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from the editor

No single month has a musical playlist as large as December’s. The wealth of great repertoire written for the holidays means that there are as many ways to listen to the season as there are ways to celebrate it. That breadth is on display at Orchestra Hall this month as we hear music as old as the 1740s—Handel’s *Messiah*, receiving its first performances here since 2016—and fresh as newly-fallen winter snow, improvised on the spot by trumpeters Charles Lazarus and Wynton Marsalis, the latter appearing with his world-famous Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

Each concert this month features a different combination of performers, as the stage will be filled with the Minnesota Orchestra and singer-actors in the third annual Home for the Holidays theatrical concert, and pared down to a single musician for George Winston’s solo piano program. And the silver screen will go up above the stage as the Orchestra and conductor Sarah Hicks bring to life the quintessential Christmas film, *It’s a Wonderful Life*, in a performance of Dimitri Tiomkin’s moving original score as the movie is shown onscreen.

This year, the music-making extends beyond Orchestra Hall in a new offering, Holiday Brass, as members of the Orchestra’s brass and percussion sections bring a variety of seasonal favorites to two area churches, with Akiko Fujimoto conducting and organ soloist Catherine Rodland and narrator Henry Charles Smith adding their talents. Whichever concert you’re attending, we thank you for adding us to your December playlist, and we wish you and yours a happy holiday season!

Carl Schroeder, Editor
editor@mnorch.org

about the cover

A unique view of Osmo Vänskä conducting the Minnesota Orchestra at Orchestra Hall, which turned 45 years old this year.
Photo: Travis Anderson.

concerts

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Sarah Hicks, pages 39, 44
Photo: Josh Kohaneck
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innovative conductor Osmo Vänskä, the Minnesota Orchestra’s tenth music director, is renowned internationally for his compelling interpretations of the standard, contemporary and Nordic repertoires. He has led the Orchestra on five major European tours, as well as a 2018 visit to London’s BBC Proms, and on historic tours to Cuba in 2015 and South Africa in 2018. In summer 2020 he and the Orchestra will travel to South Korea and Vietnam, the latter stop in observance of the 25th anniversary of restored U.S.-Vietnam diplomatic relations. He has also led the Orchestra in appearances at New York’s Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Chicago’s Symphony Center and community venues across Minnesota.

Vänskä’s recording projects with the Minnesota Orchestra have met with great success, including a Sibelius symphonies cycle, one album of which won the 2014 Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance. This month BIS is releasing the Orchestra’s newest album, featuring Mahler’s Fourth Symphony—part of a Mahler series that includes a Grammy-nominated Fifth Symphony recording. Other recent releases include an album of in-concert recordings of Sibelius’ Kullervo and Finlandia and Kortekangas’ Migrations; two albums of Beethoven piano concertos featuring Yevgeny Sudbin; a two-CD Tchaikovsky set featuring pianist Stephen Hough; To Be Certain of the Dawn, composed by Stephen Paulus with libretto by Michael Dennis Browne; and a particularly widely-praised Beethoven symphonies cycle.

As a guest conductor, Vänskä has received extraordinary praise for his work with many of the world’s leading orchestras, including the Boston and Chicago symphony orchestras, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra. In January 2020 he will become music director of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2014 he became the Iceland Symphony Orchestra’s principal guest conductor; since then he has been named the ensemble’s honorary conductor. He is also conductor laureate of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, which, during two decades as music director, he transformed into one of Finland’s flagship orchestras.

Vänskä began his music career as a clarinetist, holding major posts with the Helsinki Philharmonic and the Turku Philharmonic. Since taking up the instrument again for Sommerfest 2005 he has performed as clarinetist at Orchestra Hall, other Twin Cities venues, the Grand Teton Festival, the Mostly Mozart Festival, La Jolla Summerfest, the Seattle Chamber Music Festival, and several festivals in Finland. He has recorded Bernhard Henrik Crusell’s three Clarinet Quartets and Kalevi Aho’s Clarinet Quintet for the BIS label and is in the process of recording several duos for clarinet and violin which he has commissioned with his wife, violinist Erin Keefe.

During the 2019-20 season he will conduct American orchestras including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and Florida’s New World Symphony, and will lead a U.S. tour of the Curtis Institute Orchestra. Abroad he will appear with ensembles such as the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon, Qingdao Symphony Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and Taiwan Philharmonic Orchestra. Vänskä will conclude his tenure as Minnesota Orchestra music director at the close of the 2021-22 season. For more information, visit minnesotaorchestra.org.
Late-comers will be seated at pauses as determined by the conductor.

Children ages 6 and over are welcome at all concerts when accompanied by an adult. Family events are open to all ages.

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Photo: Erik Saulitis
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the Minnesota Orchestra, led by Music Director Osmo Vänskä, ranks among America’s top symphonic ensembles, with a distinguished history of acclaimed performances in its home state and around the world. Founded in 1903, it is known for award-winning recordings as well as for notable radio broadcasts and educational engagement programs, and a commitment to new orchestral repertoire.

**great women in Minnesota Orchestra history:**

**the founders of FRIENDS**

- In 1949 a group of women headed by Rosalynd Pflaum founded the organization known today as FRIENDS of the Minnesota Orchestra, originally called WAMSO—the Women’s Association of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra.

- Under Pflaum’s leadership, the group’s volunteers set to work on educational and fundraising initiatives to stimulate interest in and encourage statewide support of the Orchestra. Within a year it had more than 800 members and contributed its first gift of $816 to the Orchestra’s Guaranty Fund.

- Over the past 70 years, FRIENDS of the Minnesota Orchestra has contributed millions of dollars to the Orchestra, founded traditions such as Symphony Ball, Kinder Konzerts and the Young Artist Competition, and enriched the lives of generations of music lovers in Minnesota and beyond.

- Born in 1917, Pflaum was a lifelong admirer of French history and culture who was honored by the French government with the Legion of Honor for her six published historical biographies. She was elected to the Minnesota Orchestra’s Board in 1965, serving until 1974, when she became a Life Director. She and her husband Leo Pflaum, who also served on the Orchestra’s Board for many years, had three sons. A committed supporter of the Orchestra until the end of her life, she passed away in 2014 at age 96.

- Among other founders of FRIENDS of the Minnesota Orchestra was Julia Denecke, who played flute in the Orchestra for two seasons during World War II.
What is a common misconception about the viola?
Well, there are certainly many viola jokes, but I think viola is a beautiful instrument that plays a crucial role in every ensemble. We’re the ones that are filling in the gaps, always supporting and helping other instruments sound even better!

What inspires you about your Minnesota Orchestra colleagues?
Their constant dedication to the craft of music-making, and the hard work they put in each week to perform completely different repertoire.

You are featured on several of this season’s chamber music concerts. How does playing chamber music affect your performance with the full Orchestra?
I think playing in a full symphonic orchestra is just a magnified version of playing in a smaller chamber group. You always have to listen for what other instruments are playing, who has the melody, who is playing the moving line and who you are playing the same rhythm with.

Tell us something exciting about the music that you’re performing this year on the chamber series.
Last month I played Beethoven’s String Quartet Opus 18, No. 1, with my good friends Felicity James, Ben O’Dhner and Minji Choi. The Beethoven quartets are like bread and butter for violists. This one is full of youthful energy with big dynamic contrasts, and it’s really invigorating to play. An interesting thing about playing quartets from this time period is that it’s right when the composers start composing more equally for all four instruments, instead of really featuring a solo first violin with other instruments playing accompaniment.

If you weren’t a professional musician, what career do you think you’d have?
I think I would be a food critic.

Do you have favorite Twin Cities dining hotspots?
Some of my favorite places are Quang, Lurcat, and Spoon and Stable.

What music are you listening to lately?
I’ve been listening to jazz pianist Art Tatum.

Are there any other hobbies you’d like to share?
I just started knitting. I am not so good at it yet, but I’m practicing!

music on the Blue Danube: a dream travel opportunity

The Danube River that runs through the heart of Europe—immortalized in Johann Strauss’ famous On the Beautiful Blue Danube waltz—will be at the center of an eleven-day music-themed cruise in October 2020 hosted by Minnesota Public Radio’s Brian Newhouse and featuring performances by Minnesota Orchestra violinists Natsuki Kumagai and Michael Sutton. This dream-come-true trip for MPR and Minnesota Orchestra fans will include stops at great musical sites in Prague, Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna and Salzburg; insider experiences and informative lectures; and recital performances by Kumagai and Sutton, among numerous other activities onboard the chartered ship Scenic Ruby. To learn more about the cruise and how you can participate, visit minnesotaorchestra.org/travel.
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meet the annotator: Eric Bromberger

If you regularly read Minnesota Orchestra program notes in Showcase magazine, then you’ve probably seen the work of one of our longtime annotators, California-based Eric Bromberger, who wrote the Handel’s Messiah program note on page 28 of this issue. Bromberger answered questions about his background and what goes into crafting a good program note.

How long have you been writing program notes for the Minnesota Orchestra?
I’ve written for this Orchestra since 2000, when I was recommended by the renowned musicologist and writer Michael Steinberg, the late husband of former Minnesota Orchestra concertmaster Jorja Fleezanis. It’s been a good relationship ever since!

