



KANSAS CITY
SYMPHONY



Jun Iwasaki

Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5, plus *The Magic Flute* Overture

January 26-28, 2024

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

KAZEM ABDULLAH, GUEST CONDUCTOR
JUN IWASAKI, VIOLIN

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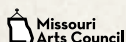
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RECORDING ARE NOT PERMITTED.**

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

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PROGRAM



KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

MOZART'S VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 5, PLUS *THE MAGIC FLUTE* OVERTURE

Friday and Saturday, January 26-27, 2024 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, January 28, 2024 at 2 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

KAZEM ABDULLAH, GUEST CONDUCTOR

JUN IWASAKI, VIOLIN



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Overture to *Die Zauberflöte*, K. 620
(The Magic Flute)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Concerto No. 5 in A Major for Violin
and Orchestra, K. 219
I. Allegro aperto
II. Adagio
III. Rondo: Tempo di menuetto
Jun Iwasaki, *violin*

- INTERMISSION -

ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD

Symphony in F-sharp, op. 40
I. Moderato ma energico
II. Scherzo
III. Adagio
IV. Finale

ABOUT KAZEM ABDULLAH



KAZEM ABDULLAH, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Kazem Abdullah works internationally and excels at reaching newer and diverse audiences, conducting concerts and operas in a wide variety of styles and formats. His recent opera ventures include conducting *The Life and Times of Malcolm X* and *The Central Park Five* by composer Anthony Davis as well as the world premiere of *Castor and Patience* composed by Greg Spears and *Omar* composed by Rhiannon Giddons. Among his recent orchestral credits are engagements with the Atlanta, Charlotte, Seattle, Oregon, Indianapolis, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati symphonies. In addition, he recently conducted an opera gala for the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the American premiere of Charles Wuorinen's opera *Brokeback Mountain* with the New York City

Opera, *Tosca* for Seattle Opera and *Hänsel und Gretel* for Cape Town Opera. At Lyric Opera of Chicago, he collaborated with soprano Renee Fleming and director Yuval Sharon on *Proximity*.

Abdullah currently lives in Nürnberg, Germany, and was the Generalmusikdirektor in Aachen, Germany, from 2012 to 2017. During his tenure in Aachen, in addition to reaching newer and diverse audiences through innovative programming, moving out of the concert hall and experimenting with juxtapositions of styles in non-traditional concert formats, he also conducted more than 25 operas.

Among Abdullah's many endeavors, he served as an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, where he assisted and prepared over twenty operas, including *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*. He returned to the Met in the fall of 2023 with Anthony Davis' opera *The Life and Times of Malcolm X*.

Trained as a clarinetist, Abdullah has performed extensively as an orchestral musician, chamber musician and soloist. He spent two seasons as a member of the New World Symphony and has performed as a soloist with orchestras such as the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra, as well as the chamber ensembles Trio Wanderer and the Aryan Quartet.

Born in Indiana, Abdullah began his music studies at the age of 10 with clarinet and piano. He studied at the Interlochen Arts Academy, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, University of Southern California and the Peabody Institute of John Hopkins University.

ABOUT JUN IWASAKI

JUN IWASAKI, VIOLIN

Jun Iwasaki was appointed concertmaster of the Kansas City Symphony by Music Director Michael Stern and started his tenure at the beginning of the 2022/23 season. A graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music's prestigious Concertmaster Academy, he has been hailed for his combination of dazzling technique and lyrical musicianship. In a review of Iwasaki's performance at the Mimir Chamber Music Festival, the Fort Worth Star Telegram called him "the magician of the evening. He could reach into his violin and pull out bouquets of sound, then reach behind your ear and touch your soul."

Prior to joining the Kansas City Symphony, Iwasaki served as concertmaster of the Nashville Symphony from 2011 to 2022 and the Oregon Symphony from 2007 to 2011. Throughout his career, he has appeared with numerous other orchestras, including the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Oregon Symphony, Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Blossom Festival Orchestra, Rome (Georgia) Philharmonic, New Bedford Symphony, Canton Symphony, Richardson Symphony, Cleveland Pops Orchestra, Plano Symphony Orchestra and Huntsville Symphony. In addition, he has served as guest concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Symphony, Gulbenkian Orchestra (Portugal), São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (Brazil), Santa Barbara Symphony, National Arts Center Orchestra (Ottawa) and Canton Symphony Orchestra (Ohio).

