



the Music is Balling

Featuring Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra
& Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2
performed by Yefim Bronfman

Kansas City Symphony
MICHAEL STERN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

the Music is Balling

Where will it take you?

To a new kind of classical concert in which the wonder of live symphonic music spills from Helzberg Hall to spread a watercolor of musical expression in the Great Hall.

How does it make you feel?

Inspired by the emotion of Ortiz, Bartók, and Brahms, take note of the feelings that stir within you. On the colorful cards handed out at intermission, jot down a word or two that captures the way one of these pieces made you feel.

Color our world!

Take your response card to the lobby where paint-smocked performers help you add your expression to the music of this evening's art installation. Just as tonight's music colors your world, your response colors ours.

— Stacy Barton, Creative Director

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ARE NOT PERMITTED.**

This program will last approximately
two hours, which includes one intermission.

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Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
Friday, October 6, 2023 at 8PM
Saturday, October 7, 2023 at 8PM
Sunday, October 8, 2023 at 2PM

Kansas City Symphony
Michael Stern, conductor
Yefim Bronfman, piano

GABRIELA ORTIZ

Kauyumari

BÉLA BARTÓK

Concerto for Orchestra

- I. Introduzione
- II. Giuoco delle coppie
- III. Elegia
- IV. Intermezzo interrotto
- V. Finale

Intermission

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major for
Piano and Orchestra, op. 83
Yefim Bronfman, Piano

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Allegro appassionato
- III. Andante
- IV. Allegretto grazioso

The 2023/24 season is generously sponsored by
Shirley and Barnett C. Helzberg, Jr.

The Classical Series is sponsored by the
— MURIEL MCBRIEN —
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The concert weekend is sponsored by
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Friday's concert is sponsored by
**Anne and Howard Elsberry
Judy Kirk**

Saturday's concert is sponsored by
Wallace and Mary Fern Souder

Guest artist Yefim Bronfman is sponsored by
**Dr. and Mrs. Roger Jackson
Richard Jensen, in memory of Gay Dannelly**

Michael Stern CONDUCTOR

Michael Stern's celebrated 19-year tenure as music director of the Kansas City Symphony is remarkable for the orchestra's artistic ascent, organizational development and stability, and the extraordinary growth of its varied audiences. With a determined focus on impeccable musicianship and creative programming, Stern and the orchestra have partnered with Grammy® Award-winning Reference Recordings for an ongoing series of highly praised CDs.

Stern is also music director of the National Repertory Orchestra, a summer music festival in Breckenridge, Colorado, as well as the newly rebranded Orchestra Lumos, formerly the Stamford (CT) Symphony. He was recently named artistic advisor of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, one of Canada's foremost orchestral ensembles, and following a 22-year tenure as founding artistic director of Iris Orchestra in Germantown, Tennessee, he now serves the newly reimagined Iris Collective as artistic advisor.

Stern has led orchestras throughout Europe and Asia, including the Budapest and Vienna radio symphonies, the Helsinki, Israel, London, Moscow and Royal Stockholm philharmonics, London Symphony, National Symphony of Taiwan, Orchestre de Paris and Tokyo's NHK Symphony, among many others. In North America, Stern has conducted the Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, Indianapolis, National (Washington, D.C.), Montreal, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Seattle and Toronto symphonies, the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras and the New York Philharmonic. He has been a regular guest at the Aspen Music Festival and School, where he works with students in the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen.



Stern received his music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where his major teacher was the noted conductor and scholar Max Rudolf. Stern co-edited the third edition of Rudolf's famous textbook, "The Grammar of Conducting," and also edited a new volume of Rudolf's collected writings and correspondence. He is a 1981 graduate of Harvard University, where he earned a degree in American history.

Yefim Bronfman PIANO

Internationally recognized as one of today's most acclaimed and admired pianists, Yefim Bronfman stands among a handful of artists regularly sought by festivals, orchestras, conductors and recital series. His commanding technique, power and exceptional lyrical gifts are consistently acknowledged by the press and audiences alike.

