

# VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

USA



2025/26 FALL PROGRAM

47<sup>TH</sup> SEASON



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Greetings VSO family! Thank you for joining us this season. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2025/26 season of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

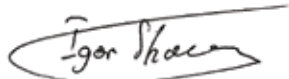
As we look forward to another exciting season filled with world-class music, let us take a moment to reflect on the past. This summer's third annual Vancouver USA Arts & Music Festival had an incredible turnout and brought our entire community together to celebrate the arts, all for **free**. We are honored to present the Festival with the City of Vancouver and remain committed to bringing music into the lives of everyone within our community.

Another highlight from the previous year was the debut performance of our youth orchestra, the VSO Youth Virtuosi, USA! The passion and talent displayed by these young musicians is truly an inspiration. From the first rehearsal to the final performance, it was a joy to witness their confidence grow and see their many hours of practice result in an exceptional concert. Now more than ever, it is essential that we provide a stage for our youth to shine. We look forward to creating more opportunities for every student in our community to engage in music.

The 2025/26 season is brimming with promise. We are excited to welcome an array of top-tier soloists and showcase both timeless masterworks alongside innovative contemporary works. Our Young Artist Competition returns and is certain to bring some tremendous young talents to Vancouver from across the nation. I welcome each of you to attend the free competition on October 12 to witness the remarkable artistry of these young musicians.

As you settle into your seats, I would like to thank you all for choosing to attend a performance with the VSO. We aim to create unforgettable moments that will touch your heart this season, and we are excited to share these experiences with you. Your attendance at concerts and your generous contributions affirm your support of our mission.

Please enjoy this phenomenal year of music and welcome, again!



Igor Shakhman  
Chief Executive Officer  
Vancouver Symphony Orchestra



# WORLD-CLASS MUSIC. OUR COMMUNITY.



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Salvador Brotons, Music Director and Conductor

## OUR MISSION

*We enrich lives in the Pacific Northwest and beyond through world-class symphonic concerts, other musical performances, and engaging educational programming.*



## WORLD CLASS MUSIC. OUR COMMUNITY.

A season featuring a dazzling array of top-tier soloists playing some of the greatest masterworks of all time, including compositions from award-winning contemporary American composers.



Inés Issel Burzyńska  
Violin virtuoso

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**United Grain Corporation**

Skyview Concert Hall  
Vancouver, Washington and  
VSO Virtual Concert Hall

### Fall

#### Carmina Burana

The Portland Symphonic Choir returns by popular demand to perform Orff's timeless *Carmina Burana*, based on a group of medieval poems and songs. Also, the symphony performs a collection of intermezzi from the Italian operatic composer Mascagni.

**September 27-28, 2025 / Sat 7pm & Sun 3pm**



#### Rhapsody in Blue

"A performer of near-superhuman technical prowess" (The New York Times), pianist Marc-André Hamelin performs Gershwin's beloved *Rhapsody in Blue*, alongside Mahler's *Symphony No. 1*.

**November 1-2, 2025 / Sat 7pm & Sun 3pm**



#### Holiday Pops with Liz Callaway

A holiday music celebration featuring long-standing audience favorites and Broadway selections with GRAMMY-nominated sensation, Liz Callaway.

Generously sponsored by the Ken and Dean Kirm Foundation

**December 13-14, 2025 Sat 7pm & Sun 3pm**



### Winter/Spring

#### Young Artist Showcase

An expressive and innovative piece from GRAMMY award-winning composer Mason Bates followed by this season's Young Artist Competition gold medalists. Plus, Richard Strauss's colorful collection of waltzes from the opera *Der Rosenkavalier* and one of his most famous tone poems *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*.

**January 17-18, 2026 / Sat 7pm & Sun 3pm**



#### A Celebration of Americana

This program features beloved American classics alongside *Four Black American Dances* from GRAMMY-nominated composer Carlos Simon.

**February 21-22, 2026 / Sat 7pm & Sun 3pm**



#### Brahms' Symphony No. 1

Beethoven's bold *Piano Concerto No. 1* performed by award-winning American pianist Anne-Marie McDermott followed by one of the greatest symphonies from Brahms! Generously sponsored by Marty Wolf

**April 11-12, 2026 / Sat 7pm & Sun 3pm**



#### Dvorák's New World Symphony

A triumphant finale with rising star, violin virtuoso Inés Issel Burzyńska performing Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 2*. Also, *The Chairman Dances* described as a "foxtrot for orchestra" and Dvořák's most famous masterwork.

**May 30-31, 2026 / Sat 7pm & Sun 3pm**



## EXPERIENCE MUSIC UP CLOSE.

Characterized by small ensembles and intimate settings, the Nien-Wei Hsiao Chamber Music Series creates an exhilarating experience unlike any other.



