

Kansas City Symphony
MICHAEL STERN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

soulful music sing

For centuries, live symphonic music has been a candle in the darkness. When joined with the human voice, it has the power to lift the soul, exuberant and joyful. Tonight, let the music of Pärt, Verdi and Schumann speak to your spirit.

During intermission or after the concert, come place a candle on the table that best illuminates your soul's response:

"Transcendent Beauty"

Arvo Pärt 's "Salve Regina" offered me serenity in today's hectic world.

"Deep Calls to Deep"

Giuseppe Verdi's "Stabat Mater" and "Te Deum" took me to a moment of contemplation.

"Sunshine & Shadow"

Robert Schumann's Symphony No. 2 encouraged me to celebrate triumphant contrasts.

- Stacy Barton, Creative Director

Stacy Barton Creative Director

CONTENTS

- 01 Program
- 02 Conductor
- 03 Chorus Director
- 04 Arvo Pärt, "Salve Regina"
- 05 Giuseppe Verdi,
 - "Stabat Mater" & "Te Deum"
- 07 Robert Schumann, Symphony No. 2
- 08 About the Kansas City Symphony & Chorus
- 10 Orchestra & Chorus Rosters
- 12 Board of Directors & Staff
- 13 Thank You
- 14 Individual Contributors
- 18 Corporate & Foundation Contributors
- 16 Sempre Society
- 17 Giving

PLEASE SILENCE YOUR ELECTRONIC DEVICES.
PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING
ARE NOT PERMITTED.

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

Follow the Kansas City Symphony on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Spotify and at kcsymphony.org.



Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts Friday and Saturday, November 17-18, 2023 at 8:00 p.m. Sunday, November 19, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

Kansas City Symphony EDUARDO STRAUSSER, guest conductor

Kansas City Symphony Chorus
CHARLES BRUFFY, chorus director

ARVO PÄRT

"Salve Regina"

Kansas City Symphony Chorus

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Four Sacred Pieces

Kansas City Symphony Chorus

II. Stabat Mater

IV. Te Deum

Intermission

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Symphony No. 2 in C Major, op. 61

I. Sostenuto assai – Allegro ma non troppo

II. Scherzo: Allegro vivace

III. Adagio espressivo

IV. Allegro molto vivace

The 2023/24 season is generously sponsored by SHIRLEY and BARNETT C. HELZBERG, JR.

The Classical Series is sponsored by the

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The concert weekend is sponsored by BEBE and GRAHAM HUNT VIRGINIA MERRILL

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Friday's concert is sponsored by MICHAEL D. FIELDS

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Guest conductor Eduardo Strausser is sponsored by: MARILYN A.W. GAAR, in memoriam NORMAN E. GAAR, ESQ.



Eduardo Strausser Guest Conductor

The 2023/24 season sees Brazilian conductor Eduardo Strausser continue his regular relationships with the Kansas City Symphony and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra as well as conducting engagements with Bamberger Symphoniker, Utah Symphony Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestre de Montpellier and Argovia Philharmonic. He also has regular relationships with Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Norrlands Operan. Other U.S. engagements have included the symphony orchestras of North Carolina, Detroit and Indianapolis.

Working extensively across Australia and New Zealand, Strausser has regular relationships with Sydney and Queensland symphony orchestras, and has had recent concerts with the New Zealand and West Australian symphony orchestras.

Previously resident conductor of Teatro Sao Paolo from 2014 to 2016, Strausser has become an experienced opera conductor. Productions in Sao Paolo have included *Elektra* and Carlos Gomes' *Fosca*, as well as performances of *The Nutcracker* with Balé da Cidade de São Paulo and a Stefano Poda production of Mahler's Symphony No. 1. He is now based in Berlin but still returns home to Latin America for guest conducting engagements.

Strausser opens his 2023/24 season with a new production of *Tosca* for Northern Ireland Opera. Most recently he led Leonard Ever's *Die Odyssee* for Zurich Opera and other highlights include *Tosca* for Theater Magdeburg which he also conducted for Staastheater Hannover alongside productions including *Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Hansel and Gretel* and *Die Zauberflöte*. Elsewhere he has also conducted *La bohème* for Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro and Teatro Verdi di Padova.

From a young age, Strausser developed an interest in works by contemporary composers. Through his studies at the Zurich University of Arts, he worked with the visionary Karlheinz Stockhausen. While a student, he took part in the International Forum for Conductors at the Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt, where he had the chance to work closely with composers György Kurtág and Brian Ferneyhough.

