



KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY



Joyce Yang PLAYS TCHAIKOVSKY

MARCH 1-3, 2024

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

REI HOTODA, GUEST CONDUCTOR
JOYCE YANG, PIANO

CONTENTS

- 1 Program
- 2 About Rei Hotoda, conductor
- 3 About Joyce Yang, soloist
- 4 About Gabriela Lena Frank, composer
- 5 Gabriela Lena Frank, *Escaramuza*
- 6 Dmitri Shostakovich, Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, op. 70
- 8 Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor for Piano and Orchestra, op. 23
- 10 Board of Directors and Staff
- 11 About the Kansas City Symphony
- 12 Orchestra Roster
- 14 Live Music Makes Life Better
- 15 Sempre Society
- 16 Symphony Society Contributors
- 19 Foundations and Organizations
- 20 Corporate Contributors
- 21 Thank You

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PROGRAM



KANSAS CITY
SYMPHONY

Joyce Yang
PLAYS TCHAIKOVSKY

Friday and Saturday, March 1-2, 2024 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, March 3, 2024 at 2 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

REI HOTODA, GUEST CONDUCTOR
JOYCE YANG, PIANO

GABRIELA LENA FRANK

Escaramuza

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, op. 70

I. Allegro

II. Moderato

III. Presto

IV. Largo

V. Allegretto

- INTERMISSION -

PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor for Piano and Orchestra, op. 23

I. Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso

II. Andantino semplice

III. Allegro con fuoco

Joyce Yang, *piano*

ABOUT REI HOTODA



REI HOTODA, GUEST CONDUCTOR

Conductor Rei Hotoda has been hailed as an inexhaustible dynamo with a deep commitment to reimagining the 21st-century concert experience. Her vision can be seen through her thought-provoking programming, passionate allyship to marginalized artists, advocacy for arts education and an unwavering commitment to presenting the music of our times.

Her success as the music director of the Fresno Philharmonic since 2017 has resulted in the extension of her tenure through the 2025 season.

She has worked tirelessly to build first-time and unique connections with the Fresno community with an eye toward reaching different audiences with a new music concert series — Proxima — and special concerts at Bitwise South Stadium. She has reimagined the pre- and post-concert experience by creating the popular Green Room and Stay Tuned series. Her programming continues to push through the preconceived notions of the classical concertgoing experience, offering audiences works by often-marginalized composers and today's leading voices in the field. Through her tireless efforts, she has successfully broken down the barriers that often exist between artist and listener and repositioned the Fresno Philharmonic as a leader in the community it serves.

Hotoda has appeared as a guest conductor with many of today's leading ensembles, including the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Detroit, Toronto, Winnipeg, Hawaii and Utah as well as the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, among others. Her interpretations of such epic centerpieces of the classical canon such as Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8 and Britten's *War Requiem* make her one of the most sought-after conductors of today. She is a tireless advocate for the music of our time, and most recently conducted the world premieres of pieces by Kevin Day and Dinuk Wijeratne as well as works by seminal composers such as Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, Jessie Montgomery and Hawaiian composer Michael-Thomas Foumai, all to much acclaim.

ABOUT JOYCE YANG

JOYCE YANG, PIANO

Blessed with “poetic and sensitive pianism” (The Washington Post) and a “wondrous sense of color” (San Francisco Classical Voice), Grammy® Award-nominated pianist Joyce Yang captivates audiences with her virtuosity, lyricism and interpretive sensitivity.

She first came to international attention in 2005 when she won the silver medal at the 12th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. In 2006 Yang made her celebrated New York Philharmonic debut alongside Lorin Maazel at Avery Fisher Hall along with the orchestra’s tour of Asia, making a triumphant return to her hometown of Seoul, South Korea.

In the last decade, Yang has blossomed into an “astonishing artist” (Neue Zürcher Zeitung), showcasing her colorful musical personality in solo recitals and collaborations with the world’s top orchestras and chamber musicians through more than 1,000 debuts and re-engagements. She received the 2010 Avery Fisher Career Grant and earned her first Grammy® nomination for her recording of music by Franck, Kurtág, Prokofiev and Robert Schumann with violinist Augustin Hadelich.

Notable orchestral engagements have included the Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Hong Kong Philharmonic and BBC Philharmonic as well as the Toronto, Vancouver, Sydney, Melbourne, and New Zealand symphony orchestras. In solo recitals, Yang has performed at New York City’s Lincoln Center and Metropolitan Museum, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Chicago’s Symphony Hall and Zürich’s Tonhalle.

Yang began the 2023/2024 season as Artist-in-Residence for the Grant Park Music Festival and as guest artist with the Aspen Music Festival, among others, followed by performances in New Zealand with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and in Australia with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. This season, Yang continues to present her wide range of repertoire in more than 30 cities playing 10 different piano concerti, solo recitals and chamber music.