Zuill Bailey  
Grammy Award-winning cellist

*Generously sponsored by*

**Oregon Public Broadcasting**

Kiggins Theatre | Vancouver, WA  
First Presbyterian Church | Vancouver, WA  
Joyce Garver Theatre | Camas, WA

## Fall

### Piano Extravaganza

A staple of our chamber music series! Dr. Michael C. Liu returns to present a program highlighting the greatest works for the classical keyboard.

**October 19, 2025 / First Presbyterian Church / 3pm**



### Back to the Movies: Go West (1925)

This classic comedy turns 100 years old this year! Starring Buster Keaton as a cattle ranch hand who befriends an unlikely companion while learning the ropes of ranch life. With live accompaniment.

**November 20, 2025 / Kiggins Theatre / 7pm**

**November 21, 2025 / Joyce Garver Theatre / 7pm**



## Winter/Spring

### Back to the Movies: Man with a Movie Camera (1929)

Directed by Dziga Vertov, this consciously radical documentary of life in the Soviet Union was filmed in Russia and Ukraine. A film proudly without actors or plot, viewers enjoy a montage of scenes of people working, playing, and traveling. With live accompaniment.

**January 22, 2026 / Kiggins Theatre / 7pm**



### The Love of Music with VSO Winds and Brass

Join us for a love-inspired program featuring members of the VSO winds and brass.

**February 6, 2026 / First Presbyterian Church / 7pm**



### VSO Chamber Music with Zuill Bailey and Awadagin Pratt

Experience GRAMMY award-winning cellist Zuill Bailey and highly acclaimed pianist Awadagin Pratt perform live alongside the VSO Chamber Orchestra.

**March 15, 2026 / First Presbyterian Church / 3pm**



### Back to the Movies: Show People (1929)

Popular comedienne Marion Davies plays naive Peggy Pepper, who arrives in Hollywood expecting stardom to land in her lap. But of course, the road to stardom has never been easy or lackluster! With live accompaniment.

**April 23, 2026 / Kiggins Theatre / 7pm**



### VSO Chamber Orchestra with Orli Shaham

Audience favorite pianist Orli Shaham returns to play with the VSO Chamber Orchestra.

*Generously sponsored by Ann Bardacke and David Wolf*

**May 3, 2026 / First Presbyterian Church / 3pm**





Welcome to the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's 47<sup>th</sup> season! I am thrilled to return for my 35<sup>th</sup> season and am excited about every program ahead of us, nearly all of which feature beloved masterworks alongside compositions from contemporary American composers. This season is extra special for me, and I can't wait to share it with you all.

Just a glance at the repertoire is enough to excite any classical music lover. We open with the famous *Carmina Burana* featuring the Portland Symphonic Choir who recently performed Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* alongside the orchestra in our 2023/24 season. We are honored to have them return and share their talent and joyous voices with us all. Other legendary masterworks include Gershwin's beloved *Rhapsody in Blue*, Brahms' *Symphony No. 1*, and Dvorak's *New World Symphony* which will close the 2025/26 season in May.

It brings me great joy to welcome some of the world's greatest musicians to the Vancouver stage all season long. Piano virtuoso, Marc-André Hamelin, will join us in November followed by the long-awaited return of Broadway sensation Liz Callaway in December. Additionally, one of the leading pianists in the world, Anne-Marie McDermott, will perform Beethoven's bold *Piano Concerto No. 1*. Our triumphant season finale will feature rising star and my friend, violinist Inés Isel Burzyńska.

The 2025/26 VSO Nien-Wei Hsiao Chamber Music Series returns this season with four chamber music ensembles and three Back to the Movies performances. We eagerly await the return of critically acclaimed pianist Awadagin Pratt, GRAMMY-award winning cellist Zuill Bailey, and internationally renowned pianist Orli Shoham.

As this season begins, I am awestruck by the continued growth of the orchestra and the support you all show for everything we do. Thank you for providing a place for the VSO to thrive within the Vancouver community and for your continued support of the arts.



Salvador Brotons  
Music Director & Conductor  
Vancouver Symphony Orchestra



## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Young Artist Competition

31<sup>st</sup> Annual Young Artist Competition Finals  
First Presbyterian Church  
Sunday, October 12, 2025 / 2pm

Free and open to the public! Spectate the final round of the Young Artist Competition as we select this season's remarkable young winners. Please reserve your seat prior to the event at [vancouversymphony.org](http://vancouversymphony.org)

### 2026 Evening of Jazz

AC Marriott Vancouver  
March 28, 2026

The hottest ticket in town! Don't miss this night of scrumptious cuisine, delicious drinks, and world-class jazz music.