What was your initial background and training in music?
I started out as a performer. I grew up in Southern California, learned to play the violin as a boy and graduated from the University of Redlands. I was drafted in 1968 and spent a year in Vietnam with the First Cavalry Division. After I returned, I completed a Ph.D. in American literature at UCLA. For 10 years I taught literature and writing courses at Bates College in Maine and at San Diego State University. Then I left teaching to devote myself to writing about music.

Your performing experience must help in your writing. Yes, being a musician has aided me immeasurably, since I’ve learned the classical repertory in the best possible way: by playing it. I’ve been lucky to play in some very good orchestras, and played through the symphonic literature, from Bach’s Saint Matthew Passion through Xenakis, Glass and Adams. I’ve always played second violin, and I love playing second violin, in both orchestras and string quartets. That lets me learn the music from the inside out. I like being inside the music, hearing the harmonies shift, feeling the cross-rhythms, and having to master the challenges of music by quite different composers. That’s quite a different way of learning music from hearing it out in the hall.

What do you think makes a good program note?
As an annotator, I feel that I have one job: to give an audience the tools to listen for themselves. My job is not to tell an audience how to feel about a piece of music, but to help them listen. Every program note should give certain basic information—like where a work comes in a composer’s career, what he or she said about it, why it’s distinctive or important, any good stories associated with it—but a note should also pique listeners’ interest, make them want to hear the music, and give them some things to listen for or ways to approach a piece. And I like the challenge of having only about 90 seconds of the audience’s time to do all those things. I know that not everyone is going to like every piece of music, and that’s fine: I like audiences to listen well, and also to listen for themselves and be honest in their response to a particular piece, whether they like it or not.

Tell us a bit about your favorite composers to write about.
My own special interests are the great symphonic tradition of Haydn through Shostakovich, the music of Bartók, and American music in general. One thing I’ve enjoyed about writing for the Minnesota Orchestra is that it’s pushed me in directions I haven’t been before. This Orchestra has played some very unusual music, and I like learning music that’s new to me.

What do you do when you’re not writing?
Much of it involves family. My wife is a pediatrician who specializes in newborn intensive care. She’s done a number of medical projects overseas, and I’ve gone with her on extended projects in Ghana, Vietnam and Ethiopia. Our three children have careers in quite different places (London, New York City and San Francisco), so we travel a lot to see them. We live in Los Osos, on California’s central coast, and work as docents at Morro Bay and Montana de Oro State Parks.
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Minnesota Orchestra

coming up in January

When the calendar flips to 2020, the Minnesota Orchestra will launch the year with a month of varied performances at Orchestra Hall as well as a tour to two Midwestern colleges. The slate begins with a New Year’s celebration conducted by Music Director Osmo Vänskä and spotlighting a rarity at Orchestra Hall: an alto saxophone soloist, Jess Gillam, who performs music by John Williams and Darius Milhaud. Other January programs include classical concerts led by guest conductors Simone Young and Paul Watkins, the latter of whom also performs as soloist in a C.P.E. Bach Cello Concerto; the return of popular singer-songwriter-pianist Ben Folds, who was last seen at Orchestra Hall in January 2018 leading a passionate audience cheer for the Minnesota Vikings; and a MusicMakers concert featuring music by seven of the country’s top emerging composers conducted by Vänskä. In addition, in late January the Orchestra will spend a week on the road, visiting the campuses of Indiana University and the University of Michigan, where the Orchestra’s musicians will work with students and perform two concerts led by Vänskä. To follow along on the tour, watch the Orchestra’s social media channels. For more information about all upcoming concerts and to purchase tickets, visit minnesotaorchestra.org.

Ben Folds, who will perform with the Minnesota Orchestra under the direction of Sarah Hicks on January 11 and 12.
join the season of giving

In December, as the spirit of giving is in the air, the Minnesota Orchestra is partnering with Simpson Housing Services in a donation drive supporting members of our community who are experiencing homelessness. As you attend concerts at Orchestra Hall this month, from Handel’s Messiah performances on December 6 and 7 through the George Winston solo piano concert on December 22, we invite you to bring your donations of the following items to the collection box located by the tree in the main floor in the Hall’s lobby:

- December 6 and 7: Adult wind- and water-resistant hats, mittens and hand warmers
- December 14 to 20: Pajamas and ground coffee (no coffee pods)
- December 21 and 22: Adult thermal long underwear; wind- and water-resistant hats, mittens and hand warmers

All donations will be given to Simpson Housing Services, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit organization dedicated to housing, supporting and advocating for people experiencing homelessness. To learn more about this organization and its programs, visit simpsonhousing.org.
“No matter who’s on the podium, the Minnesota Orchestra always seems to do powerful things with Dmitri Shostakovich symphonies. Under [Jader] Bignamini’s direction, the composer’s Ninth (from 1945) was far from the heart-swelling, post-war victory march that the Soviet authorities expected. Instead, it’s bookended by movements full of satirical laughter, as if the war were being looked back upon as an absurd comedy....[Y]ou could hear what must have infuriated the government so in Roma Duncan’s peppy piccolo solos on the opening movement, the woodwinds fleetly flitting through the central Presto, and the playful snatches of theme kicked about between musicians like a hacky sack on the finale. But the second and fourth movements have far more serious things to say about lone voices standing up to aggression and oppression. When the low brass wasn’t raging, flutist Adam Kuenzel struck a contemplative, questioning tone on the Moderato movement, while bassoonist Fei Xie carried the Largo with a long, pensive solo, drawing listeners in with a rich tone and an emotional tenor that sounded war-weary and wise.”

—Rob Hubbard, *Pioneer Press*, October 10, 2019

“[Conductor Juraj] Valčuha’s account of Strauss’ vast, 50-minute tone poem [An Alpine Symphony] was by turns majestic, expansive and mysterious, and he drew rich expressiveness from a bulked-up Minnesota Orchestra....[E]ven more impressive was the way he made the less obviously eventful stages of the journey seem gripping. The ‘In Flowery Meadows’ and ‘In a Mountain Pasture’ episodes both had beguilingly relaxed qualities, while the ‘Quiet Before the Storm’ was breath-catching, and boasted a beautiful solo from principal oboe John Snow.”

—Terry Blain, *Star Tribune*, November 2, 2019
#mnorch: social media spotlight

Throughout autumn, Orchestra Hall welcomed thousands of concertgoers for memorable Minnesota Orchestra performances ranging from Star Wars and Harry Potter film music concerts to Guarantors’ concerts to a “Hear Into the Future” week celebrating connections between the Orchestra, the Minnesota community and student performers. Audiences shared their favorite photos and concert memories on social media. We invite you to tag yours with #mnorch, and you may see them in a future issue of Showcase magazine. While you’re online, be sure to visit the Orchestra’s Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages for a wealth of online-only content including behind-the-scenes videos with Concertmaster Erin Keefe and Principal Timpani Erich Rieppel, an essay on the history and progress of women’s roles in the Minnesota Orchestra by flutist Wendy Williams, concert video clips, links to critics’ reviews and much more. We’ll see you online!

Located in North Minneapolis, Lundstrum Performing Arts is Minnesota’s premier training program for musical theater, led by a faculty of Broadway veterans and industry professionals. Join this Winter/Spring 2020 for a diverse range of classes, including Hip Hop, Performing Arts Workshops, Improv, Tap, Private Coaching and much more! Classes for all ages are available. Sign-up today!
The Minnesota Orchestra’s musicians and staff come from all around the globe—with some spending their entire professional life with the organization—all working hand-in-hand to enrich, inspire and serve our community as one of the world’s great symphony orchestras. We salute Orchestra musicians, part-time staff and full-time staff on the recent and upcoming major milestone anniversaries of their employment here.

**5 years**
Warren Anderson, usher
Kris Arkis, orchestra personnel manager
Cecilia Belcher, assistant principal second violin
Emily Boigenzahn, director of planned giving and operations
Kristen Bruya, principal bass
John Byram, ticket sales supervisor/concessions supervisor
Sarah Blain Chaplin, director of individual giving
Andrew Chappell, bass trombone
Sarah Cox, usher/concessions
Christine Cunnington, special events coordinator
John Dunkel, manager of corporate relations
Sarah Flake, event and facility services manager
Michael Galvagni, usher/door person
Greg Geiger, manager of concert enhancements and concessions
Donna Hackler, usher/concessions/usher supervisor
Don Howard, usher/concessions
Leah Kinde, usher
Dawn Loven, senior gift officer
Grant Meachum, director of Live at Orchestra Hall
Katie Merriman, ticket sales/usher/concessions/bar back
Danette Mitchell, usher
Joel Mooney, technical director
Michael Mossaad, manager of education programs
Frank Nadala, bartender
Don Orttel, usher
Matthew Powers, usher
Amanda Schroder, associate director of individual giving
Angela Skrowaczewski, liaison to the Board of Directors

**Happy Anniversary:**

**Minnesota Orchestra**
Gayle Swarts, usher
Erika Takahashi, usher
Dana Uhrig-Fox, usher/concessions/bartender
Cheryl Wentland, bartender
Hubert Williams, bartender/door person
Rochelle Woldorsky, usher
Michelle Yackel, ticket sales/receptionist
Gareth Zehngut, viola