Strausser has worked with a number of top soloists, including Paul Lewis, Isabelle Faust, Augustin Hadelich, Richard Galliano, Cédric Tiberghien, Steven Osborne, Barnabas Kelemen and Sergei Krylov, among others. A multi-linguist, he speaks eight languages fluently including German, Italian, French, Spanish and Hebrew.



Charles Bruffy Chorus Director

One of the most admired choral conductors in the United States, Charles Bruffy began his career as a tenor soloist, performing with the Robert Shaw Festival Singers for recordings and concerts in France and concerts at Carnegie Hall. Shaw encouraged his development as a conductor and the New York Times acknowledged him as an heir to Shaw's legacy. He received his undergraduate degree from Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph and his master's degree in voice performance from the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. A scholarship fund has been established at the Conservatory in his name.

Bruffy has been artistic director of the Kansas City Chorale since 1988 and chorus director for the Kansas City Symphony since 2008.

Respected and renowned for his fresh and passionate interpretations of standards of the choral music repertoire, and for championing new music, he has commissioned and premiered works by composers such as Jean Belmont Ford, Ola Gjeilo, Matthew Harris, Anne Kilstofte, Libby Larsen, Zhou Long, Cecilia McDowall, Michael McGlynn, Stephen Paulus, Jessica Rudman, Steven Sametz, Terry Schlenker, Philip Stopford, Steven Stucky, Eric Whitacre, Edna Yeh and Chen Yi.

Under Bruffy's supervision, MusicSpoke and the Roger Dean Company, a division of the Lorenz Corporation, publish a choral series specializing in music for professional ensembles and sophisticated high school and college choirs. His eclectic discography includes five albums on the Nimbus label and eight recordings for Chandos Records, three of which have been recognized by the Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences with Grammy® Awards for Best Choral Performance. Joining the likes of Alan Bergman, Maynard Ferguson, Carlisle Floyd, Daniel E.



In his spare time, Bruffy breeds and raises Arabian and Saddlebred horses on his ranch just south of Kansas City in Cass County, Missouri.



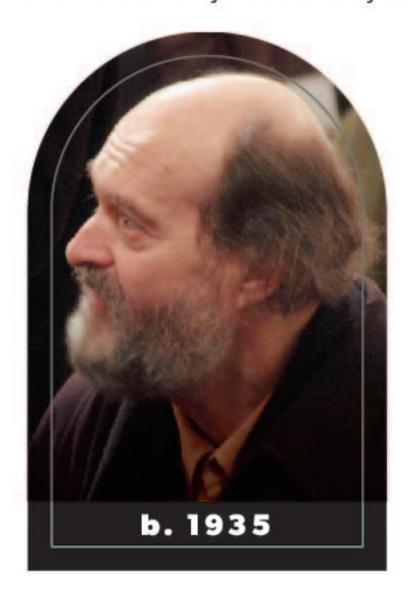
Arvo Pärt "Salve Regina" (2001) | 13 minutes Mixed chorus, celesta and strings.

The Story... Spirituality has always been an essential element in the music of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. In 1968 he composed "Credo," his first openly religious piece; under the oppressive Soviet regime, it earned him unofficial criticism and performances of his music were banned. Between the strictures placed on him and his own feeling that his previous compositional techniques were leading to a dead end, he stopped composing for eight years. At this time, he turned to intensive study of old religious vocal music: Gregorian chant (beginning around 800), the sacred motets of the Notre Dame School (1160–1250) and the Renaissance music of the 15th and 16th centuries. He said, "Hidden behind the art of connecting two or three notes lies a cosmic mystery." The music of bygone centuries would serve as his portal into the mystery.

One February morning in 1976, Pärt experienced the illumination he had been seeking with the short piano piece Für Alina. With one hand moving mostly in steps and the other hand outlining the tonic triad (the three-note chord of the home key), he had developed a composing technique he called "tintinnabuli," Latin for "bells." It became the guiding principle for all his compositions thereafter, as well as his life. In a 1999 interview, he explained: "Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers — in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity ... Tintinnabulation is like this."

The piece we are performing today, "Salve Regina" (Hail Queen), was commissioned by Essen Abbey to commemorate its 1150th anniversary (it was

founded in 845), as well as the 75th birthday of Herbert Luthe, the Bishop of Essen. The text is a hymn to Mary written in the 11th century.