As chamber musician, Jun has been a part of the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, La Jolla Summerfest, Chamber Music Northwest, Mainly Mozart, Chamber Music International and Mimir Chamber Music Festival among others. Jun has served as adjunct violin professor at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music and as the artistic director of Portland Summer Ensembles in Portland, Oregon, a workshop for young musicians focusing on chamber music.



VIOLINIST PAMELA FRANK PERFORMS BEETHOVEN

Friday & Saturday, February 2-3 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, February 4 at 2 p.m. Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

MICHAEL STERN, CONDUCTOR

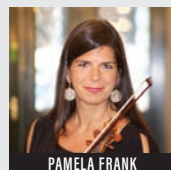
PAMELA FRANK, VIOLIN

SHELLEY WASHINGTON *Both* (KC Symphony co-commission)

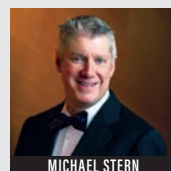
BENJAMIN BRITTEN "Four Sea Interludes"

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto

Sponsored by



PAMELA FRANK



MICHAEL STERN

PROGRAM NOTES



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Overture to *Die Zauberflöte*, K. 620 (The Magic Flute) (1791)
6 minutes

*2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets,
3 trombones, timpani and strings.*

THE STORY

Despite teaching and playing recitals, Wolfgang Mozart was chronically short of money in 1791 and he took on several projects that promised great return on investment. First, there was the infamous Requiem, sought by a mysterious stranger on

the condition that the patron's identity would never be revealed. (Spoiler alert: It was Count Franz von Walsegg-Stuppach, who some speculate wanted to pass Mozart's work off as his own.) Next, *The Magic Flute* was the brainchild of Emanuel Schikaneder, an actor/singer/playwright/dancer/impresario whom Mozart had first met in Salzburg in 1780. Schikaneder had landed in Vienna, running the 1,000-seat Freihaustheater and specializing in German singspiels — an operatic genre characterized by spoken dialogue and frequently a comic or fantastical subject. He prevailed on Mozart, a fellow Freemason, to set his libretto by promising a percentage of the profits. As if that were not enough, a lucrative and prestigious commission arrived to compose an opera on Metastasio's well-worn libretto *The Clemency of Titus* (used for 45 operas!) for the coronation of Leopold II as King of Bohemia. Having composed much of *The Magic Flute*, Mozart immediately shifted his energy toward *The Clemency of Titus*, which premiered in Prague on September 6, 1791.

With the premiere of *The Magic Flute* scheduled just over three weeks later, Mozart turned his attention to the overture. Whether a matter of desperation for lack of inspiration or a gesture of flattery to a fellow composer, Mozart “borrowed” the opening motif of Muzio Clementi's Piano Sonata, op. 24, No. 2 as the melodic kernel of the overture. Clementi had visited Vienna on tour in December 1781 and Emperor Joseph II invited Mozart (who had just settled in Vienna that May) to musically “duel” the visitor for aristocratic entertainment. Clementi played his newly composed sonata while Mozart improvised a set of variations on a theme by André Grétry. The contest was officially declared a draw and while Mozart was rather dismissive about Clementi's technique, he knew a good tune when he heard it. A decade later, he spun the motif into musical gold, completing the overture just two days before its premiere on September 30. He conducted the first two performances and saw the nascent popularity of the work (although not the profits promised by Schikaneder) before his death on December 5.

PROGRAM NOTES

THE MUSIC

Among *The Magic Flute*'s fantastical trappings is copious symbolism related to Freemasonry, a secret fraternal order espousing Enlightenment philosophies and ideals. The number three has particular significance in Freemasonry and Mozart used it liberally throughout the work, including the three noble chords at the opening of the overture, sounding triads (three-note chords). In Mozart's era, trombones were associated with sacred or ceremonial music and not yet a regular part of the orchestra so his inclusion of three trombones was far from habitual or accidental. Nor was the key of E-flat major chosen randomly; it is designated by three flats.

An unhurried quiet introduction follows the opening chords. With a sudden shift of character, Mozart gives Clementi's sparkling motif to the strings, fugato entrances coming one after another. The soft dynamic provides an especially effective palette for the off-kilter accents that surprise and delight. Mozart's masterful touch transmutes the sparse thematic material into a vivacious overture that cleverly sets the mood for the allegorical fairy tale to come. And of course, he uses three chords to conclude the overture.

