

Rachmaninoff

Celebration, Part One

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER,
MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

GEORGE LI, PIANO

KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY CHORUS

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center
for the Performing Arts



KANSAS CITY
SYMPHONY

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Rachmaninoff

Celebration, Part One

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

Friday, October 31, 2025 at 8 p.m. (SYMPHONIC PIAZZA, no intermission)
 Saturday, November 1, 2025 at 8 p.m.
 Sunday, November 2, 2025 at 2 p.m.

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR
GEORGE LI, PIANO
ANDRIANA CHUCHMAN, SOPRANO
GARRETT SORENSON, TENOR
JOSHUA HOPKINS, BARITONE
KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY CHORUS

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

NICO MUHLY *Strong Resolve**
 George Li, piano

ALISTAIR COLEMAN *The Nikolai Loop**
 George Li, piano

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF Concerto No. 2 in C Minor
 for Piano and Orchestra, op. 18
 I. Moderato
 II. Adagio sostenuto
 III. Allegro scherzando
 George Li, piano

Intermission (*Saturday and Sunday only*)

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF *Kolokola* (The Bells), op. 35
 I. The Silver Sleigh Bells
 II. The Mellow Wedding Bells
 III. The Loud Alarm Bells
 IV. The Mournful Iron Bells
 Andriana Chuchman, soprano
 Garrett Sorenson, tenor
 Joshua Hopkins, baritone
 Kansas City Symphony Chorus

* *Strong Resolve* and *The Nikolai Loop* commissioned by Paul Sekhri and Mark Gude and The Sekhri Family Foundation for the Kansas City Symphony Rachmaninoff Celebration, Matthias Pintscher, Music Director.

Matthias Pintscher

MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

Matthias Pintscher is the newly appointed music director of the Kansas City Symphony as of the 2024/25 season. He launched his tenure with a highly successful tour with the orchestra to Europe just before opening the season in Kansas City, with concerts at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Berlin Philharmonie and Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie.

Highlights of the 2025/26 season include the world premiere of Pintscher's new opera *Das kalte Herz* by the Berlin State Opera, which he composed and will conduct and which will reprise in a French version titled *Nuit sans aube* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in the same season. He returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra and will be in his sixth year as creative partner at the Cincinnati Symphony.



Pintscher was formerly the music director of the Ensemble Intercontemporain, and has held several titled positions, including nine seasons as BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra's artist-in-association, principal conductor of the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra, music director for the 2020 Ojai Festival and season creative chair with the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich.

Pintscher's music is championed by some of today's finest performing artists, orchestras and conductors, and has been performed by the Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Orchestre de Paris, among many others. He has been on the composition faculty at the Juilliard School since 2014.

Matthias Pintscher is published exclusively by Bärenreiter and recordings of his works can be found on Kairos, EMI, Teldec, Wergo and Winter & Winter.

George Li

PIANO

Praised by the Washington Post for combining “staggering technical prowess, a sense of command and depth of expression,” pianist George Li possesses an effortless grace, poised authority and brilliant virtuosity far beyond his years. Since winning the silver medal at the 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition, Li has rapidly established a major international reputation and performs regularly with some of the world’s leading orchestras and conductors, including Gustavo Dudamel, James Gaffigan, Manfred Honeck, Leonard Slatkin, Michael Tilson Thomas, Long Yu and Xian Zhang.



Recent concerto highlights include performances with the Los Angeles, New York, London, Rotterdam, Oslo, St. Petersburg and Buffalo philharmonics; the San Francisco, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dallas, Tokyo, Frankfurt Radio, Sydney, Nashville, New Jersey, New World, North Carolina, Pacific, Valencia, Montreal and Baltimore symphonies; and the Philharmonia Orchestra, DSO Berlin, Orchestra National de Lyon and Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège in Belgium.

In recital, Li has previously performed at venues including Carnegie Hall, Davies Hall in San Francisco, Symphony Center in Chicago, the Mariinsky Theatre, Elbphilharmonie, Munich’s Gasteig, the Louvre, Seoul Arts Center, Tokyo’s Asahi Hall and Musashino Hall, NCPA Beijing, Shanghai’s Poly Theater and Amici della Musica Firenze.

