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March/April 2019

Esther Yoo



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# FANFARE CINCINNATI

CSO POPS

APRIL 2019

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**ON THE COVER** **Esther Yoo**, the violinist recently listed as one of Classic FM's Top 30 Artists under 30 and acclaimed for her "dark, aristocratic tone" (*Gramophone*) and "balanced grace" (*The Herald*), will make her CSO debut **Mar. 30-31**, performing Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto. Read more about Esther Yoo on pages 34-35.

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# Louis Langrée's Beethoven Revolution

by FRANCK MERCURIO

As concert titles go, this one is pretty straightforward: “Langrée Conducts Beethoven.” And indeed, on March 30 and 31, Music Director Louis Langrée conducts the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (CSO) in performances of Ludwig van Beethoven’s Symphony No. 2. But Langrée wants audiences to understand that this is just one part of a much larger project.

The CSO is in the second year of a three-season cycle dubbed the “Beethoven Revolution,” in which the Orchestra, under Langrée’s baton, performs all nine Beethoven symphonies and explores the revolutionary influence of Beethoven over 200 years of music making. The composer’s Symphony No. 2 marks the sixth performed so far in the cycle—the final three are slated for next season (2019–20) and encompass symphonies nos. 5, 6 and 8.

So, as Lucy van Pelt asks Schroeder in *Peanuts*, “What’s so great about Beethoven?”

Quite a lot according to Langrée.

“Beethoven definitely changed the history of music and the history of symphonic music,” says Langrée. “Composers were paralyzed after him. Where to go next? People were lost.”

Beethoven was born during Western music’s Classical period, roughly 1750 to 1820, when classical tenets dictated musical compositions. Beethoven studied in Vienna under Franz Joseph Haydn, and he initially applied the compositional techniques of the Classical period. But Beethoven gradually separated his compositions from this legacy, and his musical originality ushered in the Age of Romanticism, when art, literature and music were categorized by emotion, imagination and “wildness” over rationality, formalism and discipline.

For many, his Second Symphony, composed in 1802, begins to hint at that originality. But his Ninth and final symphony—performed by the CSO and May Festival Chorus this past fall and popularly recognized by the “Ode to Joy” choral passage—really epitomizes the revolutionary nature of Beethoven’s symphonic pieces, on



Louis Langrée displays the score for Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 after a November 2018 performance of the piece.

several levels. According to Langrée, it was the work that changed music in the 19th century.

“There is a chorus, which means that there are words in this symphony; which means the message of this piece is not only a musical message,” says Langrée. “Literature, music, philosophy are all united [in Beethoven’s composition] to elevate the listener.”

By comparing Beethoven’s music to what came before, we can begin to understand why his music is considered revolutionary—even today—and continues to inspire and influence composers and musicians. To illustrate this, each of the “Beethoven Revolution” concerts juxtaposes newer works and, in some instances, brand new commissions.



Louis Langrée leading the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in the November concerts featuring Jonathan Bailey Holland's *Ode* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9.

The CSO commissioned Composer-in-Residence Jonathan Bailey Holland to write a piece to accompany Beethoven's Symphony No. 9—no easy feat! But Holland took up the challenge and composed *Ode*, which premiered at Music Hall this past November.

"*Ode* is a 'meditation on/conversation with/prelude/postlude/reckoning with' the idea of writing a work to accompany Beethoven's Ninth Symphony," said Holland.

"Beethoven's work is often the benchmark for the genre of orchestral classical music," continued Holland. "It is hard to know even how to feel about being paired with the work, let alone what to write. I focused on little bits and pieces from the Beethoven [Ninth], as well as some of the thinking about the Beethoven [Ninth], as impetus for my work."

"Beethoven, still, is haunting for musicians and composers," says Langrée. "I wanted to pair his symphonies with pieces from the 20th and 21st centuries. We commissioned a piece by Pierre Jalbert [*Passage*, which was performed as a world premiere in April 2018] to see how he would respond to Beethoven's Fourth symphony."

Said Jalbert, "In my work *Passage*, the title refers to the transformation of musical passages from Beethoven's Fourth Symphony, which informed this work, into a modern musical language, and of the passage of time between 1806, the year of Beethoven's composition, and 2018."

The March 30 and 31 program pairs Beethoven's Symphony No. 2 with Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 and Holland's *Halcyon Sun*, which the CSO commissioned and premiered in 2003.

"Presenting world premieres helps us not to forget that Beethoven composed revolutionary music, which was contemporary music," continues Langrée. "And many people didn't understand where he would lead music. Some academic composers thought he was a hooligan, destroying the rules—the sacrosanct rules. He was changing the rules and inventing new ones and opening the path to the future of music."

All the more reason to perform all nine of Beethoven's symphonies along with new works by modern and contemporary composers. Following Symphony No. 2, Langrée and the CSO will perform more Beethoven in May, including the *Emperor* Concerto with acclaimed pianist Daniil Trifonov.

The Akademie 1808 concert program, part of the CSO's 125th Anniversary season next year, caps this Beethoven exploration.

"The Beethoven Akademie event is a recreation of the most important concert of Beethoven's life, when the composer premiered his Fifth and Sixth symphonies, his Fourth Piano Concerto, and *Choral Fantasy*, among other theatrical and sacred works," said Langrée. ■

The French conductor Louis Langrée has been Music Director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (CSO) since 2013. He recently toured with them to both Asia and Europe, with appearances including the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, BBC Proms (London) and La Seine Musicale (Paris). He has been Music Director of the Mostly Mozart Festival at New York's Lincoln Center since 2002, where, at the 2018 festival, he led a celebration of the Bernstein Centenary, including a staged performance of *Mass*.

Recent and future conducting projects include debuts with the Czech Philharmonic (Prague Spring Festival), Orchestre National de France and the Konzerthaus Berlin Orchestra. Return engagements include the Wiener Symphoniker, Orchestre des Champs-Élysées and the Philadelphia, Toronto and Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestras. He also returns to The Metropolitan Opera (New York), Wiener Staatsoper and Opéra Comique (Paris). Louis has conducted several world premieres, including works by Daniel Bjarnason, Magnus Lindberg and Caroline Shaw. During the 2018-19 season, he also led the first performance of a piece by Jonathan Bailey Holland, CSO composer-in-residence.

Louis has conducted the Berliner Philharmoniker, Wiener Philharmoniker and London Philharmonic. He has worked with many other orchestras around the world, including the Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Santa Cecilia (Rome), Budapest Festival, Sao Paulo and

NHK symphony orchestras, as well as Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Freiburger Barockorchester and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Festival appearances have included Wiener Festwochen, Salzburg Mozartwoche and Whitsun and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He has also conducted at La Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper (Munich), Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Opéra-Bastille, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Dresden Staatsoper and Netherlands Opera (Amsterdam).



He was Music Director of the Orchestre de Picardie (1993-98) and Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège (2001-06) and Chief Conductor of the Camerata Salzburg (2011-16). Louis was also Music Director of Opéra National de Lyon (1998-2000) and Glyndebourne Touring Opera (1998-2003).

Louis Langrée's recordings with the CSO feature Copland's *A Lincoln Portrait* (narrated by Dr. Maya Angelou) and world premieres by Sebastian Currier, Thierry Escaich, David Lang, Nico Muhly and Zhou Tian (which was nominated for a "Best Orchestral Performance" Grammy). His recordings have received several awards from *Gramophone* and *Midem Classical*. He is a *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* and *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur*. ■

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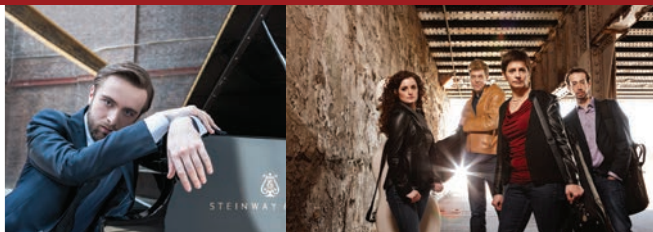
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Conductor of the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, JMR's diverse programming and electric stage presence have infused new creativity and energy into one of the world's most iconic pops orchestras.

Consistently winning international praise for his extraordinary music-making and visionary leadership, this Ohio native is also Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra in South Carolina, where his commitment has yielded a new level of artistic excellence. John Morris Russell is also Principal Pops Conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Conductor Laureate of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra in Ontario, Canada, where he served as Music Director for eleven years.

With the Cincinnati Pops, JMR regularly leads electric performances at Music Hall and Riverbend Music Center and throughout the Greater Cincinnati region and on tour. He has collaborated with generations of great performers, including Aretha Franklin, Sutton Foster, Lea Salonga, Edward James Olmos, Gregory Porter, Ray Charles, Rosemary Clooney, Idina Menzel, Vince Gill, Branford Marsalis, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Megan Hilty, Michael McDonald, George Takei, Amy Grant, Rosanne Cash, Brian Wilson, Katharine McPhee and Marvin Winans.