### 2026 Gala

Hilton Vancouver  
June 6, 2026

The biggest night of the VSO season! Come support music in your community with an elegant night with the VSO.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Vancouver USA Arts & Music Festival

Second weekend in August 2026

Brought to you by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra USA and the City of Vancouver, this festival is more than an event—it's a celebration of culture, community and the unbridled joy that comes with experiencing the arts together.

**Free to all!**



2025 Vancouver USA Arts & Music Festival

Welcome to the 2025/26 season of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

We are thrilled to usher in the VSO's 46<sup>th</sup> season. This year also marks an extraordinary achievement for Maestro Salvador Brotons, who celebrates his 35<sup>th</sup> consecutive season leading the orchestra with passion, artistry, and vision.

The VSO has been a cornerstone of Vancouver's cultural life for more than four decades and is dedicated to enriching lives across the Pacific Northwest and beyond through the power of music. It is a true privilege to have a world-class organization like the VSO call our beautiful city home.

We look forward to this upcoming season which follows on the heels of the third annual Vancouver Arts & Music Festival, held this past August in Esther Short Park. This year, the festival had a record-breaking attendance of more than 55,000 attendees! It is truly a celebration of our vibrant arts community and is a beautiful partnership between the VSO and the City of Vancouver. It brings together music, creativity, and community in the heart of our city. We hope that you will join us in August of 2026 to experience the incredible talent and artistic energy that thrive right here in Vancouver.

This season, I look forward to seeing and hearing the dedication and talent of the symphony first-hand. It is always a pleasure to experience the captivating music of this orchestra. Under the masterful direction of Maestro Salvador Brotons, each performance radiates with remarkable energy, elevating both the artistry and precision of the music. His leadership continues to inspire unforgettable moments that resonate long after the final note.

The VSO is building a legacy of leaders through music, education, and community partnerships. Indeed, this promises to be an exciting season for all of us. Whether you are a longtime patron or a first-time guest, your presence plays a vital role in supporting our talented musicians while strengthening the cultural fabric of our city.

*Anne McEnery-Ogle*

Sincerely,  
Anne McEnery-Ogle  
Mayor, City of Vancouver



## VSO EDUCATION PROGRAM

**The VSO strives to provide music education for all ages through both performance and informational programming. Learn more about our full education program below and at [vancouversymphony.org/education-program](https://vancouversymphony.org/education-program).**

- **In the Schools**

We offer complimentary student and educator tickets for Clark County schools and discounted family tickets. We also present ensemble performances in Vancouver-area schools, annual outreach concerts for students, and classroom visits by long-time VSO Conductor Salvador Brotons.

- **In the Community**

We provide soloist and small ensemble performances at senior and adult living communities, educational pre-concert talks, and masterclasses from world-class musicians.

- **National Young Artist Competition**

The annual Young Artist Competition works to highlight and celebrate great student musicianship and is open to entrants nationwide across the piano, strings, and woodwinds/brass categories.

- **VSO Youth Virtuosi, USA**

Made possible through the Ruthie Keller Community Music Initiative in conjunction with the Keller Foundation, the VSO Youth Virtuosi, USA features all-star student musicians selected from Southwest Washington school districts.

Your support allows the VSO to expand its educational outreach!



VSO Youth Virtuosi USA perform at Vancouver Arts & Music Festival



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\*Acting Position

\*\*Leave of absence

# Carmina Burana

Skyview Concert Hall, Vancouver, WA

**Salvador Brotons**, Conductor

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## Intermezzi

Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)

Intermezzo from Cavalleria rusticana

Intermezzo from L'amico Fritz

Intermezzo from Guglielmo Ratcliff

Intermezzo from Isabeau

Inno al Sole from Iris\*

\*Portland Symphonic Choir

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## Intermission

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## Carmina Burana\*

Carl Orff (1895-1982)

Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi

(Fortune, Empress of the World)

I. Primo Vere (Spring)

Uf dem Anger (On the Green)

II. In Taberna (In the Tavern)

III. Cours d'amour (Court of Love)

Blanziflor et Helena (Blanchefleur and Helen)

Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi

(Fortune, Empress of the World)

Abigail Krawson, soprano

Sam Faustine, tenor

Zachary Lenox, baritone

\*Portland Symphonic Choir

## Season Sponsors

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## The Portland Symphonic Choir

Established in 1945, the Portland Symphonic Choir has carried out this mission for almost eight decades: "To sing choral masterworks with excellence and passion and to engage, educate, and inspire its members and the community." With a notable reputation and long-standing commitment to the Pacific Northwest, our 100-person chorus includes musicians, students, retirees, and an assortment of working professionals. A central figure in the legacy of choral music in Portland, the Choir achieves excellence in musicianship, celebrates community through music, builds a sustainable musical legacy, and curates an inclusive musical space.

