

VOLUME 5

25/26 SEASON

MAY—JUNE

INDIANAPOLIS  SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Jennifer Christen
Oboe



ONE PIECE MUSIC SYMPHONY

MYO 30TH ANNIVERSARY SPRING CONCERT

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Activities are made possible in part by Indy Arts Council and the City of Indianapolis, Noblesville Creates, Indiana Arts Commission, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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Maintained and Operated by the Indiana Symphony Society, Inc.

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Mission of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra:

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra inspires and unites our community through music.



In memory of Phil Kenney, past Vice Chair of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors. Phil's advocacy for the ISO and other institutions he supported reflected his passion for our community. As a business and civic leader, husband, father and grandfather, and friend, he will be missed.



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INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



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Musicians of the ISO

Jun Märkl, Music Director • Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor
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First Violin

Kevin Lin, *Concertmaster, The Ford-West Chair*
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Michelle Kang, *Assistant Concertmaster, The Wilcox Chair*
Vincent Meklis, *Acting Assistant Concertmaster*
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Sophia Cho
Ziqing Guo
Sherry Hong
Fangming Shen
Chak Chi Wong**
Hán Xiè

Second Violin

Bryson Karrer, *Principal*
Byul (Bella) Seo, *Associate Principal*
Marisa Votapek, *Assistant Principal, The Taurel Chair*
*The Dick Dennis Fifth Chair**
Melissa Deal
Jennifer Farquhar
Hua Jin
Yeajin Kim
Jayna Park
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Viola

Yu Jin, *Principal, The Schlegel Chair*
Zhanbo Zheng, *Associate Principal*
Zachary Collins, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Caleb Cox
Nicholas Gallitano**
Yang Guo
Amy Kniffen
Li Li
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Cello

Austin Huntington, *Principal*
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Stephen Hawkey, *Assistant Principal*
CJ Collins**
James Cooper
Nicholas Donatelle
Jonah Krolik
Sam Viguerie

Contrabass

Ju-Fang Liu, *Principal*
Robert Goodlett II, *Assistant Principal*
Mitchell Ballester
Joseph Everett**
Sharif Ibrahim
Brian Smith
Bert Witzel

Flute

Jungah Yoon, *Principal*
Alistair Howlett, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Dianne Seo**

Piccolo

Dianne Seo**
Janet F. and Dr. Richard E. Barb Chair

Oboe

Jennifer Christen, *Principal, The Frank C. Springer Jr. Chair*
Tanavi Prabhu
Roger Roe, *Assistant Principal*

English Horn

Roger Roe, *The Ann Hampton Hunt Chair*

Clarinet

Julianna Darby, *Principal*
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Samuel Rothstein, *Assistant Principal, The Huffington Chair*

Bass Clarinet

Samuel Rothstein

Bassoon

Ivy Ringel, *Principal*
Michael Muszynski
Mark Ortwein, *Assistant Principal*

Contrabassoon

Mark Ortwein

Horn

Robert Danforth, *Principal, The Robert L. Mann and Family Chair*
Richard Graef, *Assistant Principal*
Julie Beckel
Alison Dresser
The Bakken Family Chair
Jeanne Getz**

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Mark Grisez, *Principal Trumpet, The W. Brooks & Wanda Y. Fortune Chair*
Daniel Lewis
Alexander Schwarz**, *Acting Assistant Principal*

Trombone

Derek Gullett, *Principal*
Ryan Miller**, *Acting Assistant Principal*

Bass Trombone

Riley Giampaolo
The Dr. and Mrs. Charles E. Test Chair

Tuba

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Timpani

Jack Brennan, *Principal*
The Thomas N. Akins Chair
Craig Hetrick, *Assistant Principal*

Percussion

Pedro Fernández, *Acting Principal*
Jon Crabiel**
Craig Hetrick

Harp

Claire Thai, *Principal*
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Kit Williams, *Stage Manager*
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Steven A. Martin, *Technician*
Patrick Feeney, *Technician*

*The Fifth Chair in the Second Violin Section is seated using revolving seating. String sections use revolving seating.

**Temporary Contract

+Leave of Absence

Music in My Life: Zhanbo Zheng, Viola



Known for his “beautiful tone and control, tremendous energy and thoughtful musicality” (*Violinist*), violist **Zhanbo Zheng** was the first Chinese to win the Primrose International Viola Competition. He has also taken top prizes in other major competitions including the Irving M. Klein International String Competition and the Washington International Competition for Strings. He was also a recipient of the Emerging Artist Award from the Saint Botolph Club Foundation.

An avid chamber musician, Zheng has collaborated with many distinguished artists and been invited to perform at the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society as a guest artist and at many music festivals. Zheng earned his bachelor and master of music degrees from the

New England Conservatory. He received his Artist Diploma from the Juilliard School and joined the ISO in 2024 as Associate Principal Viola.

Tell us about your family.

I was born in Urumqi, a northwestern city in China, and I grew up there until I moved to Beijing for school when I was 10. I am the only child and the only musician in my family!

When did you start playing the viola?

I started playing the violin at age 5 and switched to viola when I was 10 after hearing a viola recital in Beijing. That was the first time I heard a viola recital, and I immediately fell in love with the instrument. A few months later, I found myself in my first viola lesson. I love the warmth and storytelling quality of the viola’s sound.

What do you enjoy about being part of the ISO?

I’m very thankful for the warm community ISO has and enjoy being part of it. I also love that everyone here strives for artistic excellence and always wants to give their best for our audience. The diverse programming—pops, film, classical, ballet, collaborations with major competitions, and all the other series—also excites me every week!

What concerts are you looking forward to next season?

Rite of Spring has been on my bucket list for a while. I’m very excited about our 26–27 season opener, where I’ll finally have the chance to perform it, along with one of my favorite concertos, Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4!

What do you enjoy doing when you are not performing?

I love cooking; I find it therapeutic. I’m always eager to try new recipes, cooking techniques, or reverse-engineer something I tasted recently. I am also a foodie. Only cooking, though—not baking—because I often get too spontaneous with measurements and end up with results that are not very appealing. I also just fear handling the flour and dough.

Any advice for a young person considering a career in the orchestra?

You will experience one of the most treasured intellectual assets of humanity—the orchestral repertoire—and there’s no better way to experience it than as an orchestral musician. Enjoy!

Musicians Around Town

In May, Jen Christen (oboe) will be performing in the Teddy Bear Concert Series at Zionsville Library. She is also part of the Ronen Chamber Ensemble that will perform two programs in May. Brilliant Winds is a concert featuring Natalie Debikey Scanio (flute/piccolo with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra), UIndy professor Gregory Martin, and ISO musicians Alistair Howlett (flute), Sam Rothstein (clarinet), Mike Muszynski (bassoon), and Allison Dresser (horn). The program will include Franz Doppler's *Andante et Rondo*, arias by J.S. Bach, and Francis Poulenc's Sextet for winds and piano. The first concert will be on May 11 at 7 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center Laikin Auditorium, and the second concert will take place on May 12 at 7 p.m. at the Indiana Historical Society. In July, Jen will be performing with the Grand Teton Music Festival in Wyoming for two weeks as principal oboe. She is looking forward to returning to this beautiful part of the U.S. and hopefully getting more hikes in with the family this time!

Jennifer Farquhar (violin) will be playing at the Endless Mountain Music Festival in July and August that takes place around Wellsboro, Penn., and Corning, N.Y.

Zhanbo Zheng (viola) is traveling to Davis, Calif., in May for the Mellon Music Festival, where he will play several chamber music concerts. In June, he will travel to New York for the Capital Region Classical concert series for a chamber music concert, and later for another chamber music concert in Princeton, N.J.

This spring, the ISO musicians sponsored a section of the cultural trail on Washington Street during the Indianapolis Cultural Trail Spring Clean, their yearly fundraiser. They cleaned up trash, worked on some of the plants along the trail, and swept up the drains and gutters. A group of musicians also worked with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful to plant trees on April 25 in the College Park neighborhood.

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JUNE 18–28
Seussical

JULY 9–19

Oklahoma!

Jun Märkl, Music Director

Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor

Hannah Schendel, Assistant Conductor

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, Principal Guest Conductor of Pops

Special Event

Saturday, May 2, 7:30 p.m.

Hilbert Circle Theatre

ALEXANDRA CRAVERO, *Conductor*

JULIEN MOMBERT, *Music Director*

About ONE PIECE Music Symphony

Started more than 10 years ago, *ONE PIECE Music Symphony* is the one and only official *One Piece* concert, with music arranged and curated in direct collaboration with original composer Kohei Tanaka and under license from Toei Animation. 2026 will be *ONE PIECE Music Symphony*'s 13th year in Asia, 12th year in Europe, and 4th year in America. The show has already sold-out some of the world's most renowned concert venues, such as the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, the Philharmonie in Paris, and the Beijing Workers' Stadium. With videos perfectly synchronized with the anthology soundtrack and projected onto a giant video screen in HD, action, adventure, and emotions are always on the program! Sublimated by the majestic power of the musicians of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, this show is the time to enjoy the most famous music from the TV series live!

About *One Piece*

One Piece is an animated TV series adaption of creator Eiichiro Oda's original manga, the Guinness World Record, top-selling manga title of all time encompassing 108 volumes and more than 500 million copies in print. Produced by Toei Animation, this iconic TV series first debuted on Japanese TV in October 1999 and features pirate Monkey D. Luffy and his Straw Hat crew on their epic quest to find "The One Piece," the legendary treasure of the former King of the Pirates, Gol D. Roger. Now more than 25 years later, the *One Piece* franchise encompasses 15 feature films (including the most recent movie *One Piece Film Red*), video games, home videos, and an ever-growing catalog of licensed merchandise that includes accessories, toys, games, novelties, furniture, housewares, apparel, and more. In the U.S., *One Piece* is simulcast on Crunchyroll and can also be watched on Hulu, Netflix, and Tubi. For more information on *One Piece*, please visit toei-animation-usa.com/one-piece

There will be one 20-minute intermission.

Recording or photographing any part of this performance is strictly prohibited.

Length of performance is approximately two hours long.



Alexandra Cravero is a talented French conductor and violist, holding a master's degrees from CNSM Paris and Lyon. She has performed with leading Maestros such as Pierre Boulez and Marin Alsop and conducted prestigious orchestras such as the BBC Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Scottish Opera, Dallas Opera, and the Opéra du Rhin. Her extensive operatic repertoire includes works by Bizet, Massenet, Verdi, Puccini, and others, and she has worked with renowned singers such as Annick Massis and Michael Spyres. In the upcoming season, she will debut with Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, at Lausanne's Opera and will come back with Scottish Opera, Nice Opera, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, and Théâtre du Châtelet, with *Barbe Bleue*, *Tosca*, *Carmen*, and *Les Misérables*.