His first four recordings released with the Cincinnati Pops on the Orchestra's Fanfare Cincinnati label, *Home for the Holidays*, *Superheroes!*, *Carnival of the Animals* and *American Originals*, have all appeared on the *Billboard* charts; *American Originals:1918* is being released in November. JMR recently led the Cincinnati Pops on tours to Florida (2014) and Asia (2017).

A sought-after guest conductor across the continent, John Morris Russell's list of frequent engagements includes the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, the New York Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony, National Symphony (Capitol Lawn) and Dallas Symphony Orchestra, among others. ■



**Side-by-Side  
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From its very beginning, the story of Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz has been a sensation with audiences. L. Frank Baum wrote the now-classic children's book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, in the late 1890s and published it in Chicago in 1900. Upon its release, it became an instant success—the first edition sold out in just a few months! By 1903, a musical adaptation hit the Chicago theater scene, and the tale took on a new life of its own. Each generation since then has connected to this fantastic story in their own way, through print publications, live theater, and motion pictures. This enduring popularity speaks volumes about the universality of Baum's original narrative, and its ability to adapt to the ever-evolving musical styles of the past century. No matter the form—classic song-book, rock, pop or R&B—the music associated with Oz continues to inspire our collective imaginations.

This is the premise of the *Wonderful Music of Oz* concerts this month. Since the book was first published nearly 120 years ago, each successive generation has made Baum's story its own. Both my grandmothers had copies of the book stashed away in their attics, and my parents grew up with the legendary 1939 film with Judy Garland, Ray Bolger and company, which we all diligently watched on TV back when it was broadcast once every year. For my generation, the stage production of *The Wiz* in 1975 (the

first Broadway show I ever attended!) and the 1978 film starring Diana Ross and Michael Jackson was how Oz was defined; today, OUR kids have no idea who Judy Garland is, but can belt out all the tunes to *Wicked* (2003). Along the way, Elton John, Kermit the Frog and even Pink Floyd have ridden the long cultural coattails of this fanciful tale of desire, perseverance and redemption, and solidified Oz as a foundational work of American pop culture. I can't wait to saunter down that Yellow Brick Road together this month, and revel in all things Oz, along with guest vocalists Scott Coulter, Jessica Hendy and Blaine Krauss, the extraordinary students of the CCM Musical Theatre Department, and pianist John Boswell. We're off to see the WIZARD!

Cheers,




Dorothy meets the Cowardly Lion, from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* first edition. Illustration by W.W. Denslow



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# Colin Currie, Percussionist

by KAYLA MOORE

Colin Currie returns to the Music Hall stage April 12–13 for performances with the CSO of *Seidi*, music written for him by composer Kalevi Aho. He recently shared insights about the music, his creative process, and what it takes to be a world-class musician:



**As a Master Percussionist traveling internationally, what do you consider the most challenging, and most rewarding, aspects of working with different orchestras?**

Collaborating with orchestras and orchestral musicians is a very precious privilege for me, and I relish the interaction that playing a concerto presents. All orchestras have a different weighting, and react in their own way to the overall sense of timing emitting from the conductor and soloist. This is a fascinating part of integrating with different groups around the globe, and finding that balance, as well as finding that crucial blend in the sound between me and the orchestra, are my principal objectives.

**When preparing for a performance, both physically and artistically, what thoughts occupy your mind as you begin the creative process?**

I'm very interested in the concept of "authenticity" in music and making each work as true as possible to the composers' core identities. Bringing their ideas and concepts to clarity is essential, so I spend a lot of time considering the options to make each concerto speak truthfully and clearly. We often hear that, with new music, the audience is usually hearing the work for the first time, but I am also aware that it could be the first and last time...so it's crucial to make the right impression.

**When you interpret a work such as *Seidi*, which was written for you by Kalevi Aho, how do you emphasize certain musical elements and incorporate your style without compromising the integrity of the piece?**

With the works written especially for me, the composers know my playing and the kind of qualities that I am able to lend. In the best of them, like Kalevi's *Seidi*, he was well aware of

the potential for drama, intricacy, emotional intensity and the idea of presenting an ambitious structure. These are all elements that appeal to me very naturally, and I feel I can support them strongly over the course of a concerto. The balance of Kalevi/Colin is an interesting question. I suppose there has to be enough of each for the other to prosper!

***Spectator* refers to you as "the world's finest and most daring percussionist." Can you share some thoughts about what key traits/skills or instincts an artist should embody if he or she is serious about becoming a world-class musician? In other words, what do you believe contributes to the "It Factor" that serves to immortalize some musicians?**

There is no great secret here. You need utter dedication to the art form, an extraordinary amount of patience for long hours of agonizing practice, and to feel a natural passion that people can pick up on. Any artist who attempts to falsify such things is doomed, as audiences instinctively know when they are hearing something genuine—or not. There are instances of pure natural talent sustaining amazing musicians, but this is, believe me, exceedingly rare. 10,000 hours? Try 20,000.

**Looking ahead, what new projects are in the works for you and the ensemble, Colin Currie Group?**

Forming this group has been one of the most exciting projects of my career. The ensemble is dedicated to the music of Steve Reich, and we are honored to have him travel with us, perform with us and also, wonderfully, write new music for us. We continue to tour his music internationally, and we look forward to our U.S. debut soon, which will mean a lot to us—to bring his music back home will be a special moment. ■

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# Philip Marten, First Assistant Concertmaster

James M. Ewell Chair

by KAYLA MOORE



For Philip Marten, a visit to the OK Mozart Festival when he was four was all it took for him to know he wanted to become a musician. Growing up in small-town Kansas, he listened to classical music with his parents, but when he went to the OK Mozart Festival, he saw violist Paul Neubauer performing, turned to his mother and said, “I want to do that!” His mother brushed it off, thinking nothing of it, but young Philip pressed on, asking her for music lessons.

Soon after, he began piano lessons and, at the age of eight, he began playing the violin—the instrument with which he quickly fell in love and to which he dedicated himself (although, he does have a viola and occasionally plays it for fun). While studying privately, he also performed chamber music, participating in a string trio until he was 14. He next continued his violin studies with the former

concertmaster of the Kansas City Symphony, which required his mother to drive him two-and-a-half hours from their home in Independence, Kansas for lessons—ultimately prompting a family move to Kansas City. Alongside his private lessons, he also continued to perform a good deal of chamber music.

Following high school, Marten went on to study at Rice University under the tutelage of Cho-Liang Lin, graduating with his bachelor’s degree in Music with a minor in Sociology. He went on to study at the University of Southern California under Glenn Dicterow, former concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic. After two months of studying with Dicterow, Marten decided to begin taking auditions. He won his third audition, with the Kansas City Symphony, where he was Section First Violin from 2016 to 2018.

After his time with the Kansas City Symphony, he moved to Cincinnati, where he now serves as the Assistant Concertmaster with the CSO. When asked about his journey to the CSO and who inspired him, Marten says, “The easy answer is my teachers—nobody has had more of an influence on my life and career than they have. However, from every person I meet, there’s something to be learned. Everyone I work with provides me with inspiration.”

In the vein of inspiration, Marten expressed his excitement in working with the CSO at this time of incredible change and innovation: “I’m really excited to see how music changes over the next decade or so. Because I’m fairly new to this, it’s so interesting to me to see how orchestras have changed over the past decade, and moving into the next. I’m looking for opportunities for how I can contribute to that with creative programming, community outreach, and any other effective ways of fostering the strength of the American orchestra.”

As orchestras across the world are looking to change their programming to a curated mixture of “tried and true” classical compositions and creative modern pieces, Marten is particularly excited because this is right in his wheelhouse: “I love playing both really old and really new music. I love exploring Baroque music because it reminds me so much of jazz today—there’s a very improvisatory element to it. Imagine Bach going into the court and just making up fugues. What’s closer to jazz than that? You take a subject and play around with it. The fact that they knew how to notate that and play with the music is incredible, and now we have to learn how to make it sound improvised and spontaneous.”

“I also love new music, something I haven’t heard before. I love Mahler symphonies, I’ll always enjoy them, but when I hear something totally new with purpose, intention and structure, I’m fascinated. Some modern music isn’t the best, but it’s our job as musicians to find the gems of modern composition like Mason Bates, John Luther Adams, John Adams and Andrew Norman—artists who are playing with the conventions of classical music.” ■

## FUN FACTS ABOUT PHILIP MARTEN

- He has a golden doodle named Chloe and a cat named Izzy.
- He likes trying new beer—his current Cincinnati favorites are from Brink Brewing.
- He enjoys the craft coffee scene—he especially enjoys Deeper Roots Coffee.
- He composes music in his spare time.
- He loves spending time with his wife and his dog and cat, and he loves watching *The Office*.