Li gave his first public performance at Boston’s Steinway Hall at the age of 10, and in 2011 he performed for President Obama at the White House in an evening honoring Chancellor Angela Merkel. Among Li’s many prizes, he was the recipient of the 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant, a recipient of the 2012 Gilmore Young Artist Award and the first prize winner of the 2010 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. In 2019, he completed the Harvard/New England Conservatory dual degree program with a bachelor’s degree in English literature and a master’s degree in music. He subsequently graduated with an Artist Diploma from the New England Conservatory in 2022. When not playing piano, Li is an avid reader and photographer, as well as a sports fanatic.

Kansas City Symphony Chorus



The Kansas City Symphony Chorus 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. After the creation of the Kansas City Symphony, the Symphony Chorus assumed its current name and role as the Symphony’s “choral voice” in 1988. The Symphony Chorus has worked under the direction of choral conductors Eph Ehly, Arnold Epley and Charles Bruffy.

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.

Chorus Roster

Patrice Sollenberger, *Assistant Chorus Director*

Keith Florea, *President*

Briana Carillo, *Librarian*

Dan Velicer, *Accompanist*

SOPRANOS

Laura Alexander
Rebecca Baker
Pamela Beglau
Elizabeth Brockhoff
Rachel Burke
Emily Butler
Candyss Camarda
Skye D. Clements
Audrey
Duncan Welch
Sofia Gillespie
Holly Hacking
Deanna Hartman
Erica Hazelton
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Oelklaus O'Brien
Dana O'Regan
Suzette Price
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Rangel-Flemmer
Gretchen Rohrs
Jennifer Roth
Bethany Ruisinger
Jana Samuel
Angela
Schumacher-Porras
Jerusha Staggs
Maham Theisen
Connie Van Engen
Annie Walsh
Denise Weigand

ALTOS

Gwendolyn
Akins Conway
Lynne Beebe
Joyce Bibens
Amber Bracken
Katie Camlin
Marlene Carnahan
Briana Carrillo
Hyang Sook Choi
Jillian Colrain
Helen Cowan
Christine Epps
June Farson
Tori Fugate
Patricia Henshaw
Julia K. Heriford
Lenette Johnson
Margaret Jones
Ashley Jones Rivers
Avery Keown
Katherine Lang
Mikaela Lange
Julia Leamon
Lori LeVine
Meghan LeVota
Diane Martin
Sandra McCormick
Hollie Meek
Svetlana Mitchell
Karla Morgan Massia
Nguyen Nicholson
Carol Robinson
Anna Kate Scott
Amber Smith
Caitlin Smith
Greta K.
Sonnenberg
Karen Spalding
Sara Treffer
Caitlin Walker
Grace Wampler
Carolyn Welch
Sarah Zung

TENORS

Ron Alburtus
Leon Barnes
Rory Behrens
Timothy Dennison
Tony Donley
Kit Doyle
Bryce Elder
Ryan Flemmer
Keith Florea
James Jorns
Russell Joy
Mark Kahler
William Kenefake
Will Kubie
Mark Lange
Tony Locatelli
Paul Meissbach
Trent Menssen
Casey Morgan
Jacob Nienhueser
Andy Pierce
Jonathan Plummer
Jeff Preuss
Ward Russell
Brogan Sullivan
David Sutherland
Alan Talierno
Sheldon Vogt
Jeff Williams
Travis Windsor
Craig Zernickow

BASS

Ben Albertson
Jeryl Banning
James Bourassa
Kalon Breckenridge
Richard Brooks
Zach Buchanan
John Burke
Scott Chellgren
Bruce
Everett Douglas
James R. Duncan
Jeff Duncan
Aden Eilts
Bill Featherston
Brendan Gibson
Richard T. Gill
Scott B. Hall
Jude Harb
Don Hires
George Keeper
Bill Lacy
Art Lafex
Dave Lockett
Roger McDougale
Donald Milligan
Kenneth Moncrieff
Patrick Orlich
Austin Planker
Joe Potter
Chris Pressler
David Reid
Ed Roberts
John Ross
Scot Schwartz
Joshua Stark
Robert Stepanich
Rick Stephenson
Gregory Toplikar
Ken VanEngen

Strong Resolve (2025)

NICO MUHLY (b. 1981)

5 MINUTES

Solo piano.