10 years
Loren Coughlin, usher
Dennis Dillon, usher/receptionist
Jeff Dreblow, usher
Valerie Little, assistant principal librarian
Greg Milliren, associate principal flute
Kathryn Nettleman, acting associate principal bass
Gregg Sivesind, bar manager

15 years
Laura Corts, assistant director of marketing
Mary Pat Lebins, usher
Arek Tesarczyk, cello
Jennifer Woyda, manager of ticket and subscription sales

20 years
Randy Blase, usher
Dustin Dimmick, facility engineer
Dan Kupfer, director of facilities
Ken Lorence, maintenance
J. Christopher Marshall, bassoon
John Snow, principal oboe
Kevin Watkins, percussion

25 years
Kathy Kienzle, principal harp
Thomas Turner, viola
Michael Pelton, artistic planning manager and executive assistant to the music director
Mary Rascop-Peterson, events and personnel manager

30 years
Carl McCarthy, security

35 years
Michael Black, manager of development operations
Richard Marshall, viola

40 years
Dorothy Hayes, bartender

45 years
Robert Anderson, bass

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MO_Makeup 12-19.indd   19
11/15/19   8:59 AM
The newest recording in the Minnesota Orchestra's acclaimed Mahler symphonies series on the BIS Records label has arrived just in time for holiday gift-giving. Mahler's Fourth Symphony, featuring the Orchestra and soprano Carolyn Sampson under the direction of Music Director Osmo Vänskä, is available beginning this month online at minnesotaorchestra.org and in person at the Orchestra Hall Box Office. The new disc is the fifth release in a series that began in 2017 with a Grammy-nominated recording of Mahler's Fifth Symphony.

Looking for even more stocking stuffers for family and friends? Two additional Minnesota Orchestra albums have been released in recent months. Mahler's First Symphony arrived in stores last August, while last month Doomtree Records released Sound the Bells, a live-in-concert album spotlighting singer-rapper-writer Dessa in a performance of her music arranged by Andy Thompson, recorded live at Orchestra Hall in March 2019 under the baton of Sarah Hicks. The Dessa album was executive produced by Lazerbeak and Grant Meachum, the Minnesota Orchestra's director of Live at Orchestra Hall. Visit doomtree.net or minnesotaorchestra.org to order Sound the Bells.
OUT AT THE HALL is a series of concerts specially curated to give you the staples of a great night out—thoughtful conversation, superb libations, decadent local eats—centered around a variety of programs with some of the finest musicians in the world.

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ELIGIBLE CONCERTS

Handel’s Messiah  
Sat Dec 7  8pm

MusicMakers  
Fri Jan 10  8pm

Symphony in 60: Beethoven’s Fourth Symphony  
Sat Feb 1  6pm

Sam & Sarah: Music and the Mind  
Fri Feb 7  8pm

Sam & Sarah: The Russian Century  
Sat Mar 7  8pm

Vänskä Conducts Scheherazade  
Sat Apr 4  8pm

Park and Ainomäe Play Brahms  
Sat May 2  8pm

Symphony in 60: Mozart’s Jupiter Symphony  
Sat May 30  6pm

Fei Xie Plays Mozart  
Fri Jun 5  8pm

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Forty years have passed since the late Ara Burwell had a vision that FRIENDS of the Minnesota Orchestra—then known as WAMSO—should introduce live classical music to Minnesota’s youngest students through a preschool concert program. Since that time, Kinder Konzerts have become one of Orchestra Hall’s most beloved traditions, reaching thousands of young people each year. At the core of Kinder Konzerts is the story piece, a newly-composed musical work performed by a small group of Orchestra musicians as a popular children’s book is read by a narrator.

On September 28, FRIENDS presented a special 40th anniversary Kinder Konzert at Orchestra Hall that featured the world premiere of the 18th commissioned story piece, One-Dog Canoe, featuring original music by Daniel Nass performed by eight Orchestra musicians as Mary Casanova’s beloved book was read by Katie Condon. Nass and Casanova each spoke from the stage about their work—with a cameo appearance by Casanova’s own dog—and former FRIENDS president Barbara Burwell delivered moving closing remarks and a salute to Ara Burwell. Before and after the concert, the enthusiastic all-ages audience enjoyed a variety of activities in the lobby such as artwork tables and a create-your-own animal headband station, photo opportunities with a real canoe, guidance on paddle strokes from Wilderness Inquiry, and the chance to try out orchestral instruments with the aid of FRIENDS volunteers.

During the 2019–20 season, FRIENDS will serve more than 130 schools and 6,000 preschool students, teachers and parents through more than 30 Kinder Konzerts featuring One-Dog Canoe. In addition, FRIENDS presents the Meet a Musician/ACCENT series of six evening gatherings for adults interested in learning more about classical music and the Orchestra. The next ACCENT event takes place on February 6, 2020, featuring Principal Bass Kristen Bruya and Acting Associate Principal Bass Kathryn Nettleman. For more information, visit friendsofminnesotaorchestra.org.

Kinder Konzerts at 40: a world premiere event

An octet of Orchestra musicians and narrator Katie Condon premiering Daniel Nass’ One-Dog Canoe.

FRIENDS volunteers posing in the lobby post-concert with writer Mary Casanova and composer Daniel Nass.

Young concertgoers trying out a canoe provided by Wilderness Inquiry.

Photos by Jenni Salomon
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Handel’s Messiah
dec 6, 7

Minnesota Orchestra
Nicholas Kraemer, conductor
Sherezade Panthaki, soprano | Daniel Moody, countertenor
Richard Croft, tenor | Benjamin Bevan, baritone
Minnesota Chorale, Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

Holiday Concerts
Friday, December 6, 2019, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall
Saturday, December 7, 2019, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

George Frideric Handel
Messiah
Sinfonia
Part I

INTERMISSION
ca. 20’

George Frideric Handel
Messiah
Part II
Part III

ca. 60’

Please hold applause until the end of Part I, Part II and Part III.

Text appears in an insert.

pre-concert
Concert Preview with Phillip Gainsley
Friday, December 6, 7 pm, Auditorium
Saturday, December 7, 7 pm, Auditorium

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of Classical Minnesota Public Radio, including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.
Artists

**Nicholas Kraemer, conductor**

Nicholas Kraemer is principal guest conductor of Music of the Baroque in Chicago. He has held the positions of artistic director of Raglan Baroque, of which he is the founder; artistic director of the Irish Chamber Orchestra; permanent guest conductor of the Manchester Camerata; principal guest conductor of the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra and Musikkollegium Winterthur; and associate conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. He was the first music director of Opera 80, now called English Touring Opera. Appearing worldwide with many prestigious ensembles, he has conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Hallé Orchestra, and the Gothenburg, City of Birmingham, Detroit, Houston, Toronto and Colorado symphony orchestras, in addition to leading the Minnesota Orchestra in performances of Handel's *Messiah* in 2011 and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in 2018. More: [caroline-phillips.co.uk](http://caroline-phillips.co.uk).

**Sherezade Panthaki, soprano**

Soprano Sherezade Panthaki was featured in the Minnesota Orchestra's performances of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in 2018. She has ongoing collaborations with leading early music interpreters including Nicholas McGegan, Simon Carrington, Matthew Hall and Masaaki Suzuki, with whom she made her New York Philharmonic debut. Her 2019-20 orchestral season includes a return to the Winter Park Bach Festival for Brahms’ *A German Requiem*, and performances with Houston Symphony, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, St. Thomas Church in New York and Santa Fe Pro Musica. She also rejoins the viol consort Parthenia for an “Elizabethan Christmas” program, and returns to Boston Early Music Festival for its overseas trip to Bremen, performing the role of Ellienia in Graupner's *Antiochus und Stratonica*. In recital she will be featured at Caramoor Music Festival with Helicon Ensemble. More: [sherezadepanthaki.com](http://sherezadepanthaki.com).

**Daniel Moody, countertenor**

Countertenor Daniel Moody makes his Minnesota Orchestra debut in these concerts. He has appeared in the title roles in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and *Rinaldo*, as Arsamene in Handel's *Xerxes*, as Oberon in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and most recently as Nerone in Monteverdi's *L’incoronazione di Poppea* with Cincinnati Opera. He has also recently performed with the Atlanta Symphony, Les Violons du Roy, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in a duet concert with mezzo Anne Sophie von Otter, Apollo’s Fire, the Cleveland Baroque Orchestra and Mark Morris 12-19 Minn Orch Concerts_LIVE.indd   26 12-19 Minn Orch Concerts_LIVE.indd   26 11/14/19 9:45 AM

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**Handel: Messiah**

In the month of December, we often associate gracious acts of charity with the joyful holiday season. Thus it seems appropriate that Handel's great oratorio, *Messiah*, has become an integral part of Christmas celebrations, because it was written for inclusion in a series of Dublin concerts benefiting public causes. Handel was by far the most philanthropic composer of his time, and the first performance of *Messiah* in 1742 raised an impressive £400 for charity. Beginning in 1750, he led popular annual performances of the work for the benefit of London’s Foundling Hospital Chapel, to which he donated a pipe organ in addition to bequeathing a copy of the score and parts to *Messiah*.