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2018–2019 SEASON  
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Music Hall

LOUIS LANGRÉE conductor  
ESTHER YOO violin

JONATHAN  
BAILEY HOLLAND  
(b. 1974)

*Halcyon Sun*  
Slow and Calm  
Moderately Fast  
Calm. Slightly Faster. Slower

PROKOFIEV  
(1891–1953)

Concerto No. 2 in G Minor for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 63  
Allegro moderato  
Andante assai  
Allegro, ben marcato

### INTERMISSION

BEETHOVEN  
(1770–1827)

Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36  
Adagio molto—Allegro con brio  
Larghetto  
Scherzo: Allegro  
Allegro molto

*These performances will end at approximately 10 pm Saturday, 4 pm Sunday.*



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cincinnati-symphony.org May 13–19.*

**WE ARE THRILLED** to welcome back our Composer-in-Residence Jonathan Bailey Holland, and to perform his CSO-commissioned work, *Halcyon Sun*. This piece was composed for the opening of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center here in Cincinnati, and takes us on a journey through dark and uncertain paths to hope and light. Next we feature the talented Esther Yoo in her CSO debut, performing the magnificent Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 2. Closing this concert is Beethoven's jubilant Symphony No. 2. Though it was composed at a time when Beethoven was forced to face his increasing deafness, this symphony resonates with energy and frantic joy. One could never guess that this significant work was written at the same time as the "Heiligenstadt Testament," an essay Beethoven wrote to his brother in which he describes his despair at losing his hearing and contemplates suicide. This era of writing propelled him into his prolific second period.

—LOUIS LANGRÉE

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## JONATHAN BAILEY HOLLAND

### *Halcyon Sun*

- **Born:** 1974, Flint, Michigan
- **Work composed:** 2003 on commission from the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
- **Premiere:** April 30, 2004, Paavo Järvi conducting the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
- **Instrumentation:** 3 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets (incl. E-flat clarinet), 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, crash cymbals, marimba, snare drum, suspended cymbals, tam-tam, xylophone, harp, strings
- **CSO notable performances:** One previous subscription weekend: April-May 2004, Paavo Järvi conducting | The CSO also recorded this work live in 2004 for its *American Portraits* CD (released in 2011), Paavo Järvi conducting.
- **Duration:** approx. 16 minutes

Jonathan Bailey Holland, Chair of Composition at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee, is currently serving as composer-in-residence with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Earlier this season, the CSO performed his most recent work, *Ode*, his fifth commission from the orchestra. *Halcyon Sun*, in 2003, was his first.



Jonathan Bailey Holland, ©Robert Torres

Written exactly 100 years after Nielsen's *Helios* Overture (to be performed at the April 12–13 CSO concerts), *Halcyon Sun* is a 21st-century take on the same timeless topic. At the time of the premiere, the composer offered the following comments on his work:

This work was commissioned by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra as a celebration of the opening of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. For me, the Underground Railroad has always sparked visions of dark tunnels and pathways, with people moving from desolation to an unknown new life. The end of a journey is often symbolized by an image of light. For those traveling through the Underground Railroad, the light at the end of the tunnel was freedom and a new life. (The Freedom Center's website uses this same metaphor in the Stories of Freedom section when it describes the candle at Rev. John Rankin's window as a "true beacon of hope.")

I chose to focus on the end result of that journey as a starting point for my composition. The sun is nature's beacon, used for direction, used to mark time and to provide energy and light. It is also a symbol of continual rejuvenation. The opening movement tracks the sun from pre-dawn through its ascent and onto its slow arc across the sky. The music moves slowly and pulsates through shifting harmonies and ascending scales. This movement has a primeval quality, built as it is from some of music's most basic elements: sustained sounds with punctuations, a two-note figure repeated sometimes at great length, and scale-like passages. The rich and sometimes massive harmonies provide an undercurrent of growth.

Movement 2 takes the harmonies from the first movement and turns them into sporadic bursts of light. These bursts are gradually layered to create a dance of light.

The final movement is a hymn-like epilogue, perhaps representing the setting of the sun. The work ends as it began, with low strings playing soothing, predawn chords.

—Peter Laki

**SERGEI PROKOFIEV**  
**Concerto No. 2 in G Minor for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 63**

- **Born:** April 23, 1891, Sontsovka, Ekaterinoslav, Russia
- **Died:** March 5, 1953, Moscow
- **Work composed:** 1935
- **Premiere:** December 1, 1935, Madrid, Enrique Arbós conducting; Robert Soetens, violin
- **Instrumentation:** solo violin, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, bass drum, castanets, snare drum, suspended cymbals, triangle, strings
- **CSO notable performances:** 11 previous subscription weekends | Premiere: December 1938, Eugene Goossens conducting; Jasha Heifetz, violin | Most recent: November 2006, Paavo Järvi conducting; Dmitry Sitkovetsky, violin
- **Duration:** approx. 27 minutes

1934 was a year of indecision for Prokofiev. He spent a large part of it visiting Russia, yet respect for his work was becoming especially high in the West. He was, for example, elected to

honorary membership in the Academy of Music in Rome. And, as a result of his growing fame, he was asked by a group of French musicians to compose a violin concerto for the famous virtuoso Robert Soetens. The composer was torn between remaining in the West to take advantage of his rising fame, and returning to the homeland he had left 16 years earlier.

He knew full well that to move back to Russia would affect his musical style, because the brilliant, hard driving, powerful works he had been writing while living in Paris would never satisfy the official Soviet requirements for art. Russian music was supposed to be readily accessible, melodic and consonant.

The Second Violin Concerto became a transitional work. The first movement was composed in Paris, while the remaining movements were written after Prokofiev's return to Russia. Stylistically, however, the concerto is typical of his Soviet period, in that it is lyrical, tonal, relatively consonant, and simplified.

Despite returning to Russia, the composer was still able to make extensive concert tours. Consequently, the concerto was composed in hotel rooms in a variety of European cities. The premiere took place on Prokofiev's and Soetens's tour of Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.





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The composer liked Spain. The Spanish people displayed a great love of music. He said, “Whenever I played, after every concert, whether in a café or during supper in a restaurant, they would ask me thousands of questions about the Soviet Union, about Soviet music. The Spaniards were particularly interested to hear about our unions of creative artists, composers’ contracts, and the centralization of our concert institutions and orchestras.”

When Soetens premiered the concerto in Madrid, Prokofiev was accorded a standing ovation by both audience and orchestra. Later a special delegation was sent to the composer to express appreciation for his having allowed the work to be played first in Spain.

**KEYNOTE.** The first movement is cast in a traditional sonata form, except that the usual opposition between a dramatic first theme and a lyrical second theme is not evident. Both themes are lyrical. Nonetheless there is drama, as well as excitement and virtuosity, in the transitional and developmental passages. As the development section is remarkably straightforward, it is easy to follow the two themes through their various transformations. Prokofiev’s concern with accessibility is clear throughout the concerto.

The second movement, like the first, is predominantly lyrical, with the solo instrument

seldom silent. Again Prokofiev makes the main theme’s transformations easy to follow. Many of the textures derive from the opening opposition of *staccato* (short note) accompaniment and *legato* (smoothly connected) solo line. At the very end these roles are reversed, as the violin plays a *pizzicato* accompaniment to the lyrical tune in the cellos, horns and clarinets.

In contrast to the earlier movements, the finale is brash, a bit sarcastic, almost demonic—certainly not lyrical. As earlier, the solo instrument plays nearly constantly. There are no cadenzas. Despite the lack of outright lyricism, the music is melodic, as befits a concerto by a proper Soviet composer. Dance rhythms abound, and several times the music almost becomes a waltz. There are also exciting rhythmic and metric asymmetries, such as the passage in 7/4 time that is heard twice.

Prokofiev’s Second Violin Concerto was written nearly 20 years after his First. Comparisons are instructive. What is surprising is that the two works are not more different, considering the avant-garde music the composer was creating in the intervening years. Although there are certain stylistic differences, they share the idea of lyricism contrasted with harshness. The First Concerto was composed while Prokofiev was preparing to leave Russia, the Second upon his



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return. Thus the two works form an appropriate frame around the composer's Parisian period.

—Jonathan D. Kramer

## LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36

- **Born:** December 16, 1770, Bonn, Germany
- **Died:** March 26, 1827, Vienna
- **Work composed:** 1802
- **Premiere:** April 5, 1803 in Vienna, Beethoven conducting
- **Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings
- **CSO notable performances:** 26 previous subscription weekends | Premiere: April 1895 (Pike Opera House), Henry Schradieck conducting | Most recent: January 2015, Louis Langrée conducting
- **Duration:** approx. 32 minutes

For some time Beethoven had been alarmed over the weakening of his hearing. How could he function as a musician if he were to become deaf? What chagrin he would feel if he, the world's greatest composer, could not hear! He consulted several doctors, each of whom prescribed a different remedy. Nothing worked. He had days of good hearing and days when he could barely make out conversations. There were times when he could hear music perfectly and other times when he could not

even rehearse, because all he could perceive were high notes.

One of his doctors felt that a few months away from the tumult of Vienna might help. So the composer went for six months to the small town of Heiligenstadt. There he composed the Second Symphony. Also, he had time and solitude to reflect on the consequences of his loss of hearing. He faced up to the inevitability of eventual deafness, he contemplated suicide, and he wrote down his anguished concerns in a document known as the "Heiligenstadt Testament." The testament is ostensibly addressed to Beethoven's brothers, although at times he seems to speak to all of humanity, sometimes to God, and at other times to one special, unnamed person.