The Music... Like much of Pärt's music, "Salve Regina" is slow and meditative, with simple harmonies and mostly stepwise motion. The chorus begins in unison, slowly expanding into fuller chords, with several instrumental interludes. At the text "Turn then, our advocate, your merciful eyes on us," the chorus gains more momentum and movement, building to a majestic climax on "show us [Jesus] after our exile." The last line, divided into four phrases, is delivered pianissimo, reverently hushed, almost in a whisper. — AJ Harbison

Giuseppe Verdi "Stabat Mater" and "Te Deum"

The Story...

Giuseppe Verdi earned worldwide acclaim and significant wealth writing operas that are considered a bulwark of the genre. The composer of *La traviata*, *Otello*, *Aida* and *Rigoletto* — 28 operas in all — was steeped in the form and wrote little else. Even his magnificent Requiem, a rare excursion outside opera, is filled with dramatic elements and is less a religious work than a commemoration of the Italian novelist Alessandro Manzoni, whose death in 1873 profoundly affected Verdi.

It was toward the end of his life that Verdi wrote Four Sacred Pieces; indeed, each was composed at a different time across several years and the works were not conceived as a set at all. One of the works, "Ave Maria," was written in 1889 as a response to an intellectual exercise. A music journal in Milan had published an unusual scale and called for harmonizations based on the scale. Verdi was intrigued and composed "Ave Maria" using the scale for inspiration, describing it as Scala enigmatica armonizzata a Quattro voci miste (Enigmatic scale, harmonized for four mixed voices). The work was included in the set at the behest of Giulio Ricordi, his publisher. "Laudi alla Vergine Maria" was composed between 1886 and 1888. "Te Deum" dates from 1895-96 and "Stabat Mater" from 1896-97. The premiere of the set, omitting "Ave Maria," took place in a concert by the Paris Opera on April 7, 1898, led by renowned flutist and conductor Paul Taffanel. Because of ill health, Verdi did not attend the premiere but sent copious performance notes with Arrigo Boito, his librettist for Otello and Falstaff. Arturo Toscanini led the Italian premiere the following month, also leaving out "Ave Maria."

There is no foundation to the speculation that impending mortality induced religious introspection and the composition of these works. Verdi was a rationalist, interpreted by some as anticlerical, and he most likely viewed the time-honored texts of the "Ave Maria," "Stabat Mater" and "Te Deum" as dramatic inherently and extremely well-suited to his musical talents. "Laudi alla Vergine Maria" was taken from Dante's "Divine Comedy" and Verdi appreciated his ability to communicate so directly. Similarly, because of Verdi's finely honed sense of drama and ability to distill vast complexities sharply etched into works illumine moments, these manifestations of the human soul.



- Eric T. Williams

The Music...

"Stabat Mater"

from Four Sacred Pieces (1896-97) | 12 minutes Mixed chorus, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 4 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 4 trombones, timpani, bass drum, harp and strings.

Verdi's music is filled with examples of text painting — using sounds to illustrate the emotion, action or meaning of the text. Four declamatory chords without a third to establish major or minor tonality frame the opening unison choral invocation. Entering at the dissonant interval of a tritone from the orchestra, the chorus embodies the drama of Jesus' mother weeping before the cross where her son was hanging. Quiet sobs give way to a frenzied crescendo depicting the torment of crucifixion. As Jesus' life ebbs away, so does the music. A cappella, the chorus tenderly entreats Mary to grant them deeper empathy for her plight and greater love of Christ. The voices are in harmony, distinct from much of the previous unison writing. The appeals become more impassioned, underscored orchestrally, pleading for defense from devouring flames on the day of judgment. Verdi portrays the final request to be granted the glory of paradise with a blaze of musical light. The work ends on a single unison pitch, a quiet benediction.

"Te Deum"

from Four Sacred Pieces (1895-96) | 15 minutes Double mixed chorus, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 4 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 4 trombones, timpani, bass drum and strings.

Paying homage to its roots in the ancient plainchant tradition, Verdi begins his setting of the laudatory "Te Deum" with male voices intoning the opening line. Soft antiphonal phrases lead to a fortissimo proclamation of "Holy, Holy, Holy." The alternation between choirs is stirring and after a high-voltage declaration of "Holy" comes a nearly whispered repetition. Angelic soprano voices fade to nothing as the music transitions to a flowing line not unlike those of Palestrina, a Renaissance composer whose music Verdi found inspiring. Yet again, Verdi paints the text musically, with "majesty" and "King of glory" framed by noble brass lines.

