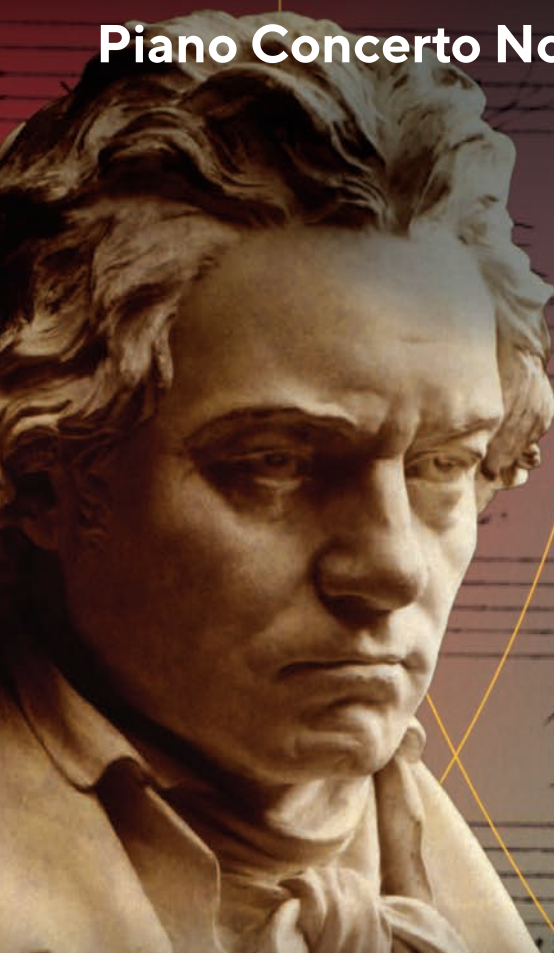
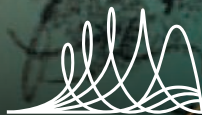


Beethoven and Beyond

Piano Concerto No. 2



FRIDAY, JANUARY 30
SATURDAY, JANUARY 31
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1



**KANSAS CITY
SYMPHONY**

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR
TAMARA STEFANOVICH, PIANO

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

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Beethoven and Beyond

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

PROGRAM



Friday, January 30, 2026 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, January 31, 2026 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, February 1, 2026 at 2 p.m.

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR
TAMARA STEFANOVICH, PIANO

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

LISA STREICH

Black Swan for Piano and Orchestra
(world premiere, KCS commission)
Tamara Stefanovich, piano

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2
in B-flat Major, op. 19
I. Allegro con brio
II. Adagio
III. Rondo: Molto allegro
Tamara Stefanovich, piano

Intermission

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, op. 60
I. Adagio — Allegro vivace
II. Adagio
III. Allegro vivace
IV. Allegro ma non troppo

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.

Tamara Stefanovich

PIANO

Fearless, dazzling, exceptional" (The Guardian), Tamara Stefanovich captivates audiences worldwide with her highly elaborate recital programs, as chamber musician or soloist with the world's leading orchestras. Passionate about a broad repertoire from Bach to the contemporary, she has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony and Philharmonic orchestras, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Bamberger Symphoniker and Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen amongst others. Stefanovich performs at the world's major concert venues including Suntory Hall Tokyo and London's Royal Albert and Wigmore halls. She has been featured in international festivals such as Festival de La Roque-d'Anthéron, Salzburger Festspiele and Beethovenfest Bonn. In the current season Stefanovich will perform at Musikfest Berlin and Muziekgebouw Amsterdam and in duo recital at Musikfest Herrenhausen.



Recent engagements have included performances with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, WDR Sinfoniesorchester Köln, Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo. Stefanovich also undertook an extensive U.S. recital tour marking the 90th birthday of Pierre Boulez, garnering exultant reviews.

Fruitful collaboration has connected Stefanovich with composers including Boulez, George Benjamin, Hans Abrahamsen and György Kurtág. She works with chamber music partners such as Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Pierre-Laurent Aimard and Matthias Goerne and regularly partners with conductors such as Esa-Pekka Salonen, Vladimir Jurowski and Susanna Mälkki.