The German composer had spent most of his later years in London and was well known for his operatic and courtly compositions. Handel may not have considered himself a composer of sacred music, but it is reported that *Messiah* so moved him that after completing the “Hallelujah Chorus”—with tears streaming down his face—he declared: “I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the great God himself.” Over the next 270 years, *Messiah* secured a place as one of the most beloved compositions in the entire orchestral and choral repertoire, and as one of Handel’s most enduring, and endearing works.
Richard Croft, tenor

American tenor Richard Croft is internationally renowned for his performances with the Metropolitan Opera, Vienna Staatsoper, Teatro alla Scala, Opera National de Paris, Berlin Staatsoper, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Salzburg Festival and Festival d’Aix-En-Provence, and collaborations with leading orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Cleveland Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic and Boston Symphony Orchestra. He is recognized for his performances of the music of Baroque composers including Handel, Haydn, Rameau, Gluck and Vivaldi, as well as the leading tenor roles in Mozart’s operas Don Giovanni, Cosi fan tutte, Idomeneo, La Clemenza di Tito, Mitridate, La Finta Giardiniera and The Abduction from the Seraglio. One highlight of his 2019-20 season is a stage production of Mozart’s arrangement of Handel’s Messiah at Salzburg Mozartwoche with Les Musiciens du Louvre conducted by Marc Minkowski and directed by Robert Wilson. A two-time Grammy nominee, he is featured on recordings from Deutsche Grammophon/Archiv, Harmonia Mundi, Erato, Telarc and Chaconne. More: danielmoodycountertenor.com.

Benjamin Bevan, baritone

Benjamin Bevan made his debut at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden singing Henry Cuffe in Gloriana by Benjamin Britten. In 2018 he made his debuts at English National Opera as Baron Douphol in Verdi’s La Traviata and at Welsh National Opera as Lescaut in Boulevard Solitude by Henze. He went on to sing Lescaut in Puccini’s Manon Lescaut for the Royal Danish Opera and Ferryman in Britten’s Curlew River for Opéra de Dijon. In 2018 he also created the role of Nameless Man in Faust Alberta by Simone Spagnolo as part of Opera in the City, to great critical acclaim. His recent and future engagements include the Dancaire in Carmen with the Welsh National Opera; the Count in The Marriage of Figaro with Mid Wales Opera, Sam in Un ballo in Maschera and Geronte in Manon Lescaut with Opera Holland Park; as well as performances of Bach’s St. Matthew Passion and Handel’s Messiah with Bach Collegium Japan, and St. John Passion in Barcelona. More: benbevan.com.

Minnesota Chorale

Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

Barbara Brooks, accompanist and artistic advisor

The Minnesota Chorale, principal chorus of the Minnesota Orchestra since 2004, has sung with the Orchestra for more than four decades. Founded in 1972 and led since 1995 by artistic director Kathy Saltzman Romey, the Chorale is Minnesota’s preeminent symphonic chorus and ranks among the foremost professional choruses in the U.S., best known for its work with the two major orchestras of the Twin Cities. Among the Chorale’s multi-generational initiatives are the acclaimed Bridges community engagement program, the Minneapolis Youth Chorus and Prelude Children’s Choir, the Voices of Experience choir for older adults, Men in Music for high-school boys, IncHor open rehearsals, and an Emerging Conductor training program. More: mncchorale.org.

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By the spring of 1741 Handel’s 30-year effort to make a success of Italian opera in London had come to a shuddering conclusion. He finally had to admit failure, and rumors circulated in London that he was about to leave England and return to Germany.

Relief came from an unlikely source. The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, invited Handel to Dublin to put on a series of concerts in support of various local charities. For Handel, Ireland was literally new territory, and he was glad to accept the invitation, get away from London for a while and seek new audiences. In addition to gathering earlier works for performance there, that summer he began work on a new oratorio that would have its premiere in Dublin.

At breakneck speed
This oratorio represented a new direction for Handel, who by no means considered himself a composer of sacred music. It was on a text assembled from the Bible and the Prayer Book Psalter by his longtime friend Charles Jennens. Handel worked with unbelievable speed: from the time he sat down in front of a blank sheet of paper until the completion of the full orchestral score of Messiah, just 24 days had elapsed—from August 22 to September 14. He then pressed on with his oratorio Samson, completing it by late October, and left almost immediately, taking one of the packet boats that ran regularly from Chester to Ireland.

Handel’s arrival in Dublin—on November 18, 1741—was very much like Haydn’s would be in London precisely 50 years later. Both composers journeyed to a foreign land and discovered that they were famous. Both were feted, delighted by the quality of the performers and acclaimed by enthusiastic crowds in jammed halls. Just as Haydn would later do in London, Handel began his Dublin residency by performing earlier works, including L’Allegro, Acis and Galatea, Esther and Alexander’s Feast. Not until he had been in Dublin for five months did Handel present his new oratorio: he led an open rehearsal of Messiah on April 9, 1742, and the official premiere followed four days later, on April 13.

Success in Ireland
It was a stunning success, and Dubliners struggled to get tickets. Neal’s Musick Hall, where the premiere took place, had room for only 600, and so management came up with a shrewd solution. The day of the performance, Faulkner’s Dublin Journal carried this admonition: “The Stewards of the Charitable Musical Society request the Favour of the Ladies not to come with Hoops this Day to the Musick-Hall in Fishamble-Street: the Gentlemen are desired to come without their swords.” Thus slimmed down, 700 listeners were crammed into the hall, and the performance turned the handsome profit of 400 pounds for Mercer’s Hospital, the Charitable Infirmary and the Charitable Music Society (for the relief of those imprisoned for debt). A second performance of Messiah, on June 13, was equally successful, and Handel left Ireland in August, eager to repeat that success in London.

It must have come as the worst possible surprise to the composer when the oratorio failed at its London premiere on March 23, 1743. Perhaps he should have seen it coming. That performance was preceded by a furor in the newspapers about his decision to present an oratorio on Biblical texts in a public theater, and...
Handel’s performance was attacked as “blasphemous.” A few subsequent performances had scarcely more success, and it was not until May 1, 1750, when Handel led Messiah as a benefit for the opening of the Hospital Chapel of the Foundling Hospital, his favorite charity, that the oratorio finally won favor.

By the time Handel died nine years later, in April 1759, Messiah had been performed 56 times in London and was on its way to achieving the status it enjoys today, that of a beloved icon.

**nativity, crucifixion, resurrection**

*Messiah* was originally composed for the Easter season, yet for two and a half centuries it has been a perennial event in Christmas celebrations.

Jennens structured his work around the three central events of Christianity: Part I is about the birth of Christ, Part II is about the crucifixion, and the final part is about the resurrection and the spreading of the gospel. Thus *Messiah* focuses essentially on Christianity’s three primary holy days: Christmas, Good Friday and Easter.

His arrangement of texts for *Messiah* was brilliant. Basic to his plan was his decision not to cast *Messiah* as drama—there is no narrative line here, no rising action, no climax. He began with the assumption that his audience already knew the story and required no telling; he then chose texts about specific incidents in the life of Christ, and these become a sequence of moments-along-the-way in one of the most famous and familiar of all stories, rather than an attempt to tell that story.

**magnificent music**

But Jennens’ text would have been long forgotten were it not for the magnificence of Handel’s music. Handel composed *Messiah* from many different kinds of music. From opera he retained the recitative and dramatic aria, though he shrewdly avoids making the arias too brilliant. In place of florid lines that might seem operatic and out of context for this subject, he blesses the soloists with some of the most appealing, straightforward melodies ever written—though these also can be brilliant.

The famous *Pastoral Symphony*, or *Pifa*, is derived from the pifferari, the music of the Italian shepherds who would make an annual Christmas pilgrimage to Rome to play wind instruments in imitation of the shepherds who watched over the Nativity. Handel is quite willing to paint pictures with his orchestra, as in the resounding brass of “The trumpet shall sound,” and in the stunning progress from the ominous B-minor murmurings of “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth” to the radiant G-major sunlight of “For unto us a Child is born.” Yet the real glory of *Messiah* lies in its choruses, and Handel demands great versatility from his singers: their music ranges from the lyric to the brilliant (“And he shall purify”) to the dramatic (“Glory to God in the highest”) and—most impressively—to the great fugues (“And with his stripes,” “He trusted in God” and the concluding “Amen”).

Even its creator could be overpowered by this music. As he completed the “Hallelujah Chorus,” Handel, tears streaming down his face, is reported to have told his manservant: “I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the great God himself.”

**Instrumentation:** vocal soloists and mixed chorus with orchestra comprising 2 oboes, bassoon, 2 trumpets, timpani, harpsichord, organ and strings

Program note by Eric Bromberger.

"Handel is the greatest and ablest of all composers; from him I can still learn."