I wrote Paul Sekhri, the dedicatee, and asked him what exactly it was that he found so deeply alluring about Rachmaninoff. To my surprise, he wrote back two seconds later with a simple harmonic example: C minor, E major, A-flat major, C minor. This sort of harmonic wiggling is quite foreign to my native tongue, which uses single-pitch pivots and has a relatively slow harmonic heartbeat. I took this as a challenge, and wrote a short series of variations on that exact progression. The theme, as it were, is presented as a lilting short-long pattern, with each chord repeated twice. The first variation is a vaguely unstable syncopated cross-hands affair, which begins to have hiccoughs and abrupt changes of tack. The second returns to the lilt, but here with a high descant. The third is a perpetual motion machine, which goes off-kilter, skittering back through the previous variations and collecting new information on the way. The piece ends quietly and completely in my own harmonic language, with the instability and romantic yearning replaced by a series of six bell-like chimes.



— *Nico Muhly*

The Nikolai Loop (2025)

ALISTAIR COLEMAN (b. 1998)

5 MINUTES

Solo piano.



The Nikolai Loop is a prelude for piano written in response to Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2, a work that has profoundly shaped my love of the piano. The concerto itself carries a remarkable backstory: after the disastrous reception of his First Symphony, Rachmaninoff suffered a severe breakdown and withdrew from composing. During this period, he sought treatment with neurologist Nikolai Dahl,

whom he visited daily for months, undergoing various therapies of the time, including hypnosis. Rachmaninoff credited these sessions with helping him overcome his writer's block and later dedicated the concerto to Dahl.

This prelude seeks to capture Rachmaninoff's psychology in the fall of 1900, as he found his way back to composition. A fragmented opening slowly falls into orbit around a hypnotic scale pattern that loops and transforms, building momentum over time. The pattern eventually coalesces into chords at the extreme ranges of the keyboard — ghost-like echoes of the concerto's iconic opening. In this way, the piece reflects both the paralysis of writer's block and the fragile, uncertain process of finding a way into creativity.

This prelude was commissioned by the Kansas City Symphony, and is written for and dedicated to George Li. I'm very grateful to him and to Matthias Pintscher for helping bring this piece to life.

— *Alistair Coleman*

Concerto No. 2 in C Minor for Piano and Orchestra, op. 18 (1901)



SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
(1873-1943)

32 MINUTES

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

THE STORY

In 1897, the 24-year-old Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff premiered his First Symphony in St. Petersburg. It was a complete disaster. The conductor, Alexander Glazunov, was incompetent, had made

several unauthorized changes to the music during rehearsals, and was drunk during the performance. Rachmaninoff was so humiliated that he watched from backstage and left the hall as soon as the piece was finished. Critics panned the symphony, with fellow Russian composer César Cui going so far as to say, "If there were a conservatory in Hell, [and] if one of its talented students ... were to compose a symphony like Mr. Rachmaninoff's, then he would have fulfilled his task brilliantly and delighted the inmates of Hell."

The experience plunged Rachmaninoff into a deep depression for three years; he drank heavily and had a severe case of writer's block, eventually unable to compose anything at all. His worried relatives suggested visiting the neurologist and hypnotist Nikolai Dahl, who had successfully treated one of the composer's aunts. Not knowing what else to do, Rachmaninoff agreed. He visited Dahl daily from January to April 1900. Dahl was an amateur musician himself, and his course of treatment involved lengthy discussions of music as well as hypnotic suggestions: "You will begin to write your concerto ... You will work with great facility ... The concerto will be excellent." The treatment proved successful — in April Rachmaninoff accepted the invitation of

a friend to spend time with him in Italy, and he returned to Russia a few months later with sketches for the second and third movements of his Second Piano Concerto, among other music. He finished them in time to perform them, with his cousin Alexander Siloti conducting, at a benefit concert in December. The following months were spent composing and orchestrating the first movement; he finished the full concerto in May and dedicated it to Dahl. The premiere took place in November 1901, again with Rachmaninoff performing and Siloti conducting, and it was a smashing success.

The entire concerto features one gorgeous, long-spun melody after another.

THE MUSIC

The first movement opens with the piano alone, intoning bell-like chords that were inspired by the Russian Orthodox church bells Rachmaninoff heard as a child. The entire concerto features one gorgeous, long-spun melody after another, sometimes introduced by the orchestra and sometimes by the piano. The second movement's main theme, played by a clarinet and then taken up by the piano, is particularly beautiful. Unusually, a short cadenza for the solo piano appears in the second movement (when it is typically found in the first). After a short orchestral introduction, the piano has another short cadenza at the beginning of the third movement. The music progresses from C minor to C major; a blisteringly fast final cadenza leads to a majestic restatement of the movement's main theme, and hammering piano chords bring the concerto to an exhilarating close.