Kohei Tanaka, Composer

Japanese composer, arranger, and singer **Kohei Tanaka** has written the musical scores for numerous famous anime TV series, OVAs, movies, computer games, and tokusatsu series, among them *One Piece*, *Sakura Taisen*, *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure*, and *Gunbuster!* Tanaka began playing the piano at an early age. After graduating from Osaka Seiko Gakuin High School, Tanaka attended Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music for music composition, notably studying under Tomojirō Ikenouchi. Tanaka worked for three years in the advertising department of Victor Music Industries after his graduation. After that, he attended the Berkley College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, for two years and then returned to Japan to work as both a pianist and a composer. *NOTE: Mr. Tanaka will not be attending this performance.*

Wild Faery Company, Producer

The Wild Faery Company successfully produces and promotes large-scale and ambitious productions worldwide with efficiency and agility. The company's primary focus is producing so-called orchestral film concerts. We operate with international-level concert halls, orchestras, and artists and have produced numerous concerts under official licensing from top-tier Japanese video game and anime IP s, such as *KINGDOM HEARTS* (The Walt Disney Company), *FINAL FANTASY* (SQUARE ENIX), and *One Piece* (Toei Animation). The company is a subsidiary of the French company La Fée Sauvage. More information can be found at <http://www.wildfaery.com>.

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Metropolitan Youth Orchestra

30th Anniversary Spring Concert

Jun Märkl, Music Director
Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor
Hannah Schendel, Assistant Conductor
Enrico Lopez-Yañez, Principal Guest Conductor of Pops

Presented by:

BANK OF AMERICA 

Metropolitan Youth Orchestra 30th Anniversary Spring Concert
Sunday, May 3, at 3 p.m.
Hilbert Circle Theatre

KRYSTLE FORD, Director, Metropolitan Youth Orchestra
JORDAN NELSON, Associate Director, Metropolitan Youth Orchestra
THE STRING QUEENS, Guest Artists

Orchestra D

Debut

“Born To Be Wild” by Mars Bonfire | Arr. Krystle Ford

Dolce Primo 1 & 2

“Thriller” by Rod Temperton | Arr. Robert Longfield

Harp Ensemble

“APT.” by Rosé and Bruno Mars | Arr. Krystle Ford

Dolce Secundo

“Bad Guy” by Billie Eilish | Arr. Krystle Ford

MYO Parents & Alumni Ensemble

“What I Like” by Bruno Mars | Arr. Michael Story

Orchestra C

“Dance the Night Away” by Dua Lipa | Arr. Michael Story

“Style” by Taylor Swift | Arr. Orchestracks

Orchestra B, featuring The String Queens

“My Favorite Things” by Rodgers & Hammerstein | Arr. The String Queens,
Charles Barnett, Eric Allen

“Crazy/Rollin” by Gnarls Barkley/Adele | Arr. The String Queens and Eric Allen

Orchestra A, featuring The String Queens

“Spain” by Chick Corea | Arr. by The String Queens & Krystle Ford

“Eleanor Rigby” by McCartney & Lennon | Arr. The String Queens & Eric Allen

All Orchestras Closing Song featuring vocalist Kyle Reed and The String Queens

“Stand By Me” by Ben E. King | Arr. Bob Lowden

Krystle Ford, Metropolitan Youth Orchestra Director



Krystle Ford is a contemporary violinist and Indianapolis native. She is the director and alumnus of the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra and holds a music degree from Butler University where she studied under Dr. Lisa Brooks and Mark Buselli. Krystle has always had a love for teaching and mentoring children. She lived in NYC for nearly 10 years and taught in the public schools in Brooklyn while serving as the Artistic Director of the Noel Pointer Foundation. In 2015, she moved back to Indianapolis to carry out the vision of MYO for her former orchestra director and mentor, the late Betty Perry. She enjoys making music with her band The Trap Orchestra, sewing, and making ice cream with her family. She also enjoys hosting guests from all over the world in her short-term rentals and has plans to build tiny homes! Krystle currently resides on the northwest side of Indianapolis with her husband Quinton, daughter Zoe, and son Cameron.

Jordan Nelson, Associate Director



Born and raised in Indianapolis, **Jordan Nelson** began his violin studies at age six under the guidance of the late Betty Perry, founder of the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra (MYO). His passion for music grew from that early start. He was a member of MYO from 1995 until graduating in 2007. Jordan earned a Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance/Orchestral Strings from California State University Northridge, studying under Dr. Lorenz Gamma. While classically trained, he also enjoys playing other music genres, including R&B and Indie.

After spending 15 years in California, Jordan returned to Indianapolis and currently serves as the Associate Director for MYO. He also teaches at the Butler Community Arts School. Outside of music, Jordan has diverse interests, including calisthenics, weight lifting, combat sports, reading classic literature, studying theology, and collecting and reselling sneakers.

Metropolitan Youth Orchestra

The Metropolitan Youth Orchestra (MYO) is a youth and family development program of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. For 30 years, the MYO program has focused on developing life skills through the rehearsal and performance of music. Students are provided a safe and loving environment to make mistakes, overcome fears, develop healthy relationships, fulfill their potential, and take the life skills learned through music to become successful adults.



Scan this QR code to view the list of 2025–2026 MYO participants.

INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

UNCHARTED

SERIES

STEVE HACKMAN *Conducts His*

TAYLOR SWIFT: THE SYMPHONY ERA

JUNE 3RD



TEDDY BEAR CONCERT SERIES

INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Teddy Bear Series presents **five different original stories** written by retired ISO violinist Victoria Kintner Griswold. Each one introduces young children (ages 3–6) to the instruments of the orchestra through story, movement, and live music. All performances are free and open to the public.

*Registration may be required.

IndianapolisSymphony.org/teddy-bear



UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

The Runaway Strings

May 30 | 11:00 a.m.

IMCPL East 38th
Street Branch

The Giant's Violin

June 6 | 11:00 a.m.

Greenwood Public Library

The Runaway Strings

June 27 | 11:00 a.m.

JCPL's Franklin Branch

The Big Note

July 11 | 11:00 a.m.

IMCPL Glendale Branch

The Garden Symphony

July 13 | 11:00 a.m.

Hussey-Mayfield
Memorial Library,
Whitestown

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Praised for its authentic, soulful, and orchestral sound, **The String Queens** (TSQ) is a dynamic trio that creates stimulating musical experiences that inspire diverse audiences to love, hope, feel, and imagine! With an array of repertoire spanning from the Baroque era to the Jazz Age to today's Billboard Hot 100 Chart, TSQ performs versatile programs that take listeners on a rousing musical journey through time and a multitude of musical genres.

Based in Washington, D.C., TSQ has been featured in performances at renowned concert halls and venues across America, including Carnegie Hall in New York City and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in the nation's capital. Notable appearances include a special performance dedicated to Vice President Kamala Harris at the "We Are One" Presidential Inauguration Concert in January 2021 and rendering a spotlight presentation of TSQ's electrifying arrangement of Harry Styles's hit song "Golden" for the world's most prestigious tennis tournament "The Championships, Wimbledon" in June 2021. As an ensemble who frequents the D.C. jazz scene, other headlining performances include multiple appearances at the DC Jazz Festival and the Capital Jazz Fest.

Recognized by D.C.'s leading news network WUSA9 as "school teachers by day and concert performers by night," TSQ's dedication, service, and innovative work in the field of music education has been acknowledged by the DC Jazz Festival with the "Jazz Education Award" in 2022, Carnegie Hall with the "Music Educators Workshop" Keynote Address in 2021, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra with the "Aspire Award" in 2020, Washington Performing Arts' "Mars Arts D.C." Resident Ensemble in 2019 and 2020, and most recently, a partnership with the Save The Music Foundation to present a series of professional development workshops for performing arts educators around the country on "Social Emotional Learning in the Arts Classroom" and "Trauma-Informed Centered Arts Classrooms" as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In August 2022, TSQ released its third album titled *RISE*, which was made possible by a Sphinx Organization MPower Artist Grant. With this album, TSQ sought to sonically address the problems that are currently plaguing the world by creating unique arrangements of timeless classics rooted in hope, joy, peace, and love. Featuring original compositions by Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Richard Smallwood, The Beatles, Michael Jackson, and more, *RISE* takes listeners on a musical journey that starts in a field of loss and hopelessness and ends in a fortress of faith, triumph, and fortitude.

Previous albums from TSQ include a self-titled EP released in 2019 and a holiday EP titled *Our Favorite Things* released in 2020. All TSQ albums are available on this site and all major digital music platforms.

May
8-9

Ben Rector: Symphonies Across America with Jon McLaughlin

Jun Märkl, Music Director

Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor

Hannah Schendel, Assistant Conductor

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, Principal Guest Conductor of Pops

Printing Partners *Pops Series* • Program Six

Friday, May 8, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 9, 7:30 p.m.

Hilbert Circle Theatre



ENRICO LOPEZ-YAÑEZ, *Conductor* | BEN RECTOR, *Vocalist* | JON MCLAUGHLIN, *Vocalist*

Scan this QR code to view the repertoire for this performance.



Premier Sponsors



Auracast Assistive Listening System sponsored by Malcolm and Joyce Mallette.

There will be one 20-minute intermission.

Recording or photographing any part of this performance is strictly prohibited.
Length of performance is approximately two hours long.



Enrico Lopez-Yañez is redefining what it means to be a conductor in the 21st century. Celebrated for his charismatic stage presence, definitive collaborations, and passion for making orchestral music accessible to all,

Lopez-Yañez is one of the most innovative and in-demand conductors in North America. He currently serves as Principal Pops Conductor of the Detroit and Pacific Symphonies, Principal Conductor of Dallas Symphony Presents, and Principal Guest Conductor of Pops at the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. He previously spent eight seasons conducting the Nashville Symphony, where he also served as their Principal Pops Conductor.

As a trailblazer in the symphonic world, Lopez-Yañez has premiered dozens of groundbreaking symphonic collaborations with artists including Dolly Parton, Kelsey Ballerini, Portugal. The Man, The Mavericks, Tituss Burgess, and The War and Treaty. His wide-ranging collaborations span genres and generations, featuring artists such as Nas, Patti LaBelle, Itzhak Perlman, Kenny Loggins, Stewart Copeland, Toby Keith, Richard Marx, Bernadette Peters, Leslie Odom Jr., Gladys Knight, Ben Folds, The Beach Boys, Tower of Power, and Kenny G. As a composer and arranger, Lopez-Yañez's versatility is equally expansive. He has written for artists like Big Sean and Mariachi Los Camperos, and he has been commissioned by major orchestras including the Baltimore Symphony, Cincinnati Pops, Detroit Symphony, Houston Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, San Diego Symphony and many more.

Highlights of the 2025–26 season include performances with Ben Rector, Cody Fry, Common, Trisha Yearwood, Angela, Leonardo,

and Pepe Aguilar. He will make appearances with the Cleveland Orchestra, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra, while returning to lead the Baltimore Symphony, Cincinnati Pops, Minnesota Orchestra, National Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Seattle Symphony, among others. Past guest engagements include the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, and Toronto Symphony.

In 2023, Lopez-Yañez was honored with the “Mexicanos Distinguidos” award by the Mexican government, recognizing outstanding career achievements by Mexican citizens abroad. A passionate advocate for Latin music, he has arranged and produced concerts featuring Latin Fire, Mariachi Los Camperos, and The Three Mexican Tenors, and collaborated with Aida Cuevas, Arturo Sandoval, Lila Downs, and Lupita Infante.