Following summer festival appearances in Verbier and Salzburg and on tour with mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená, the 2022/23 season included the opening week of the Chicago Symphony, followed by return visits to the New York Philharmonic and the Pittsburgh, Houston, Philadelphia, New World, Pacific, Madison, New Jersey, Toronto and Montreal symphonies. In Europe, he toured with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and was also heard with the Berlin Philharmonic, Bayerischer Rundfunk (Munich), Bamberg, Dresden Staatskapelle, Maggio Fiorentino and Zurich Opera orchestras.

Born in Tashkent in the Soviet Union, Yefim Bronfman immigrated to Israel with his family in 1973, where he studied with pianist Arie Vardi, head of the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University. In the United States, he studied at the Juilliard School, Marlboro School of Music and Curtis Institute of Music, under Rudolf Firkusny, Leon Fleisher and Rudolf Serkin. A recipient of the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize, one of the highest honors given to American instrumentalists, in 2010 he was further honored as the recipient of the Jean Gimbel Lane prize in piano performance from Northwestern University and in 2015 with an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music.



Gabriela Ortiz (b. 1964)

Latin Grammy® Award-nominated Gabriela Ortiz is one of the foremost composers in Mexico today. Her musical language achieves an extraordinary and expressive synthesis of tradition and the avant-garde, combining high art, folk music and jazz in novel, frequently refined and always personal ways. She has written music for dance, theater and cinema, and has actively collaborated with poets, playwrights and historians. Her creative process focuses on the connections between gender issues, social justice, environmental concerns and the burden of racism, as well as the phenomenon of multiculturalism caused by globalization, technological development and mass migrations.

Her music has been commissioned and played by prestigious ensembles the world over, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, National Orchestra of Bretagne, Cincinnati Symphony, Kronos Quartet, Tambuco Percussion Quartet, Hungarian Philharmonic, Malmö Symphony, Simon Bolívar Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, among others.

Among Ortiz's many honors are Mexico's National Prize for Arts and Literature, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, Fulbright Fellowship, first prize of the Silvestre Revueltas National Chamber Music Competition, Banff Center for the Arts Residency and the Mozart Medal Award.



Born in Mexico City to a musical family, Ortiz trained with the eminent composer Mario Lavista at the National Conservatory of Music and Federico Ibarra at the National University of Mexico. Following study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, she earned a doctorate in electroacoustic music composition at The City University in London. She currently teaches composition at the Mexican University of Mexico City.

“ Among the Huichol people of Mexico, *Kauyumari* means “blue deer.” The blue deer represents a spiritual guide, one that is transformed through an extended pilgrimage into a hallucinogenic cactus called peyote. It allows the Huichol to communicate with their ancestors, do their bidding, and take on their role as guardians of the planet. Each year, these Native Mexicans embark on a symbolic journey to “hunt” the blue deer, making offerings in gratitude for having been granted access to the invisible world, through which they also are able to heal the wounds of the soul.

When I received the commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic to compose a piece that would reflect on our return to the stage following the pandemic, I immediately thought of the blue deer and its power to enter the world of the intangible as akin to a celebration of the reopening of live music. Specifically, I thought of a Huichol melody sung by the De La Cruz family — dedicated to recording ancestral folklore — that I used for the final movement of my piece, *Altar de Muertos* (Altar of the Dead), commissioned by the Kronos String Quartet in 1997.

I used this material within the orchestral context and elaborated on the construction and progressive development of the melody and its accompaniment in such a way that it would symbolize the blue deer. This in turn was transformed into an orchestral texture which gradually evolves into a complex rhythm pattern, to such a degree that the melody itself becomes unrecognizable (the imaginary effect of peyote and our awareness of the invisible realm), giving rise to a choral wind section while maintaining an incisive rhythmic accompaniment as a form of reassurance that the world will naturally follow its course.

While composing this piece, I noted once again how music has the power to grant us access to the intangible, healing our wounds and binding us to what can only be expressed through sound.

