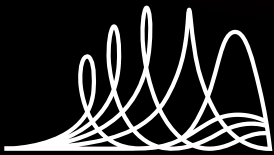


THE GENIUS OF

Mozart



KANSAS CITY
SYMPHONY

April 11-13, 2025

JANE GLOVER, GUEST CONDUCTOR
YING LI, PIANO

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center
for the Performing Arts

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The Genius of Mozart

MOZART, BRITTEN AND HAYDN

Friday, April 11, 2025 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, April 12, 2025 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, April 13, 2025 at 2 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

JANE GLOVER, GUEST CONDUCTOR

YING LI, PIANO

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Suite on English Folk Tunes, op. 90, "A time there was..."

- I. Cakes and Ale: Fast and rough
- II. The Bitter Withy: Allegretto
- III. Hankin Booby: Heavily
- IV. Hunt the Squirrel: Fast and gay
- V. Lord Melbourne: Slow and languid

W.A. MOZART

Concerto No. 23 in A Major for Piano and Orchestra, K. 488

- I. Allegro
 - II. Adagio
 - III. Allegro assai
- Ying Li, piano

Intermission

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Young Apollo for Piano, String Quartet and String Orchestra, op. 16

Ying Li, piano

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN Symphony No. 104 in D Major, Hob. I:104, "London"

- I. Adagio — Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Menuet: Allegro
- IV. Finale: Spiritoso

Jane Glover

GUEST CONDUCTOR

Acclaimed British conductor Jane Glover, Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, has been Music of the Baroque's music director since 2002 and recently was named Principal Guest Conductor of the Fort Worth Symphony beginning in 2025. She made her professional debut at the Wexford Festival in 1975, conducting her own edition of Francesco Cavalli's *L'Eritrea*. She joined Glyndebourne in 1979 and was music director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera from 1981 until 1985. She was artistic director of the London Mozart Players from 1984 to 1991. From 2009 until 2016 she was Director of Opera at the Royal Academy of Music, where she is now the Felix Mendelssohn Visiting Professor, and was Visiting Professor of Opera at the University of Oxford, her alma mater.

Jane Glover has conducted all the major symphony and chamber orchestras in Britain, as well as orchestras in Europe, the United States, Asia and Australia. In recent seasons she has appeared with the orchestras of New York, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Minnesota, San Francisco, Houston, St. Louis, Sydney, Cincinnati and Toronto, as well as the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Bamberg Symphony and the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. She also has worked with the period-instrument



orchestras Philharmonia Baroque and the Handel and Haydn Society and has made frequent appearances at the BBC Proms.

Jane Glover's discography includes a series of Mozart and Haydn symphonies with the London Mozart Players and various recordings with the London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, Trinity Wall Street and BBC Singers. She is the author of the critically acclaimed books "Mozart's Women" and "Handel in London" and has recently published "Mozart in Italy." She holds a personal professorship at the University of London and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Music, an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music and the holder of several honorary degrees. In 2020 she was awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society's Gamechanger Award for her work in breaking new ground for other female conductors.

Ying Li

PIANO

Chinese pianist Ying Li is the first-prize winner of the 2021 YCA Susan Wadsworth International Auditions, as well as recipient of the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival Prize and the Tri-I Noon Recitals Prize. She has received top awards in numerous national and international competitions including the inaugural Antonio Mormone International Prize, Sarasota Artist Series Piano Competition, Brevard Music Festival and International Liszt Piano Competition for Young Pianists, and was a finalist at Concours musical international de Montréal.

Ying has performed with many leading orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Brevard Music Festival Orchestra, L'Accademia Orchestra del La Scala, NWD-Philharmoniker and Stuttgart Philharmonic. During the 2024/25 season, Ying will make appearances with the Minnesota Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Orlando Philharmonic, Eugene Symphony, Aiken Symphony and Salisbury Symphony, among others.

Ying made her New York City recital debut at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in the Peter Marino Concert and her Washington, D.C. debut at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater.

As an avid chamber musician, Ying has appeared at prestigious festivals

around the world including the Verbier Festival Academy, ClassicheFORME International Chamber Music festival in Lecce, Ravinia's Steans Institute, La Jolla Music Society, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the Artists Series Concerts in Sarasota and the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival.



Ying began piano lessons at age 5 in China and was a student at the elementary school division of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. She moved to Philadelphia in 2012, at age 14, to study at the Curtis Institute of Music with Jonathan Biss and Seymour Lipkin. After receiving her Bachelor of Music degree at Curtis Institute in 2019, she received her Master of Music degree at the Juilliard School in New York with Robert McDonald. She continues her studies with McDonald at the Juilliard School's Artist Diploma Program.



Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Suite on English Folk Tunes, "A time there was...", op. 90

(1974)

14 minutes

Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, side drum, snare drum, bass drum, triangle, tubular bell, harp and strings.