Lopez-Yañez is also Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Symphonica Productions, LLC, a creative production company developing innovative Pops, Family, and Educational concerts for orchestras. Symphonica's shows have been praised as “incredibly special—and something that needs to become the new norm” (Lima Symphony) and have been performed by the Baltimore, Milwaukee, North Carolina, Phoenix, Seattle, Toronto, and Utah Symphony, among others.

His work as a producer, composer, and arranger can be heard on numerous recordings, including the UNESCO benefit album *Action Moves People United* and award-winning children's albums such as *The Spaceship that Fell in My Backyard* and *Kokowanda Bay*. His work has received honors from the John Lennon Songwriting Contest, Hollywood Music in Media Awards, Parents' Choice Foundation, and Global Media Awards, where he was recognized for his “catchy arrangements.”

Ben Rector, Vocalist



Fifteen years after starting his career writing songs and touring in his Honda Accord on the weekends,

Ben Rector found himself at home and at the piano in March 2020.

The alchemy of life's big questions,

more downtime than he'd had in a decade, and those now all-too-familiar "unprecedented times" resulted in his career album: *The Joy of Music*. The project includes a breathtaking short film (featuring seven songs brought to life with stunning cinematography), inviting listeners and viewers to visit a dream world that communicates Rector's creative process and his reckoning with his job as an artist. He is led through the film's chapters by his new friend Joy, a muppet monster he created with Jim Henson's Creature Shop.

In this fantastic and dream-like landscape we see and hear Rector overcome a deep-seated fear of failure, dancing and singing his way through the journey of rediscovering the joy of music.

Ben Rector has amassed over a billion streams across all platforms, has performed on numerous late night and morning TV shows including *Conan*, *The Today Show*, *Jimmy Kimmel*, *Live With Kelly and Ryan*, *The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade*, and as a celebrity mentor on *American Idol* alongside Ryan Tedder, Jewel, Brian McKnight, Jason Aldean, and more. His records have topped numerous Billboard charts, with his last two records landing at #1 on Billboard's U.S. Folk and #2 on Billboard's U.S. Rock and U.S. Indie charts. Rector has built a dedicated touring base, regularly selling out theaters and amphitheaters across the country, including three consecutive nights at the legendary Ryman Auditorium in Nashville.

Jon McLaughlin, Vocalist



Indiana-born singer-songwriter and pianist **Jon McLaughlin** first broke out with his 2007 debut "Indiana," earning fans through heartfelt songwriting, virtuosic piano work, and unforgettable live shows.

Since then, he's toured with Billy Joel, Kelly Clarkson, and Adele, collaborated with Sara Bareilles and Demi Lovato, and even performed at the Academy Awards. His newest album, *SCENARIOS* (October 2025), marks a bold new chapter, featuring brand-new songs that showcase both his storytelling and signature piano-driven sound.



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Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor

Hannah Schendel, Assistant Conductor

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, Principal Guest Conductor of Pops

ISO Film Series Presented by Bank of America

Saturday, May 16, 7 p.m.

Sunday, May 17, 2 p.m.

Hilbert Circle Theatre

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JACK EVERLY, Conductor

Marvel Studios Flip Logo	Score by Michael Giacchino
Overture.....	Scores by Pinar Toprak, Danny Elfman & Alan Silvestri
<i>Iron Man</i>	Score by Ramin Djawadi
“Back in Black”.....	(Brian Johnson, Angus Young & Malcolm Young, as performed by AC/DC)
<i>Captain America</i>	Score by Alan Silvestri
“Star Spangled Man”	(Alan Menken & David Zippel)
<i>Thor</i>	Scores by Patrick Doyle & Mark Mothersbaugh
<i>Avengers</i>	Score by Alan Silvestri
Bigger Universe	
<i>Doctor Strange</i>	Score by Michael Giacchino
<i>Ant-Man</i>	Score by Christophe Beck
<i>Civil War</i>	Score by Henry Jackman
<i>Spider-Man</i>	Score by Michael Giacchino
<i>Captain Marvel</i>	Score by Pinar Toprak
<i>Black Panther</i>	Score by Ludwig Göransson, with “Wakanda” featuring Baaba Maal
<i>Avengers</i>	Score by Alan Silvestri

INTERMISSION—Twenty Minutes

Entr'acte	Score by Michael Giacchino
<i>Guardians of the Galaxy</i>	
“Hooked on a Feeling”	(Mark James; as performed by Blue Swede and Björn Skifs)
“Guardians Inferno”	(Tyler Bates & James Gunn; as performed by David Hasselhoff)
	Score by Tyler Bates
<i>Infinity War</i>	Score by Alan Silvestri, with additional music by Christophe Beck
<i>Whatever It Takes</i>	Scores by Alan Silvestri & Lorne Balfe
<i>Endgame</i>	Score by Alan Silvestri, with additional music by Pinar Toprak and Ramin Djawadi

Today's performance lasts approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission. Rated PG-13. The performance is a presentation of *Marvel Studios' Infinity Saga Concert Experience* with live orchestra.

Out of respect for the musicians and your fellow audience members, please remain seated until the conclusion of the entire concert program, including any encore.

Marvel Studios' Infinity Saga Concert Experience

May
16-17

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Jack Everly is the Principal Pops Conductor of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic Orchestra, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra (Ottawa). He has conducted the

Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, the San Francisco Symphony, the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall, and the Seattle Symphony.

As Music Director of the National Memorial Day Concert and *A Capitol Fourth* on PBS, Everly proudly leads the National Symphony Orchestra in these patriotic celebrations on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol. These concerts attract hundreds of thousands of attendees on the lawn and the broadcasts reach millions of viewers, making them some of the highest-rated programs on PBS.

Everly recently extended his contract with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra through the 2026–27 season. He will then become Conductor Emeritus and continue to be the Music Director and conductor of the AES Indiana *Yuletide Celebration* and the *Film Series* presented by Bank of America. He will also continue to make appearances on the Printing Partners *Pops Series* each season.

Everly led the ISO in its first Pops recording, *Yuletide Celebration*, Volume One. Some of his other recordings include *In The Presence* featuring the Czech Philharmonic and Daniel Rodriguez; Sandi Patty's *Broadway Stories*; the soundtrack to Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; and *Everything's Coming Up Roses: The Overtures of Jule Styne*.

Originally appointed by Mikhail Baryshnikov, Everly was conductor of the esteemed American Ballet Theatre for 14 years, where he served as music director. In addition to his ABT tenure, he teamed with Marvin Hamlisch on Broadway shows that Hamlisch scored. He conducted Carol Channing hundreds of times in *Hello, Dolly!* in two separate Broadway productions.

Everly, a Hoosier native and graduate of the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, is a recipient of the 2015 Indiana Historical Society Living Legends Award and holds an Honorary Doctorate of Arts from Franklin College in his home state of Indiana. In 2023, he received the Sagamore of the Wabash award, the highest honor a Hoosier can receive, presented by Governor Eric Holcomb.

Everly has been a proud resident of the Indianapolis and Zionsville communities for more than 20 years and would like to thank his ISO musician colleagues for their continued commitment to excellence and for filling our community with music all year long.

May
29–30

Appalachian Spring

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Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor

Hannah Schendel, Assistant Conductor

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, Principal Guest Conductor of Pops

Classical Series • Program Fourteen

Friday, May 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 30, at 5:30 p.m.

Hilbert Circle Theatre

ROBERT SPANO, *Conductor* | STEVEN BANKS, *Saxophone*

Aaron Copland | 1900–1990

Appalachian Spring

Joan Tower | b. 1938

Love Returns Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra

Steven Banks, *Saxophone*

INTERMISSION—Twenty Minutes

Ralph Vaughan Williams | 1872–1958

Symphony No. 5 in D Major

Preludio: Moderato

Scherzo: Presto misterioso

Romanza: Lento

Passacaglia: Moderato

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Length of performance is approximately two hours.

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Robert Spano, conductor, pianist, composer, and teacher, is known worldwide for the intensity of his artistry and distinctive communicative abilities, creating a sense of inclusion and

warmth among musicians and audiences that is unique among American orchestras. Music Director of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (FWSO) since August 2022 Spano will continue there through July 2031, shaping the artistic direction of the orchestra and driving its continued growth. This season, Spano also steps into the role of Music Director of the Washington National Opera (WNO) for a three-year term. An avid mentor to rising artists, he is responsible for nurturing the careers of numerous celebrated composers, conductors, and performers. As Music Director of the Aspen Music Festival and School since 2011, he oversees the programming of more than 300 events and educational programs for 630 students and young performers; he also directs the Aspen Conducting Academy, which offers participants unparalleled training and valuable podium experience. After twenty seasons as Music Director with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO), he now serves as its Music Director Laureate. He also becomes Principal Guest Conductor of the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School this season, where he previously served as Principal Conductor.

In his fourth season as music director of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Spano leads more than six symphonic programs, including a world premiere by Michael Gandolfi. Spano leads two productions at Washington National Opera in 2025–2026: the company's production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and a new production of Robert Ward's Pulitzer

Prize- and Tony Award®-winning opera *The Crucible*. Other highlights of the season include a return to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for two programs celebrating the 250th anniversary of America's independence and guest conducting appearances with the Louisville Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Spano's newest recording as a pianist and composer is a collaboration with mezzo-soprano Kelley O'Connor, "Songs of Orpheus," a series of song cycles by Edvard Grieg, Claude Debussy, George Crumb, and Spano himself, on *Sono Luminus* (Aug. 22, 2025).

Robert Spano made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2019, leading the U.S. premiere of Nico Muhly's *Marnie*. Recent concert highlights include several world-premiere performances, including *The Sacrifice of Isaac* by Jonathan Leshnoff with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra; Steven Mackey's *Aluminum Flowers*, and James Ra's *Te Deum* with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra; Jake Heggie's *Earth 2.0* with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra; a new production of *Fidelio* with the Washington National Opera; *Of Earth and Sky: Tales From the Motherland* by Brian Raphael Nabors with the FWSO and Rhode Island Philharmonic; and *Voy a Dormir* by Bryce Dessner at Carnegie Hall, with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and mezzo-soprano Kelley O'Connor.

With a discography of critically acclaimed recordings for Telarc, Deutsche Grammophon, and ASO Media, Robert Spano has garnered four Grammy™ Awards and eight nominations with the Atlanta Symphony. Spano is on faculty at Oberlin Conservatory and has received honorary doctorates from Bowling Green State University, the Curtis Institute of Music, Emory University, and Oberlin. Maestro Spano is a recipient of the Georgia Governor's Award for the Arts and Humanities and is one of two classical musicians inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame.



As a performer and composer, saxophonist **Steven Banks** (b. 1993) is striving to bring his instrument to the heart of the classical music world. He is driven to program and write music that directly ad-

resses aspects of the human experience and is an active and intentional supporter of diverse voices in the future of concert music. Rick Perdian of Seen and Heard International has said “one senses that Banks has the potential to be one of the transformational musicians of the twenty-first century.”