Although life is filled with interruptions, *Kauyumari* is a comprehension and celebration of the fact that each of these rifts is also a new beginning. ”

— Gabriela Ortiz

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, bongo drum, claves, cymbals, glockenspiel, jawbone, log drum, metal guiro, seed pod rattle, shakers, sistrum, snare drum, tam-tam, tambourine, xylophone, harp and strings.

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)

- Béla Bartók, one of Hungary's most famous composers, 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*.
- 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 1904, 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. They found that the melodies Brahms and Liszt had drawn on for their dances and rhapsodies were not in fact Magyar (Hungarian) folk songs but songs of the Roma people. The pair of researchers published a collection of folk songs in 1906, and continued the work throughout their lives. In all, they collected over 10,000 songs from Eastern Europe and beyond, laying 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, incorporating more chromaticism and dissonance. 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 *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 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 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*. He passed away in September 1945, his funeral drawing only ten people. He was buried 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 Farkasrét Cemetery beside the remains of his wife, following a funeral accompanied by full state honors.

— AJ Harbison

Known for:
The Miraculous Mandarin (ballet, 1918)
Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta (1936)
Concerto for Orchestra (1943)

CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA

1943 | 40 minutes



Perhaps one of the most dramatic examples of “the music calling” to a composer occurred after the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók composed his Sixth String Quartet in 1939. This might well have been his last composition had it not been for Serge Koussevitzky, the music director of the Boston Symphony. Bartók had fallen gravely ill at the beginning of 1943, and was languishing in a New York hospital with an undiagnosed illness. The great conductor paid him a visit to personally give him a commission for an orchestra work in memory of Koussevitzky’s wife Natalie. The story goes that Bartók was so moved he rose from his hospital bed and walked out of the hospital to get to work.

He completed the 40-minute score for a large orchestra in a mere eight weeks, finishing it on October 8, 1943. Koussevitzky premiered the work with the Boston Symphony on December 1, 1944; Bartók was present (with, in his words, the “grudgingly granted permission” of his doctor) and received the acclamation of both critics and audience as the piece was a complete success. He wrote, “The performance was excellent. Koussevitzky says it is the ‘best orchestra piece of the last 25 years’ (including the works of his idol, Shostakovich!).” The fact that Bartók finished such a legendary piece in just eight weeks while in failing health is a testament to the power of musical inspiration, lending even more drama to an already fascinating piece.

In a program note for the premiere, Bartók wrote, “The general mood of the work represents, apart from the jesting second movement, a gradual transition from the sternness of the first movement and the lugubrious death-song of the third, to the life-assertion of the last one.” The layout of the piece is a palindrome: two long outer movements in classical sonata form frame two scherzo-like movements (including the “jesting second movement”) surrounding the dark “night-music” of the third.

The transcendent power of music to connect people and cultures was something Bartók believed in, and he used that belief to incorporate many different influences into his music. Bartók stated, “My true guiding principle ... [is] the ideal of the brotherhood of peoples, despite war and all conflict. It is this ideal which I work with all my power to serve through my music; this is why I do not avoid any influence, be it from Slovak, Romanian, Arabic or any other source.”

Concertos are usually written for a virtuosic soloist (a violinist, a pianist or another instrumentalist) with orchestra, so a “Concerto for Orchestra” seems like a contradiction in terms. But Bartók explained that the title came from the treatment of each orchestral instrument in a soloistic manner. Listen especially to the brass instruments in the first movement, the pairs of instruments in the second movement, and the strings’ blazingly fast perpetual motion throughout much of the finale.

— AJ Harbison



Fun Fact:

Due to the very exposed B-natural to F glissando in this piece, the trombone part is nearly impossible on most modern bass trombones. This being the case, a specialty trombone was developed with an additional slide so that the glissando can be played. Keep your ear open during the fourth movement to hear it.