Oh you men who think or say that I am malevolent, stubborn, or misanthropic, how greatly do you wrong me. You do not know the secret cause which makes me seem that way to you. From childhood on, my heart and soul have been full of the tender feeling of goodwill, and I was ever inclined to accomplish great things. But, think that for six years now I have been hopelessly afflicted, made worse by senseless physicians, from year to year deceived with hopes of improvement, finally compelled to

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face the prospect of a lasting malady (whose cure will take years or, perhaps, be impossible). Though born with a fiery, active temperament, even susceptible to the diversions of society, I was soon compelled to withdraw myself, to live life alone. If at times I tried to forget all this, oh how harshly I was flung back by the doubly sad experience of my bad hearing! Yet it was impossible for me to say to people, "Speak louder, shout, for I am deaf." Ah, how could I possibly admit an infirmity in the one sense which ought to be more perfect in me than in others, a sense which I once possessed in the highest perfection, a perfection such as few in my profession enjoy or have ever enjoyed? Oh, I cannot do it; therefore forgive me when you see me draw back when I would have gladly mingled with you. My misfortune is doubly painful to me because I am bound to be misunderstood; for me there can be no relaxation with my fellow men, no refined conversations, no mutual exchange of ideas. I must live almost alone, like one who has been banished; I can mix with society only as much as true necessity demands. If I approach near to people, a hot terror seizes upon me, and I fear being exposed to the danger that my condition might be noticed. Thus it has been during the last six months which I have spent in the country. By ordering me to spare my hearing as much as possible, my intelligent doctor almost fell in with my present frame of mind, though sometimes I ran counter to it

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**One of his doctors felt that a few months away from the tumult of Vienna might help. So the composer went for six months to the small town of Heiligenstadt. There he composed the Second Symphony. Also, he had time and solitude to reflect on the consequences of his loss of hearing.**

by yielding to my desire for companionship. But what a humiliation for me when someone standing next to me heard a flute in the distance and I heard nothing, or someone heard a shepherd singing and again I heard nothing!

Such incidents drove me almost to despair; a little more of that and I would have ended my life—it was only my art that held me back. Ah, it seemed to me impossible to leave the world until I had brought forth all that I felt was within me....

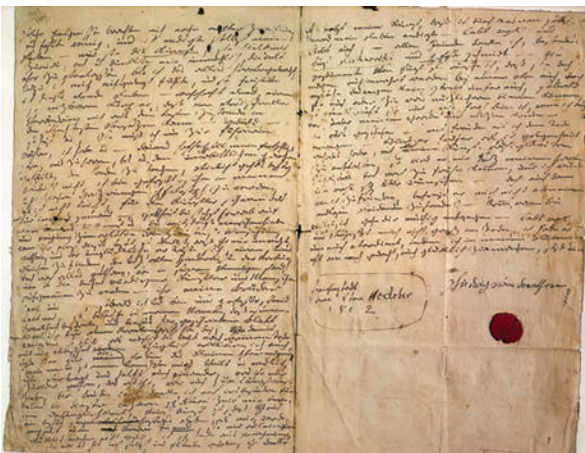
That fond hope, which I brought here with me—to be cured to a degree at least—this I must now wholly abandon. As the leaves of autumn fall

and are withered, so likewise has my hope been blighted. I leave here—almost as I came—even the high courage, which often inspired me in the beautiful days of summer, has disappeared. Oh Providence, grant me at last but one day of pure joy. It is so long since real joy echoed in my heart. Oh when, oh when, oh Divine One, shall I feel it again in the temple of nature and of mankind? Never? No, that would be too hard.

One might expect such anguished feelings to be reflected in the music composed at the time of the Heiligenstadt Testament, but the Second Symphony is surprisingly happy, carefree, and innocently sunny. One might expect that Beethoven's concern over his hearing would eat away at his creativity, but he was composing at breakneck speed. One might expect that the composer would give up, but instead he plunged himself into composing with renewed ardor, and soon his music matured into his extraordinary second-period style.

His deafness actually may have helped more than harmed his work. He was forced to retire from the concert stage, and so he devoted more time to composition. Also, as his deafness increased, he kept more and more to himself, thereby developing the strong inner personality that shines through in his mature works. Although he did have occasional periods of normal hearing almost to the end of his life, his deafness made him more and more withdrawn. He shunned the company of all but his close friends, and he compensated for his isolation with an incredible intensity in his music.

People often wonder how a composer can work if he is deaf. Composers imagine the sounds of their music in their minds. They usually



Pages from Beethoven's "Heiligenstadt Testament."

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# TRIFONOV PLAYS BEETHOVEN'S EMPEROR

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do not need to rely on the actual physical sounds of instruments. If they compose at the piano, for example, it is more for convenience than necessity. Beethoven was already an experienced composer when he began to lose his hearing. He knew exactly what his music sounded like, without having actually to listen to it. Occasional slips in orchestration in his later works have been attributed to his deafness, but his sense of melody, harmony and counterpoint—the essentials of his art—never wavered.

**KEYNOTE.** For this keynote, let us turn to the interesting program note written by composer Hector Berlioz: “In this symphony everything is noble, energetic, and proud. The introduction is a masterpiece. The most beautiful effects follow one another without confusion and always in an unexpected manner. The song is of touching solemnity, and it at once commands respect and puts the hearer in an emotional mood. The rhythm is already bolder, the instrumentation richer, more sonorous, more varied. An *allegro con brio* of enchanting dash is joined to this admirable *adagio*. The *grupetto* [the rapid figure that forms the principal motive], which is found in the first measure of the theme, given at first to the violas and cellos in unison, is taken up again in an isolated form, to establish either progres-

sions in a crescendo or else imitative passages between wind instruments and strings....

“The *largetto* is not treated after the manner of the First Symphony. It is not composed of a theme worked out in canonic imitation, but it is a pure and frank song, which at first is sung simply by the strings and then is embroidered with a rare elegance by means of light and fluent figures. Their character is never far removed from the sentiment of tenderness which forms the distinctive personality of the principal idea. It is a ravishing picture of innocent pleasure, which is scarcely shadowed by a few melancholy accents....

“The *scherzo* is as frankly gay in its fantastic capriciousness as the second movement has been wholly and serenely happy, for this symphony is smiling throughout. The war-like outbursts of the first *allegro* are completely free from violence; there is only the youthful ardor of a noble heart, in which the most beautiful illusions of life are preserved untainted. The composer still believes in love, in immortal glory, in devotion. What abandon in his gaiety! What wit! What sallies! Hearing these various instruments disputing over fragments of a theme which no one of them plays in its complete form, hearing each fragment thus colored with a thousand nuances as it passes from one to the other, it is



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"The closing movement is of like nature. It is a second *scherzo*, in 2/2 time, and its playfulness has perhaps something still more delicate, more piquant."

Berlioz's descriptive terms—noble, energetic, proud, touching solemnity, enchanting dash, rare elegance, tenderness, ravishing picture of innocent pleasure, frankly gay, serenely happy, delicate, etc.—certainly do not suggest the turmoil of Beethoven's mind as revealed in the Heiligenstadt Testament. The human mind, particularly that of a genius like Beethoven, is complex. It is capable of operating on independent planes at once. Beethoven demonstrated this fact more than once. His Eighth Symphony, for example, is just as carefree and witty as the

Second, yet it too was written during a difficult period.

Beethoven had a strong character, and he always managed to emerge the victor in his internal struggles. That he surmounted his deafness to go on composing is more important than the degree to which his struggles were manifested in the music. Eventually his inner strength did gain expression in, for example, his next symphony, the *Eroica*. Perhaps, at the time of the Second his musical personality was not yet ready to express the anguish over his deafness because he had not yet mastered his fate. As a result the Second Symphony could become a happy creation, although written at the unhappiest of times.

—Jonathan D. Kramer

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Region I - Interview/Discussion Program

**ESTHER YOO, violin**

- **Previous CSO Performances:** Debut
- **Read more:** [estheryooviolin.com](http://estheryooviolin.com)



Esther Yoo, © Marco Borggreve

Esther Yoo, the first ever Artist-in-Residence with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (2018) is acclaimed for her “dark, aristocratic tone” (*Gramophone Magazine*) and “balanced grace” (*The Herald*). Recently listed as one of Clas-

sic FM’s Top 30 Artists under 30, Yoo first came to international attention in 2010 when she became the youngest prizewinner of the 10th International Sibelius Violin Competition at age 16. In 2012 she was one of the youngest-ever prizewinners of the Queen Elisabeth Competition, and from 2014 to 2016 she was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist.

The 2018-19 season sees Yoo debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Florida Orchestra and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. A regular collaborator with the Philharmonia Orchestra, she tours with the ensemble twice this season—to Korea and China with Esa-Pekka Salonen, and to Spain and the UK with Vladimir Ashkenazy. In Europe, Yoo returns to Orchestra National de

Belgique and Orchestra National de Lille, and debuts with Oulu Symphony, Orquesta Camera Musicae and Orquesta Sinfonica Portuguesa.