Banks is establishing himself as a compelling and charismatic soloist and in 2022, he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant and was a chosen artist for WQXR’s Artist Propulsion Lab. He was the first saxophonist to be awarded First Prize at the Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions. Critics have consistently recognized Banks for his warm yet glowing tone, well-crafted and communicative musical expression and deft technical abilities.

Banks has appeared with The Cleveland Orchestra, Montreal Symphony, Utah Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, and Aspen Festival Orchestra, and has enjoyed working with such conductors as Franz Welser-Most, Xian Zhang, Nicholas McGegan, Rafael Payare, John Adams, Peter Oundjian, Jahja Ling, Matthias Pintscher, Alain Altinoglu, and Roderick Cox.

In recital, he has appeared across the USA at the San Francisco Symphony’s Spotlight Series at Davies Hall, Merkin Hall, The Kennedy Center, The Kravis Center, and Festival Napa

Valley with his collaborative partner, pianist Xak Bjerken. A keen chamber musician, Banks has appeared at Spoleto Festival USA, Chamber Music Chicago, and the Aspen Music Festival, and was the first artist-in-residence of the Skaneateles Festival in the 2023–2024 season. He has collaborated with the Borromeo and St. Lawrence string quartets and will work with the Dover and Verona quartets in the coming seasons. He is a founding member of the Kenari Quartet, an all-saxophone ensemble that performs regularly together offering inspiring and uplifting compositions and arrangements. As baritone saxophonist of Kenari, Steven won First Prize at the inaugural M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition and has garnered two silver medals from the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition. Their album, *French Saxophone Quartets*, was released in 2016 on the Naxos label.

In 2023 and 2024 Banks premiered and toured with a commissioned concerto from Grammy-winning composer Billy Childs. The three-movement, 20-minute concerto explores aspects of the African American experience in America and takes inspiration from such poets as Nayyirah Waheed, Claude McKay, and Maya Angelou.

As a composer, Banks has been commissioned by such organizations as Young Concert Artists, WQXR’s Artist Propulsion Lab, Latitude 49, Yale University’s Project 14 Initiative, and Northwestern University’s Saxophone Ensemble. His work for alto saxophone and string quartet, *Cries, Sighs and Dreams*, was premiered in May 2022 at Carnegie Hall with the Borromeo Quartet. His work for solo piano, *Fantasy on Recurring Daydreams*, was premiered by Zhu Wang in April 2023. Banks’ works are published by Murphy Music Press.

Scan this QR code to read more in the ISO’s digital program book.



Appalachian Spring Aaron Copland

Born: Nov. 14, 1900, Brooklyn, New York

Died: Dec. 2, 1990, Tarrytown, New York

Years Composed: 1943–1944

Length: c. 26 minutes

World Premiere: Oct. 1944, Washington, D.C.

Last ISO Performance: January 2017 with conductor Krzysztof Urbaniński

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 French horn, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, and strings

Considered to be the first composer with a definitively “American sound,” it is interesting to note that Aaron Copland’s harmonic education began in France. Copland studied in Paris under composer and educator Nadia Boulanger, a master pedagogue who influenced the lives and works of musicians across the globe. Described as an “intellectual Amazon” by Copland, Boulanger taught harmony at the French Music School for Americans with a depth of passion that had an outstanding effect on the American. In his later years, Copland stated that being accepted as Nadia Boulanger’s pupil was the most important musical moment of his life.

Aaron Copland’s trademark harmonic architecture is fully displayed in the opening of *Appalachian Spring*; the iconic introduction is built from an A-major triad which emits from a single clarinet, supported by placid strings. The core of Copland’s music comes from his harmonic simplicity; the artfully layered entrances create a melodic arc born of the harmonic foundation. This is in great contrast to a foreground melody being supported by background harmony, as is generally the case

in Western European orchestral music. His slow rhythmic organization creates a broader sense of harmonic architecture, and this interplay of melody and harmony is uniquely Copland. Mature orchestrations play into the straightforward harmonic foundation; Copland’s carefully selected timbres blend into one another seamlessly. This orchestral architecture pairs with Copland’s harmonic building blocks to create a transformative sound that is purely American.

Copland marks the opening clarinet solo “*semplice, white tone*,” in its first entrance, guiding the performer to create a glassy, transparent quality of sound. Single woodwinds pass the ascending motif gently, soon lending it to trumpet and horn while strings quietly ebb underneath. The long-tone introduction creates a sonic picture of the Great Plains at sunrise; one feels they are looking out to the expansive American West as Copland’s *Appalachian Spring* delicately unfolds. Leonard Bernstein, a Copland contemporary, described this introduction as “perfectly serene.”

Aaron Copland aimed to write music that was accessible to the masses, allowing orchestral music a place in every American’s life. To Copland, accessibility was born of simplicity. While he certainly has a sophisticated compositional output brimming with complex rhythms—his multimetric tendencies earned him the title “the Brooklyn Stravinsky”—harmonic landscaping is paramount to Copland’s writing. The simple harmonic cell, just a major chord, spurts forth and transfigures itself into expansive figures that stretch across the full orchestra with graceful, playful ease.

Appalachian Spring is tuneful, at times singsong-y. The *Allegro* theme bursts forth vigorously, still a simple riff on the opening major chord. Rather than continue his expansive long tones, though, Copland now truncates and flips his *legato* opening; now an inverted eighth-note figure creates a punchy theme that erupts from upper strings and

piano. The theme bounces across the orchestra and resounds joyfully while a brass fanfare blooms in the distance. As Copland's major triad evolves, a folksong sprouts in the strings. The Shaker song, *Simple Gifts*, emerges. The orchestral texture returns to the peaceful opening soundscape with winds and strings layered deftly. Again the principal clarinet leads the charge, now joyfully presenting the *Simple Gifts* theme to the orchestra twice as fast. Winds develop the theme that is eventually overtaken by full-bowed *legato* celli, who sing through the American Shaker hymn with prayerful lyricism as flutes and percussion twinkle brightly in the background. Copland employs the Shaker tune throughout every section of the orchestra; a brief canon in the strings leads to a jubilant brass fanfare. As the Shaker variations continue, a truly grandiose presentation of the theme flows from the full orchestra, now one unified body. *Appalachian Spring* closes in reverent fashion, again led by Copland's graceful harmonic landscaping and rhythmic structure. A single clarinet echoes the opening triad while strings hum quietly below. A final twinkle from glockenspiel and harp draws the suite to an earnest close.

Love Returns Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra Joan Tower

Born: Sept. 6, 1938, New Rochelle,
New York

Years Composed: 2024–2025

Length: c. 24 minutes

World Premiere: July 2025, Colorado

Last ISO Performance: This is the ISO's
first performance of this piece.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 French horns, 2 trumpets, bass trombone, timpani, percussion, strings, and solo saxophone

An expanded version of her piano work, *Love Letter*, Joan Tower's *Love Returns* opens with the same arcadian harmonic sequence. Perfect fifths rise quietly from the violins while the lower strings sustain a transparent foundation of sound. Tower utilizes graceful harmonic architecture to create an orchestral soundscape that is open and contemplative without feeling empty. The composer credits Aaron Copland as an important influence on her own style—her *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* is a nod to the Dean of American music—and hints of *Appalachian Spring* are felt in Tower's first few measures.

Throughout *Love Returns*, the strings act as a unified body to imitate two hands at the piano: calculated entrances seamlessly pass up from the double basses to the violins, ultimately blooming in slow motion to cradle the saxophone solo. Tower's expert writing for the saxophone is wholly classical. Although the composer utilizes her trademark wandering tonal centers (sometimes-octatonic, sometimes-pentatonic, occasionally whole-tone), there is virtually nothing else in the concerto that leans towards jazz. Classical saxophone playing prides itself on the richly dense timbre of the instrument, mellow and moody. These characteristics are perfectly displayed in *Love Returns*, performed expertly by the premiere soloist Steven Banks. Throughout the concerto, the saxophone's melodic lines spin upwards in a quiet, thoughtful intensity. When the orchestra is not supporting the solo line, woodwind timbres blend seamlessly from the saxophone to create an overall enmeshed relationship between solo and orchestra. Like her harmonic structures, Joan Tower keenly manipulates timbral changes within the orchestra to build quality of sound in a defined, intentional way.

Tower's original work for piano was written in memoriam to her late husband, Jeff Litfin. *Love Letter* is a brief but poignant piece, brimming with the complexities and nuances



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we experience in personal relationships. Tower wrote the work after her husband passed away in 2022 at ninety-five years old; they had been married for fifty years. The composer premiered the piano work in 2023 to an immediately positive reception. In *Love Returns*, she pulls melodic themes and her signature harmonic architecture from the keyboard, now stretching it across the full orchestra.

With its main theme ascending, constantly looking up and forward, *Love Letter* perfectly captures the experience of relating closely with a partner. In *Love Returns*, this idea is illustrated further between the relationship between solo and orchestra. With the exception of the expansive saxophone cadenza, the orchestra is always in close contact with the saxophone solo. Much like the Brahms Violin Concerto (1878), Tower's orchestra is never overbearing, yet not quite conversational. The two entities blend over time to become one unified body of sound.

Love Returns is a long-form theme and variations. Each of the six variations get progressively faster, again excepting the very introspective saxophone cadenza in movement V. None of Tower's movements have subtitles or illustrative text—only tempo indications—leaving all interpretation to the listener. Perhaps this six-movement *accelerando* reflects time passing faster as we age and as relationships evolve. As *Love Returns* progresses, Tower utilizes more percussion to motivate the orchestra forward. What began as an elegiac serenade becomes a tumultuous groove with snarling accents and muted brass interjections. Constant meter changes and offset slurs leave the listener dizzy, briefly unable to catch a downbeat. Ultimately the concerto ends quietly, echoing the meditative harmonic sequence that opens the work.

Symphony No. 5 in D Major Ralph Vaughan Williams

Born: Oct. 12, 1872, Down Ampney,
Great Britain

Died: Aug. 26, 1958, London, Great Britain

Years Composed: 1938–1943

Length: c. 39 minutes

World Premiere: June 1943, London,
England

Last ISO Performance: Nov. 1995 with
conductor Raymond Leppard

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (one doubling
piccolo), oboe, English horn, 2 clarinets,
2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trom-
bones, timpani, and strings

Ralph Vaughan Williams' Fifth Symphony is a staunch departure from the preceding Fourth. No. 4 is highly dissonant; the opening grips the listener with a disconcerted, angular introduction that never seems to truly resolve. The Fifth, in contrast, is serene and placid. In his first four symphonies, Vaughan Williams defines his tonal language and orchestral strategies, and some may attest that the Fifth Symphony does little to expand Vaughan Williams' compositional palette. Instead, the Fifth adds dimension and nuance to the composer's symphonic output.

Vaughan Williams had already started composing the Fifth (1938–1943) as Britain entered World War II. His previous experience serving in the Great War colored his musical response to yet another large-scale conflict and, as a result, Symphony No. 5 is overall quite elegiac and some of Vaughan Williams' most gentle writing. While Vaughan Williams is clearly meditating on turmoil and its impact on life, Aaron Copland simply described Symphony No. 5 as "staring at a cow for forty-five minutes." The American did not, apparently,



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feel that the *Pastoral Symphony* (Vaughan Williams' Third) conjured grazing cattle, though fellow-Brit Peter Warlock certainly made some quips to this end.