3 flutes, piccolo, 3 oboes,
English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet,
3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns,
3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba,
timpani, bass drum, cymbals,
side drum, tam-tam, triangle,
2 harps and strings.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

- Brahms started piano studies at age 7, no doubt encouraged by his father who was a double bassist with the Hamburg Philharmonic.
- There is considerable academic debate whether Brahms was forced to play piano in Hamburg's waterfront bars and brothels as a youth because of his family's poverty. Brahms is alleged to have told stories about the experience but many of the tales have questionable provenance.
- By all reports, Brahms could be cynical, ill-tempered, blunt, tactless, prickly and gruff. "I am only too often reminded that I am a difficult person to get along with. I am growing accustomed to bearing the consequences of this."
- Brahms came to prominence with the assistance of Robert and Clara Schumann, whom he met in 1853. A composer and influential music critic, Robert wrote an article celebrating Brahms as a genius and heir to Beethoven's legacy. When Robert was hospitalized in 1854, Brahms helped Clara manage the Schumann household (and its 7 children). Although the ultimate truth of their relationship remains obscure, it is documented that Brahms and Clara were strongly attracted to one another. Robert's death in 1856 made marriage possible but they chose not. Brahms never married and Clara never remarried. Their relationship deepened over the years and, while not immune to disagreements, they remained devoted to one another for the rest of their lives.
- Cambridge University offered Brahms an honorary doctorate of music but he declined it. The University of Breslau (now University of Wrocław in Poland) conferred an honorary doctorate of music on the curmudgeonly composer and suggested that he write a piece in appreciation of the award. The practical-joke-loving Brahms responded with *Academic Festival Overture*, a work he described as a "rollicking potpourri of student's songs" associated more with drinking than studious endeavors.

— Eric T. Williams

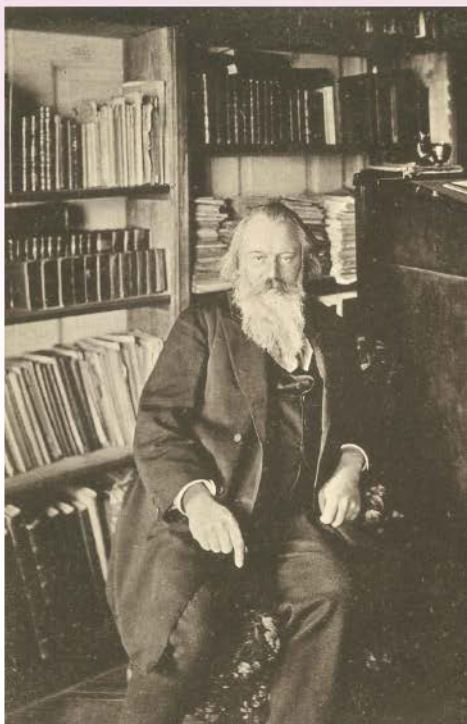
Known for:
Violin Concerto (1878)
Hungarian Dances (1869-1879)
A German Requiem (1857-1868)

CONCERTO NO. 2 IN B-FLAT MAJOR FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 83

1881 | 50 minutes

For any young composer, the fear of failure can be debilitating. Imagine what it would feel like to pour your heart and soul into a piece of music, only to have it dismissed by audiences. As hard as it is to believe now given his iconic status, that's exactly what happened to the German composer Johannes Brahms when he premiered his First Piano Concerto in 1859 at just 25 years old. At the first performance the audience reception was cool. At its next performance, five days later in Leipzig, it was much worse. Brahms wrote to a friend, "My Concerto has had a brilliant and decisive — failure." The few people clapping in the audience were drowned out by a chorus of hissing. He vowed, "A second one will sound very different."

A lesser composer might have cracked under the pressure of such a failure, but not Brahms. He would roar back in triumph with his second concerto, albeit decades later — it took the always self-critical composer 22 years to finally complete it. He wrote to a close friend on July 7, 1881, "It is a tiny, tiny little concerto with a tiny, tiny little scherzo." His German words for little concerto and little scherzo, "Konzertel" and "Scherzerl", use the diminutive ending -erl — somewhat like saying "concerto-ette" or "scherzo-ette" in English. He was being coy, since the concerto was 50 minutes long and most likely the longest and most complex piano concerto ever written to that point.