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Yang received her first piano lesson from her aunt at the age of 4 and quickly took to the instrument, which she received as a birthday present. In 1997, Yang moved to the United States to begin studies at the pre-college division of the Juilliard School with Yoheved Kaplinsky. After winning the Philadelphia Orchestra’s Greenfield Student Competition, she performed Prokofiev’s Third Piano Concerto with that orchestra at just 12 years old. She graduated from Juilliard with special honor as the recipient of the school’s 2010 Arthur Rubinstein Prize, and in 2011 she won its 30th Annual William A. Petschek Piano Recital Award. She is a Steinway artist.



ABOUT GABRIELA LENA FRANK



GABRIELA LENA FRANK

(b. 1972)

Currently serving as composer-in-residence with the Philadelphia Orchestra and included in the Washington Post's list of the 35 most significant women composers in history (August 2017), identity has always been at the center of composer/pianist Gabriela Lena Frank's music. Born in Berkeley, California, to a mother of mixed Peruvian/Chinese ancestry and a father of Lithuanian/Jewish descent, Frank explores her multicultural American heritage through her compositions. Winner of a Latin Grammy®

Award and nominated for Grammys as both composer and pianist, Frank also holds a Guggenheim Fellowship and a USA Artist Fellowship given each year to fifty of the country's finest artists. She has received orchestral commissions and performances from leading American orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony. In October 2022, the San Diego Opera premiered Frank's first opera, *The Last Dream of Frida and Diego*, utilizing words by her frequent collaborator, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Nilo Cruz.

Frank is the subject of scholarly books including the W.W. Norton anthology "The Musics of Latin America;" "Women of Influence in Contemporary Music: Nine American Composers" (Scarecrow Press); and "In Her Own Words" (University of Illinois Press). She is also the subject of several PBS documentaries, including the Emmy-nominated "Música Mestiza," regarding a workshop she led at the University of Michigan, composing for a classical string quartet plus a trio of Andean panpipe players.

In 2017, Frank founded the award-winning Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, a non-profit training institution held on her two rural properties in Boonville, California, for emerging composers from a vast array of demographics and aesthetics. Civic outreach is an essential part of Frank's work. She has volunteered extensively in hospitals and prisons, with her current focus on developing the music school program at Anderson Valley High School, a rural public school of modest means with a large Latino population in Boonville.

Frank attended Rice University in Houston, Texas, where she earned bachelor's and master's degrees. She studied composition with Sam Jones and piano with Jeanne Kierman Fischer. At the University of Michigan, where she received a doctorate in composition in 2001, Frank studied composition with William Albright, William Bolcom, Leslie Bassett and Michael Daugherty and piano with Logan Skelton.

PROGRAM NOTES

GABRIELA LENA FRANK

Escaramuza (2010)

9 minutes

Timpani, bass drum, castanets, claves, contra snare drum, cymbals, 3 marimbas, nipple gong, roto-tom, tambourine, triangles, slapstick, harp and strings.

Escaramuza, which signifies “skirmish” in the Spanish language, is inspired by the kachampa music of Andean Perú. Celebrating the pre-Hispanic Inca warrior, the kachampa dance is executed by athletic men who convey a triumphant, even joyful, spirit. Inspired by the kachampa dances done with fast-snapping ropes that I’ve witnessed in Perú, especially in Paucartambo during the Virgen de la Carmen festival, I’ve created a brightly chiseled romp in an asymmetrical 7/8 rhythm that is launched after an extended bass drum solo. Through most of *Escaramuza*, no section of the ensemble is allowed to rest for long, maintaining the high energy typical of kachampas.

— *Gabriela Lena Frank*

Fun For the Family AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

Sunday, March 10 at 2 p.m.
Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center

CALEB YOUNG, GUEST CONDUCTOR

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 collection of symphonic favorites. Tickets start at \$25 for adults and \$15 for children.



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PROGRAM NOTES



DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

Symphony No. 9 in E-flat Major, op. 70 (1945)

28 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, tambourine, triangle and strings.

THE STORY

Throughout the greater part of his career — until Stalin died in 1953 — Dmitri Shostakovich was constantly in and out of favor with the repressive (and often murderous) Soviet regime. In the midst of World War II, though, he was “in.” His monumental Seventh and Eighth symphonies had portrayed the Nazis invading the Soviet Union and the Soviets pushing the Nazis back into Germany, respectively. Each was over an hour long and each had been received extremely well. So when Shostakovich announced that his Ninth Symphony would utilize a large orchestra, a chorus and vocal soloists (reminiscent of Beethoven’s Ninth), it was widely expected that the piece would celebrate the Soviet triumph and be a “victory symphony” to cap off his “war trilogy.” As he often did, however, Shostakovich promised what the regime wanted to hear, and then delivered something completely different: an emotionally complex work for small orchestra (and no voices) which at 28 minutes is shorter than single movements in both the Seventh and the Eighth. Shostakovich said of it, “Musicians will love to play it and critics will delight in blasting it.” Sure enough, Soviet critics condemned its “ideological weakness,” and one dismissed it as “a carefree Yankee recklessly whistling a cheerful little tune.” In 1948 the censorship board banned the work in its second denunciation of the composer. Shostakovich did not write another symphony until Stalin was dead.