— *Eric T. Williams*

Film + Live Orchestra

THE GOONIES™ IN CONCERT

Thursday, February 8 at 7 p.m.

Friday, February 9 at 7 p.m.

Saturday, February 10 at 7 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the
Performing Arts



GONZALO FARIAS, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Celebrate the cult classic film *The Goonies*™, screened with the exhilarating score performed live by your Kansas City Symphony. A 1985 smash hit produced by Steven Spielberg, *The Goonies*™ has been a childhood rite of passage for over 30 years. When a group of misfit kids discover an ancient map leading to the long-lost loot of notorious pirate One-Eyed Willy, they set off on an unbelievable adventure. Will they find the treasure and save their town? Tickets from \$40 for adults and \$32 for children.

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PROGRAM NOTES



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Concerto No. 5 in A Major for Violin and Orchestra,
K. 219 (1775)

31 minutes

Solo violin, 2 oboes, 2 horns and strings.

THE STORY

Wolfgang Mozart had impeccable violin credentials: his father Leopold was a respected violin teacher who published the influential *Essay on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* the same year Wolfgang was born. Due to the happy convergence of talent and his father's instruction, Wolfgang began working as a concertmaster in Salzburg at the age of 13. His violin skills were significant; as Leopold wrote to him,

"You are not quite aware yourself of what an excellent violinist you are, when you gather up all your strength and play with self-confidence, verve, and fire." He began composing his first violin concerto in 1773. He set aside the genre for two years and then returned to it in 1775, writing the remainder of his five authenticated violin concerti in a tremendous creative surge: No. 2 in June, No. 3 in September, No. 4 in October and No. 5 in December. Wolfgang composed no more violin concerti and stopped performing on violin, no doubt to the consternation of his father, but did play viola in chamber music settings, not fully abandoning his string training.

For whom did Mozart compose these lovely works? The prominent Neapolitan violinist Antonio Brunetti is often mentioned but since he did not join the Salzburg ensemble until 1776, it is unlikely that he was the inspiration, although he did perform the concerti later and Mozart even composed a new adagio for No. 5 because Brunetti found the original "too artificial." Mozart family friend and talented amateur violinist Andrä Kolb is another candidate. It is also possible that Mozart wrote them for his own use or perhaps he was obsessively seeking to master the genre. Regardless of their genesis, the concerti are filled with vitality and ebullience, similar to their 19-year-old creator.

PROGRAM NOTES

THE MUSIC

Sensitive to balance concerns, Mozart accompanies the solo violin with pairs of oboes and horns along with a string complement. After a conventional orchestral introduction, the solo violin enters with a slow and noble phrase floating over susurrant strings. Following this brief reverie, the concerto gets cracking with an abundance of elegant violin acrobatics, all cloaked in luscious melody. A cadenza provides the soloist an opportunity to display technical prowess wedded to imagination before the few closing measures of the movement.

Although Brunetti may have disliked Mozart's original slow movement, it is warm and gracious, making inventive use of the simplest musical ingredients. A descending scale fragment serves as the essence from which Mozart spins appealing phrases. The unhurried pace provides ample opportunity to revel in the transparent beauty of sound. A flirtation with the minor key is brief and quickly relinquishes its hold as the music settles back into sunny E major.

The final movement is built as a rondo, with its recurring refrain bracketing passages of suave appeal. The genial theme in triple meter readily calls to mind the minuet, a dance form prevalent in Mozart's time, and the solo violin dances gracefully throughout. Sophistication gives way to a zesty section in A minor, its duple meter, chromaticism and percussive effects suggested by Turkish military bands, a style that was all the rage in Vienna at the time. Here, the *alla turca* percussion are imitated by the cellos and basses using the wood of their bow to strike the strings. The minuet returns and the movement ends with a charming gesture reminiscent of the concerto's opening notes.

—Eric T. Williams

FREE HAPPY HOUR CONCERT

Wednesday, February 21 at 6 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center
for the Performing Arts

Musicians of the Kansas City Symphony present FREE Happy Hour concerts that will add delightful music to the middle of your week. Bring friends and family to enjoy familiar classical works and exciting modern compositions. Join us in the beautiful Kauffman Center Brandmeyer Great Hall lobby for a drink after work starting at 5 p.m., then attend a short and casual concert beginning at 6 p.m.

Seating is general admission. Visit kcsymphony.org for tickets.