As a chamber musician, Yoo has appeared in solo recital at Lincoln Center, Wigmore Hall, Oslo Opera House, and Bozar and, as a member of the Z.E.N. Trio (with former BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists Zhang Zuo and Narek Hakhnazaryan), at Aspen Music Festival, Ottawa Chamberfest and in Hong Kong, Liverpool and Cambridge.

In 2017 Deutsche Grammophon released her second album with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Vladimir Ashkenazy—Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto and other works—following her 2015 debut album of the Glazunov and Sibelius concertos. Also in 2017 the Z.E.N. Trio released their debut album on the same label. In 2018, Yoo was featured on the soundtrack of the internationally released film *On Chesil Beach*.

Born in the U.S. and raised in Europe since age 6, Yoo began playing the violin at age 4 and made her concerto debut at age 8. She has completed the Excellence Bachelor Programme at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich, and the Artist Diploma Programme at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Brussels. She plays the 1704 “Prince Obolensky” Stradivarius, generously loaned to her by a private collector.

Esther Yoo is an official Champion of the music therapy charity Nordoff Robbins. She is represented worldwide by Harrison Parrott, Ltd. ■

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# Q&A with Esther Yoo

by KAYLA MOORE



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**You are widely regarded for your unique and personal interpretation of each piece you take on. What affects you when learning, internalizing, and ultimately performing a piece?**

Thank you! For me, one of the most important processes of preparing a piece is studying the score and trying to place myself in the composer's shoes as closely as possible. I need to have a clear understanding of the score before finding my own voice in the music, as well as finding freedom within structure.

**What inspires you?**

There are so many situations, places and people that inspire me a great deal. I've always found nature to be very inspiring and healing in many ways. Also connecting with all kinds of people around the world and growing as a person through

new encounters is a strong source of inspiration for me. Something that never fails to inspire and motivate me is meeting people who are deeply passionate about their profession, no matter what field they might be in. That kind of energy is contagious.

**What advice would you give your younger self as you were first coming into the global forefront of classical music performance?**

In general I would tell my younger self to let go a little more. I was very introverted when I was younger, and I kept a lot of emotions bottled up. Ultimately, I released a lot of it through music, but as I grew older I realized I had to teach myself how to let go and get out of my own head.

**Was there a certain moment when you decided to dedicate your life to music and share your music with the world? What made you want to pursue your passion and make it your career?**

I think it was an accumulation of really fantastic experiences, rather than one specific moment, that made me want to pursue a career in music. I have had a natural bond with music since I was a kid, and I was fortunate to have been exposed to great recordings and live performances from a very early age. As music lovers themselves, my parents had an extensive CD collection and of-

ten took me along to concerts they went to hear.

I had a lot of other interests as I was growing up, and I was quite lucky to have had opportunities to dabble in various interests of mine. But ultimately I always wanted to come back to music. Discovering music, working with musicians, and performing and sharing music with people have always been the greatest joys for me.

**Do you have a favorite piece to perform? A favorite composer?**

It's difficult to pick just one favorite composer, of course, but my current favorite composers are Bach and Shostakovich. Their music is worlds apart, and I love their works for different reasons. I've loved Bach since I was a child—there's an endless amount to learn from his music, even when at first glance it looks quite simple, and I love the feeling of peace and stability I get when playing or hearing his compositions. I immersed myself in the world of Shostakovich when I was a bit older and was instantly fascinated by the unique manner in which he captures darkness and controls time in the most magical way.

**What do you do in your spare time while traveling the world for performances?**

I enjoy having new experiences, whether it's exploring new cities, discovering new food, or meeting new people. Keeping my body healthy while traveling is important to me, so I try to do a lot of yoga along with cardio exercise. Reading or watching movies is a great source of inspiration for me, and I also love connecting with my followers on Facebook and Instagram as I travel around! ■

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**SCOTT COULTER, vocalist**

■ Previous Pops Performances: Debut



Scott Coulter

For his work in cabaret, Scott Coulter has received five MAC Awards (Manhattan Association of Cabarets & Clubs), five Bistro Awards and two Nightlife Awards for Outstanding Vocalist and has performed at most of NYC's top rooms, including Birdland, 54 Below,

The Oak Room at the Algonquin, and Feinstein's at The Regency, where he spent a record-setting eight months performing the revue *11 O'Clock Numbers at 11 O'Clock*, which he also co-created, directed and musically arranged. His self-titled debut CD won the 2003 MAC Award for Outstanding Recording and was chosen as the best recording of the year by *TheatreMania* and *Cabaret Scenes* magazines. Coulter was director and star of *A Christmas Carol: The Symphonic Concert* in its world premiere with the Baltimore Symphony and reprised his performance in the Emmy-nominated PBS production that premiered in December 2013. He was

an Emmy nominee himself for his performance in *American Song* at NJPAC. Coulter regularly performs in concert both as a solo artist and with a variety of legendary performers, including Stephen Schwartz, Tony winner Ben Vereen and Grammy winner Sheena Easton, and he has performed with symphony orchestras all over the world, including San Francisco, Baltimore, Seattle, Phoenix, Detroit, Winnipeg, St. Louis and Calgary.

Since 1997, Coulter has performed with award-winning songwriting duo Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich in their many award-winning revues. While singing with Goldrich and Heisler he was discovered by Oscar- and Grammy-winning composer Stephen Schwartz, who then invited him to join the revue *Stephen Schwartz & Friends*. That revue (starring Schwartz and Coulter along with Liz Callaway and Tony Award winner Debbie Gravitte) has been performing all over the world since 1999. Schwartz has said, "One of the greatest things that can happen to a composer is to have his music interpreted by Scott Coulter."

Coulter is creator, arranger and director of several touring shows (symphonic and non-) including *Music of the Knights*, *You've Got a*

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Friend, *Blockbuster Broadway!*, *The Fella Sings Ella*, *The King: The Music of Elvis*, and, for The ASCAP Foundation, *Jerry Herman: The Broadway Legacy Concert*. As a director, his credits include many shows for The Town Hall in NY (*Broadway by the Year*, *Broadway's Rising Stars*, *Broadway Originals*, *Broadway Unplugged*) and *Broadway by the Year* for The Berkshire Theatre Festival and *Broadway by the Bay*. Along with Michael Kerker and ASCAP, he's a regular producer/director of Michael Feinstein's *Standard Time* at Carnegie Hall. Coulter recently wrote the book for the new musical *Got To Be There*, which celebrates the life and music of songwriter Elliot Willensky.

Coulter is founder/owner of Spot-On Entertainment and is a resident director of programming at 54 Below (Broadway's Supper Club) in NYC. He is Artistic Director of the Pocono Mountains Music Festival and a proud graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

For more information about *The Wonderful Music of Oz*, as well as other Spot-On productions, please visit [spot-onentertainment.com](http://spot-onentertainment.com).

## JESSICA HENDY, vocalist

■ Previous Pops Performances: Solo debut



Jessica Hendy

Jessica Hendy played the role of Grizabella in *Cats* in both the original Broadway run and the 2016 revival cast, becoming the only person to have appeared in both Broadway incarnations of that smash hit musical. Other Broadway credits include *Aida* (Amneris) and *Amour*. She has toured nationally and in Canada in *Cats* (Grizabella) and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Narrator). In New York, she received rave reviews for her one-woman cabaret, "A Life to Call Your Own," and a Bistro Award for the revue *Get Your Tickets Now*. NYC Pre-Broadway workshops include *Dance of the Vampires*, *Aida* and *The Molly Maguires*. She played Diana Goodman in the regional premiere of the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical *Next to Normal* at The Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati. The ETC production was such a hit, it was brought back for a second run the following



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summer and had another stellar run. She has had the pleasure to work at many theatres around the country, including Pittsburgh CLO and North Shore Music Theatre in *Miss Saigon* (Ellen), and Helen Hayes Performing Arts Center in *Songs for a New World* with Jason Robert Brown. Hendy's performance as Jeanne in *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* at The Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati earned her an ACCLAIM Award for Best Actress. Her symphonic concert work includes performances with the Cincinnati Pops, Modesto Symphony, Long Beach Symphony, Ft. Worth Symphony, Grand Rapids Symphony, and the Kentucky Symphony Orchestra. She travels the country with the concerts "Broadway Today!" and "Cinema Toast: The Music of the Movies." Jessica Hendy is a proud graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

### BLAINE KRAUSS, vocalist

#### ■ Previous Pops Performances: Debut

Blaine Krauss made his Broadway debut in the smash hit *Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812* after traveling the world as Simba in *The Lion King* and starring in the Radio City



Blaine Krauss

Summer Spectacular. He currently appears in *The Cher Show*. Krauss performs with symphonies around the globe and is a regular performer at Feinstein's/54 Below. His talents led him in 2011 to be a feature

performer for the largest Commemoration of 9/11 outside of the U.S. at the Trocadero in Paris. In 2010 he was selected to be one of 20 Presidential Scholars in the Arts by the White House and the Presidential Scholar Commission. This venture led to having met President Obama and concluded with a performance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. He was selected to be the featured vocalist at the 2010 July 4th Celebration at the U.S. National Archives, and he was a selected participant at the International Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland. His theatrical credits include *Godspell* and *Spelling Bee* at the West Virginia Public Theatre, *Evita*, *Into the Woods*, *Civil War*, *Make Me a Song*, *Chess*, and Jean Valjean in CCM's *Les Misérables*.