THE MUSIC

The first movement primarily consists of a decidedly non-monumental melody in the strings, a bombastic trombone fanfare (of two notes) with drums, and a piccolo theme that may have inspired the comment about a whistling Yankee.

The second movement, much darker in tone, begins with a long, melancholy clarinet solo; other woodwind instruments take up the theme, which eventually is replaced by a highly chromatic melody in the strings. The third movement is blisteringly fast, but its cheeriness is only for show. Instead of building to a climax, it slowly dies away. The fourth movement begins without a pause but announces itself with a menacing theme in the trombones and tuba, which gives way to a mournful bassoon solo that one writer called “a speech over the grave.”

The last movement, which also follows without a pause, starts with the same bassoon playing a clownish melody. The second bassoon solo from the fourth movement becomes the main theme of the last, parodied and mocked in ever more grotesque ways. The British music journalist Ian MacDonald sums up the symphony’s ending in this way: “Shostakovich’s contempt is scalding. Here are your leaders, the music jeers: circus clowns. Point made, [he] summons a helter-skelter coda and slams [the Ninth] shut.”

—AJ Harbison

ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATION



St. Patrick's Weekend

CATHIE RYAN WITH THE KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

Saturday, March 16 at 8 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Celebrate St. Patrick's weekend with us! Direct from Ireland, original Cherish the Ladies singer Cathie Ryan brings her Celtic charm to the Helzberg Hall stage with your KC Symphony. Ryan has created the definitive Celtic program featuring a blend of Irish traditional, contemporary and original songs mixed with rafter-raising jigs, reels and rousing Irish step dancing. Get ready for a true celebration of Irish-American music that speaks to the heart with a deep respect for the roots of the Irish tradition. Tickets from \$40.



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The Kansas City Symphony offers many unique ways for companies to reach individuals and families in our community. We offer a variety of exceptional opportunities for your business to support the Kansas City Symphony while also receiving a tremendous amount of recognition from our most valued audience members.

For more information, please contact Mark Laverentz, Manager of Corporate Partnerships at (816) 218-2601 or mlaverentz@kcsymphony.org.



PROGRAM NOTES



PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor for Piano and Orchestra, op. 23
(1874-75)

33 minutes

*Solo piano, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns,
2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings.*

THE STORY

Everyone loves a story where the critic gets it spectacularly wrong and the hero succeeds brilliantly. In this case, the hero is composer Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and the critic is pianist/conductor Nikolai Rubinstein. The tale begins in 1862 when Tchaikovsky left behind his civil service career and enrolled at the newly opened St. Petersburg Conservatory to study composition with Anton Rubinstein, Nikolai's older brother. Tchaikovsky revered Anton, but it was always an uneasy relationship, and Rubinstein frequently criticized the young composer. Immediately after graduation in 1866, Tchaikovsky accepted an offer from Nikolai Rubinstein to teach harmony at the newly established Moscow Conservatory. Rubinstein welcomed him warmly, provided accommodation in his apartment and introduced him to Moscow's artistic circle. Rubinstein's encouragement and advocacy extended to conducting numerous performances of Tchaikovsky's works over the next several years.

In November 1874, Tchaikovsky began work on his first piano concerto, having already composed three operas, two symphonies, two string quartets and the *Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy* as well as numerous smaller works for piano. He completed a draft on December 24 (O.S.) and eagerly went to play it for Rubinstein, anticipating affirmation and hoping that he would premiere the work. Thus, he was utterly stunned by Rubinstein's corrosive assessment. The moment was seared into his memory and he described it three years later in a letter to his patron, Nadezhda von Meck.

I patiently played the concerto to the end: it was greeted with silence. I got up and asked, "What do you think of it?" Suddenly a torrent of words gushed from Rubinstein's lips, getting louder and fiercer every minute until he sounded like Zeus hurling thunderbolts. According to him my concerto was worthless, impossible to play; the passages so broken, so disconnected, so poorly composed that it would be impossible to correct them. The composition was vulgar and trivial and I had stolen bits from here, there, and everywhere. Other than two or three pages, all the rest should be destroyed. I left the room without a word. Presently, Rubinstein came to me and seeing how upset I was, repeated that my concerto was impossible but if I would revise it to suit his requirements, he would introduce it at one of his concerts. "I won't alter a single note," I replied.

