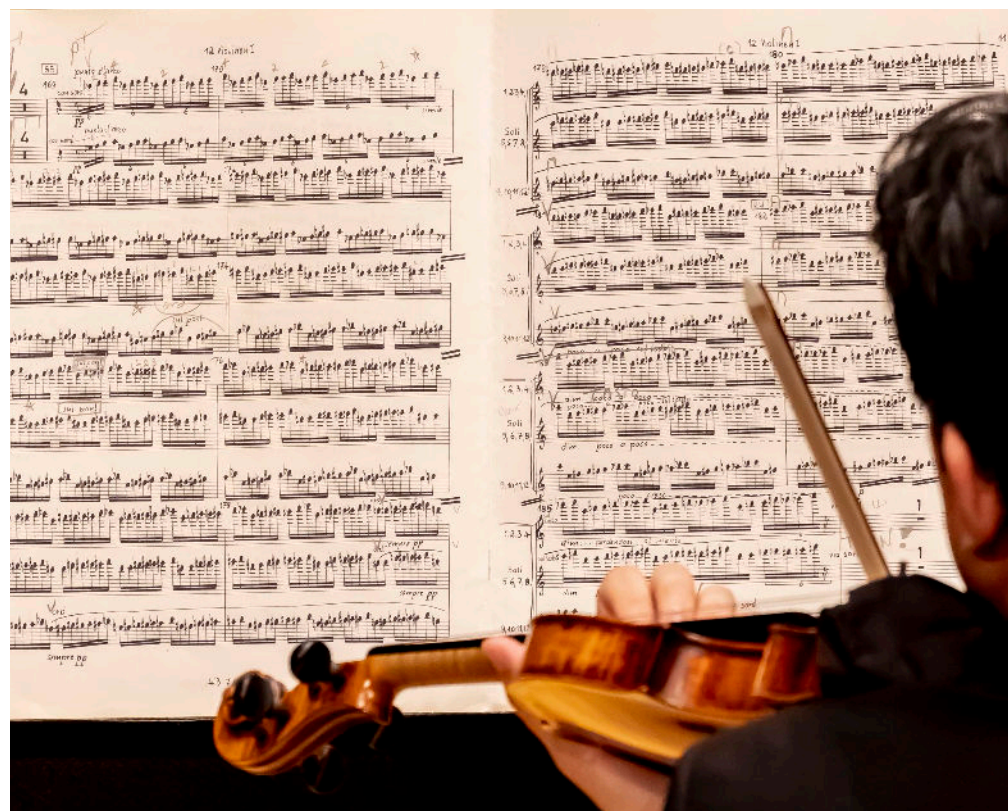
about *Rhapsody*, its popular appeal further propelled Gershwin’s already meteoric career.

The piece was originally titled *An American Rhapsody* but Ira had seen an exhibit of paintings by James McNeill Whistler with titles such as “Symphony in White” and “Arrangement in Gray and Black,” which appealed to his lyricist instincts, and he convinced George to adopt the title *Rhapsody in Blue*.

### THE MUSIC

Originally scored for dance band, *Rhapsody in Blue* is best known in Grofé’s 1942 full orchestra version. At a rehearsal for the premiere, the band’s clarinetist Ross Gorman played the iconic opening solo with a glissando, likely joking around. Gershwin loved the sound and immediately adopted it.

Given the free form of a rhapsody, Gershwin introduces most of the work’s thematic material early and draws upon individual melodies or riffs in flashes of inspiration. Leonard Bernstein once described it as “a string of separate paragraphs stuck together. The themes are terrific — inspired, God-given.” The episodic nature of the work contributes to its sense of spontaneity and easy likeability. A certain improvisatory flair combined with syncopated rhythms and generous application of blues scales adds to *Rhapsody*’s lasting appeal. **ETW**







### GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898-1937)

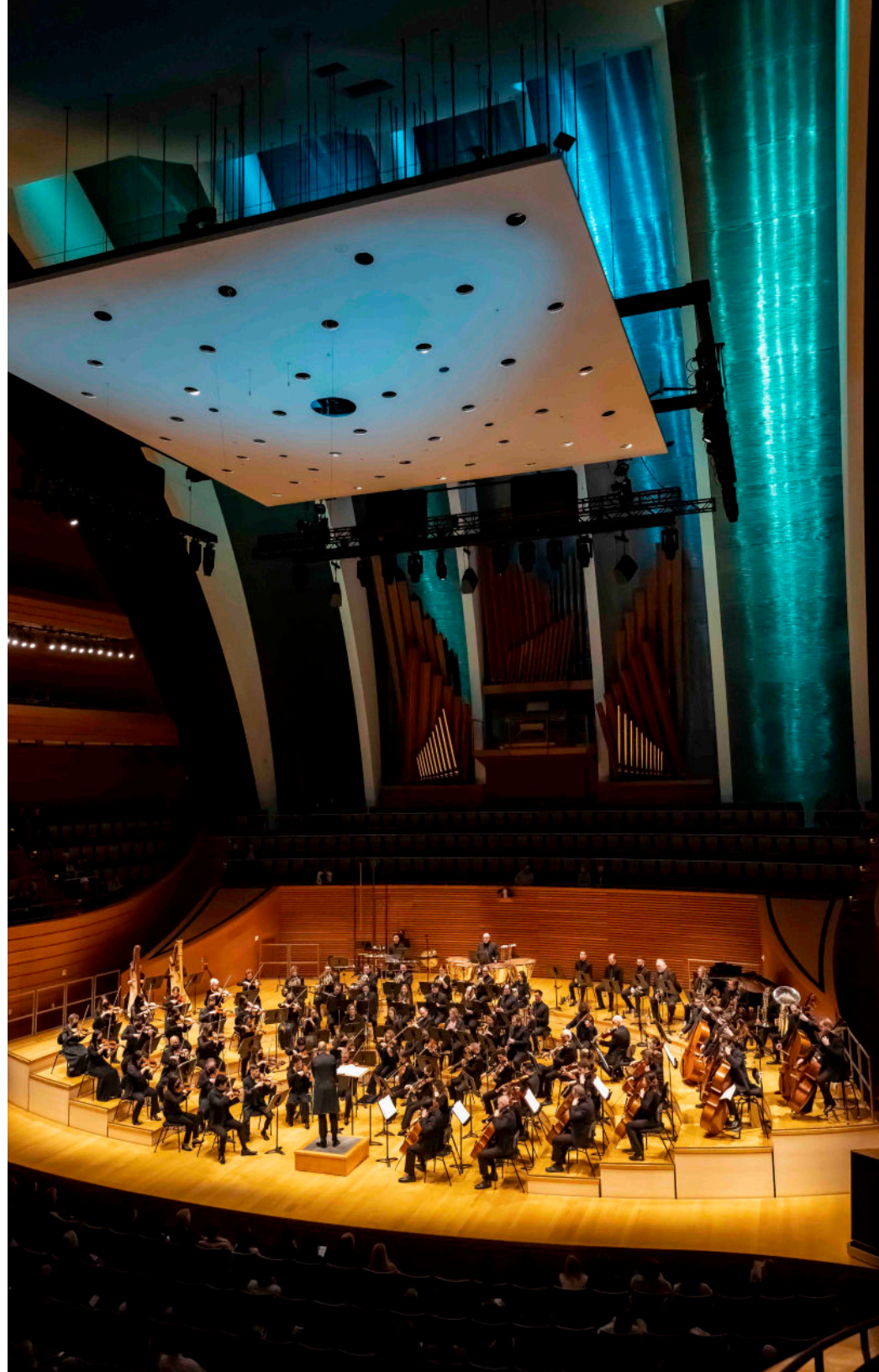
#### Known for:

- *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924)
- *An American in Paris* (1928)
- "I Got Rhythm" (1930)
- *Porgy and Bess* (1935)

- Jacob Gershowitz — better known to the world as George Gershwin — was the second son born to Russian Jewish immigrants in Brooklyn, New York. The family acquired a piano for older brother Ira to study music but it was George who began learning to play by ear, emulating the songs he heard at school. At 14, he began piano lessons with Charles Hambitzer who quickly recognized the boy's innate talent, writing to his sister: "I have a new pupil who will make his mark if anybody will. The boy is a genius." Hambitzer introduced Gershwin to classical music as well as standard piano technique. Gershwin made rapid progress and dropped out of school at 15 in order to take a job as a song plugger for music publisher Jerome H. Remick & Co. in Tin Pan Alley.
- Gershwin's first published song was the 1916 number "When You Want 'Em, You Can't Get 'Em," earning only 50 cents for the ambitious young composer. He churned out songs rapidly and had his first national hit in 1919 with "Swanee," popularized by singer Al Jolson. He composed works for Broadway and teamed up with brother Ira in 1924 for a string of hit musicals, including *Lady, Be Good!*; *Oh, Kay!*; *Funny Face*; *Strike Up the Band*; *Girl Crazy*; and *Of Thee I Sing*.
- Gershwin's breakthrough classical work was *Rhapsody in Blue*, composed in 1924 at the behest of jazz bandleader Paul Whiteman. A host of eminent musicians attended its premiere, including conductor Walter Damrosch who commissioned Concerto in F (which was in turn premiered at Carnegie Hall in December 1925 with Gershwin at the keyboard). *An American in Paris* soon followed (1928) along with

his Second Rhapsody, which Gershwin premiered with the Boston Symphony in 1932 conducted by Serge Koussevitzky.