— *AJ Harbison*

Kolokola (The Bells), op. 35 (1913)

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873-1943)

50 MINUTES

Soprano, tenor and baritone soloists, mixed chorus, piccolo, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, chimes, cymbals, orchestra bells, snare drum, tam-tam, tambourine, triangle, harp, piano, celesta and strings.



THE STORY

Following the success of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto (also on this program), he composed the cantata *Spring* (which we are performing on our "Midsummer Night's Dream" concert in April). He wanted to follow up *Spring* with another choral work, but was having trouble finding a suitable text. While on a vacation in Rome in 1907, he received

an anonymous letter. The letter included a poem and the writer suggested that it would lend itself well to a musical setting. The poem was a free Russian translation by symbolist poet Konstantin Balmont of Edgar Allen Poe's poem "The Bells." Rachmaninoff was deeply moved by the poem and began working on a choral setting of it. (After Rachmaninoff's death it was discovered that the sender of the letter was Maria Danilova, a young cello student at the Moscow Conservatory who was a fan of both Poe and Rachmaninoff.)

Poe's poem is filled with onomatopoeia (words sounding like what they describe), evoking with words and repetition the sounds of four different kinds of bells — silver bells on horses, golden wedding bells, bronze bells sounding a fire alarm and giant iron bells. The bells get progressively larger and deeper, and the poem gets progressively darker. Balmont's poem follows the same structure and makes the final poem even darker than Poe's version, making the iron bells' tolling explicitly death knells. (See an English translation of Balmont's poem on pages 13-15.)

Rachmaninoff later said *The Bells* was one of his own favorite compositions, and noted the influence of bells on Russian composers in

general and himself especially: “The sound of church bells dominated all the cities of the Russia I used to know ... They accompanied every Russian from childhood to grave, and no composer could escape their influence ... If I have been at all successful in making bells vibrate with human emotion in my works, it is largely due to the fact that most of my life was lived amid the vibrations of the bells of Moscow ... In the drowsy quiet of a Roman afternoon, with Poe’s verses before me, I heard the bell voices, and tried to set down on paper their lovely tones that seemed to express the varying shades of human experience.”

THE MUSIC

Rachmaninoff’s piece is considered a choral symphony because it follows a standard four-movement symphonic structure: first movement, slow movement, scherzo and finale, with each movement setting one of the sections of the poem.

The first movement uses the tenor soloist and is light and sparkling as it describes a nighttime sleigh ride in the snow. Even in this movement, though, death is not far off, as the poem speaks of “deep oblivion” and “universal slumber” in lines that Balmont added to his version. The second movement begins with the four notes of the “Dies irae” (Day of Wrath) chant, which Rachmaninoff used liberally, almost obsessively in his works to represent death. But he transforms those notes into a sweet melody as the chorus and the soprano sing of golden wedding bells.

The third movement turns darker, with the alarm bells that grow “discordant, faint and weak” as the fire grows stronger. The fire (greatly amplified in Balmont’s version compared to Poe’s) is personified and declares its intention to leap ever higher until it reaches the moon. This movement, for chorus without a soloist, features some vivid orchestration, especially in the introduction as you hear a spark grow into a raging, insatiable blaze. The final movement begins with a mournful melody in the English horn over deep pizzicato (plucking) in the low strings, leading to the baritone soloist’s entrance. The climax comes with a vision of a demon “madly reeling” and ringing the death knells, “moaning forth the word of doom.” The baritone’s final words — “There is neither rest nor respite, save the quiet of the tomb” — lead to a tranquil orchestral ending in a major key, suggesting peace and rest at last. The symphony ends with a plagal cadence, the IV-I chords at the end of a hymn that harmonize the word “Amen.”

— *AJ Harbison*

KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY CONCERTS

Matthias Conducts Mahler: Symphony No. 7



Friday, November 21 at 8 p.m. (SYMPHONIC PIAZZA)
Saturday, November 22 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, November 23 at 2 p.m.