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**JOHN BOSWELL, piano**■ **Previous Pops Performances:** Debut

John Boswell

Pianist John Boswell has served as musical director for Judy Collins, Andy Williams, Bob Newhart, Scott Coulter, Maude Maggart, Faith Prince, Carmen Cusack, Babbie Green, Jason Graae and a host of other fine talents. Boswell played the role of “Moose” in the national tour of *Crazy For You* and has appeared on

*The Tonight Show, Today Show, CBS This Morning, Regis and Kathie Lee and General Hospital*, and he was the piano playing hands of Nancy McKeon on the sitcom *The Facts of Life*. Recent concerts with symphony orchestras have included *Jerry Herman: The Broadway Legacy Concert, Blockbuster Broadway!*, *Sheena Easton and Scott Coulter: The Spy Who Loved Me*, and *Music of the Knights*. Boswell has been heard singing in the shows *Three Men and a Baby...Grand, Cinema Toast, Broadway Today, Wiseguys*, and the New York cult hit *Cashino*. Broadway/Off-Broadway credits include *Crazy For You, The Secret Garden, LIZA! Steppin' Out*

at *Radio City Music Hall, Back to Bacharach and David*, and *The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives*. His monthly concerts in 2017 at The Gardenia in Los Angeles were thrilling crowd-pleasers. Boswell has nine CDs of original piano music, including *Night Music*, the most recent. While a student at UCLA, Boswell received the Frank Sinatra Award for popular instrumentalists.

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2018-2019 SEASON  
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SAT APR 13, 8 pm  
Music Hall

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JOHN STORGÅRDS conductor  
COLIN CURRIE percussion

NIELSEN  
(1865-1931)                      *Helios Overture, Op. 17*

KALEVI AHO  
(b. 1949)                        *Sieidi, Concerto for Solo Percussion and Orchestra*

### INTERMISSION

SIBELIUS  
(1865-1957)                    *Symphony No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 82*  
Molto moderato—Allegro moderato—Presto  
Andante mosso, quasi allegretto  
Allegro molto—Misterioso

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*These performances will end at approximately 10 pm Friday and Saturday.*

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**IT IS A DISTINCT PLEASURE** to welcome back beloved guest conductor John Storgårds to the podium in this beautiful program of Nordic composers and influences. We begin with Carl Nielsen’s mesmerizing *Helios Overture*, which depicts the stunning beauty of the sun’s journey through the sky. Nielsen was inspired to write this music during a trip to Greece and by stories of the sun god, Helios; the piece paints a vibrant yet tranquil scene. Second on tonight’s program is a Concerto for Solo Percussion and Orchestra titled *Sieidi*, which comes from a Finnish language, Sami, and denotes a sacred site. We are thrilled to have the great Colin Currie perform this magical piece for the first time at the CSO. Finally, we present Symphony No. 5 by the wonderful Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. This remarkable work was commissioned by the government of Finland to celebrate the composer’s 50th birthday. It took many versions before arriving in its final, radiant form, which we present to you this evening.

—LOUIS LANGRÉE

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### CARL NIELSEN *Helios Overture, Op. 17*

- **Born:** June 9, 1865, Sortelung, on the Danish Island of Funen (Fyn)
- **Died:** October 3, 1931, Copenhagen
- **Work composed:** 1903 in Athens
- **Premiere:** October 8, 1903, Copenhagen, Johan Svendsen conducting
- **Instrumentation:** 3 flutes (incl. piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, strings
- **CSO notable performances:** One previous subscription weekend: October 1989, David Loebel conducting
- **Duration:** approx. 12 minutes

At the age of 38, Carl Nielsen—Denmark’s greatest classical composer—had already written two symphonies and an opera that had been performed successfully in Copenhagen. Yet he had not yet been able to quit his “day job” in the second violin section of the Royal Danish Orchestra, even after receiving a modest state pension to support his work as a composer. In 1903 he obtained a leave from the orchestra, to accompany his wife, the sculptor Anne-Marie Carl-Nielsen, née Brodersen, to Greece. She had

received a grant to study ancient Greek art, and the couple settled in Athens, where Nielsen, too, admired the antiquities and immersed himself in ancient mythology. The figure of Helios, the sun god, captured his imagination in particular, and he composed a concert overture in which a full day, from sunrise to sunset, is represented in the form of a magnificent arch beginning and ending with a quiet contemplation of nature in the sustained notes of the French horns, and with a great deal of bustling activity in between.

**KEYNOTE.** Out of the quiet opening, a sinuous string melody emerges; it grows steadily in volume and rises in register until the blazing sound of the trumpets announces bright daylight. The violins introduce a glorious new theme in a new key and a faster tempo, continued by the cellos, projecting feelings of joy at the sight of the midday splendor. Then, unexpectedly, a fugue in Presto tempo appears, perhaps symbolizing the “fire-darting steeds” (as the poet Pindar called them) who drew Helios’s golden chariot across the sky. The hectic motion gradually subsides and the meditative opening returns to signal the end of the day and the disappearance of the sun behind the horizon.

—Peter Laki

### KALEVI AHO *Sieidi, Concerto for Solo Percussion and Orchestra*

- **Born:** March 9, 1949, Forssa, Finland
- **Work composed:** 2010–2011, on commission from the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Luosto Classic Festival in Finland and the Gothenburg Symphony
- **Premiere:** April 18, 2012, London’s Royal Festival Hall, Osmo Vänskä conducting the London Philharmonic; Colin Currie, percussion
- **Instrumentation:** solo percussion, 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, castanets, crash cymbals, 6 hand bells, suspended cymbals, tambourine, triangle, strings
- **CSO notable performances:** These performances are the CSO premiere of *Sieidi*.
- **Duration:** approx. 36 minutes

Finnish composer Kalevi Aho, who turns 70 on March 9, has written 16 symphonies and a concerto for almost every instrument in the orchestra, in addition to several operas and a great deal of chamber and vocal music. Almost all of his works have been recorded on the BIS label and distributed worldwide, so that his music has reached music lovers all over the world. From his extremely large and varied catalogue, one should note in particular the *Insect Symphony* (No. 7, 1988), derived from the opera *Insect Life* (1985–87), and *Chinese Songs* for soprano and





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orchestra (1997). Also known as a passionate writer about current social issues, Kalevi Aho is a prominent voice in the cultural life of his country.

The percussion concerto *Sieidi*, which has become one of Aho's most-performed works, was written for virtuoso percussionist Colin Currie. It was co-commissioned by a music festival in remote Luosto, Finland, almost 600 miles to the north of Helsinki. Luosto is located in a region known as Lapland, which has long been inhabited by the Sami people (the term Lapp, by which this group was long known, is considered derogatory and no longer used). The Sami have their own ancient culture and religion, worshipping around large boulders, high in the mountains or on the seashore. These sacred sites are called *sieidi* in the Sami language and they provided the initial inspiration for Aho's concerto. Drums played a very important role in the ancient shamanic rituals of the Sami; their large, hand-held instruments had various magic symbols painted on their membranes. It was, therefore, a natural choice for Aho to write a percussion concerto to honor the Sami.

The work features the members of the orchestral percussion section, who are almost as important as the main soloist. Three percussionists, each with his or her special battery of instruments, are set up on the left, on the right, and in the back of the stage, respectively. They interact with the protagonist, who is placed front and center, in a multiplicity of ways.

**KEYNOTE.** The concerto, just over half an hour long, is in a single movement, consisting of about a dozen different sections (the lines between sections are not always easy to draw). In general, each new section is marked by the soloist's switch to a new instrument or instruments in his vast array of drums, gongs and mallets.

The work begins with a vigorous solo on the *djembe*, a drum of West African origin that seems to make a solemn proclamation, punctuated by two large bass drums on either side of the stage. After a passionate response from the orchestra, the soloist re-enters on the *darabuka*, a Middle Eastern drum with a slightly lighter sound. Following the second response, the soloist moves to his set of five tom-tom drums, which produce a whole range of different sounds from high to low. This carefully planned succession of membranophones creates a gradual intensification of the musical textures and an increase in excitement, leading into a passage where a thundering timpani solo from the orchestral player in the back helps bring this introductory section to its end.

As a total contrast, the soloist moves to the marimba (a pitched mallet instrument!), provid-



Kalevi Aho. Photo: TroubaDisc

ing a vigorous accompaniment to a dreamy English-horn solo, continued by the oboe and other woodwinds. This more introspective section builds up to its own climax. Then the scene darkens again as the timpani in the back begins a dramatic dialog with the soloist, now on wood blocks and temple blocks, highlighting the third major family of percussion instruments—the idiophones—after the mallets and drums. After an ominous transition section, with full orchestra complete with menacing bass drums, the orchestra falls silent and the soloist moves to yet another instrument, the vibraphone, to play a cadenza filled with the magical sounds of the metallic bars.