— Ludwig van Beethoven in 1827, at the end of his life

The Minnesota Orchestra—then known as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra—first performed *Handel’s Messiah* on Christmas Day 1903, just seven weeks after its inaugural concert. On that occasion, founding Music Director Emil Oberhoffer led the Orchestra and the Philharmonic Club chorus, and the vocal soloists were Jennie Osborn Hannah, Alma Johnson Porteous, Edward C. Towne and Frederick Martin. Since 1966 the ensemble has presented the work nearly every year with a variety of distinguished conductors and soloists, although this year’s performances of *Messiah* are the Orchestra’s first since 2016.
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Dec. 15, St. Paul Seminary Chapel, St. Paul

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May 2, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Hopkins
May 3, St. Paul Seminary Chapel, St. Paul

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## Holiday Brass

**Minnesota Orchestra Brass and Percussion Sections**  
**Akiko Fujimoto, conductor**  
**Catherine Rodland, organ | Henry Charles Smith, narrator**

### Holiday Concerts

- **Friday, December 6, 2019, 7 pm**  
  St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church, Mahtomedi
- **Sunday, December 8, 2019, 4 pm**  
  Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer/Arranger</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowell Mason/arr. Anthony DiLorenzo</td>
<td>Joy to the World</td>
<td>ca. 4’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franz Xaver Gruber/arr. Jonathan Ring</td>
<td>Silent Night</td>
<td>ca. 6’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johann Sebastian Bach/arr. Phil Snedecor</td>
<td>“Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen” (Now you are well avenged), from <em>Christmas Oratorio</em></td>
<td>ca. 4’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Johann Sebastian Bach | *In Dulci Jubilo*  
  Catherine Rodland, organ | ca. 3’ |
| Traditional/arr. Robert Ward | *The Christmas Nightingale* | ca. 3’ |
| Anthony DiLorenzo | *Twas the Night Before Christmas*  
  Henry Charles Smith, narrator | ca. 7’ |
| Jonathan Ring | *’Tis the Season* | ca. 5’ |
|  | INTERMISSION | ca. 20’ |
| Traditional/arr. DiLorenzo | *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* | ca. 4’ |
| Stephen Bulla/Pietro Yon | A *Manger Pastorale/Gesù Bambino* | ca. 6’ |
| Louis Vierne | *Carillon de Westminster*  
  Catherine Rodland, organ | ca. 7’ |
| Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky/arr. Dean Sorenson | *The Sugar Plum Fairy*, from *The Nutcracker* | ca. 3’ |
| Traditional/arr. Ralph Carmichael | *The Twelve Days of Christmas* | ca. 4’ |
| John Francis Wade/arr. Snedecor | *O Come, All Ye Faithful* | ca. 4’ |
| George Frideric Handel/arr. David Baldwin | *Hallelujah Chorus*, from *Messiah* | ca. 4’ |
| Traditional/arr. Sterling Proctor | *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* | ca. 4’ |
Conductor **Akiko Fujimoto** joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 2017 as assistant conductor and in 2018 became associate conductor. In this role, she conducts Young People's Concerts, Symphonic Adventures concerts for high school students, special events and outdoor concerts. She will make her Minnesota Orchestra subscription concert debut next March in concerts at Northrop at the University of Minnesota. She was previously associate conductor of the San Antonio Symphony and conducting associate for the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. She recently served as a cover conductor for three programs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and led two concerts with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center. This season she starts a new role as the music director of the Mid-Texas Symphony and conducts concerts with the Lexington Philharmonic, Florida Orchestra and Portland Symphony Orchestra. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.

Organist **Catherine Rodland** is artist in residence at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, where she teaches and performs as a featured soloist regularly. She is also the organist of Colonial Church in Edina. She is a prizewinner in several competitions, including the 1994 and 1998 American Guild of Organists Young Artists Competition, the 1994 Calgary International Organ Competition, and the 1988 International Organ Competition at the University of Michigan, in which she received first prize. She has performed extensively throughout the U.S. and Canada, and she has been featured often on the syndicated radio program Pipedreams on National Public Radio. She is currently presenting a series of recitals featuring the complete organ symphonies of Louis Vierne.

Narrator **Henry Charles Smith** conducted more than 1,000 Minnesota Orchestra concerts while serving as the ensemble's associate and resident conductor. He won a Grammy for Classical Album of the Year in 1969 with the Philadelphia Brass Ensemble. As principal trombonist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, he performed with Eugene Ormandy and many other of the 20th century's greatest conductors. His guest conducting experience includes engagements with the Detroit, Dallas, Indianapolis, Kansas City and National symphony orchestras; the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; the San Antonio, Delaware, Oregon, North Carolina and Phoenix symphonies; and the Calgary Philharmonic and Edmonton Symphony in Canada. He was also the music director of the South Dakota Symphony for 12 years and is now conductor emeritus. He served on the faculties of the Curtis Institute of Music, Indiana University, Temple University and University of Texas at Austin, and served as director of orchestral activities at Arizona State University, where he is now professor emeritus.
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Chris Crenshaw, trombone | Vincent Gardner, trombone | Elliot Mason, trombone
Sherman Irby, alto and soprano saxophones, flute and clarinet
Ted Nash, alto and soprano saxophones, flute and clarinet
Victor Goines, tenor and soprano saxophones, clarinet and bass clarinet
Paul Nedzela, baritone and soprano saxophones and bass clarinet
Camille Thurman, saxophones and vocals
Dan Nimmer, piano | Carlos Henriquez, bass

Holiday Concert
Friday, December 13, 2019, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

The program for tonight’s concert will be announced from the stage.
There will be one intermission.

The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis (JLCO) comprises 15 of today's finest jazz soloists and ensemble players. Led by Wynton Marsalis, Managing and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, this versatile orchestra performs a vast repertoire ranging from original compositions and Jazz at Lincoln Center-commissioned works to rare historic compositions and masterworks by Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Fletcher Henderson, Thelonious Monk, Mary Lou Williams, Dizzy Gillespie, Benny Goodman, Charles Mingus and many others. The JLCO has been Jazz at Lincoln Center's resident orchestra since 1988, performing and leading educational events in New York, across the U.S., and around the globe. Alongside symphony orchestras, ballet troupes, students and an ever-expanding roster of guest artists, the JLCO has toured over 300 cities across six continents. Its guest conductors have included Benny Carter, John Lewis, Jimmy Heath,
Chico O'Farrill, Ray Santos, Paquito D'Rivera, Jon Faddis, Robert Sadin, David Berger, Gerald Wilson and Loren Schoenberg. The JLCO was voted best Big Band in the annual DownBeat Readers' Poll from 2013 to 2016.

In 2015, Jazz at Lincoln Center launched Blue Engine Records, a new platform to make its archive of recorded concerts available to jazz audiences everywhere. Its first release, Live in Cuba, was recorded on a historic 2010 trip to Havana by the JLCO and was released in 2015. Since then, additional releases have included Big Band Holidays, The Abyssinian Mass, The Music of John Lewis and Handful of Keys. Blue Engine's United We Swing: Best of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Galas features the Wynton Marsalis Septet and an array of special guests, with all proceeds going toward Jazz at Lincoln Center's education initiatives. Its most recent releases are 2018's Una Nochón Ruben Blades, 2019's Betty Carter's The Music Never Stops, 2019's Bolden (Official Soundtrack) composed and performed by Wynton Marsalis, and Marsalis' Swing Symphony, performed by JLCO and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Robertson and released in July 2019. To date, 14 other recordings have been released and internationally distributed.

Jazz at Lincoln Center is dedicated to inspiring and growing audiences for jazz. With the world-renowned Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and a comprehensive array of guest artists, Jazz at Lincoln Center advances a unique vision for the continued development of the art of jazz by producing a year-round schedule of performance, education and broadcast events for audiences of all ages. These productions include concerts, national and international tours, residencies, weekly national radio programs, television broadcasts, recordings, publications, an annual high school jazz band competition and festival, a band director academy, jazz appreciation curricula for students, music publishing, children's concerts and classes, lectures, adult education courses, student and educator workshops, a record label and interactive websites. Under the leadership of Managing and Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis, Chairman Robert J. Appel and Executive Director Greg Scholl, Jazz at Lincoln Center produces thousands of events each season in its home in New York City, Frederick P. Rose Hall, and around the world.

World-renowned trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis was born in New Orleans in 1961, began his classical training on trumpet at age 12, entered the Juilliard School at age 17, and then joined Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. He made his recording debut as a bandleader in 1982, and has since recorded more than 60 jazz and classical recordings, which have won him nine Grammy Awards. In 1983 he became the first artist to win classical and jazz Grammys in the same year; he repeated this feat in 1984. Marsalis is also an internationally-respected teacher and spokesman for music education, and he has received honorary doctorates from dozens of U.S. universities and colleges. He has written six books; his most recent are Squeak, Rumble, Whomp! Whomp! Whomp!, illustrated by Paul Rogers and published by Candlewick Press, and Moving to Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life with Geoffrey C. Ward.

In 1997 Marsalis became the first jazz artist to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for a jazz work, his oratorio Blood on the Fields, which was commissioned by Jazz at Lincoln Center. In 2001 he was appointed Messenger of Peace by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and he has also been designated cultural ambassador to the United States by the U.S. State Department through its CultureConnect program. He was instrumental in the Higher Ground Hurricane Relief concert, produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center. The event raised more than $3 million for the Higher Ground Relief Fund to benefit the musicians, music industry-related enterprises, and other individuals and entities from the areas in Greater New Orleans who were affected by Hurricane Katrina. He helped lead the effort to construct Jazz at Lincoln Center’s home—Frederick P. Rose Hall—the first education, performance and broadcast facility devoted to jazz, which opened in 2004.