- There are several anecdotes of uncertain authenticity that Gershwin sought musical instruction from renowned composers, including Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg and Maurice Ravel. Stravinsky asked about Gershwin's income and on learning the considerable amount, supposedly responded "Perhaps you should teach me." Schoenberg reportedly turned him down, saying "I would only make you a bad Schoenberg, and you're such a good Gershwin already." Ravel demurred with "Why become a second-rate Ravel when you're already a first-rate Gershwin?"
- Struck by the dramatic potential of DuBose Heyward's novel "Porgy," Gershwin teamed up with DuBose and Dorothy Heyward along with brother Ira to write *Porgy and Bess*, his most ambitious work. Calling it a "folk opera," Gershwin took *Porgy and Bess* to Broadway in 1935, where it failed to achieve the commercial success of his other work.
- Gershwin played his Concerto in F with the Los Angeles Philharmonic on February 11, 1937, and uncharacteristically stumbled over some passagework. A medical checkup didn't reveal any problems but he later began complaining of blinding headaches and olfactory hallucinations. Mood swings and coordination problems began increasing and he collapsed into a coma on July 9, 1937. Surgeons removed a large brain tumor on July 11 but Gershwin died later that morning, devastating friends and admirers the world over. **ETW**



## CARL NIELSEN

### Symphony No. 4, “The Inextinguishable” (1916)

35 minutes

*Piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, 2 sets of timpani and strings.*

### THE STORY

Two years prior to the premiere of Carl Nielsen’s Fourth Symphony, he wrote in a letter to his wife:

I have an idea for a new composition, which has no programme but will express what we understand by the spirit of life or manifestations of life, that is: everything that moves, that wants to live ... just life and motion, though varied — very varied — yet connected, and as if constantly on the move, in one big movement or stream. I must have a word or a short title to express this; that will be enough. I cannot quite explain what I want, but what I want is good.

By 1916, he had settled on a Danish word to explain what he was after: “Uudslukkelige.” The English translation “inextinguishable,” though the closest equivalent, loses much of the nuance of the original. According to Jesper Buhl, founder of a Danish classical music record label, “In Danish we will associate ‘slukke’ with something that will end and will never come back again ... when your life is over, one can say that God will ‘slukke’ your life. It will not come back. Making that word [through the prefixes ‘u-’ (negation) and ‘ud-’ (‘out’)] into something that will never stop, never close, never end is ... poetic and beautiful and very deep and intense.”

The nickname of the symphony is not meant to be programmatic — describing a particular struggle and victory — but rather to describe the elemental life force that Nielsen considered music to have. He wrote: “Life is indomitable and inextinguishable; the struggle, the wrestling, the generation and the wasting away go on today as yesterday, tomorrow as today, and everything returns. Once more: music is life, and like it inextinguishable.”

### THE MUSIC

The symphony is written in four movements that follow each other without the usual pause in between. It begins with a bang, with almost every instrument in the orchestra playing during the first four pages of the score. After the music calms, listen for a lyrical melody played by two clarinets in harmony: this will return as the climax of the first movement, and also play a pivotal role in the third and fourth movements. The second movement begins with a quiet, lilting line played by the violins that is taken up by clarinets. The third movement again has violins at its beginning, accompanied by interjections in the timpani and the rest of the strings. The fourth movement features a famous “battle” between the two sets of timpani, after which the clarinet melody from the first movement returns, played gloriously and at full strength by the whole orchestra as the inextinguishable life force of music triumphs. *AJH*



### CARL NIELSEN (1865-1931)

#### Known for:

- Symphony No. 2, “The Four Temperaments” (1902)
- *Maskarade* (opera, 1906)
- Symphony No. 4, “The Inextinguishable” (1916)

- Carl Nielsen, Denmark’s greatest composer, came from humble beginnings. He was born to a poor family in 1865 on the island of Funen; his father was a house painter by day and a fiddler and cornet player by night. Nielsen studied violin and also played bugle and trombone for an army band as a teenager. He studied violin, music theory and composition at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen, graduating in 1886 with average grades.
- Nielsen had various violin gigs in the next few years, along with the premieres of several of his early works. In 1889 he landed a position as a violinist in the prestigious Royal Danish Orchestra, which provided a steady income for him first as a violinist and later as an assistant conductor. He stayed with the orchestra through 1914, after which he conducted the Musikforeningen orchestra and taught at the Royal Academy until his death.
- Outside Denmark, Nielsen is best known for his six symphonies. His works are much better known within Denmark, and he is more famous for his opera *Maskarade* and his many art songs in Danish. One critic describes the songs as “the most representative part of the country’s most representative composer’s output.” In 2006, the Danish ministry of culture created a list of the twelve greatest musical works of Denmark; three of the twelve were by Nielsen.
- Nielsen makes use of Danish folk music, though not in such an overt way as some of his contemporaries, like Béla Bartók or Jean Sibelius. His harmonies grew more complex and chromatic over the course of his career, and he was fond of progressive tonality — ending a piece in a different key than he started in. His philosophy of music was summed up in a 1907 letter to a fellow composer: “I advise you again and again ... *Tonality, Clarity, Strength.*”
- Nielsen’s 60th birthday in 1925 saw concerts and awards in his honor, but he took a different view of the occasion. He wrote: “If I could live my life again, I would chase any thoughts of Art out of my head and be apprenticed to a merchant or pursue some other useful trade the results of which could be visible in the end ... I have lived as a foolish dreamer and believed that the more I worked and exerted myself in my art, the better position I would achieve. No, it is no enviable fate to be an artist.”
- In October 1931, Nielsen had a series of heart attacks and was rushed to the National Hospital in Copenhagen. He died a few days later, surrounded by his family. His last words to them were, “You are standing here as if you were waiting for something.” *AJH*