Drawing on his lifetime of experience with opera choruses, Verdi sets the various creed statements with the choir in eight parts, yet marvelously coordinated with the orchestral lines — a compositional tour de force. A trumpet call closes the declaration of judgment followed by a tender plea for redemption. In unison rhythm, the a cappella choir appeals for salvation. The words "praise" and "forever" are floridly intertwined in the texture of a swirling orchestral accompaniment. Soft march-like beats underpin a request for safekeeping from sin and the tender supplication for mercy is positively ethereal. Single trumpet notes frame a solo soprano voice in a triune expression of hope. As the work concludes, the violins float on a high E; the cellos and double basses reply with a murmured E five and six octaves below, radiating peace.

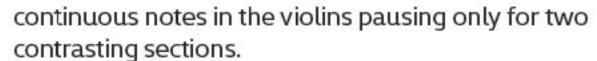
Robert Schumann

Symphony No. 2 in C Major, op. 61 (1847) | 34 minutes 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings.

The Story... Robert Schumann's short life (he died in 1856, aged only 46) was marked by cyclical periods of optimism and depression. In 1844 he suffered a nervous breakdown from poor health, deep depression and constant ringing in his ears. He moved his family from Leipzig to Dresden, which had a slower pace of life, and he slowly began to recover. He began work on his third symphony (which we know as Symphony No. 2 due to publication order) in December 1845, sketching the whole piece in six days, but noting later that it was "a souvenir of a dark period." The process of revising and orchestrating the symphony took most of 1846, and in October he stated he "felt better" having completed it.

In the Second Symphony, Schumann's vision was illumined by the work of two other German composers. In 1839, he heard the long-overdue premiere of Franz Schubert's Ninth Symphony (composed in 1826), also in C major, and realized it was possible to make a substantial symphonic statement even under the long shadow of Ludwig van Beethoven's monumental achievements. In the end, his Second Symphony, sharing the key of C with Schubert's symphony and also the final movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, takes on the heroic story of struggle and ultimate victory that characterized many of Beethoven's best-known works.

The Music... Schumann described the opening movement as "full of my struggle ... Sometimes I fear my semi-invalid state can be divined from the music." A grand statement in the brass at the outset is combined with a quiet, sinuous, slightly chromatic line in the strings and then the woodwinds. (Remember this brass motif; it will return at the end of the second movement and triumphantly at the end of the fourth). The second movement is sprightly and fast, with near-





The slow third movement is in C minor instead of C major. Listen for the "melancholy bassoon," which Schumann stated symbolized the "dark time." The finale begins with a march, and then moves through transformations of themes from the slow movement. After a dark cadence on C minor that seems to bring the movement to a halt, the woodwinds introduce a hopeful melody based on a Beethoven song. Towards the end, the motif from the very beginning is restated pianissimo (very quietly) by the brass; it grows louder and more prominent, leading to the piece's decisively triumphant conclusion. — AJ Harbison

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.





ABOUT THE KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY CHORUS

The Kansas City Symphony Chorus, led by Grammy® Award-winning Chorus Director Charles Bruffy, is a 160-voice ensemble that continues its long tradition of excellence serving as "the choral voice of the Kansas City Symphony." The Symphony Chorus has been offering quality choral music to the greater Kansas City metropolitan area since the early 1960s, first as the Mendelssohn Choir and then as the Civic Chorus. Before the appointment of Chorus Director Charles Bruffy in 2008, the Symphony Chorus worked under the direction of choral conductors Eph Ehly and Arnold Epley.

The Symphony Chorus has represented Kansas City in five concert tours, including performances in New York City, Boston, the Berkshires, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Mexico where it performed with the Mexico City Symphony. The Symphony Chorus women recorded Holst's *The Planets* with the Kansas City Symphony in January 2015.

The Kansas City Symphony Chorus musicians are all volunteers from the region's extensive musical community selected through rigorous auditions. Members have rich backgrounds in both music education and performance, and are engaged as soloists and conductors in schools, churches and venues throughout the region.

For more information about the Kansas City Symphony and the chorus, please visit kcsymphony.org.

KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

2023/24 SEASON ORCHESTRA ROSTER

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Kazato Inouye
Rena Ishii
Paul Kim^
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Duncan Steele^, Associate Principal
Jessica Nance, Assistant Principal
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2023/24 SEASON ROSTER

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We are grateful to each and every donor. We have moved some of our donor listings online, and an alphabetical list of individual supporters of \$100+ can now be found at kcsymphony.org/donors.

Thank you for your generosity.



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