Livestock or not, by 1939 Vaughan Williams had defined his musical vernacular and, in the throes of war, is credited as the composer to loosen Germany's stylistic hold on orchestral music in England (though it should here be stated that Dame Ethel Smyth had been working at this decades before, especially in terms of English opera). Ralph Vaughan Williams credits Maurice Ravel (he studied in Paris after the turn of the century) for truly unlocking harmonic possibilities, guiding Vaughan Williams away from "the heavy contrapuntal Teutonic manner." Four decades later, Vaughan Williams' harmonic prowess had become entirely his own. Wandering modality suffuses Symphony No. 5. Vaughan Williams' use of suspensions and passing tones over a pedal bass create rich, complex harmonies that never quite establish any one true "tonic." His major-minor fluctuations also blur any sense of harmonic homeland, adding to an overall expansive but ambiguous tonal atmosphere.

The *Preludio* opens with a C pedal tone in the low strings while two French horns oscillate around a floaty D-major motif. Rather than a dissonant outcome, Vaughan Williams' haunting orchestration creates a mystic, foggy atmosphere at the symphony's onset. The *Scherzo* begins equally mysterious; the $\frac{3}{4}$ frolic through the rainy English countryside is as mercurial as it is rustic. Vaughan Williams employs a sort of rhythmic counterpoint in his second movement: strings pass running

eight-note lines while winds are overlaid across bar lines, blurring a sense of overt rhythmic structure. The most bucolic is the third movement, *Romanza*. Muted strings support a brief English horn solo before woodwinds provide further melodic commentary. The *Romanza* is the most prayerful section of Symphony No. 5, recalling the "massive quietness" of Vaughan Williams' *Pastoral Symphony*. The *Passacaglia* closes Vaughan Williams' symphony; the theme and variations unfold after celli provide the thematic material that will evolve consistently through the end of the symphony. Brightly triumphant brass fanfares dot the movement, permeating the entire finale with a sense of optimistic triumph.

Symphony No. 5 is considered by many to be Vaughan Williams' greatest achievement. The Fifth Symphony is deeply serene in contrast to the bitter war that waged on, and many listeners consider it a "symphony of hope." Unsurprisingly, the peace brought forth by Vaughan Williams' work was received with immediate praise from hunkered-down, war-exhausted British audiences. The premiere took place in London on June 24, 1943, while the Battle of Bamber Bridge erupted amongst U.S. troops in northern England.

About the annotator: Cynthia Stacy is an orchestra librarian with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and also maintains the ISO archive. Ms. Stacy studied bassoon at DePaul University and the New England Conservatory of Music, where her academic writing focused on Russian orchestral music.

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† *Coffee Pops Series* • **Program Five**

Friday, June 5, at 11 a.m.

Hilbert Circle Theatre

JACK EVERLY, *Conductor*

Scan this QR code to view the repertoire for this performance.



† The Coffee Concert is an abbreviated performance.
There is no intermission.

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Length of performance is approximately 90 minutes. See Jack Everly's biography on page 23.

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Jun Märkl, Music Director

Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor

Hannah Schendel, Assistant Conductor

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, Principal Guest Conductor of Pops

Printing Partners *Pops Series* • Program Seven

Friday, June 5, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 6, 7:30 p.m.

Hilbert Circle Theatre



JACK EVERLY, *Conductor* | CHRISTIAN BORLE, *Vocalist*

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There will be one 20-minute intermission.

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Length of performance is approximately two hours long. See Jack Everly's biography on page 23.



Christian Borle is a Grammy and two-time Tony Award-winning actor. Christian won the Tony Award for Best Featured Actor in a Musical as Shakespeare in *Something Rotten*, and Best Featured Actor in a Play as Black Stache in *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Most recently on Broadway, he starred as Joe/Josephine in *Some Like It Hot* (Tony nom.), for which he wrote additional material and received a Grammy Award for its cast album. Additional Broadway credits: *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Footloose*, *Amour*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Spamalot*, *Legally Blonde* (Tony nom.), *Mary Poppins*, *Falsettos* (Tony nom.), and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. He most recently starred as Albert Peterson in the Kennedy Center's production of *Bye Bye Birdie* in June 2024. He also starred as Orin Scrivello, DDS et al. in *Little Shop of Horrors* at the

Westside Theater, for which he received the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, and Lucille Lortel (or LuLo) Awards for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Musical. On TV, Christian has appeared in *Hazbin Hotel*, *Gilmore Girls*, *Evil*, *Masters of Sex*, *Elementary*, *Younger*, *Lifesaver*, NBC's *Peter Pan Live*, and NBC's *The Sound of Music Live*. Christian played a recurring role on *The Good Wife/Fight* and received across-the-board praise as Tom on *Smash*. Christian also appeared in Michael Mann's feature *Blackhat* opposite Chris Hemsworth and Viola Davis, and *The Bounty Hunter* with Jennifer Aniston. Directing: *Popcorn Falls* (Davenport Theater), *Footloose* (The MUNY), and *Tale as Old as Time*, a tribute to Howard Ashman at 92Y's Lyrics & Lyricists series. Playwriting: *Hammered: A Thor & Loki Play*.



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INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Jun Märkl, Music Director

Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor

Hannah Schendel, Assistant Conductor

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, Principal Guest Conductor of Pops

Classical Series • Program Fifteen

Friday, June 12, at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 13, at 5:30 p.m.

Hilbert Circle Theatre

JUN MÄRKL, *Conductor*

Gustav Mahler | 1860–1911

Symphony No. 6 in A Minor (“Tragic”)

Allegro energico, ma non troppo

Andante moderato

Scherzo: Wuchtig

Finale: Sostenuto - Allegro moderato - Allegro energico

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*This performance is endowed by Dorit and Gerald Paul and Eloise Paul.
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There is no intermission.

Length of performance is approximately one hour and twenty minutes.
Recording or photographing any part of this performance is strictly prohibited.



Jun Märkl assumed his duties as Music Director of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra in September 2024 having previously acted as the ISO's Artistic Advisor from 2021 to 2024. This

new appointment celebrates the culmination of Mr. Märkl's nearly 25-year-long collaboration with the ISO. Märkl currently serves as Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, as Principal Guest Conductor of the Oregon Symphony, and was recently named Chief Conductor of the Residentie Orkest in The Hague beginning with the 2025–26 season.

Maestro Märkl is a highly respected interpreter of both symphonic and operatic Germanic repertoire, and for his idiomatic explorations of the French impressionists. His long-standing relationships with the great opera houses and orchestras of Europe have been highlighted by his leadership as General Music Director of the National Theater Mannheim (1994–2000), and as Music Director of the Orchestre National de Lyon (2005–11), the MDR Symphony Orchestra Leipzig (2007–2012), and the Basque National Orchestra (2014–17). He has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the Bavarian Radio Symphony, the Munich Philharmonic, the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the Orchestre de Paris in Europe, the Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Montreal Symphony in North America, the NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo, and the Sydney Symphony and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in Australia among many others.

Maestro Märkl was a regular guest at the state operas of Vienna, Munich, Berlin, and the Semperoper Dresden, and was permanent conductor of the Bavarian State Opera until 2006. He made his Royal Opera House London Covent Garden debut with *Götterdämmerung* in 1996 and with *Il Trovatore* at the Metropolitan Opera of New York in 1998. He conducted complete *Ring* cycles at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and at the New National Theatre in Tokyo 2001–2004, and toured Japan with the Semperoper Dresden and the Wiener Staatsoper. Maestro Märkl has an extensive discography—among more than 50 CDs, he has recorded the complete Schumann symphonies with the NHK Symphony, Mendelssohn and Wagner with the MDR Leipzig Symphony; as well as Ravel, Messiaen, and a nine-CD recording of Debussy with the Orchestre National de Lyon which led to the honor of the “Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres” being bestowed upon him by the French Ministry of Culture in 2012. Märkl has more recently recorded 3 CDs with works of Japanese composer Toshio Hosokawa and 4 CDs of rare works by Saint-Saëns in a project that will continue in the coming years.

Born in Munich, Märkl's father was a distinguished concertmaster and his mother a solo pianist. Jun Märkl studied at the Musikhochschule in Hannover, with Sergiu Celibidache in Munich and Gustav Meier in Michigan. In 1986, he won the conducting competition of the Deutsche Musikrat and a year later won a scholarship from the Boston Symphony Orchestra to study at Tanglewood with Leonard Bernstein and Seiji Ozawa. Fully dedicated to working with young musicians, he has acted as Principal Conductor at the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, he teaches as a Guest Professor at the Kunitachi College of Music in Tokyo, and is a regular guest conductor at the Aspen Music Festival, Colorado.



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Spencer Meyer, Piano

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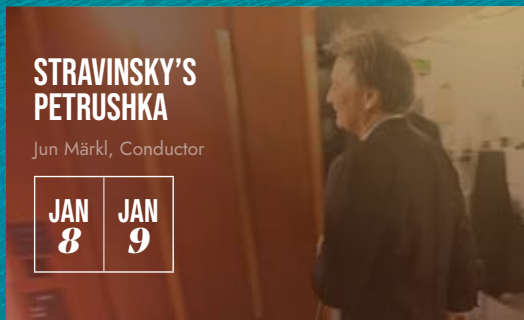
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A SYMPHONIC JOURNEY
Rick Steves, Narrator

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Cody Fry, Vocalist

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Jun Märkl, Conductor

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Mandy Gonzalez, Vocalist

APR 9	APR 10
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Francesca DeGo, Violin

MAY 14	MAY 15
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**ROMEO AND JULIET
AND BEETHOVEN'S TRIPLE**
Alexandra Dariescu, Piano

MAY 20	MAY 21	MAY 22
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Symphony No. 6 in A Minor ("Tragic") Gustav Mahler

Born: July 7, 1860, Kalischt, Bohemia

Died: May 18, 1911, Vienna, Austria

Years Composed: 1903–1904

Length: c. 80 minutes

World Premiere: May 1906, Germany

Last ISO Performance: February 2002 with
conductor Roberto Minczuk

Instrumentation: 4 flutes (two doubling piccolo), piccolo, 4 oboes (two doubling English horn), English horn, 4 clarinets (one doubling E-flat clarinet), bass clarinet, 4 bassoons, contrabassoon, 8 French horns, 6 trumpets, 4 trombones, tuba, 2 timpani, percussion, 2 harps, celeste, and strings

Alma Mahler (née Schindler) was considered to be the leading interpreter of Gustav Mahler's works throughout the twentieth century. While her interpretations are incredibly important to the understanding of Gustav's life and works as a whole, modern scholars insist we take her recollections with a grain (or tablespoon) of salt. Gustav Mahler is one of the most hyperromantic figures of the twentieth century; it makes sense that his wife would be just as passionate, therefore exaggerated, in her memories of the great composer. Her perspective is, of course, a deeply personal and intimate glance into Gustav Mahler's life and works, though one must concede that there is no diary or memoir *anywhere* without an inflated account (or two). The words penned by the composer's wife and confidante are an important source in the understanding of his life as a whole. The Sixth Symphony is Gustav Mahler's most personal work and it is valuable to peer through the lens of the woman closest to him, especially as tragedy befell the composer and his family in the time he composed Symphony No. 6.