The premiere of the Second Piano Concerto took place on November 9, 1881, with Brahms as the soloist. It was an immediate hit (in stark contrast to the First) and in the next several months Brahms performed it in a dozen cities across Europe. Where others might have given up, Brahms succeeded. The existence of his Second Piano Concerto is proof that when the music calls, the power of that inspiration is stronger than the fear of failure or even the passage of time itself.

The “concerto-ette” is in four movements, like a symphony, instead of the usual three. The first movement starts with a solo horn call; the piano traverses most of the keyboard in an answering echo, and woodwinds, then strings enter almost as in response to the call. After a single phrase, though, the piano interrupts with a short solo cadenza (at the beginning of the movement instead of its typical placement near the end). From there, the movement proceeds along classical sonata form lines. The horn solo returns in the recapitulation, but first in a minor key, and the material of the cadenza returns as well; several minutes later, it comes back in the “right” major key.



The second movement, the “scherzo-ette,” is the most dramatic and stormy of the four movements; a central trio section in major provides a contrast to the minor key of the surrounding music.

The third movement is based on a yearning cello melody heard at the outset, then passed to violins and the piano. Brahms must have liked this melody, because he reused it five years later as the theme for his art song “Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer” (Ever gentler grows my slumber).

The finale is lighter in mood, with the recurring theme a lilting, almost skipping tune, with other melodies peppered in throughout the movement. The piano and orchestra trade themes back and forth until the decisive final chords.

— AJ Harbison

Solo piano, 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns,
2 trumpets, timpani and strings.



ABOUT THE KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

Founded in 1982 by R. Crosby Kemper, Jr. and a group of passionate music lovers, the Kansas City Symphony has rocketed to become one of the top 25 orchestras in the United States. During our 42-week season, we perform a huge range of orchestral and chamber music in our performance home, Helzberg Hall at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, one of the very best concert halls in America. The musicians of the Symphony also perform throughout the Kansas City metro region on our portable stage, the Mobile Music Box, and we serve as the orchestra for both the Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City. Michael Stern, the Symphony's music director, is finishing a 19-year tenure marked by artistic ascent, critical acclaim and national recognition for the orchestra. Starting in July 2024 we will welcome conductor and composer Matthias Pintscher as his successor. Matthias regularly conducts many of the world's best orchestras and opera companies and also ranks as one of the world's foremost composers of orchestral music.

Your Symphony includes 80 full-time musicians from around the world who call Kansas City home. Frequently joining them onstage is the 160-voice Symphony Chorus led by Charles Bruffy. Every season dozens of soloists perform with us — instrumentalists, singer/songwriters, tribute rock bands, even aerial artists. We also accompany your favorite films, playing the soundtrack live as the full movie is shown on Helzberg Hall's giant screen.

Between our concerts at the Kauffman Center, performances on the Mobile Music Box and community events like Celebration at the Station, the Symphony aspires to serve all of Kansas City through music. We belong to you, and to your neighbors, and to all the people you see throughout the community.

Music connects us; it has the unique ability to draw us closer to our inner selves and also closer to one other, transcending our differences. Every Symphony concert will take you on an emotional journey — a journey that's deeply personal but also a journey that we all experience together as one.

We're happy you are here. We are *your* Kansas City Symphony.

For more information, please visit kcsymphony.org.

KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

2023/24 SEASON ORCHESTRA ROSTER

Michael Stern, Music Director

FIRST VIOLINS

Jun Iwasaki, *Concertmaster*,
Miller Nichols Chair
Stirling Trent, *Associate Concertmaster*
Sunho Kim, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Anne-Marie Brown
Michael Brown
Betty Chen
Anthony DeMarco
Susan Goldenberg*
Tomoko Iguchi
Chiafei Lin
Dorris Dai Janssen
Filip LazovskiΔ
Vladimir Rykov
Alex Shum*

SECOND VIOLINS

Tamamo Someya Gibbs, *Principal*
Kristin Velicer, *Acting Associate Principal*
Minhye Helena Choi, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Arianna Brusubardis^
Mary Garcia Grant
Kazato Inouye
Rena Ishii
Paul Kim^
Stephanie Larsen
Jinyou Lee^
Sodam Lim
James Zabawa-MartinezΔ

VIOLAS

MingYu Hsu, *Principal*
Duncan Steele^, *Associate Principal*
Jessica Nance, *Assistant Principal*
Kent Brauningner
Sean Brumble
Marvin Gruenbaum
Jenifer Houck
Duke Lee
Jesse Yukimura

CELLOS

Mark Gibbs, *Principal*,
Robert A. Kipp Chair
Susie Yang, *Associate Principal*,
Richard Hill Chair
Alexander East, *Assistant Principal*
Matt BeckmannΔ
Maria Crosby
John Eadie
Lawrence Figg
Meredith McCook
Allen Probus

DOUBLE BASSES

Evan Halloin, *Acting Principal*
Richard Ryan, *Acting Associate Principal*
Nils Aardahl
Lena GoodsonΔ
Joseph Nunez
Keith WymerΔ
Caleb Quillen‡

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*
Matthew Lengas

ENGLISH HORN

Matthew Lengas

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

David Sullivan, *Acting Principal*
Landon and Sarah Rowland Chair
Alberto Suarez†, *Principal*
Elizabeth Gray, *Acting Associate Principal*
David Gamble
Stephen Multer, *Associate Principal Emeritus*
Benjamin BacniΔ

TRUMPETS

Julian Kaplan, *Principal*
James B. and Annabel Nutter Chair
George Goad, *Acting Associate Principal*
Steven Franklin‡, *Associate Principal*
Shea KelsayΔ

TROMBONES

Evelyn Carlson^, *Principal*
Porter Wyatt Henderson, *Associate Principal*
Jahleel SmithΔ

BASS TROMBONE

Jahleel SmithΔ

TUBA

Joe LeFevre, *Principal*, *Frank Byrne Chair*

TIMPANI

Timothy Jepson, *Principal*,
Michael and Susan Newburger Chair

PERCUSSION

David Yoon, *Acting Principal*
Justin OchoaΔ, *Acting Associate Principal*

HARP

Katie VenturaΔ, *Acting Principal*

LIBRARIANS

Elena Lence Talley, *Principal*
Fabrice Curtis

* Non-Rotating Musician

^ New Member

‡ On Leave of Absence

Δ One-Year Member

SEE WHO'S NEW

2023/24 Season New Musicians



BENJAMIN BACNI, *horn*

Ohio native Benjamin Bacni received degrees in horn performance from Bowling Green State University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Since 2019, he has been a member of the Wichita Symphony. Benjamin has performed across the Midwest with the Topeka Symphony, Music Theater of Wichita, Missouri Symphony, Tulsa Symphony, Symphony of Northwest Arkansas, Omaha Symphony and South Dakota Symphony, as well as the Buffalo Philharmonic. A frequent substitute musician with the Kansas City Symphony, Benjamin is excited to join the orchestra for the 2023/24 season. He spends his free time as an at-home baker, focusing on croissants and macarons.



MATT BECKMANN, *cello*

Cellist Matt Beckmann is glad to be joining the Kansas City Symphony for the 2023/24 season. Matt has been a frequent substitute and was a member of the orchestra for the 2014/15 season. Matt holds degrees from St. Olaf College and the New England Conservatory of Music. As a teacher and advocate for music education for all people of all ages, Matt has a raucous studio of cellists at the Kansas City Suzuki Academy, a program founded by his wife, Alyssa Hardie Beckmann, in 2015. He lives in Prairie Village with his wife and their two children, Miles (8) and Carina (6).