For more information on Jazz at Lincoln Center and tonight's performers, visit jazz.org.
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Home for the Holidays
with the Minnesota Orchestra

Sarah Hicks, conductor
Conceived and directed by Peter Rothstein
Written by Kevin Kling

Holiday Concerts
Saturday, December 14, 2019, 8 pm  Orchestra Hall
Sunday, December 15, 2019, 2 pm  Orchestra Hall
Thursday, December 19, 2019, 11 am and 7:30 pm  Orchestra Hall

Today’s concert lasts two hours, including one 20-minute intermission.

ensemble
Christina Baldwin*
Robert O. Berdahl*
Kevin Kling*
Greta Oglesby*
Huxley Westemeier*

VocalEssence Singers of this Age, choir | G. Phillip Shoultz, III, conductor

Peter Rothstein, stage director
Kevin Kling, writer
Robert Elhai, composer and arranger
Peter Ostroushko, composer

With additional material by Stephen Paulus, along with other seasonal pieces
Eric McEnaney, musical preparation

Laurie DeMartino, projection designer
Alice Fredrickson, costume designer
Nancy Carlson, original artwork – “The Mitten”
Kelli Foster Warder, assistant director/choreographer
Jim Lichtscheidl, movement director
Priscilla Bruce, hair and makeup designer
Clara Cavins, assistant costume designer
Justin Hossle*, production stage manager
Z Makila, assistant stage manager

* Member of Actors Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States

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“Christmas Time is Here” (from A Charlie Brown Christmas) – By Lee Mendelson and Vince Guaraldi
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Conductor Sarah Hicks, the Minnesota Orchestra's principal conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall, has led a broad range of programs since joining the Orchestra as assistant conductor in 2006. During the 2019-20 season, she will conduct the Orchestra in performances with Ben Folds and Cloud Cult; a tribute to Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald featuring Capathia Jenkins and Tony DeSare; the Sam & Sarah series; and live performances of movie scores featured in the Orchestra's Movies and Music series. Away from Orchestra Hall, she has recently conducted concerts with the Antwerp Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Sarasota Orchestra, Toronto Symphony, Dallas Symphony and Virginia Symphony Orchestra. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.

Kevin Kling's plays have been produced in the Twin Cities and around the world. His collaborations with composer Victor Zupanc include For the Birds for Zeitgeist, Best Summer Ever for Children's Theatre Company and The Burning Wisdom of Finn McCool performed by the Dakota Valley Symphony, the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, St. Olaf College and the Willmar Area Symphonic Orchestra. Kling and Zupanc recently premiered their The Twelve Dancing Princesses with the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra. A frequent commentator for TPT's Almanac, Kling was named the Minneapolis Story Laureate by Mayor R.T. Rybak in 2014. More: kevinkling.com.


Greta Oglesby earned critical and audience acclaim when she played the lead in Tony Kushner's Caroline, 12-19 Minn Orch Concerts_LIVE.indd   40
Artists

Robert Elhai, composer and arranger

Robert Elhai has composed music theater for History Theater, Jungle Theater, Fortune's Fool Theatre, Nautilus Music-Theater and Theater Latté Da, among other companies. He created scores for The New Standards’ performance with the Minnesota Orchestra in 2016. Nominated for Tony and Drama Desk Awards for the Broadway production of *The Lion King*, he has written arrangements and orchestrations that have graced many other theater and concert productions, as well as some 150 movies, including *Crazy Rich Asians*, *Fences*, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, *Across The Universe* and most of *The Fast and the Furious* series. More: robertelhai.com.

Peter Rothstein, stage director

Peter Rothstein works extensively as a director of theater, musical theater, opera and new work development. He is the founding artistic director of Theater Latté Da, a Twin Cities-based company dedicated to adventurous musical theater. His other directing credits include productions at the Guthrie Theater, Children’s Theatre Company, Minnesota Opera, Ten Thousand Things, Utah Shakespeare Festival and Seattle’s 5th Avenue Theater. He is the creator of *All Is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*. He has been awarded seven Ivey Awards for overall excellence and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Theatre Communications Group, the Minnesota State Arts Board and the McKnight Foundation. More: peter-rothstein.com.

VocalEssence Singers Of This Age

G. Phillip Shoultz, III, founding director

Rhiannon Fiskradatz, operations manager

Corey Cellurale, choral assistant

VocalEssence Singers Of This Age is a dynamic group of Twin Cities-area high school students who sing, move, write their own music, rap, and reflect the diversity of our community in its membership. Under the leadership of Founding Director G. Phillip Shoultz, III, the students present a wide range of music from classical to hip-hop. The ensemble is in residence at Augsburg University.

Shoultz enjoys a multifaceted career in the arts, learning and worship arenas. He serves as Associate Conductor and Director of Learning and Engagement of VocalEssence. The winner of the 2015 ACDA Graduate Conducting Competition and an International Conductors Exchange Program participant, he oversees worship and music activities at Good Samaritan UMC and frequently conducts choirs and workshops worldwide. More: vocalessence.org.

Huxley Westemeier, ensemble

Eleven-year-old Huxley Westemeier is welcomed for his Minnesota Orchestra debut in Home for the Holidays. He has performed in many local productions, most notably *Watch on the Rhine* at the Guthrie Theater, *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Ordway, and the Children’s Theatre Company’s *Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Musical*. He performed on the first national Broadway tour of *School of Rock* as Billy, and most recently originated the role of August Rush in the world premiere of *August Rush the Musical* at the Paramount Theatre. In addition to theater, Westemeier enjoys composing and playing music, reading, linguistics, magic, biking, traveling and running with his dogs.
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Merry and Bright
Charles Lazarus, trumpet
Bruce A. Henry, vocals | Tonia Hughes, vocals | Cameron Kinghorn, vocals
Tommy Barbarella, keyboards | Jeff Bailey, bass
David Schmalenberger, drums | Daryl Boudreaux, percussion

The Lazarus Brass
Douglas C. Carlsen, trumpet | Geoff Senn, trumpet | Brad Shermock, trumpet
Michael Gast, horn | Michael Petruconis, horn | Dave Graff, trombone
R. Douglas Wright, trombone | John Wasson, bass trombone | Steven Campbell, tuba

Holiday Concert
Friday, December 20, 2019, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

The program for tonight’s concert will be announced from the stage. There will be one intermission.

Charles Lazarus, a member of the Minnesota Orchestra’s trumpet section since 2000, has been featured in Merry and Bright concerts at Orchestra Hall annually since 2015. In addition, he has created and starred in four original productions featuring his jazz ensemble with the Orchestra: A Night in the Tropics, American Riffs, Fly Me to the Moon and Our Love is Here to Stay. In 2015 Lazarus and the Orchestra performed the world premiere of Steve Heitzeg’s American Nomad; he and the Orchestra reprised this work last season, and a live video recording of the performance was released online this past August. His four solo recordings, Solo Settings, Zabava, Merry & Bright and Lovejoy, showcase his wide-ranging talent and feature collaborations with diverse composers, arrangers and performers, including Orchestra musicians. Lazarus holds the Paul and Margot Grangaard Chair. More: minnesotaorchestra.org, charleslazarus.com.

Bruce A. Henry has been influenced by legends such as John Coltrane, Leon Thomas, Nina Simone and Marvin Gaye. He has recorded for Disney, HBO and national ad campaigns.

Tonia Hughes’ vocal style combines elements of gospel, blues, jazz, R&B and worship music. She is a singer, songwriter, recording and theater artist, and is the recipient of a 2017-18 McKnight Fellowship.

Cameron Kinghorn is a vocalist, trumpeter and songwriter who performs most frequently as the frontman of the Soul/R&B group Nooky Jones. He performs regularly with the Afrobeat/Afrofunk band Black Market Brass and with artists such as Dessa, The New Standards, Aby Wolf and Champagne Confetti, as well as Mild High Club, with whom he performed at the 2018 Coachella Music Festival.

Tommy Barbarella worked extensively with Prince, among many other artists, and arranged Purple Rain for the Minnesota Orchestra’s 2016 performance at the Minnesota Vikings home opener.

Jeff Bailey is active as a performer, composer, producer and educator with world-renowned jazz artists. He has performed with Joey McIntyre of New Kids on the Block, Doc Severinsen, Jonatha Brooke, Heather Headley, Doc Martin, Chastity Brown and Charley Drayton.

David Schmalenberger recently performed with Cantus, the Steeles, Garrison Keillor and cabaret legend Marilyn Maye. He also recently recorded with the Laura Caviani trio and the Bill Simenson Jazz Orchestra. He teaches at Augsburg University and Anoka Ramsey Community College.

Daryl Boudreaux is a percussionist, singer, songwriter, and a member of the Grammy-winning Sounds of Blackness. He has performed with The Steeles, Bruce Henry, Jody Watley, T. Mychael Rambo, Ronnie Laws, Mint Condition, Ann Nesby, Parliament Funkadelic, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Minnesota Orchestra.
It’s a Wonderful Life Live in Concert
with the Minnesota Orchestra
Sarah Hicks, conductor
Minnesota Chorale, Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

Holiday Concerts
Saturday, December 21, 2019, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall
Sunday, December 22, 2019, 2 pm | Orchestra Hall

Produced and directed by Frank Capra
Written by Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett and Frank Capra

starring
James Stewart as George Bailey
Donna Reed as Mary Hatch
Lionel Barrymore as Mr. Potter
Thomas Mitchell as Uncle Billy
Henry Travers as Clarence
Beulah Bondi as Ma Bailey
Ward Bond as Bert
Frank Faylen as Ernie Bishop
Gloria Grahame as Violet Bick

Music by Dimitri Tiomkin
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Today’s performance lasts two hours and 30 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission.
Please remain seated until the conclusion of the show.