THE STORY

In 1973, at age 59, the English composer Benjamin Britten underwent heart surgery to replace a failing valve; during the procedure he suffered a minor stroke that affected his right hand. He was left unable to perform or conduct and sank into depression, feeling no desire to compose. But Rita Thomson, his full-time nurse who had become a close friend, was determined to lift his spirits, and through her diligent efforts she succeeded to the point where he was able to compose again.

In the fall of 1974 Britten and Thomson spent time in Germany, and there he sketched his Suite on English Folk Tunes.

On the cover of the score there is a quote by the English poet and novelist Thomas Hardy, from which the piece's subtitle comes: "A time there was — as one may guess / And as, indeed, earth's testimonies tell — / Before the birth of consciousness / When all went well." This short stanza, capturing so succinctly a feeling of nostalgia and longing for better times, inspired

Britten's own nostalgia for the folk music of his youth. The five movements include ten folk tunes. As Britten gradually began to accept his continually failing health and the fact that he would never fully recover, the suite stands as a love letter to English folk music and a look back over Britten's own career — "Hankin Booby" had been written on its own in 1966, "The Bitter Wither" had been considered for a composition in 1962, and the Hardy poem had been set by Britten as the last movement of his song cycle *Winter Words* in 1953. As it happened, the suite was to be his final orchestral work; Britten died of heart failure in December 1976.

THE MUSIC

"Cakes and Ale" is marked "Fast and rough," and features clipped dialogues between timpani and strings as well as longer lines in the brass and winds. "The Bitter Wither" uses only strings,

harp, horns and a solitary tubular bell, while "Hankin Booby" uses only woodwinds, trumpets and a drum. (The word "wither" is an old English term for a willow tree, while "hankin booby" was an English folk dance; the two words together meant something like "swagger like a buffoon.") "Hunt the Squirrel" is written for violins alone, divided into four parts (with two soloists). "Lord Melbourne" returns to the full instrumentation and is slow and melancholy, highlighted by a beautiful solo from the English horn. The last page of the score sees a very quiet held chord in the strings underneath three solo wind lines marked respectively "dying away," "dying away" and "like an echo"; with the benefit of hindsight, it is difficult not to hear the music as the composer's farewell.

— AJ Harbison

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Concerto No. 23 in A Major for Piano and Orchestra, K. 488

(1786)

26 minutes

Solo piano, flute, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns and strings.

THE STORY

Mozart was an incredibly prolific composer. Despite dying in 1791 at just 35 years of age, he completed more than 800 compositions in virtually every major genre of his time. He wrote 27 piano concertos in total, the first when he was 11 years old and the last in the final year of his life. Of those 27, 12 were composed in just a two-year period, when he was between 28 and 30 years old, and No. 23 was one of the last of those. Often experiencing financial insecurity, Mozart composed most of his concertos for himself to perform to make money; this concerto was completed on March 2, 1786 and

most likely performed by Mozart at a concert that spring.

Fascinatingly, this concerto plays a part in a story (which may or may not be entirely true) about the 20th-century Russian dictator Joseph Stalin. The story goes that Stalin heard this concerto played by pianist Maria Yudina on Moscow Radio and contacted the radio station to ask for a recording. It had been a live broadcast and there was no recording — but of course they could not say no to Stalin. They called Yudina and reassembled the orchestra late that night; the concerto was recorded in a single

take, pressed onto a record and delivered to Stalin the next day. Nine years later, when Stalin was found dead in his country home in 1953, that recording was on his record player; it was the last music he ever listened to.

THE MUSIC

At the outset of the concerto, the orchestra introduces the two main themes of the first movement, followed by the solo piano's entrance restating the themes with some embellishments. With one flute, no oboes, no percussion and just two horns for brass, the work has a chamber-music feel to it — like a graceful, elegant conversation between the instruments. Toward the end of the movement, the piano has a soliloquy in the form of a cadenza, a short passage for the soloist without orchestral accompaniment. Even this, though, is not too flashy or showy.

The second movement is widely considered some of Mozart's most

beautiful music. It is the only movement in all of his piano concertos with the tempo marking "Adagio" (his slow movements are usually marked "Andante") and the only movement to be written in the key of F-sharp minor. The piano introduces the sighing, wistful theme by itself; the middle section has a lighter episode in A major featuring the woodwinds before returning to the dark-hued main theme. The piano also kicks off the third movement, heralding a change in mood and tempo to bright and fast. The movement's high spirits are only occasionally dimmed by melancholic clouds that pass quickly, and after the grace of the first movement and the yearning wistfulness of the second, the ebullience of the third strikes the perfect balance and ends the concerto quite cheerfully.

— *AJ Harbison*

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

Decades: Back to the 80s

Friday, April 25 at 8 p.m.