Matthias Pintscher, music director and conductor

GUSTAV MAHLER *Symphony No. 7*

Brahms' Fourth Symphony

Friday, January 9, 2026 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, January 10, 2026 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, January 11, 2026 at 2 p.m.

Roderick Cox, guest conductor
Avery Gagliano, piano (Almy Legacy Fund)

SAMUEL BARBER *Essay No. 2*
CLARA SCHUMANN *Piano Concerto*
JOHANNES BRAHMS *Symphony No. 4*



Roderick Cox

Pines of Rome and Bruch's Second Violin Concerto



Jun Iwasaki

Friday, January 16, 2026 at 8 p.m. (SYMPHONIC PIAZZA)
Saturday, January 17, 2026 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, January 11, 2026 at 2 p.m.

Kevin John Edusei, guest conductor
Jun Iwasaki, violin

SAMY MOUSSA *Elysium*
MAX BRUCH *Violin Concerto No. 2*
OTTORINO RESPIGHI *Fountains of Rome*
OTTORINO RESPIGHI *Pines of Rome*

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Rachmaninoff

The Bells Text

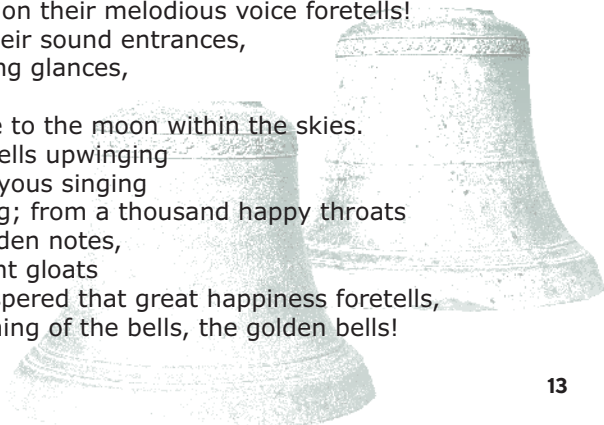
Russian poem by Konstantin Balmont, adapted from "The Bells"
by Edgar Allen Poe
English translation by Fanny S. Copeland

I. The Silver Sleigh Bells

Listen, hear the silver bells!
Silver bells!
Hear the sledges with the bells,
How they charm our weary senses with a sweetness that compels,
In the ringing and the singing that of deep oblivion tells.
Hear them calling, calling, calling,
Rippling sounds of laughter, falling
On the icy midnight air;
And a promise they declare,
That beyond Illusion's cumber,
Births and lives beyond all number,
Waits an universal slumber — deep and sweet past all compare.
Hear the sledges with the bells,
Hear the silver-throated bells;
See, the stars bow down to hearken, what their melody foretells,
With a passion that compels,
And their dreaming is a gleaming that a perfumed air exhales,
And their thoughts are but a shining,
And a luminous divining
Of the singing and the ringing, that a dreamless peace foretells.

II. The Mellow Wedding Bells

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of tender passion their melodious voice foretells!
Through the night their sound entrances,
Like a lover's yearning glances,
That arise
On a wave of tuneful rapture to the moon within the skies.
From the sounding cells upwinging
Flash the tones of joyous singing
Rising, falling, brightly calling; from a thousand happy throats
Roll the glowing, golden notes,
And an amber twilight gloats
While the tender vow is whispered that great happiness foretells,
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells, the golden bells!





Rachmaninoff *The Bells* Text (cont.)

III. The Loud Alarm Bells

Hear them, hear the brazen bells,
Hear the loud alarm bells!

In their sobbing, in their throbbing what a tale of horror dwells!

How beseeching sounds their cry,
'Neath the naked midnight sky,
Through the darkness wildly pleading
In affright,

Now approaching, now receding
Rings their message through the night.

And so fierce is their dismay

And the terror they portray,

That the brazen domes are riven, and their tongues can only speak

In a tuneless, jangling wrangling as they shriek, and shriek, and shriek,

Till their frantic supplication

To the ruthless conflagration

Grows discordant, faint and weak.

But the fire sweeps on unheeding,

And in vain is all their pleading

With the flames!

From each window, roof and spire,

Leaping higher, higher, higher,

Every lambent tongue proclaims:

I shall soon,

Leaping higher, still aspire, till I reach the crescent moon;

Else I die of my desire in aspiring to the moon!