ARIANNA BRUSUBARDIS, *violin*

Latvian American violinist Arianna Brusubardis comes to the Kansas City Symphony from the Canton (Ohio) Symphony. She holds a bachelor's degree from the Juilliard School, where she studied under the guidance of Laurie Smukler. Arianna has toured Europe, South America and Asia with several orchestras and has performed with the Tanglewood Music Center and Spoleto Festival USA orchestras. As a soloist, Arianna has been featured on Wisconsin Public Radio's The Midday program and in concerts with the Milwaukee Symphony, Madison Symphony and the Cleveland Women's Orchestra, where she also held the position of concertmaster.



EVELYN CARLSON, *trombone*

A native New Yorker, Evelyn Carlson was appointed principal trombone of the Kansas City Symphony beginning with the 2023/24 season. She previously spent three seasons as assistant principal trombone of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. After working with Tony Mazzocchi in high school, Evelyn studied with Colin Williams and Nikki Abissi at Montclair State University in New Jersey before transferring to the Juilliard School. There she studied with Joseph Alessi, her idol from a young age. Evelyn has attended Music Academy of the West and the National Orchestral Institute, and has won multiple national competitions. She is excited to check out the buzz about Kansas City barbecue.



LENA GOODSON, *double bass*

Double bassist Lena Goodson is a recent master's degree graduate of Rice University where she studied with Tim Pitts. She earned her bachelor's degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, studying with Hal Robinson and Edgar Meyer. While at Curtis, Lena served as assistant principal bass of the Harrisburg Symphony for six years. She has also performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Lena is a three-time fellow at both the Tanglewood Music Center and the Aspen Music Festival and School. In addition, she has participated in NPR's From the Top program, the New York String Orchestra Seminar and the Perlman Music Program.



SHEA KELSAY, *trumpet*

Originally from Seattle, Shea Kelsay moved to Chicago to begin her orchestral studies at Northwestern University, completing both undergraduate and master's degrees there. Shea has spent summers with the Britt Festival Orchestra, Artosphere Festival Orchestra and Brevard Music Center, and as a Tanglewood fellow. Following her first summer at Tanglewood, she served as acting principal trumpet of the Nashville Symphony. Since then, she has enjoyed an active freelancing career, playing as a substitute with the Boston Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Utah Symphony and several other regional groups. Outside of trumpet, Shea is an avid scuba diver, road-tripper and cat lover.



PAUL KIM, *violin*

Paul Kim is an accomplished and versatile violinist, holding both undergraduate and graduate degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has performed with renowned ensembles including the Cleveland Orchestra, the Seattle Symphony and the Nashville Symphony, joining the Kansas City Symphony in 2023. Paul has also participated in the Pacific Music Festival, Tanglewood Music Center and the National Repertory Orchestra. In addition to his orchestral engagements, Paul has been actively involved in music education, nurturing the talents of young players in the Seattle Youth Symphony and Nashville Symphony's Accelerando program. Currently, Paul enjoys teaching violin lessons alongside his wife at P & W Violin Studio.



JINYOU LEE, *violin*

Jinyou Lee has performed as a recitalist, soloist and chamber musician throughout South Korea, North America and Europe. She earned a bachelor's degree from Haute École de Musique de Lausanne in Switzerland, where she studied with Gyula Stuller, and master's and Master of Musical Arts degrees from the Yale School of Music, studying with Syoko Aki. She joined the Kansas City Symphony in September 2023 and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she was a student of Stefan Milenkovich. In her spare time, Jinyou enjoys hiking and watching baseball games with her husband, Roy.



JUSTIN OCHOA, *percussion*

Originally from San Antonio, Texas, Justin Ochoa joins the Kansas City Symphony in 2023 as acting associate principal percussion. Previously, he performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic as a Judith and Thomas Beckmen Resident Fellow. After graduating from Interlochen Arts Academy, Justin studied at the University of Texas-Austin, earning a bachelor's degree in 2019. He then moved to Los Angeles for graduate study at the Colburn School, graduating with his master's degree in 2023. In addition to touring and performing with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Justin has performed with the Dallas Symphony and the Fort Worth Symphony. Outside of music, Justin enjoys boxing and staying active.