She wrote of the Mahlers' vacation to their Austrian mountain home in 1903, a "composing holiday" for Gustav. It was the summer, and Mr. and Mrs. Mahler traveled to their mountainous retreat with their young daughter, Maria Anna. Gustav Mahler was, as many composers are, vastly inspired by nature. He spent his time enjoying the outdoors (he was an avid cyclist and swimmer) and found many melodies in their wooded retreat, tucked into the Alps. Mrs. Mahler retells that her husband had drafted the first movement of No. 6 at this time, and in it he wove an ode to his wife. "I have tried to capture you in a theme; I do not know whether I have been successful," admitted Gustav. He added, "You will have to put up with it." The amorous F-major theme in the first movement is Alma's theme, sweepingly luscious and passionate. Two harps accentuate the already full-bodied orchestration, adding even more romance to the texture. Alma's theme enters the symphonic landscape after an intensely foreboding march is presented by strings, accented by snarling snare rolls that introduce the symphony. Mrs. Mahler's theme is gorgeous but brief, soon overtaken by the return of militant basses which stomp towards another refrain of Gustav's treacherous march.

Mahler's Sixth is the only one of his symphonies to end with a somber finale. The rest of his nine completed symphonies conclude either triumphantly major (the choral ending to *Resurrection* is pure exalted victory), or somehow transformed (the Fourth begins mysteriously but ends with visions of Heaven), but in no other Mahler symphony is his final cadence truly grim. The ending of the Sixth is requiem-esqe, going so far as to employ literal blows of inescapable fate. In the last movement, a tuba presents a distressing dotted figure—a feature present throughout the entire symphony—accompanied with a clanking interjection of harp in its lowest, spookiest register. Mahler's orchestral textures ebb and flow just as his moods do. In a moment, a dirge turns into another march variation, though this time the stride becomes excitedly frenzied

rather than particularly militant. A splash of major sonorities are heralded in by a horn solo though, gradually, the orchestral landscape takes a mysterious turn. A brief moment of *herdenglocken* (cow bells) breezes in from a distance alongside more offstage percussion, harkening back to Mahler's time composing in the Alps. Just as we are lulled into a state of calm, we are smacked awake by the first of Mahler's fateful hammer blows.

Gustav Mahler composed the Sixth through 1904, in which time Alma gave birth to their second daughter, Anna. In the midst of what should have been the happiest time of their personal lives, Gustav Mahler busied himself with densely tumultuous works. As he wrote the Sixth, the composer was completing his newest set of vocal-orchestral works based on text by Fredrich Rückert. Mahler's *Kinder-totenlieder* (*Songs on the Death of Children*) disturbed Alma greatly, and she superstitiously admonished her husband for "tempting fate" by composing such an ominous song cycle with two toddlers in their care.

With his newest symphony completed, Gustav Mahler conducted the premiere of the Sixth in May 1906, which was received with mixed reviews. The dress rehearsal, however, left the composer-conductor utterly grief-stricken. Alma wrote that Gustav was "sobbing, wringing his hands, and not in control of himself." In her 1940 memoir, she'd go on to say that not a single other work touched his soul the way the Sixth Symphony had:

"No other work has flowed so directly from his heart as this one. We both cried at the time; we felt so deeply what this music meant, what it forebodingly told us. The Sixth is his most personal work and is also a prophetic one. In *The Songs on the Death of Children* and in the Sixth, he musically anticipated his life. He, too, received three blows from fate, and the last felled him. But at the time, he was cheerful and conscious of the greatness of his work; he was a tree in full leaf and flower."

Although it would have been easy for Alma to make these florid comments decades later—hindsight is 20/20—the foreboding nature of the Sixth Symphony is both chilling and prophetic. Mahler had been described as a "determinist" by his first biographer, Richard Specht. Specht reported that Mahler was utterly convinced that "the creative person is lifted up by his inspiration to a higher, anticipatory level of existence, and that in his creative work he would anticipate the experience that everyday life would later bring." Mahler's Sixth Symphony seems eerily foreboding in retrospect, and his full body reaction to the dress rehearsal seemed to supernaturally grip his soul. Perhaps Mahler's determinist outlook was rooted in ill-fated truth and his music indeed anticipated his grim fate. It seems that the Sixth comes straight from Gustav Mahler's core, his work full of unfortunate premonitions.

With the gift of hindsight, it certainly feels that the blows of fate in the Finale symbolize three major tragedies in Mahler's final years. Although there was no way to predict it *medically*, the Mahler's eldest daughter, Maria Anna, died of a fatal heart condition in July 1907, just over a year after the Sixth's premiere. The death of his beloved Maria, only five years old, was the most meaningful "blow of fate" that struck the composer in the short time before his own death (1911). The asymmetrical rhythmic motif in the Scherzo has a particular creepiness to it when paired with this unfortunate truth; Alma Mahler had described this as the sound of children staggering while running and playing on the beach. As the third movement progresses, the rhythmic figure wanes to only include (seemingly) one child.

The second most dreadful blow came earlier that year: in May 1907, Mahler was forced to resign from his position as music director of the Vienna Court Opera, a position he had been working towards since 1895. He was appointed in 1897, after holding multiple other conducting positions, though his tenure in

Vienna was shaky from the start. In his decade on the podium there, musicians and singers found Mahler to be too demanding. In 1903, stagehands revolted against the conductor, demanding better working conditions and more realistic standards. Many operagoers did not believe that Mahler's contemporary-leaning artistic vision was appropriate for the uber-traditional Vienna Court Opera. While these internal issues certainly influenced Mahler's forced resignation, the most glaringly painful reason for his dismissal was political duress: Gustav Mahler—although he converted to Catholicism in 1897, specifically to secure his Viennese appointment—was consistently attacked by anti-Semitic press due to his Bohemian birth and Jewish parents.

The final blow of fate: Mahler's diagnosis. After discovering he had a fatal heart condition, his doctors implored Mahler to avoid stress and overfatigue. A disastrous diagnosis for anyone, certainly, but especially for Mahler. Not only was he a man who found respite and inspiration in outdoor activity, he was very active while conducting. In his lifetime, Mahler was most well known as a conductor; his style on the podium was very active and gestural, and brought much of the athleticism to the craft that we see in conductors today. In her memoir, Alma Mahler states of this time, "I had been alarmed for years by the creaking sound his heart made—it was particularly loud at the second beat—and I had always known that it must be diseased . . . he had a pedometer in his pocket. His steps and pulse-beats were numbered and his life [was] a torment."

These three events were catastrophic to Gustav Mahler. It seemed that life itself was trying to stop the composer, that his world was doomed to collapse. As he revised the Sixth through 1906, he had no idea how hellish 1907 would be, and yet Symphony No. 6 seems to preempt Mahler's misery. Something supernatural had indeed gripped the composer, and in completing this symphony it seems Mahler did

determine his own fate. It is unclear if its nickname, *Tragic*, was given to the symphony by the composer or if it was superimposed onto the work post-performance, but an element of tragedy—waging an unwinnable war against a predetermined, unconquerable fate—certainly runs through the eighty-minute work.

For nearly sixty of those eighty minutes, a large wooden box sits quietly in the back of the orchestra. In the final portion of the Finale, an alarmingly large sledgehammer is raised to administer multiple menacing blows of pure sonic force. It has become known as the "Mahler Box," though the composer refers to it in the score simply as the "hammer." Originally written for three beastly occurrences, Mahler omitted the third blow as he revised the work over time, and performances often only include two strikes of the Mahler Box. Music critic Paul Bekker argued that the blows signify "an interference by something outside this world, something of a supernatural, crushing effect that mankind can no longer fight against." The composer called for these obtrusive sounds to emit forcefully from the back of the ensemble at the symphony's bitter end, "like the fall of an ax," having no idea that they'd posthumously be aligned with tragedies in his own final years. The ultimate moments of Mahler's Sixth are surely tragic; the symphony wages war through the final bars, ultimately closing with the dwindling feeling of certain death. We are met with a predetermined but unfortunate outcome; the symphony fades to a *pianissimo* close before a final full-orchestral blow from Fate, unconquered.

About the annotator: Cynthia Stacy is an orchestra librarian with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and also maintains the ISO archive. Ms. Stacy studied bassoon at DePaul University and the New England Conservatory of Music, where her academic writing focused on Russian orchestral music.

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† *Coffee Classical Series* • Program Six

Thursday, June 18, at 11 a.m.

Hilbert Circle Theatre

JUN MÄRKL, *Conductor* | MAKOTO OZONE, *Piano*

DOUGLAS DILLON, *Host, Words on Music*

Sergei Rachmaninoff | 1873–1943

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43

Makoto Ozone, *Piano*

Makoto Ozone | b. 1961

O'berek

Makoto Ozone, *Piano*

Robert Schumann | 1810–1856

Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 38 (“Spring”)

Andante un poco maestoso - Allegro molto vivace

Larghetto

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Allegro animato e grazioso

Auracast Assistive Listening System sponsored by Malcolm and Joyce Mallette.

† The Coffee Concert is an abbreviated performance. There is no intermission.

Length of performance is approximately one hour and fifteen minutes.

Recording or photographing any part of this performance is strictly prohibited.

See Jun Märkl’s biography on page 39.



Makoto Ozone is a unique force in both jazz and classical music, blending sound worlds and a host of influences into his performances. Born in Kobe, Japan, he was self-taught in jazz, under his father's

guidance, first on the organ, then piano. He first came to public attention when he gave his solo recital at the Carnegie Hall in 1983, following his graduation from Berklee College of Music. Makoto then became the first Japanese artist to sign an exclusive contract with CBS and released his first album, *Ozone*, a year after his Carnegie debut.

His stellar career in jazz, which earned him a Grammy nomination in 2003, has brought him regularly to the forefront of the international jazz scene, recording and touring with musicians such as Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Paquito D'Rivera, Anna Maria Jopek, Branford Marsalis, and others. In 2004, he formed his own big band in Japan, "No Name Horses" which has regularly toured to Europe, North America, and Asia since its creation.

In more recent years, Makoto has expanded into classical repertoire, alongside his jazz engagements. Having first performed Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1996, he now performs concertos by Mozart, Bernstein, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Rachmaninov with major orchestras. Alongside his performing schedule, Makoto composes music, with over 300 pieces to his name, many for "No Name Horses," as well as a symphony and piano concerto. His own concerto *MOGAMI* received its European premiere in autumn 2024 with the RSB Berlin and Duncan Ward.

Ozone has collaborated with a prestigious list of conductors including Marin Alsop, Bertie Baigent, Jader Bignamini, Kevin John Edu-

sei, Alan Gilbert, Jun Märkl, Lahav Shani, Kahchun Wong, and Kazuki Yamada. He has performed with orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, RSB Berlin and Rotterdam Philharmonic, as well as many orchestras in Japan such as the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra and Sapporo Symphony.