O despair, despair, despair,

That so feebly ye compare

With the blazing, raging horror, and the panic, and the glare,

That ye cannot turn the flames,

As your unavailing clang and clamor mournfully proclaims.

And in hopeless resignation

Man must yield his habitation

To the warring desolation!

Yet we know

By the booming and the clanging,

By the roaring and the twanging,

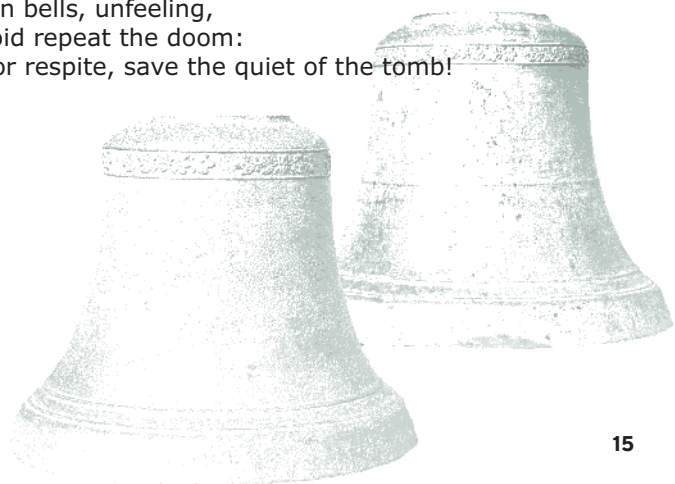
How the danger falls and rises like the tides that ebb and flow.

And the progress of the danger every ear distinctly tells

By the sinking and the swelling in the clamor of the bells.

IV. The Mournful Iron Bells

Hear the tolling of the bells,
 Mournful bells!
 Bitter end to fruitless dreaming their stern monody foretells!
 What a world of desolation in their iron utterance dwells!
 And we tremble at our doom,
 As we think upon the tomb,
 Glad endeavor quenched for ever in the silence and the gloom.
 With persistent iteration
 They repeat their lamentation,
 Till each muffled monotone
 Seems a groan,
 Heavy, moaning,
 Their intoning,
 Waxing sorrowful and deep,
 Bears the message, that a brother passed away to endless sleep.
 Those relentless voices rolling
 Seem to take a joy in tolling
 For the sinner and the just
 That their eyes be sealed in slumber, and their hearts be turned to dust
 Where they lie beneath a stone.
 But the spirit of the belfry is a somber fiend that dwells
 In the shadow of the bells,
 And he gibbers, and he yells,
 As he knells, and knells, and knells,
 Madly round the belfry reeling,
 While the giant bells are pealing,
 While the bells are fiercely thrilling,
 Moaning forth the word of doom,
 While those iron bells, unfeeling,
 Through the void repeat the doom:
 There is neither rest nor respite, save the quiet of the tomb!



INDIANA JONES

and the
**RAIDERS
OF THE LOST ARK**



LIVE IN CONCERT

Thursday-Saturday, January 22-24, 2026 at 7 p.m.
Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 2 p.m.

Nicholas Buc, guest conductor

Follow along with the heart-pounding escapades of Indiana Jones as he travels across the globe to find the Ark of the Covenant before it falls into the wrong hands. Your Kansas City Symphony performs John Williams' legendary score live and in sync with Steven Spielberg's unforgettable film.

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Kansas City Symphony

In only its 43rd 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 welcomed 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.

Top international soloists perform with the Kansas City Symphony every season, including brilliant classical musicians, popular singer/songwriters, rock bands and other creative performers. The Symphony also performs live soundtracks for a variety of fan-favorite films, with the movie projected on a giant screen above the stage.

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 Kansas City 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 Orchestra Roster

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER, MUSIC DIRECTOR

FIRST VIOLINS

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New Musician Bios



OMRI BARAK

ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL AND SECOND TRUMPET

Omri is an alumnus of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with David Bilger, and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, where he studied with Barbara Butler and Charles Geyer. He joins the Kansas City Symphony in the 2025/26

season as associate principal and second trumpet. Prior to this, he was principal trumpet of the Allentown Symphony, a position he had held since the age of 19. Additionally, he spent the 2023/24 season serving as acting second trumpet with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and has been a frequent guest musician with the Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Chicago Symphony Orchestras, among others.