Her discography includes a recording of Kurtág's "Quasi una Fantasia" and his double concerto with Asko|Schönberg Ensemble and Reinbert de Leeuw/Jean-Guihen Queyras for ECM. Following her first solo recording with works by Bach and Bartók, she dedicated her second album, "Influences," to works of Ives, Bartók, Messiaen and Bach.

Stefanovich regularly leads educational projects at London's Barbican Centre, Kölner Philharmonie and Klavier-Festival Ruhr. She was co-founder and curator of Portland International Piano Festival's "The Clearing". A dedicated European, she studied in Belgrade, at the Curtis Institute and at Cologne's Musikhochschule.

Black Swan for Piano and Orchestra (2025)

LISA STREICH (b. 1985)

25 MINUTES

Solo piano, piccolo, 3 flutes, bass flute, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, crotales, whirly tubes, harp, piano and strings.



I always see animals when I see instruments with their humans. In this case, the grand piano is like a black swan lying on the stage.

The black swan (*Cygnus atratus*), native to Australia, is only rarely seen on other continents. It appears mostly in parks or lakes where it has been introduced — a dark and graceful contrast to the native white swans. Its deep black feathers and crimson beak give it an almost otherworldly presence, both beautiful and unsettling. The black swan feels like a symbol of rarity and transformation, a reminder that even in familiar landscapes, the unexpected can appear and change how we see the world.

There is, of course Tchaikovsky's Black Swan — the dark, seductive double of the White Swan — but I did not follow this path.

I came across the Black Swan Theory proposed by Nassim Nicholas Taleb, which describes rare, unpredictable events that have a massive impact. These events lie beyond normal expectations, seem obvious in hindsight, and often change the course of history or entire systems.

We live in a time marked by rapid progress and deep turmoil: technological leaps, global connectivity, and scientific advances coexist with wars, inequality, climate crises, and social unrest. It is an age of immense potential, shadowed by uncertainty and human struggle. I noticed that this made me long for a Black Swan moment — a positive Black Swan moment — one that could let us see the world as a whole from above; a moment that could unify us, remind us that we all depend on one another, on both large and small scales.

The piece seeks to reveal different forms of dependency and imperfection, and I believe their outcomes can be beautiful, cruel, or devastating. At the same time, I hope there is some naïve hope and beauty in the music.

— *Lisa Streich*

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

ON STAGE: LEILA JOSEFOWICZ

Thursday, February 5 at 8 p.m.



Matthias Pintscher, music director and conductor

Leila Josefowicz, violin

Alex East, Tamamo Gibbs, MingYu Hsu, Sally Kim and

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At just \$100 per person, On Stage is a rare VIP experience with extremely limited seating. Call the Box Office at 816.471.0400 or visit kcsymphony.org to purchase your tickets today!

Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major for Piano and Orchestra, op. 19 (1793)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

28 MINUTES

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

THE STORY

Today we think of Beethoven almost exclusively as a composer. Back when this concerto was written, he was unknown as a composer but well-known as a rising young virtuoso pianist. In 1792 he left his hometown of Bonn, Germany to make his way in Vienna, Austria, the musical capital of the world at that time. He devoted himself to studying counterpoint and composition while building a reputation as a performer and improviser in the salons of Viennese nobility. This led to his public debut at the Burgtheater in March 1795, when he was just 24 years old.



Beethoven had begun composition of the B-flat piano concerto before arriving in Vienna, and it was intended as a vehicle for showcasing himself as a performer. At his debut, he performed one of his concertos — either this one (which was composed first) or the one we know as No. 1 (which was published first). The concert was a hit, with “unanimous applause” according to the local paper. His public and private success may have given him the confidence he needed to officially publish his opus 1 (a set of piano trios) that fall, starting him on the journey of becoming one of the greatest composers of all time.

Our soloist today, Tamara Stefanovich, will be performing her own cadenza in the first movement.