Seeking redemption from this dismal situation, Tchaikovsky cast about for a soloist and settled on the renowned German pianist Hans von Bülow, who was delighted at the dedication. He wrote to Tchaikovsky (in stark contrast to Rubenstein):

PROGRAM NOTES

[The concerto] displays such brilliance, and is such a remarkable achievement among your musical works, that you have without doubt enriched the world of music as never before. There is such unsurpassed originality, such nobility, such strength, and there are so many arresting moments throughout this unique conception; there is such a maturity of form, such style — its design and execution, with such consonant harmonies, that I could weary you by listing all the memorable moments which caused me to thank the author — not to mention the pleasure from performing it all. In a word, this true gem shall earn you the gratitude of all pianists.

Von Bülow gave the premiere in Boston in October 1875 to great acclaim, with subsequent performances confirming its popularity and building Tchaikovsky's reputation in the U.S. Rubinstein would eventually reverse his judgment, later conducting and even performing the concerto as soloist. The rift was mended and Tchaikovsky wrote his Second Piano Concerto for Rubinstein, who died before he could play it.

True to his word, Tchaikovsky didn't alter a note when the concerto was published in 1875 but he did make some revisions for an 1879 version and he took the recommendations of pianist Alexander Siloti in preparing yet another revised edition in 1888/89; it is this last version that has become standard.

THE MUSIC

Ever the consummate melodist, Tchaikovsky generously populates this concerto with themes destined to capture your ear. Noble horns announce the regal opening melody while the piano's thunderous chords accentuate the sense of majesty. The piano soon takes over the melody and dashes headlong into a brief cadenza barely more than a minute after the concerto's beginning. One needn't wait long for a change of character before sparkling phrases are tossed about the orchestra. As the music proceeds, it covers a huge emotional range and Tchaikovsky exploits each shift for maximum effect, yet without being contrived or forced. In trademark style, he builds intensity and dynamic, leading to a set of knuckle-busting chords that prove to be a feint; the real cadenza arrives later. The movement ends as heroically as it began.

A solo flute introduces the second movement's gentle and pastoral theme, drawn from the French song "Il faut s'amuser, danser, et rire" ("One must have fun, dance, and laugh") that was in the repertoire of soprano Désirée Artôt who was briefly Tchaikovsky's fiancée. Piano, cello and oboe each take a solo turn with the melody before the piano embarks on a quicksilver flight, drawing the orchestra into a softly shimmering world of effervescent notes. As the scene gradually evaporates, the original theme returns and the movement ends in sleepy repose.

After a cursory introduction, the piano presents the driven theme of the third movement, for which Tchaikovsky drew inspiration from Ukrainian folk songs. The music is dazzling, with extravagant pianistic flourishes and orchestral bravura. Tchaikovsky's music is pulse-quickenning and it is little wonder that the concerto is a favorite of pianists and audiences alike.

— *Eric T. Williams*

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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.

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

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MATTHIAS PINTSCHER WELCOMES VIOLINIST PHILIPPE QUINT

Friday and Saturday, March 22-23 at 8 p.m.

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Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER, GUEST CONDUCTOR
AND NEXT MUSIC DIRECTOR
PHILIPPE QUINT, VIOLIN



LEONARD BERNSTEIN Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story*
ERROLLYN WALLEN Violin Concerto (KC Symphony co-commission, U.S. premiere)
CHARLES IVES *Three Places in New England*
SERGEI RACHMANINOFF Symphonic Dances



The excitement is building for one of the most riveting concerts of the year, led by our next music director, Matthias Pintscher. Right from the downbeat, you'll be drawn in by the melodic genius and rhythmic brilliance of Leonard Bernstein's music for *West Side Story*. Whether it's the "Cool" fugue, a dream of friendship in "Somewhere," the compelling "Mambo" or the danger of "Rumble," you'll love these Symphonic Dances by one of America's most storied composers and conductors.

Melding styles and musical thoughts, Belize-born UK composer Errollyn Wallen took inspiration from violin virtuoso Philippe Quint's childhood memories of church bells and a lullaby to create a new violin concerto that will have its U.S. premiere in Kansas City. Quint's spellbinding playing will bring this new work to life with its incredible personal story.

Charles Ives, one of America's most original composers, always followed his own muse. *Three Places in New England* gives us Ives' unique perspective of time and place. This imaginative exploration of sound is like none other.

Sergei Rachmaninoff's last orchestral work is a fitting end to this dazzling program. Urbane, filled with rich colors and seductive harmonies, Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances are lyrical and more than a touch nostalgic. From tolling bells to sensuous swaggers, this is compelling music that will linger in your memory. All tickets are only \$25 (plus applicable fees). Secure the best available seats now.



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