When the orchestra re-enters, the reverie continues with a soulful saxophone solo, continued by the clarinets. The lyrical atmosphere is rudely disrupted by a new orchestral explosion that gives rise to another cadenza, partially improvised by the soloist on the large tam-tam. Then, in a more peaceful new section introduced by two solo violins, the melodic phrases of the English horn and saxophone are set against the lively rhythms of the soloist, who now plays on wood blocks and temple blocks. This section, which features many prominent woodwind solos, has a distinctly Middle Eastern sound to it, and takes on the character of a lively dance. Another fiendishly virtuosic marimba passage is followed by the most joyful episode of the concerto, with a complex interplay between the soloist (playing mostly on the tom-toms) and the orchestra. The music quiets down at the end as the soloist returns to the two drums he played at the beginning, first the *darabuka* (against sinuous woodwind and brass solos), and then the initial *djembe*, which gets softer and softer. The last sounds we hear are the orchestral percussionists shaking their South American rainsticks, in imitation of the sounds of nature heard in the vast national park that had inspired the piece and where one of its first performances took place.

—Peter Laki

**JEAN SIBELIUS****Symphony No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 82**

- **Born:** December 8, 1865, Hämeenlinna, Finland
- **Died:** September 20, 1957, Järvenpää, Finland
- **Work composed:** 1912–1919
- **Premiere:** 1915 version: December 8, 1915, Robert Kajanus conducting; final 1919 version: November 1919, Jean Sibelius conducting
- **Instrumentation:** 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, strings
- **CSO notable performances:** 10 previous subscription weekends | Premiere: October 1932, Eugene Goossens conducting | Most recent: November 2010, Thomas Dausgaard conducting | The CSO also performed this work at Carnegie Hall in January 2005 and in Madrid and Barcelona on its 2004 European tour, Paavo Järvi conducting.
- **Duration:** approx. 30 minutes

Although its positive tone may imply otherwise, the Fifth Symphony gave Sibelius more trouble than any other work. The first version, which took three years to complete, displeased him. He made extensive revisions after the premiere in late 1915. A second version was performed in 1916, but still the composer was not satisfied. He planned to have the work ready for a 1917 performance, but World War I and then civil war in Finland kept him from working on it. As these wars cut off Sibelius's income from his German

publisher, he had to compose small piano pieces and songs in order to earn a living. He returned to the Fifth after hostilities ended. The work found its final form in 1919.

It is a total contrast to the inner, nebulous Fourth Symphony. With the Fifth, Sibelius went back to the energetic world of the Second, but with noticeably greater sophistication. Leaving behind the Fourth's experiments with vague tonality, he cast the diatonic Fifth unambiguously in E-flat major.

**KEYNOTE.** Sibelius was intrigued by the concept of a movement. To what extent is a movement an independent piece, and to what extent is it an integral part of a larger whole? The manner in which the Second Symphony's third movement melts into its finale is an early indication of Sibelius's concern with this question. His casting of the Seventh Symphony in one continuous movement is his final solution. In the Fifth, each of the two outer movements acts like two movements combined into one. The first movement was, in fact, two separate movements in the symphony's first version. In its final form, the first movement begins with an expansive section that is far too long, too involved, and too stable to be an introduction. Just as it approaches an expected recapitulation, it gives way to a scherzo. This new section is almost a waltz, except for rhythmic irregularities in the

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accompaniment. The two sections are closely integrated, with one beat of the first part's 12/8 becoming the scherzo's 3/4 measure. The result is a brightening of mood without a literal tempo change.

The finale also functions as two movements, but they interpenetrate one another more than in the first movement. The perpetual motion that begins the finale sounds like a second scherzo, in a fast 2/4 time. This music gives way to a slower passage in which the measures are consistently grouped in threes. This grouping makes the music sound now like a slow 3/2, even though, as in the first movement, the actual tempo has not changed. The scherzo returns, followed by a peroration in the slower tempo, now finally written in 3/2.

Between these two double movements lies the *andante*, an intermezzo that is essentially a set of variations on a simple theme.

The ending of the symphony is unusual. The slower idea of the finale takes over, gradually building in sound and intensity. The tension mounts to the breaking point, and then the music does just that: it breaks. A movement that has been characterized by continuous sound, particularly during the final build, at last admits silence. Sustained sound has become almost excessive. Several isolated, full, short chords punctuate the silence, as this most extraordinary of symphonies ends in a most extraordinary manner.

—Jonathan D. Kramer

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## JOHN STORGÅRDS, conductor

■ **Previous CSO Performances:** 4 previous, including his debut in April 2010 and his most recent in January 2017

■ **Read more:** [johnstorgards.com](http://johnstorgards.com)



John Storgårds, © Marco Borggreve

Chief Guest Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra as well as the Principal Guest Conductor of the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, John Storgårds

has a dual career as a conductor and violin virtuoso and is widely recognized for his creative flair for programming. He additionally holds the title of Artistic Director of the Chamber Orchestra of Lapland and served as the Chief Conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic 2008-2015.

Highlights of Storgårds' 2018-19 North American season include subscription debuts with the Boston, Pittsburgh and Dallas symphonies, and return appearances with The Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom, as well as with the National, Detroit, Toronto, St. Louis and Cincinnati symphony orchestras. In Europe this season he returns to the BBC Proms with the BBC Philharmonic, debuts with the Munich Philharmonic,

Dresden Staatskapelle and Seoul Philharmonic, and leads the Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin at the Berlin Philharmonie and on tour.

Storgårds' award-winning discography includes recordings of works by Schumann, Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn, but also rarities by Holmboe and Vasks, which feature him as violin soloist. Two cycles of symphonies by Sibelius (2014) and Nielsen (2015) with the BBC Philharmonic were released to critical acclaim by Chandos. His most recent recording with the BBC Philharmonic is works by American avant-garde composer George Antheil. Additional recordings include discs of works by Nørgård, Korngold, Aho and Rautavaara, the latter receiving a Grammy nomination and a *Gramophone* Award in 2012. Storgårds' recording with the Chamber Orchestra of Lapland of concertos for theremin and horn by Kalevi Aho received the distinguished ECHO Klassik Award in 2015. In 2018 he recorded the Alfredo Casella Violin Concerto for Chandos with the BBC Philharmonic, Gianandrea Noseda conducting.

Storgårds studied violin with Chaim Taub and subsequently became the concertmaster of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen, before studying conducting with Jorma Panula and Eri Klas at the famed Sibelius Academy. He received the Finnish State Prize for Music in 2002 and the Pro Finlandia Prize 2012.

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**COLIN CURRIE, percussion**

■ **Previous CSO Performances:** 4 previous, including his December 2006 debut and his most recent in January 2016.

■ **Read more:** [colincurrie.com](http://colincurrie.com)



Colin Currie, © Marco Borggreve

Hailed as “the world’s finest and most daring percussionist” (*Spectator*), Colin Currie is a solo and chamber artist at the peak of his powers. Championing new music at the highest level, he is the soloist of choice for many of

today’s foremost composers, and he performs regularly with the world’s leading orchestras and conductors.

Currie’s commitment to commissioning and creating new music was recognized in 2015 by the Royal Philharmonic Society, who awarded him the Instrumentalist Award. From his earliest years Currie forged a pioneering path in creating new music for percussion, winning the Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist Award in 2000 and receiving a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award in 2005. Currie has premiered works by Steve Reich, Elliott Carter, Louis Andriessen, HK Gruber, Mark-Anthony Turnage, James

MacMillan, Brett Dean, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Jennifer Higdon, Kalevi Aho, Rolf Wallin, Kurt Schwertsik, Andrew Norman, Julia Wolfe and Nico Muhly. This season, Currie premieres new works by Helen Grime, Simon Holt and Andy Akiho.

In October 2017 Currie launched Colin Currie Records, in conjunction with LSO Live, as a platform for recording his diverse projects and celebrating the extraordinary developments for percussion music in recent times. The label’s first release was the Colin Currie Group’s debut recording, of Steve Reich’s *Drumming*, followed by *The Scene of the Crime*, a collection of works performed by Colin Currie and Håkan Hardenberger in their duo recital.

2018-19 also sees the launch of Currie’s new percussion quartet, Colin Currie Quartet, including the premiere of a work for four marimbas by Kevin Volans and appearances including the NCPA Beijing, Wigmore Hall and East Neuk Festival, among others.

Currie’s ensemble, the Colin Currie Group, was formed in 2006 to celebrate the music of Steve Reich and, with Reich’s personal endorsement, took on the role of ambassadors of Reich’s *Drumming*, which they have performed at many venues and festivals internationally.

Currie is also Artist in Association at London’s Southbank Centre.

Colin Currie plays Zildjian cymbals and is a MarimbaOne Artist. ■

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**RASHIDRA SCOTT, vocalist**

- **Previous Pops Performances:** Debut
- **Read more:** [rashidrascott.com](http://rashidrascott.com)



Rashidra Scott

Rashidra Scott is absolutely ecstatic that her musical voyage has led to this opportunity. At four years old, “The Greatest Love of All” was the first song she sang. From an early age Scott was known around town as “the little girl with the big voice.” From community musical theatre to church music ministry, she was constantly in demand for civic and social performances at local and national events.