In the 2025–26 season, Ozone will tour Europe and Japan with the Tokyo Philharmonic and Myung-whun Chung and make his debut with Colorado Symphony and Indianapolis Symphony, both under the baton of Jun Märkl. He has also been invited to perform with other guest artists at Toronto's Koerner Hall as part of a concert to celebrate 100 years since Oscar Peterson's birth. Ozone will give his London concerto debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in spring 2026, as well as make his much anticipated return to the Royal Scottish National Orchestra with Kevin John Edusei. His trio TRiNFIniTYP will tour to Australia after their hugely successful UK and Europe tour in the 24–25 season.

Makoto Ozone has an extensive discography, releasing over 30 albums under his name and as a composer in solo, duo, and trio settings, as well as performing as a collaborator on many others. January 2024 saw the hugely successful release of Makoto's latest album *TRiNFIniTYP* (Universal Music), featuring Shimpei Ogawa on bass and Kunito Kitai on drums.

Makoto's many awards include the Kinokuniya Theatre Award (2000), Kobe City Culture Award (2005), Fumio Nanri Prize (2007), Hyogo Prefecture Culture Award (2009), and Art Encouragement of Education, Culture, Sports, Science Minister's Prize (2014). In 2018, Makoto received the Medal of Honour with Purple Ribbon by the Government of Japan. This is Japan's highest award to individuals who have made significant contributions to the nation's academic or cultural life.

Jun Märkl, Music Director

Jack Everly, Principal Pops Conductor

Hannah Schendel, Assistant Conductor

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, Principal Guest Conductor of Pops

Classical Series • Program Sixteen

Friday, June 19, at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 20, at 5:30 p.m.

Hilbert Circle Theatre

JUN MÄRKL, *Conductor* | MAKOTO OZONE, *Piano*

Benjamin Britten | 1913–1976

Soirées musicales, Op. 9 (Suite of Five Movements from Rossini)

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Canzonetta

Tirolese

Bolero

Tarantella

Sergei Rachmaninoff | 1873–1943

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43

Makoto Ozone, *Piano*

Makoto Ozone | b. 1961

O'berek

Makoto Ozone, *Piano*

INTERMISSION—Twenty Minutes

Robert Schumann | 1810–1856

Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 38 (“Spring”)

Andante un poco maestoso - Allegro molto vivace

Larghetto

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Allegro animato e grazioso

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Soirées musicales, Op. 9 (Suite of Five Movements from Rossini)
Benjamin Britten

Born: Nov. 22, 1913, Lowestoft, Suffolk,
Great Britain

Died: Dec. 4, 1976, Aldeburgh,
Great Britain

Year Composed: 1936

Length: c. 10 minutes

World Premiere: Jan. 1937, London,
England

Last ISO Performance: Aug. 2001 with
conductor John Morris Russell

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (both doubling
piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets,
2 bassoons, 4 French horns,
2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani,
percussion, harp, and strings

Benjamin Britten's *Soirées musicales* begins with a boisterous fanfare that quickly unfurls to a circus-like romp. The charming *March* theme bounces along, underscored by playful pizzicato strings. Britten's take on Gioachino Rossini's themes includes slightly offkilter orchestrations—piccolo accompanied by bass drum and cymbals makes for a cheeky refrain—which add to the first movement's playful air.

Bel canto lyricism saturates the second movement, *Canzonetta*. The harp provides a

constantly bubbling harmonic foundation for the sweeping and lush melody, first introduced by the clarinet. This canzonetta, *La promessa*, first appears in Rossini's original *Soirées musicales*—a set of eight songs for voice and piano published in 1835. A century later, Benjamin Britten was composing incidental music for documentary films and arranged a three movement suite based on Rossini's themes, simply calling this his *Rossini Suite*. Britten later borrowed two more movements (and Rossini's title), and published his own *Soirées musicales* in 1937.

The third and fourth movements, *Tirolese* and *Bolero*, are again straight from Rossini's set of songs. Britten reverses their original order but retains all of their characteristic charm. *Tirolese* is a buoyant peasant waltz, complete with Britten's exaggerated pickup notes and *pe-sante* downbeats to seal the deal. Next, we are transported to a hazy Spanish courtyard in the *Bolero*. Accompanied by snappy castanets, a throaty oboe solo foreshadows a sultry melody that is later presented by a solo trumpet.

The *Tarantella* brings Britten's suite to an exciting close. Here, Britten riffs on another Rossini work. Britten's lively final movement is built on a much slower original; Rossini's original melody, "La Charite," hails from a larger choral work, *Trois chœurs religieux*. Britten doubles the original tempo and weaves jovial dotted rhythms into the melodic line, completely transforming the atmosphere while keeping the heart of Rossini's original melody intact.



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Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43
Sergei Rachmaninoff

Born: April 1, 1873, Oneg, Novgorod, Russia
 Died: March 28, 1943, Beverly Hills, Calif.
 Year Composed: 1934
 Length: c. 24 minutes
 World Premiere: Nov. 1934, Maryland
 Last ISO Performance: Sept. 2024 with conductor Mario Venzago
 Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 bassoons, 4 French horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, strings, and solo piano

Although Sergei Rachmaninoff had made a habit of abstaining from alcohol in his later years, the final variation of his *Variations on a Theme of Paganini* tempted the composer. The movement opens with devilishly difficult leaps, so difficult that the pianist-composer was nervous to perform his own passage. At a dinner party a few days before the *Rhapsody*'s premiere, Rachmaninoff lamented to fellow pianist and trusted friend Benno Moiseiwitsch. "Why Sergei Vasilievich, you *must* have a glass of Crème de Menthe. It is the best thing in the world for jumps," answered Moiseiwitsch. Astonished, Rachmaninoff scoffed at the suggestion. Moiseiwitsch doubled down, imploring him to give in. Rachmaninoff relented, obtaining a "generous quaff of the emerald cordial" from the host before the night was through.

The premiere was flawless, and Rachmaninoff subsequently made a habit of swigging the minty liqueur before every performance of the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. Rachmaninoff's closest confidantes corroborate that he never failed to enjoy a Crème de Menthe

before a performance of this particular work. Benno Moiseiwitsch retells this story fondly, adding that in his own score to *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Rachmaninoff scrawled "The Crème de Menthe Variation" atop the *A tempo un poco meno mosso* which brings the concerto to a flamboyant close.

The final variation in Rachmaninoff's work is a particular ode to its namesake. Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840) was a violin virtuoso who astounded Victorian audiences with his phenomenal left-hand technique; the violinist was somehow able to conjure devilishly quick successions of notes in the blink of an eye. His double-stops, harmonics, and extended pizzicato phrases left his audiences in awe; Paganini's impression on the musical world is still felt among violinists today. Aside from his legacy as a performer, Paganini composed works for the violin. His most famous (and most difficult) are his 24 Caprices for Solo Violin. In the *Rhapsody*, Rachmaninoff borrows the theme from Paganini's final caprice, transforming and manipulating it across twenty-four *new* variants, now for piano and orchestra.

The "little Pagan," as his surname translates, was so supernaturally gifted that legends befell his reputation. Concertgoers whispered that Paganini had sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his extraordinary talent. His surname paired with playing the violin—the devil's instrument—certainly underscored such salacious gossip. These rumors fluttered so fervently that the Catholic Church denied the violinist a proper burial upon his death in 1840. Paganini was, finally, buried thirty-six years postmortem, though he was ultimately exhumed and again reburied seventeen years later.

Composers continued to resurrect Paganini for years to come; the caprices served as important melodic fodder in the late Romantic era. Paganini's caprices are quoted in Frédéric Chopin's *Rondo à la Krakowiak* (1828). Franz



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Liszt's *Grandes études de Paganini* (rev. 1851) is based on the violin works. Even Johannes Brahms' Op. 35 (1863) is based on Paganini's 24. Rachmaninoff's take on Paganini's themes was composed in 1934, late in the Russian's career. Just ahead of World War II, Rachmaninoff's orchestral writing is leaner, more angular and commanding. Here Rachmaninoff is more pointed in both orchestral articulation and his own compositional focus.

The *Rhapsody* begins with a trick: a variation of Paganini's theme is presented *before* Rachmaninoff presents the original melody. Paganini's theme is not displayed fully until the second movement, *Tema*, which is there and gone in a flash. Violins present Paganini-incarnate alongside fizzling keyboard interjections which underscore the *Rhapsody's* harmonic progression.

Each variation offers a shift in character, motivating the *Rhapsody* to evolve into monstrous full-orchestral marches, dirges, and serenades all rooted in the same theme. Rachmaninoff manipulates articulation masterfully, pitting dry *staccato* notes against *legato* counter-melodies. Heavy accents are perfectly placed and provide textual variance between all sections of the orchestra. Fragments of Paganini's once-simple motif volley across the ensemble, transforming each time to achieve vastly different moods. *A Dies irae* lurches its way through multiple movements within the *Rhapsody*, perhaps a reminder of Paganini's burial troubles. The "day of wrath" chant is (loosely) a handy outline of the Paganini theme, therefore an easy riff for Rachmaninoff to utilize. The troubling motif is first audibly employed in Rachmaninoff's seventh variation, but rears its fateful head again clearly in the tenth. It makes its most foreboding appearance in the finale.

Variation 18 is hailed as the most romantic of the bunch. Here, Rachmaninoff inverts the Paganini theme to create a passionate serenade. This is a stark contrast to the combative

moments that populate the *Rhapsody*. 18 is the longest of any of the twenty-four variations; solo piano sings through the gorgeous melody in full before the full orchestra overtakes the phrase. The piano and orchestra work together to suspend time for a brief moment before solo piano brings the variation to a delicate close. Rachmaninoff, ever cheeky, knew this luscious variation would be an instant favorite among audiences. He said (surely smirking), "This one's for my agent." Variation 18 is indeed beloved among listeners and performers alike; it is Rachmaninoff at his most indulgent and most melodic. The last swath of variations return to Rachmaninoff's organized chaos: flurries of notes, aggressive accents, and massive *crescendi* bring *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* to a truly virtuosic end, worthy of Paganini himself.

O'berek Makoto Ozone

Born: March 25, 1961, Kobe, Japan

Year Composed: 2001

Length: c. 8 minutes

World Premiere: July 2024, Hangzhou, China

Last ISO Performance: This is the ISO's first performance of this piece.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, B^b clarinet, Eb clarinet, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 French horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, strings, and solo piano

First appearing on his 2011 album, *Haiku*, with Polish vocalist Anna Maria Jopek, Makoto Ozone's *O'berek* is a genre-bending example of cultural synthesis. The 2011 original version of *O'berek* is scored for jazz combo with an additional world music element: Ozone adds Jap-



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anese flute to the standard piano-drums-bass lineup. *Haiku* went platinum on Polish charts, and *O'berek* has since become a popular tune in Ozone's setlist. The collaboration with Jopek blends Polish dance forms, Japanese flute playing, and American jazz in a way that seems impossible to mesh but absolutely works. The goal of their collaboration was to "find a common factor in Japanese and Polish music." *O'berek* does exactly that, with the lively dance rhythm bursting from the piano, vocals that echo the percussive groove, and Japanese flute that weaves in and out of the foreground. The percussive backing is perfect for dancing, and Jopek's Polish vocals sit squarely within the texture to provide a cohesive combo sound.