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The Movies & Music series is made possible by U.S. Bank.
Artists

Conductor Sarah Hicks, the Minnesota Orchestra’s principal conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall, has led a broad range of programs since joining the Orchestra as assistant conductor in 2006. During the 2019-20 season, she will conduct the Orchestra in performances with Ben Folds and Cloud Cult; a tribute to Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald featuring Capathia Jenkins and Tony DeSare; the Sam & Sarah series; and live performances of movie scores featured in the Orchestra’s Movies and Music series. Away from Orchestra Hall, she has recently conducted concerts with the Antwerp Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Sarasota Orchestra, Toronto Symphony, Dallas Symphony and Virginia Symphony Orchestra. In November 2019 she conducted the orchestra for the nationally-televised live musical performance of Disney’s The Little Mermaid on ABC. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.

Dimitri Tiomkin, composer

Dimitri Tiomkin’s professional debut in film music came in St. Petersburg’s cinemas, where he accompanied Russian and French silent films. He also provided piano accompaniment for the ballerina Thamar Karsavina on Army post tours and improvised on the piano during performances by the comedian Max Linder. These experiences and the skills he gained helped lay the foundation of his American film music career. Tiomkin was hired by Universal in 1931 to score the Russian-themed Resurrection, his first effort at a non-musical film, and it was Paramount’s Alice in Wonderland that offered Tiomkin his first chance at composing and arranging the underscore and songs for a major motion picture. Film music assignments continued sporadically until he met director Frank Capra at a party and a personal friendship blossomed. The two first worked together on Lost Horizon (1937). His music for Lost Horizon was nominated for an Academy Award, although the nomination itself went to the head of the music department. The Capra-Tiomkin partnership continued with You Can’t Take It With You (1938), Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939), Meet John Doe (1941) and It’s a Wonderful Life (1947). During World War II Capra recruited Tiomkin to score the “Why We Fight” series of training and indoctrination films produced by the Army Signal Corps. Music for a dozen documentaries, including The Negro Soldier (1944) and The Battle of San Pietro (1945), was the result.

Minnesota Chorale

Kathy Saltzman Romey, artistic director

Barbara Brooks, accompanist and artistic advisor

The Minnesota Chorale, the Minnesota Orchestra’s principal chorus since 2004, is in its 24th season under the leadership of Kathy Saltzman Romey. Founded in 1972, the Chorale is the state’s preeminent symphonic chorus, performing regularly with both this Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Among the Chorale’s initiatives are its acclaimed Bridges community engagement program, the Minneapolis Youth Chorus and Prelude Children’s Chorus, the Voices of Experience choir for older adults, Men in Music for high-school boys, InChoir open rehearsals and Emerging Conductor training program. More: mnchorale.org.

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Monica deCausmeaker*
Anna Maher
Erika Malpass
Margaret Matejcek
Shannon McGuire
Adriana Pohl
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Jaime Anthony
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Eric Alman
Samuel Baker*
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James Bowen
John R. Henrich
Thomas Hollenhorst
Thomas Jermann
Joe Kastner*
Evan Kerr
Paul Nevin
Bob Peskin*
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Rick Wagner*

Section leader

Concert Preview with Phillip Gainsley and Sarah Hicks
Saturday, December 21, 7 pm, Auditorium
Sunday, December 22, 1 pm, Auditorium
A New Year Celebration: Auld Lang Syne!
Dec 31–Jan 1
Osmo Vänskä, conductor
Jess Gillam, alto saxophone
Bagpipes, bow-ties and brilliant music: You're invited to a gala New Year's celebration that pops as Osmo Vänskä leads the Minnesota Orchestra in a sparkling celebration of 2020.

MusicMakers with Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra
Jan 10
Osmo Vänskä, conductor
The culmination of the Orchestra's 17th annual Composer Institute, this performance features the music of some of the country's most gifted young composers, plus a behind-the-scenes look at the craft of music-making through onstage interviews with each composer.

Ben Folds with the Minnesota Orchestra
Jan 11–12
Sarah Hicks, conductor
This performance adds the Orchestra's talent to Ben Folds’ vocals and piano for an evening of quirky melodies, impromptu creation, and an epic love-fest between audience and musicians.

Mahler and Ravel
Jan 17–18
Simone Young, conductor
Romantic, artful and expressive, these selections by Mahler, Ravel and Debussy—three giants of early 20th-century music—bring meditative warmth to late winter evenings.

Beethoven, Bach and Britten
Jan 30–31
Paul Watkins, conductor and cello
Strings take center stage as noted cellist and conductor Paul Watkins joins us for a luminous cello concerto by C.P.E. Bach, Britten's idyllic Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge and Beethoven's Fourth Symphony.
An Evening with George Winston

George Winston, piano

Holiday Concert

Sunday, December 22, 2019, 7:30 pm | Orchestra Hall

Tonight’s program will be announced from the stage.
There will be one intermission.

For more than 40 years, pianist George Winston has inspired fans and musicians alike with his singular solo acoustic piano songs, featured on albums which have sold 15 million copies. Intensely dedicated to touring, he performs nearly 100 live concerts each year. His music is evocative, offering listeners a chance to take a step back from their perpetually busy lives and let their minds adventurously wander.

Winston grew up mainly in Montana and also spent his later formative years in Mississippi and Florida. During this time, his favorite music was instrumental rock and instrumental R&B, including Floyd Cramer, the Ventures, Booker T & The MG's and Jimmy Smith, among many other artists. Inspired by R&B, jazz, blues and rock music (especially the Doors), he began playing the organ in 1967. In 1971 he switched to the acoustic piano after hearing recordings from the 1920s and the 1930s by the legendary stride pianists Thomas “Fats” Waller and the late Teddy Wilson. At this time, in addition to working on stride piano, he also pioneered his own style of melodic instrumental music on solo piano, called folk piano. In 1972, he recorded his first solo piano album, Ballads and Blues 1972, for the late guitarist John Fahey's Takoma label.

Winston's classic albums, Autumn and December, are perennial favorites, along with Winter into Spring, Summer, 2017’s Spring Carousel – A Cancer Research Benefit, as well as two volumes of the compositions of Vince Guaraldi, two volumes of benefit albums for the Gulf Coast disasters, and six other solo piano albums. He just released his 15th solo piano album, Restless Wind, via Dancing Cat Records/RCA Records. For more information, visit GeorgeWinston.com.

Please bring a donation of new wind- and water-resistant winter hats, gloves and thermal underwear for men and women to support Simpson Housing Services of Minneapolis.
An elementary student had an up-close interaction with Minnesota Orchestra flutist Wendy Williams during a visit to Bethune Community School as part of the Orchestra’s Common Chords residency in North Minneapolis in January 2019. That same month Music Director Osmo Vänskä and the Orchestra presented an American Expressions festival of our country’s music, including Artie Shaw’s jazz-tinged Clarinet Concerto starring Principal Clarinet Gabriel Campos Zamora.
A COMMITMENT TO EXTRAORDINARY ARTISTRY

An array of exciting experiences happen at Orchestra Hall—from performances of centuries-old symphonies to world premieres, from hip-hop recordings to yoga classes, from theatrical concerts to collaborations with local ensembles and arts groups. The common thread: extraordinary artistry from each Orchestra musician, conductor and guest performer.

4 recording projects were undertaken during the 2018-19 season. The Orchestra continued its Mahler project by recording Symphonies No. 7 and 10 for BIS Records and performed two live-in-concert recordings, collaborating with singer-rapper-writer Dessa for a release on the Doomtree Records label, and spotlighting Orchestra trumpet player Charles Lazarus in Steve Heitzeg’s American Nomad for a video shared online.

“By turns sizzling and sensitive, Vänskä’s Mahler could be his crowning achievement in Minnesota.”

– TERRY BLAIN, STAR TRIBUNE

153 Minnesota Orchestra concerts were held at Orchestra Hall and beyond. In total, the Orchestra performed works written by 155 composers during the 2018-19 season, including a world premiere and two U.S. premieres.

6 new musicians joined the Minnesota Orchestra during the season, including Associate Concertmaster Felicity James and Principal Timpani Erich Rieppel. Another six Orchestra musicians were featured as soloists; among them was bass clarinetist Timothy Zavadil in the U.S. premiere of Geoffrey Gordon’s Prometheus.

226,460 people attended Minnesota Orchestra concerts at Orchestra Hall during the season, filling nearly 90 percent of the Hall’s seats. Thirty-three percent were first-time Orchestra concertgoers.

114 guest soloists, conductors and ensembles appeared alongside the Orchestra, including twin sister pianists Christina Naughton and Michelle Naughton and the Indigo Girls.

61 singers, dancers and solo musicians from around the world joined the Orchestra for the Sommerfest finale, Osvaldo Golijov’s La Pasión según San Marcos, which received its Minnesota premiere under Maria Guinand’s direction.