Throughout the years, that little girl singing along with the radio was still ever-so-alive inside, leading her to a bachelor’s degree in Music with a concentration in Music Business/Management from Boston’s Berklee College of Music. After graduating, Scott spent four years singing for Walt Disney Entertainment as a featured

vocalist on Disney Cruise Line (Disney Wonder) and *Tarzan Rocks!* at Disney’s Animal Kingdom. The highlight was being a proud member of the opening team of Hong Kong Disneyland as Nala in “The Festival of *The Lion King.*” After living in Hong Kong for nine months Scott was led to move to New York, and that turned out to be the best “nudge” she could have followed.

Scott’s most current project is *Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of the Temptations.* In ten years of being in New York, she has been on Broadway in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, Sister Act, Hair, Finian’s Rainbow, and Avenue Q.* She was on the road as a background vocalist for renowned singer Patti Austin’s “BeboperElla!” tour in conjunction with the release of Austin’s Ella Fitzgerald tribute album, *For Ella.* Scott’s television appearances include Violet (the singing nurse) on Sony/FOX’s *Rescue Me,* as well as *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, Dancing with the Stars,* the 2011 and 2014 Tony Awards, *The View, Good Morning America, The Today Show, Wendy Williams,* the Walt Disney World Christmas Parade, and Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. She is also a featured vocalist on the Grammy Award-winning cast album for *Beautiful...*

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Scott is humbled for this opportunity to perform the music of the legend who created, in her four-year-old soul, the desire to sing and find her own voice. This journey has been exhilarating and the best is yet to come! Whitney, "I will always love you."

### BRENT HAVENS, conductor

■ **Previous Pops Performances:** One previous, in April 2013

■ **Read more:** [windbornemusic.com](http://windbornemusic.com)



Brent Havens

Berklee-trained arranger/conductor Brent Havens has written music for orchestras, feature films and virtually every kind of television. His TV work includes movies for networks such as ABC, CBS and ABC Family Channel; commercials; sports music for networks such as ESPN; and even cartoons.

Havens has also worked with the Doobie Brothers and the Milwaukee Symphony, arranging and conducting the combined group for Harley Davidson's 100th Anniversary Birthday Party

Finale attended by over 150,000 fans. He has worked with some of the world's greatest orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic and the BBC Concert Orchestra in London, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Birmingham, England, the Malaysian Philharmonic, the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, the Dallas Symphony, the Fort Worth Symphony, the Nashville Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic, and countless others.

Havens recently completed the score for the film *Quo Vadis*, a Premier Pictures remake of the 1956 gladiator film. In 2013 he worked with the Baltimore Symphony and the NFL's Baltimore Ravens to arrange and produce the music for the Thanksgiving Day halftime show between the Ravens and Pittsburgh Steelers, adapting both classical music and rock songs into a single four-minute show. Havens is arranger/guest conductor for all of the symphonic rock programs for Windborne Music, the production company responsible for shows such as tonight's *The Music of Whitney Houston*. ■

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# Q&A with Rashidra Scott

by FRANCK MERCURIO

## **What is the appeal of performing with a symphony orchestra? How is it different from performing in a Broadway production?**

The lushness and fullness of sound, from the strings, brass and woodwinds to the timpani, are unmatched.

The biggest difference for me between performing with a full symphony orchestra and on Broadway is the size of the ensemble of musicians. Most of the shows I've done have a pit ranging from eight to 14 chairs, sometimes without live strings. Also, with a symphony orchestra I can hear myself because I'm able to wear in-ear monitors during the shows; on Broadway, however, while we have wedges (monitors), there are usually so many live mics that it's impossible to put enough of the vocals into the mix for every individual performer to be satisfied. I gave up long ago relying on the monitors to hear myself. Faith, trust and pixie dust (or an inner sense of sound) get me through most Broadway shows.

## **Can you describe your attraction to Whitney Houston? Which of her songs do you love best? And what's the greatest challenge of performing her songs?**

I actually talk about this a little bit in the show, but the first song my mom heard me sing, and how she found out

I *could* sing, was "The Greatest Love of All." Something about Whitney's ability to tell a story through song really spoke to 3- or 4-year-old me.

I'd say the greatest challenge is living up to Whitney's legacy and being compared to her. I always try to give the disclaimer that in no way am I ever trying to imitate her. Her gift comes once in a lifetime. I consider it my privilege to pay homage to her voice, highlight all of our happy memories of her in her prime, and lead everyone through a celebration of her legacy.

## **You've been in so many great Broadway productions. Do you have a favorite one? And if so, why is it your favorite?**

The show I'm about to open now, *Ain't Too Proud* (by the time of the April concert we will have been open for almost a month), is probably one of my most exciting, because I get to work with many people I've admired and been connected to, in some ways, for years. It's exciting to hear audiences root and cheer for them, and for me to have the opportunity to



showcase myself as an actress and singer in ways I haven't yet been able to in New York.

Of my past shows, I think *Sister Act* is probably my favorite. I'm still in touch with, and friends with, so many people from that show. Our director, Jerry Zaks, created such a safe, loving and supportive environment that we truly became a family. It was also a treat to occasionally step in to the role of the leading lady. I learned a lot about myself as a performer and a person. It forced me out of my comfort zone in many ways that surprised even me. ■



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Guests of Macy's with guest conductor David Robertson and soloists Kelley O'Connor, Nicholas Phan, Nicole Cabell and Eric Greene after the Jan. 27 Mozart Requiem concert.



Guests of PNC with Amy Grant backstage after Amy's Feb. 10 Pops performance.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT



Thane Maynard, Zak Morgan and CSO Associate Conductor Keitaro Harada with Sophie—guest of UDF—after the Feb. 2 Lollipops concert.



Principal Trumpet Bob Sullivan (left) with Western and Southern guests after his featured performance with the CSO Feb. 2.

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Thomas Schippers was Music Director from 1970 to 1977. He left not only wonderful musical memories, but also a financial legacy with a personal bequest to the Orchestra. The Thomas Schippers Legacy Society recognizes those who contribute to the Orchestra with a planned gift. We thank these members for their foresight and generosity. For more information on leaving your own legacy, contact Mary McFadden Lawson at 513.744.3272.

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For the 2018–19 season, we have looked to Composer-in-Residence Jonathan Bailey Holland for the inspiration-seeking part of the CSO’s mission “to seek and share inspiration,” and the impact of his residency has been meaningful.

Jonathan’s history with the CSO dates back to 2003 when the Orchestra commissioned his *Halcyon Sun*, written and premiered in honor of the opening of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, with former Music Director Paavo Järvi conducting. A live recording of that piece was included on the CSO’s 2011 CD *American Portraits*, and a 2011 WTJU review calls the work “an amazing example of orchestral mastery... that shimmers as light through a prism.” *Halcyon Sun* opens the March 30–31 CSO concert program with Louis Langrée conducting.

Jonathan has composed four other works for the CSO through the years, the most recent of which, *Ode*, had its world premiere in November. Music critic Janelle Gelfand wrote, “Its outer movements were atmospheric and well-crafted. The composer effectively scored a wordless chorus, minimalist-like repetitions and glimmering effects in the mallet instruments. Recognizable fragments of themes from Beethoven’s Ninth glided by, as if in a mist of time. There were moments that were quite beautiful, even mystical.”

According to Jonathan, “There is a comfort and familiarity in getting to work with the Orchestra repeatedly, but also a feeling of honor at being asked to do another work for such a

great orchestra,” and Louis wrote, “Jonathan’s music resonates with Cincinnati audiences and the musicians at the Orchestra.”

Jonathan also curated a chamber performance at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in January, and throughout this season he led the CSO’s Young Composers Workshops, during which five young area composers received coaching and the opportunity to write new chamber works. Those works were premiered by CSO musicians on March 29 in the Wilks Studio at Music Hall.

I had the privilege to host a community event with Jonathan at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County last fall and interview him for Episode 13 of the Fanfare Cincinnati Podcast, available to stream on a computer, tablet or smart phone near you.

Having Jonathan as the CSO Composer-in-Residence this season has affirmed and grown our relationship with an important American composer. While his residency is coming to an end, the impact and inspiration from our time together lives on. ■



Louis Langrée with Jonathan Bailey Holland at the November premiere of *Ode*.



## UP NEXT APRIL / MAY

**1. CHAMBER PLAYERS  
THE YOUNGEST MASTER  
APR 26, 2019**

**2. RAVEL + DEBUSSY:  
COLORS OF SPAIN  
APR 27-28, 2019**

**3. TRIFONOV PLAYS  
BEETHOVEN  
MAY 3-4, 2019**

**4. SEASON FINALE:  
LANGRÉE CONDUCTS  
MAHLER 5  
MAY 10-11, 2019**

**5. MAY FESTIVAL 2019  
MAY 17-25, 2019**



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