Luke Poeppel, David T. Beals III

Assistant Conductor

Colin Smith, vocalist

Katrina Rose, vocalist

Aaron LaVigne, vocalist

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Benjamin Britten

(1913-1976)

Young Apollo for Piano, String Quartet and String Orchestra, op. 16

(1939)

8 minutes

Solo piano, solo string quartet (2 violins, viola and cello) and strings.

THE STORY

The British composer Benjamin Britten, living in the United States, wrote *Young Apollo* on a commission from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He wrote in the original program note:

[*Young Apollo*] is founded on the last words of [John] Keats' unfinished [poem] "Hyperion":

**"— and lo! from all his limbs
Celestial ..."**

The end of one order of gods has come. Saturn, Hyperion and the other ancient gods, who ruled the world by might and terror, have to make way to the new order — gods of light, youth, beauty and laughter. Apollo, called to be the new god of beauty by Mnemosyne, the old goddess of memory, foresees his destiny; and in one final convulsion throws off his mortal form. He stands before us — the new, dazzling Sun-god, quivering with radiant vitality.

Britten completed the composition, assigned it the opus number 16 and was the piano soloist for the premiere performance in Toronto. Following that performance, though, Britten withdrew the work — he did not publish or promote it and it was not performed again until after his death. The composer did not explain the withdrawal. Some scholars think he was dissatisfied with the music itself, which was the case with many of his other early works. Others speculate that Britten came to consider the poem's and music's praise of male beauty too overt, as he was careful throughout his life to conceal his homosexuality.

THE MUSIC

For the first eight pages of the score, the string orchestra plays nothing but the note A (six octaves' worth); for most of the rest, they play nothing but A and the other notes of the A major triad (C-sharp and E). Interest and variety is supplied by the piano and the solo string quartet, who venture much further into various notes and keys and supply a remarkable variety of textures and effects. Throughout, the music is dazzling, flamboyant and extraordinarily unique.

— *AJ Harbison*



Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Symphony No. 104 in D Major, Hob. I:104, "London"

(1795)

29 minutes

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

THE STORY

In 1790, the accomplished Austrian composer Franz Joseph Haydn was invited by an impresario to visit England. In the preceding ten years Haydn's music had become incredibly popular in England, so he agreed to come. A contemporary reviewer wrote this about his first concert there: "Haydn himself presided at the pianoforte; and the sight of that renowned composer so electrified the audience as to excite an attention and a pleasure superior to any that had ever been caused by instrumental music in England." Over the course of two visits (1791-92 and

1794-95), Haydn enjoyed rock-star status and made a great deal of money. He also wrote a great deal of music, including twelve symphonies (Nos. 93-104) that are known collectively as the "London symphonies." The last one, which we are performing today, is also known individually as the "London" Symphony.

The symphony was premiered on April 13, 1795, and was played again at his farewell concert on May 4. Haydn wrote in his diary of the packed farewell concert: "The whole company was delighted and so was I. I took in this evening 4,000 gulden [tens

of thousands of dollars today]. One can make as much as this only in England.”

THE MUSIC

This final symphonic statement of Haydn’s begins with a grand fanfare, and then an extended quiet introduction in D minor. The third fanfare brings us to the main theme in D major, though it is (at first) quiet and cheerful rather than grand in its turn. The second movement is a gently lilting Andante with a stormy middle section in a minor key; following this it proceeds with multiple variations on the melody, often making use of surprising contrasts in harmony and dynamics.

The third movement is a minuet, a stately court dance. Haydn’s mischievous side comes out here as

he continually puts accents on the “wrong” beats. The trio section in the middle provides a change of pace, with a different key and a jaunty melody passed between various instruments. Following custom, the minuet is repeated after the trio. The finale is marked “Allegro spiritoso” (fast and spirited) and features a Croatian folk melody Haydn heard during his years employed by the Esterházy family at their estate in rural Hungary. Some of the off-kilter accents from the minuet make reappearances. The exuberant movement may have been a farewell to London (and, perhaps unwittingly, a farewell to the form, as it was the composer’s last symphony), but there is no “sweet sorrow” in this parting — only the jollity of a wide smile and a happy wave goodbye.

— *AJ Harbison*

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In only its 42nd season, the Kansas City Symphony has already become one of America's most vibrant major orchestras and has gained national and international recognition. With the 2024/25 season, the Symphony welcomes conductor and composer Matthias Pintscher as its new music director. Pintscher 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.

Continually creating live music experiences in Helzberg Hall, located in the prestigious Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, the Symphony serves Kansas City's metro population of more than 2.2 million people as well as welcoming visitors from around the globe. The Symphony's 80 full-time musicians from around the world bring a diverse and dynamic range of musical experiences to our audiences in both orchestral and chamber music formats each season. In addition to concerts in Helzberg Hall, Symphony musicians perform throughout the region on our portable stage, the Mobile Music Box. The Symphony also serves as the

orchestra for the Kansas City Ballet and the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, adding to the rich cultural experiences that these organizations offer to the community.

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