PROGRAM NOTES



ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD (1897-1957)

Symphony in F-sharp, op. 40 (1952)
50 minutes

Piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, gong, marimba, xylophone, harp, piano, celesta and strings.

THE STORY

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was born in 1897, and quickly developed into an astonishing child prodigy. He was playing piano by age 5 and composing by 7; his original ballet *The Snowman*, written when he was 11, was a smash hit in Vienna. His compositions were praised by composers such as Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss and Giacomo Puccini. His music and conducting attracted the attention of Hollywood producers, and he came to the United States several times in the mid-1930s to score Warner Brothers films. In 1938, Korngold accepted a commission to score “The Adventures of Robin Hood” and traveled to Hollywood. Shortly after his departure, Germany invaded Austria and the Nazis confiscated Korngold’s home in Vienna. He later stated that the opportunity to score “Robin Hood” literally saved his life.

Korngold retired from film composition in 1947 and was eager to return to writing concert music. In the last 10 years of his life, he produced concertos for violin and cello and his lone symphonic work, the Symphony in F-sharp. (“F-sharp” was his given title for the symphony, without specifying major or minor.) The symphony is dedicated “To the memory of Franklin Delano Roosevelt,” who had died seven years earlier. Korngold gave no programmatic title or story to the symphony. But an early draft of a program note reveals what may have been on his mind:

The composer characterizes his new symphony as a work of pure, absolute music with no program whatsoever, in spite of his experience, that many people — after the first hearing — read into the first movement the terror and horrors of the years 1933-45 and into the Adagio [the third movement] the sorrows and sufferings of the victims of that time.

With that note, which was never published, was Korngold discouraging that interpretation? Or underhandedly encouraging it?

PROGRAM NOTES

THE MUSIC

As with much of Korngold's later concert music, many of the themes in the symphony are drawn from his film scores. The first movement features a long, sinuous chromatic melody punctuated by jabbing interjections from the rest of the orchestra. At the end, while the rest of the orchestra quietly plays an F-sharp major chord, the clarinet stubbornly holds on to an A natural from F-sharp minor. The second movement scherzo crackles with nervous energy, using music from his scores for "Juarez" and the film noir "Deception."

The Adagio is the emotional heart of the symphony, serving as the elegy for Roosevelt (and perhaps the victims of the Nazis as well). The melody, from "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex," switches frequently between major and minor. There is also material from "Captain Blood," underscoring a scene where the captain and his pirates have been sold into servitude, and from "Anthony Adverse," where a title card announces that Anthony "found no peace from the growing torment within him." It ends disquietingly, with one oboe and one trumpet playing a C discordant with the prevailing D minor chord. The finale draws from Korngold's score for "Kings Row" (starring future president Ronald Reagan) and includes echoes of the other movements. The ending is unambiguously triumphant, with the low brass and an exhilarating upward rush by the strings proclaiming F-sharp major.

— *AJ Harbison*

FAMILY CONCERTS

Film + Live Orchestra

LEGEND OF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Sunday, February 11 at 2 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Discover this fusion of science and fantasy that captures the imaginations of all ages, seamlessly combining music, film and narration. We dive into the cultural stories surrounding auroras and the actual science that causes them. Go on a spectacular voyage from the Earth's upper atmosphere to the Sun and to the far reaches of subarctic Canada.

Fun For the Family

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

Sunday, March 10 at 2 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Join Phileas Fogg as he sets sail on massive steamer ships, boards lightning-fast locomotives and hops on an elephant for a frantic race to the finish line. The KC Symphony and local theater artist Alex Espy present this engaging adaptation, bringing Jules Verne's enduring classic to life through inventive staging and storytelling, puppetry and a specially curated collection of symphonic favorites.

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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. 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 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 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 movie is projected 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 Kansas City through music. We belong to you, and to your neighbors, and 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 another, 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.

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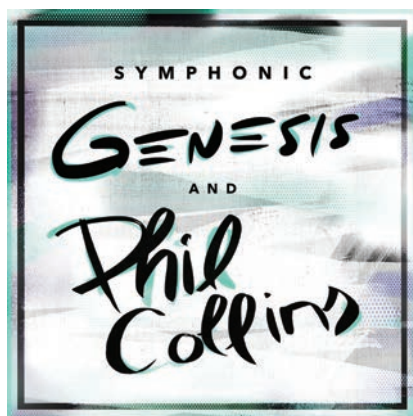
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