Photos this spread: Greg Helgeson, Tony Nelson, Courtney Perry, Paul Phillips, Joseph Scheller.
years have passed since the Orchestra's first concert at the University of Minnesota's Northrop. The Orchestra returned to Northrop to celebrate the restoration of Northrop's famed pipe organ, as organist Paul Jacobs, the Orchestra and Music Director Osmo Vänskä performed the world premiere of John Harbison's *What Do We Make of Bach?*

work performed at the 2018-19 season's opening concert was Joan Tower's *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* No. 1, preceded by a welcome from Michelle Miller Burns, the Orchestra's new President and CEO.

American composers were showcased during a three-week American Expressions festival of music from our own nation, ranging from Florence Price's First Symphony to John Williams' score from *Star Wars: A New Hope* to a Future Classics concert capping the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute.

"The imaginations of young composers are on full display at the Composer Institute. I marvel anew every year at the originality and audacity of their work."

— ADAM KUENZEL, PRINCIPAL FLUTE

2021–22

will be Osmo Vänskä’s final season as the Orchestra’s music director, news announced in late 2018. By the end of his tenure, Vänskä will have served 19 years in the position, tying a record set by Emil Oberhoffer and Stanislaw Skrowaczewski.

"To each and every one of you: you are a true Minnesota treasure, you are ambassadors for this state, your reputation extends well beyond the borders of this state and this nation, and for that we are grateful."

— MINNESOTA GOVERNOR TIM WALZ TO THE MUSICIANS OF THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA
INSPIRING PEOPLE OF ALL AGES TO LEARN, LISTEN AND GROW

The Orchestra’s educational offerings have been a core part of its mission since the first Young People’s Concert was performed in 1911. Today, a wide range of initiatives provide learning opportunities for students and adults alike.

31,708

students—coming from 285 schools throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa—attended one of the 2018-19 season’s 22 Young People’s Concerts.

“I was so impressed with the educational flow of the presentation. Clearly a focus on how kids learn and what they need to stay engaged. All of the visuals and word prompts right down to the changing colors at regular intervals. WOW!”

– A SAINT PAUL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER AFTER ATTENDING A YOUNG PEOPLE’S CONCERT

4

local high schools received visits from the Minnesota Orchestra through the Symphonic Adventures program, which provided 3,200 music students with dynamic one-hour concerts at their schools, hosted by Sam Bergman and conducted by Music Director Osmo Vänskä, Associate Conductor Akiko Fujimoto and guest conductor Juanjo Mena.

“The fact that Osmo Vänskä is taking the time to conduct the Minnesota Orchestra in our space for our students is absolutely life-changing.”

– OSSEO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

40

adult amateur musicians participated in the third Minnesota Orchestra Fantasy Camp, taking the Orchestra Hall stage to rehearse and perform alongside the Orchestra under the baton of Osmo Vänskä.

200

students from the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies, Minnesota Youth Symphonies and MacPhail Northside Youth Orchestra rehearsed and learned side-by-side with their Minnesota Orchestra counterparts.

Photos this spread: Heidi Giacalone, Greg Helgeson, Courtney Perry, Tim Rummelhoff.
AN ELECTRIC CONNECTION TO THE COMMUNITY

The 2018-19 season brought the Minnesota Orchestra and its community closer than ever before, through initiatives such as a weeklong North Minneapolis residency and a Latin American-themed summer festival.

“It was so good to be a part of this experience of bringing the community together...especially when it is easy to become discouraged and hyper-focused on our differences instead of all of the things that we actually have in common and that we love...thank you for this beautiful evening!”

- PATRON AT A COMMON CHORDS: NORTH MINNEAPOLIS CONCERT

25 free events were held throughout North Minneapolis during the Minnesota Orchestra’s first-ever Twin Cities-area “Common Chords” residency week in January 2019.

142 local artists performed in and around Orchestra Hall during the free, family-friendly International Day of Music in July as part of the “Música Juntos” (Music Together) summer festival.

“The sense of community you’ve created and the diversity of the audience you’ve invited in was a truly beautiful thing.”

- AUDIENCE MEMBER AT THE MÚSICA JUNTOS SOMMERFEST

1,238 people attended the Northern Lights Symphony Ball, led by Co-Chairs Betsy Frost and Charlie Anderson, with Marilyn Carlson Nelson serving as Honorary Chair. The event raised $1.2 million in support of the Orchestra and its education programs. Under the direction of Osmo Vänskä, the Orchestra was joined by singer-songwriter Chastity Brown.

Photos this spread: Travis Anderson Photo, Heidi Giacalone, Jayme Halbritter, Tony Nelson, Courtney Perry, Jessi Ryan.
A KEYSTONE FOR MINNESOTA’S EXCEPTIONAL CULTURAL COMMUNITY

The Minnesota Orchestra plays a vital role in Minnesota’s cultural ecosystem.

+2M

listeners across Minnesota and beyond heard

Minnesota Orchestra performances broadcast live by Classical Minnesota Public Radio and subsequently featured on national and international broadcasts.

$2.2B

The Minnesota Orchestra’s musicians and audiences contributed significantly to the state’s $2.2 billion annual economic impact from the arts (source: Creative Minnesota 2019). The Orchestra’s tours and recordings also draw national and international attention that enhances the reputation of the state and the region.

100%

Residents from every one of Minnesota’s 87 counties attended a performance at Orchestra Hall.

80

artists, arts organizations and other partners curated pre- and post-concert experiences that complemented the Orchestra’s performances.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

We are grateful to the following individuals—and to donors at all levels—whose annual gifts to the Guaranty Fund support the Minnesota Orchestra.

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John J. Erickson
Amanda Flosbach
Friday Club
Mark Geve
Jane and David Gregerson
Deborah Brown Hanson and
Stephen J. Hanson
Jeanne J. Janisch
Richard Klemm and Harv Thompson
Joan C. Lindskey
David and Judy Ranheim
Nancy Sells
Angela and Nicholas Skrowaczewski
Helen P. Smith
Isaac Thompson

In memory of Carol Garrison
Dorothy Boen
Linda and Henry Cohen
Sheryl Cohen and Dan Fink
Anice Flesh
Dr. Stanley M. and Luella G. Goldberg
Myra and Roger Greenberg
Jennifer McGuie
Janny Silver

In memory of Bayle Greenberg
Virginia Mahigan

In memory of Julie Hara
Deborah Brown Hanson and
Stephen J. Hanson
Burt Hara

In memory of Joan Hardy
Gregory Thomas

In memory of Robert Higgins
John J. Ericson
Wilhelmina Fischer
Dr. Robert A. Higgins
Chuck and Joanne Lewellen
Shari Nelson

In memory of Mary Lou Hill
Ellen Abbott
William and Geraldine Haag
Susan Hill
Jacklyn Stoddard

In memory of Doris Inghram
Norma Anderson

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Often I’m asked, directly or indirectly, to explain just what it is I do when preparing the Minnesota Chorale for performances with the Minnesota Orchestra. Of the many forms this question takes, my favorite is, “Why were you up there taking a bow?”

I don’t take offense at this. I know that my work as chorus master is hidden from the audience, as is the extraordinary diligence of the Chorale’s singers in rehearsing, say, Brahms’ *German Requiem* for concert. But I also know that when voices merge with instruments on the stage of Orchestra Hall, and when text is married to music, magic can occur. Our job, mine and the singers’, is to make that magic happen dependably. Driven by a passion for the choral art, we aim to create moments of transcendent beauty to share with both listeners and fellow performers.

For every major performance project, I build a distinctive choral instrument, drawing from the Chorale’s roster of 260 singers a group of the appropriate size with the needed skills: vocal color and technique, linguistic capability, musical experience and leadership, esprit de corps. (A chorus that’s right for Brahms won’t be right for Handel, and vice versa.) Over the course of six to ten weeks of rehearsal, we weld these building blocks into an ensemble that is flexible, nuanced, engaged and alive, developing a shared musical understanding that enables us to bring to life the composer’s intentions.

In my early years as chorus master, I believed that my sole task was to rehearse the mechanics of a work (notes, rhythms, dynamics, text, articulation), and thus to provide a foundation on which the performance conductor could realize his or her musical vision.

Now I see it differently: I believe that fostering a deeper relationship between the singers and the composition is as important as teaching the intricacies of the musical score. What moves us, I want to ask, in a particular text and its musical setting? The answer yields insights that are critical to the process of readying the chorus for a successful collaboration with the orchestra and conductor onstage.

The hows and whys of artistic expression are fascinating. And each project offers another opportunity to delve into the mysteries of musical creation, thanks to that magical union of words with music—and the profound intimacy of the singing voice. The singers and I investigate language, culture, history, religion, philosophy and individual psychology through the lens of choral music. The results are audible. And the exploration strengthens our capacity to build bridges to audiences and to enrich the entire community.

Educating, enriching, uniting, inspiring—and doing this through the power of the human voice: this would be my favorite answer to that recurrent question, “Just what do you do?”

**Kathy Saltzman Romey** is artistic director of the Minnesota Chorale, the Minnesota Orchestra’s principal chorus, and choral advisor to the Orchestra; she is also director of choral activities at the University of Minnesota. This month the Chorale is featured alongside the Orchestra in performances of Handel’s Messiah and Tiomkin’s score for *It’s a Wonderful Life*. The Chorale will also collaborate with the Orchestra next May in two choral-orchestral works: Rachmaninoff’s Three Russian Songs and Stravinsky’s Symphony of Psalms.
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