THE MUSIC

The first movement opens in the double-exposition form that had become standard by Beethoven's time, with an orchestra-only section first, introducing the two main themes of the movement, and then the piano's entrance where the soloist plays the themes. The piano part includes many quick chromatic passages (using both the white and the black keys) that must have shown off Beethoven's speed and light touch. Toward the very end of the movement there is a spot for the cadenza — a showy section for the soloist alone. Beethoven improvised the cadenza at the first performance, and our soloist, Tamara Stefanovich, will be playing her own cadenza in her performance today.

The second movement is a lovely adagio with singing lines for the piano as well as sections where the piano accompanies instrumental solos from the orchestra. The finale is a rondo, where the main theme returns multiple times with episodes of different material in between. It is light-hearted and playful, with accents on the "wrong" beats of the theme's 6/8 meter. In the second-to-last appearance of the theme, the piano plays the melody in the "wrong" key of G major and in the "wrong" position (coming in a beat early). The full orchestra then forcefully returns to the melody in the "right" key and the "right" position and, after a couple of mischievous quiet moments, brings the concerto to its lively finish.

— *AJ Harbison*

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, op. 60 (1806)



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

32 MINUTES

*Flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons,
2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings.*

THE STORY

Beethoven's even-numbered symphonies tend to be overshadowed by his odd-numbered symphonies — the Third ("Eroica"), the Fifth and of course the Ninth especially. His Fourth in particular,

sandwiched between the Third and the Fifth, is unfairly neglected.

It certainly has a very different character than those works; Robert Schumann described it as "a slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants." But it has a charm all its own that displays a different side of Beethoven's musical personality.

Following the weighty innovations of the Eroica Symphony, completed in 1804, Beethoven started working on the sketches of what would become his Fifth Symphony. However, in the summer of 1806, he set aside the sketches to focus on a shorter and lighter piece that became the Fourth. Count Franz von Oppersdorff commissioned the composer for a piece that his court orchestra could perform. Beethoven may have initially intended to dedicate the Fifth Symphony to the count. After two years had passed, though, he had dedicated the Fifth to two other patrons out of financial necessity, so he gave the count the already-completed (and already-premiered) Fourth. The count was understandably displeased and never commissioned another work from him.

THE MUSIC

Notes on the symphony from the Eastman School of Music point out, "The Fourth shines forth in a noble simplicity that the Romantic period inherited from the Enlightenment. In terms of its proportions, it is well-made and beautifully wrought — 'Greek' in its focus on

Robert Schumann described Beethoven's Fourth Symphony as “a slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants.”

beauty and artistic skill, and ‘slender’ in its economy of materials and marvelously understated proportions.”

The symphony surprisingly starts with a slow, somber introduction that begins in B-flat minor and meanders through several distant keys before the first entrance of the timpani and trumpets ushers in the main theme in a fast B-flat major. This theme is fun, cheerful and light. The timpani again play a structural role after the central development section: A 25-measure roll, growing from a very soft rumble to a loud thunderous roar, brings in the recapitulation and restatement of the theme.

The slow second movement has two main themes, one introduced at the outset by the violins and one introduced by a solo clarinet. Beneath, between and around the melodies, a rhythmic accompaniment that is present throughout becomes its own kind of theme (perhaps a foreshadowing of the rhythmic short-short-short-long pattern on which the whole Fifth Symphony is built). The very quick third movement takes the elegant minuet of Haydn's and Mozart's symphonies, speeds it up and turns it into a cheeky scherzo. Contrasts of dynamics and tempo make the movement fast and fun. There are two contrasting trio sections, in a slightly slower tempo and focused primarily on the woodwinds.

The final movement is light and cheerful, with nearly continuous sixteenth notes creating a sense of perpetual motion. Like many symphonies of Beethoven's teacher, Franz Joseph Haydn, there are mischievous, light-hearted surprises of dynamics and sudden key changes. At the very end, he uses another of Haydn's tricks: comically slowing down his main theme, with hesitating statements by violins, then bassoons, then violas — before the full orchestra returns for a brief headlong rush to the end.

— *AJ Harbison*



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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.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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