When not playing trumpet, Omri enjoys brewing coffee, playing chess, finding new great restaurants and solving crossword puzzles.



JOE MAIOCCO

BASS TROMBONE

Born and raised in Prospect, Kentucky, bass trombonist Joe Maiocco was originally on track to be an airline pilot. Music slowly started taking over Joe's life when he began playing the cello in middle school. He explored a wide range of instruments before ultimately

turning his focus to the trombone, soon committing to bass trombone and starting private study with Brett Shuster of the University of Louisville in 2019.

Joe began his undergraduate studies at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, where he studied with Michael Mulcahy, Randall Hawes, Douglas Wright and Reed Capshaw while playing in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. During his first year, he made appearances as a guest musician with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and was soon after appointed to the Kansas City Symphony.

Joe is a performing artist with the S.E. Shires Company and was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center in the summer of 2025 before officially joining the Kansas City Symphony in the fall. Outside of music, Joe spends lots of his free time golfing, and will occasionally tap into his roots by building and flying model planes.



LIZ TEPLITSKY
ACTING FLUTE/PICCOLO

Liz Teplitsky is joining the Kansas City Symphony as acting flute/piccolo after two years in that position with The Florida Orchestra and serving as acting second flute of the San Antonio Symphony. Recent orchestra performances include appearances with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Fort Worth Symphony, Alabama Symphony and Phoenix Symphony. Travels for other concerts have taken Liz as far as Wyoming for the Grand Teton Music Festival and South Florida for a punk rock performance of *Tosca* with Opera Naples Festival. Liz studied flute with Angela Jones Reus (University of Georgia) and Alison Brown Sincoff (Ohio University). She began doctoral studies at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, but left to join the Air Force Band in San Antonio.



JAVIER MORALES-MARTINEZ
ACTING PRINCIPAL CLARINET

Javier Morales-Martinez, a Los Angeles native, earned his Master of Music degree from the Colburn Conservatory of Music, where he studied under Yehuda Gilad. He also holds a Bachelor of Music in Clarinet Performance with a minor in accounting from the University of Southern California. Javier has been featured on NPR's "Tiny Desk Concert" series and "From the Top," where he was awarded the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship. He has received top prizes in numerous competitions, including first prize at the Fine Arts Club of Pasadena Clarinet Competition, first prize at the Silverstein Global Clarinet Contest and recognition as a National YoungArts Foundation finalist. Additional honors include the Lorna Hedges Scholarship from Music Academy of the West and the Mitchell Lurie Award from USC's Thornton School of Music.

As an orchestral musician, Javier has performed with the Kansas City Symphony, Houston Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, among others. He has also participated in esteemed music festivals including the Tanglewood Music Center, Marlboro Music Festival, Music Academy of the West and the Orchestra of the Americas.

New Musician Bios (cont.)



CHAI LEE
PRINCIPAL HARP

Harpist Chai Lee joins the Kansas City Symphony as principal harp in the 2025/26 season, appointed by Matthias Pintscher. He has performed with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic and Sarasota Orchestra, as well as serving as guest

principal with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra. He is an international prize-winning soloist, winning top prize at the Soka Nippon International Harp Competition and the Juilliard Concerto Competition, performing at Lincoln Center. He has appeared with the Aspen Music Festival, Music Academy of the West, International Harp Festival in Ancenis, France, Bowdoin International Music Festival, Académie Internationale d'été de Nice, World Harp Congress and the United Nations Chamber Music Society. Chai has served as a teaching assistant at the Juilliard School and secondary lessons instructor at the Yale School of Music, in addition to fulfilling assistant roles in the admissions and communications offices. He is a graduate of the Juilliard School, where he studied with Nancy Allen, and Yale University, where he studied with June Han.



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Creative Planning	Reliant Financial Services
Dillingham Enterprises, Inc.	SageView Advisory - Kansas City
DL & CL Investments	SHS MedTech Consulting
Excel Constructors	Terrasi Living & Scandia Home
Fairway Creamery	The Homesteader Cafe LLC
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Film + Live Orchestra

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A Holiday Tradition

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DECEMBER 5-7

Experience the tradition of Handel's *Messiah* in the breathtaking acoustics of Helzberg Hall, performed by your Kansas City Symphony, Symphony Chorus and soloists under Baroque master Nicholas McGegan.

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Film + Live Orchestra

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