DUNCAN STEELE, *viola*

Duncan Steele grew up in downtown Chicago and started learning violin when he was 4 years old. When he was 15, he switched over to viola as his main instrument. As a student of Atar Arad, Duncan pursued his bachelor's and master's degrees at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, serving as principal violist of the Philharmonic Orchestra from 2021 to 2022. He has performed across Europe and Asia as well as winning awards from the American String Teachers Association, the Society of American Musicians, the Music Festival in Honor of Confucius and the DePaul Concerto Festival.



JAMES ZABAWA-MARTINEZ, *violin*

A native of Austin, Texas, violinist James Zabawa-Martinez has performed concerts and recitals throughout the U.S. and Europe. Before joining the Kansas City Symphony in 2023, James was a violin fellow at the New World Symphony in Miami Beach for two years. He has performed with several orchestras, including the Cleveland Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony and Buffalo Philharmonic. James' primary teachers include Sally O'Reilly, Brian Lewis and Zoya Leybin. He earned a degree from the University of Texas-Austin and has pursued doctoral work at the University of Minnesota.



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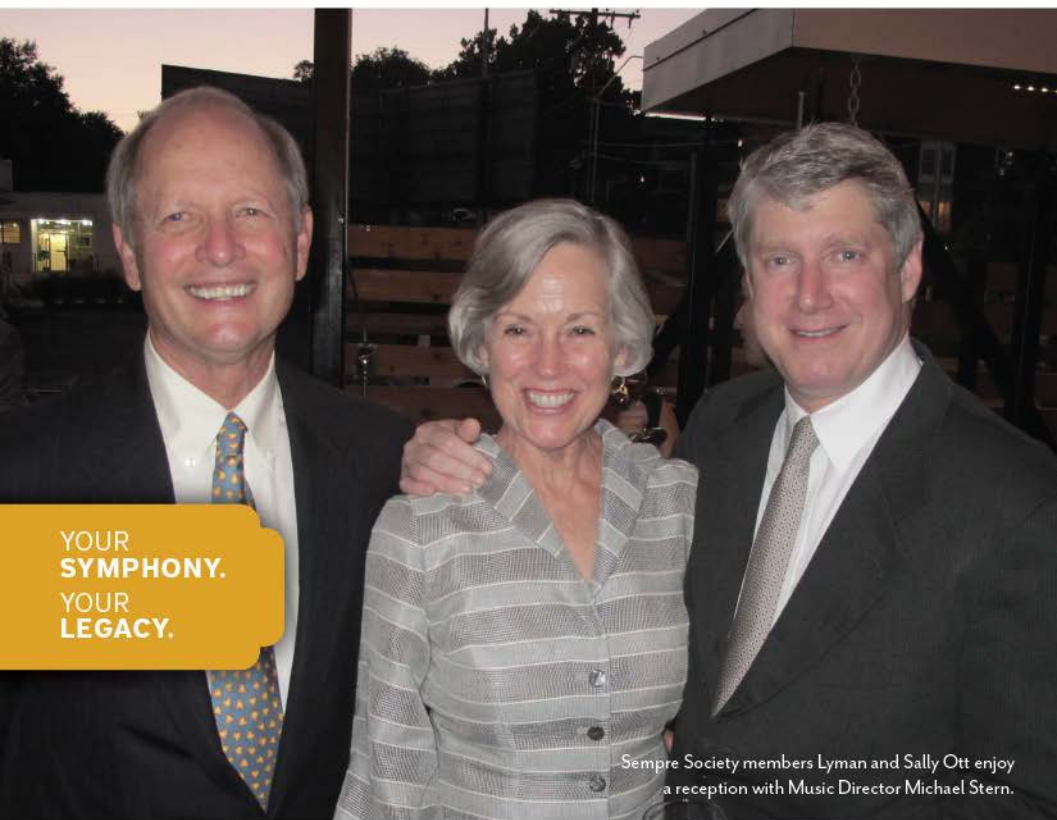
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