In his 2021 album *Ozone 60*, the composer expands the length of the work while paring down its forces. Now seven minutes long but without the full combo, the original tune jives across the keyboard with the same rhythmic fervor. A syncopated clapped rhythm opens the work but is soon interrupted by a mysterious ostinato which fuels the Slavic-imbued chart. Ozone's playing exhibits a cool control over the keyboard. Smooth grace notes and melodies come just as easily to Ozone as rumbling, percussive bass lines. In *O'berek*, Ozone's left hand blends *pesante* downbeats, necessary for the dance, with melodic flutters and ornaments that pop effortlessly from his right hand.

Now scored for a full symphony orchestra, *O'berek* reaches its largest form. Orchestrated by Garth Edwin Sunderland and premiered in 2024 with the Hangzhao Philharmonic in China, the orchestral version utilizes Ozone's hallmark textural variance and differences in articulation to achieve a symphonic groove.

Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 38 ("Spring")

Robert Schumann

Born: June 8, 1810, Zwickau, Germany

Died: July 29, 1856, Endenich, N. Bonn,
Germany

Year Composed: 1841

Length: c. 32 minutes

World Premiere: March 1841, Leipzig,
Germany

Last ISO Performance: September 2005
with conductor Mario Venzago

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes,
2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 French horns,
2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani,
triangle, and strings

Written in a four-day creative fervor in January 1841, Robert Schumann's Symphony No. 1, *Spring*, refers not to the season itself, but an anticipatory yearning for the change of seasons. Robert Schumann was a poet at heart; the symphony originally had a poem inscribed in the score, but the composer ultimately removed it from publication. He wanted his symphony to be absolute music—music with no explicit narrative—but the last stanza of the poem certainly influenced much of Schumann's composition:

*O, turn, o turn and change your course
In the valley, Spring blooms forth!*
—Adolf Böttger, *Frühlingsgedicht*

The sun sheepishly comes out from the winter doldrums and, in a blast of strings and horns, a regal fanfare bursts forth to celebrate the highly anticipated turn towards spring. One can hear snow melting in the first movement: Schumann paints a sonic portrait of the last snow-capped mountaintops, eager to melt. Excitement

tumbles forth from trumpets and timpani just before the principal winds echo chirping birds, finally able to soar in warmer air.

The excitement at the onset of Schumann's First Symphony might be due, in another part, to his recent marriage to sought-after concert pianist and fellow composer Clara Wieck. Clara's father vehemently discouraged the nuptials. Although he blamed Robert's drinking for the distrust, perhaps most troubling to Friedrich Wieck was that Clara was a major source of income in the Wieck household. If Clara was married, her income no longer flowed to her father. Although she became a touring pianist and garnered success as a composer in her own right, her father was highly controlling of Clara both as a daughter and as a pupil; Friedrich Wieck was her piano teacher and aimed to use her talent as a living advertisement for his own studio. Wieck's advertisement backfired, though; Robert Schumann saw a young Clara in recital and, in turn, moved into the Wieck household to study with Fredrich. In his early letters, Robert commended Clara's playing multiple times, even stating that crowds preferred *her* playing to that of her male counterparts. After moving in to study with Wieck, Robert became a large part of Clara's childhood; the two began getting especially close in her early teens. While Fredrich never supported the burgeoning relationship (*especially* when Robert was briefly engaged to another Wieck student), Robert persisted. The two wed in 1840 after six years of formal courting and petty legal battles against Friedrich. Clara was just shy of twenty-one years old, Robert was thirty.

Until Clara's encouragement, Robert Schumann had been most famous for his piano works. *Carnaval* (1835), *Kinderszenen* (1838), and *Kreisleriana* (1838) remain standard works in pianists' repertoire. He had written an unfinished symphony as early as 1832 but abandoned the work entirely. Clara's

journals reveal that it is *she* who encouraged Robert to compose for a full orchestra, rather than remain at the keyboard. In 1839, two years before Schumann's First Symphony, Clara journaled,

"I believe it were best if he composed for the orchestra: his imagination cannot expand sufficiently on the keyboard . . . My highest wish is that he should compose for orchestra—that is his field! May I persuade him to enter it."

The warm melody in the First Symphony's second movement, *Larghetto*, is often described as Schumann's loving portrait of his new bride. While unverifiable, it is entirely likely; Schumann includes literary ciphers in many of his piano works and it makes sense that he would do the same in the throes of newlywedded bliss. The third movement, *Scherzo*, is a joyous frolic through blooming fields. It rolls happily to the double bar, only stopped by the lumbering minor mode B-theme, always introduced by the strings. At last, spring has finally sprung in Schumann's finale, *Allegro animato e grazioso*. The movement overflows with life as *staccato* winds trot around the strings. The final bars grow more excitable; boisterous trombone interjections lead frenzied strings to Schumann's final exuberant cadence.

About the annotator: Cynthia Stacy is an orchestra librarian with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and also maintains the ISO archive. Ms. Stacy studied bassoon at DePaul University and the New England Conservatory of Music, where her academic writing focused on Russian orchestral music.

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Support the Arts in Indy!

Ronen Chamber Ensemble

Visit www.ronenchamber.org/events or scan the QR code for more information about each concert. **Artistic Directors:** Gregory Martin, Piano; Alistair Howlett, Flute; Jennifer Christen, Oboe.

Brilliant Winds

Featuring Natalie Debikey Scanio (flute/piccolo with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra). The program includes Franz Doppler's *Andante et Rondo*, arias by J.S. Bach, and Francis Poulenc's Sextet for winds and piano.

Monday, May 11, at 7 p.m.

Jewish Community Center Laikin Auditorium
6705 Hoover Road, Indianapolis

Tuesday, May 12, at 7 p.m.

Indiana Historical Society



Indianapolis Suzuki Academy

More Than Music Lessons: The Indianapolis Suzuki Academy offers violin, cello, harp, and piano lessons via the Suzuki Method. Unlike traditional music lessons, this is an activity for the child AND the parent, partnering with our Suzuki teachers to help the child learn music just as naturally as learning their first language. Our mission is to nurture beautiful character in every child through excellence in music. Learn more by attending a Parent Info Session—now enrolling for Fall 2026.

Join us for a summer parent info session and check out our website to see our upcoming community performances!



Indianapolis Symphonic Choir

The Indianapolis Symphonic Choir's annual exploration of the intersection of singing and spirituality, *Voices of the Spirit*, will take place on **May 17 at 3 p.m.** at Second Presbyterian Church. This concert features guitarist Daniel Duarte, soprano Gabriela Martinez, mezzo-soprano Mitzi Westra, tenor Thomas Cooley, and bass Ron Dukes. Visit indychoir.org for tickets. The ISC is always looking for singers to join in the music-making. If you already have experience singing and wish to join this premier choral organization, we would like to hear from you! Each season is full of monumental performances and special events—something for everyone. Auditions for the 2026–2027 season will be held June 14. Visit indychoir.org/auditions for more information.



Indianapolis School of Ballet

Ballet & Art Camps

July 20–24, 2026

This summer, imagination takes center stage at our *Sleeping Beauty*-themed Ballet & Art Camp in downtown Indianapolis! Designed for children starting at age 5, this dynamic day camp blends ballet, tap, art, and music in a fun, supportive environment that encourages creativity and builds confidence. The week culminates in a magical studio performance where students showcase their new skills. It's the perfect summer experience for young dancers and artists alike! Half- and full-day camp options are available. Perfect for young artists ages 5-10 years old. For more information and to register, please visit indyballet.org/camps or call us at 317.955.7525.



Indianapolis Children's Choir

Come learn, laugh, sing, and make magical memories with the Indianapolis Children's Choir at **Summer Music Camp!** It's ideal for kids in grades 1–8 who love music, no matter their level of experience. This week-long camp is packed with part-singing, instruments, music games, and crafts, and ends with a concert where campers will present all that they've learned. **Choose from June 8–11 or July 20–23, 2026.** Details and registration at icchoir.org/camp



Additional upcoming events:

ICC 40th Anniversary Celebration: Christel DeHaan in Harmony: At the Corner of Bach & Broadway with concerts at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on May 17, 2026, at the Scottish Rite Cathedral.

Administration and Staff of the ISO

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Hilbert Circle Theatre Information

Welcome to the Hilbert Circle Theatre, home of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. We are delighted you are with us and hope you enjoy the performance.

Box Office

For questions about parking, tickets, subscriber benefits, and will call, visit our Box Office at the main entrance to the theatre (off of Monument Circle) or the satellite Box Office at the east entrance (off Scioto Street, open before performances only).

Subscriber Information

If you are a subscriber and have any ticketing needs, please email the ISO at subscriber@IndianapolisSymphony.org. One of our Customer Care Representatives will return your email as soon as possible.

Coat Checks and Restrooms

Coat checks are located on the main floor and on the Oval Promenade on the second floor. The second floor can be reached by staircases on the east and west end of the theater or elevators near the main entrance. Accessible restrooms are located on both floors. Changing tables are available in most restrooms in the accessible stall. A family/gender-neutral restroom is also available; please ask an usher for access.

Ushers

For questions about Hilbert Circle Theatre accessibility, first aid, and lost and found, please see an usher. Larger print programs can be made available upon request ahead of the event. The ISO also has sensory bags, lap pads, and a sensory room available; please ask an usher for assistance. The Auracast Assistive Listening System is made possible through the generosity of Malcolm and Joyce Mallette; more information is available in the coat room.

Emergency

In the event of an emergency, please use the nearest exit (marked by lighted signs). This is your shortest route out of the theater.

Beyond the Concert

Attend The J. K. Family Foundation *Words on Music* one hour before every *Classical Series* concert to hear from classical music experts.

Parking

Express Park Garage is open on the west side of Pennsylvania Street between Market and Washington Streets. The garage is owned and operated by Denison Parking. A canopy connects the garage to the Hilbert Circle Theatre lobby, giving you a close and convenient parking option.

Other parking options include:

- Valet Service is offered for the *Classical Series*, *Printing Partners Pops Series*, the *Film Series* presented by Bank of America, and select AES Indiana *Yuletide Celebration* performances. Available one hour before the performance begins.
- Metered parking is available downtown near the theatre. Visit parkindy.net for details.
- Visit downtownindy.org for additional parking options.

For more information, contact the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra at 32 East Washington Street, Suite 600, Indianapolis, IN 46204, visit us online at IndianapolisSymphony.org or call the Hilbert Circle Theatre Box Office at 317-639-4300.

We welcome your comments at iso@IndianapolisSymphony.org!

2025–26 Season Sponsors

The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra is grateful for the generous support of these season-long corporate and foundation sponsors.

To become a corporate partner, please contact Maggie Leemhuis, Senior Director of Corporate & Foundation Giving, at 317-229-7094 or email sponsorships@indianapolissymphony.org.

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As Indiana's largest nonprofit performing arts organization, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra is grateful for its supporters who help sustain world-class musical experiences for the community.

Contact Senior Director of Annual Giving Rose Branson at rbranson@indianapolissymphony.org or **317.742.9579** for more information.





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