Under the direction of Artistic Director Dr. Alissa Deeter since 2019, the Portland Symphonic Choir continues a reputation of excellence and dedication by creating powerful and accessible choral experiences for all music enthusiasts. Dr. Deeter has prepared the chorus for concerts and major works with ensembles including Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the Oregon Festival Orchestra, and in concert with Andrea

Bocelli. Additionally, the Portland Symphonic Choir has a long history of commissioning and premiering new works. One way the Choir highlights new choral music is with our Summer Sings New Works series and recording project.

We feature the Portland Symphonic Chorus in this opening program which begins with a set of orchestral interludes from operas by Pietro Mascagni. This set concludes with joyous choral *Hymn to the Sun* from Mascagni's *Iris*. The orchestra and chorus are then joined by soprano Abigail Krawson, tenor Sam Faustine, baritone Zachary Lenox, for Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, a powerful setting of texts from medieval Germany.



**Pietro Mascagni**  
(1863 - 1945)

*Intermezzi and Chorus  
from Cavalleria rusticana,  
L'amico Fritz, Guglielmo  
Ratcliff, Isabeau, and Iris*

The five operas represented here were composed between 1889 and 1911. Duration 23:00.

Pietro Mascagni's first opera, *Cavalleria rusticana* was at least partly responsible for inaugurating the new *verismo* style. (*Verismo*—realism—is a literary and operatic style of the late 19th century, often focused on gritty, dark stories about the poor.) It began as Mascagni's entry in a contest for young Italian opera composers, sponsored by a music publisher, for one-act operas. Based upon a popular play by Giovanni Varda, *Cavalleria rusticana* is a torrid tale set in a small Sicilian village. A soldier, Turridu, returns home to the village to find his fiancée, Lola, has married another. In revenge, he seduces the girl Santuzza, setting off a series of events that will end in her disgrace and his own death. The wistful *Intermezzo* heard here is a melancholy but fervent orchestral interlude which portrays Santuzza's state of mind as her world crumbles around her.

Mascagni's follow-up to the dark *Cavalleria rusticana* was a fairly conventional three-act comedy with a happy ending! His *L'amico Fritz* (*Friend Fritz*, 1901) tells the story of a wealthy landowner, Fritz, who is charmed by Suzel, the daughter of one of his caretakers. Fritz's friend, Rabbi David vows to find a husband for Suzel, and during a discussion of marriage, David makes a wager that Fritz himself will be married within a year. When David hints that he has found a suitable man for her, matters come to a head: Suzel, who has developed feelings for Fritz, does not want to marry another,

and the anguished Fritz is unwilling to grant his permission for the match. This is the point at the beginning of Act III, that Mascagni inserts the *Intermezzo*, played as Fritz wanders the countryside wondering what to do. After an initial, angry outburst, this is music of intense sadness. Don't worry...finally, Fritz and Suzel shyly confess their mutual love and they are married.

Though he had already started work on his *Guglielmo Ratcliff* in 1889, when he set it aside for *Cavalleria rusticana*, it was unfinished until 1895, when it was successfully premiered at Milan's La Scala. This is a dark and bloody plot set in 19th-century Scotland. The title character, Ratcliff, is a violent young man who is desperately in love with Maria. He has killed two of her fiancés already, and issues a challenge to a third, Douglas, who is about to marry Maria. Douglas defeats Ratcliff in the ensuing duel, but chooses not to kill him. At this point, Mascagni inserts the gorgeous *Intermezzo*, also known as *Il Sogno* (The Dream). This is seemingly a moment of peace before the mad scene that closes Act III, in which the wounded Ratcliff loses all contact with reality. In Act IV, he shows up in Maria's bedroom, on the eve of her wedding, and wildly begs her to run away with him. She refuses and he kills her; then kills her father; and finally kills himself.

A version of the English Lady Godiva legend, *Isabeau* is set in medieval Spain where King Raimondo holds a grand tournament to find a husband for his modest and chaste daughter Isabeau. When the princess refuses to choose a suitor, the angry king decides that her punishment will be to ride naked through the town every day until she chooses a man. The townspeople, respectful of the princess's modesty, refuse to look at her, but a young falconer, Folco loudly praises her beauty. Isabeau visits the young man in prison, and after Folco explains that there was nothing shameful about her nakedness, she falls in love with him and begs her father for his freedom. The dreamy, almost Wagnerian *Intermezzo* accompanies Isabeau's ride through the town. It is permeated throughout by the sound of bells—the bells of the town, rung to remind the people they needed to abide by a strict "no peeking" rule.

In 1898, Mascagni premiered his *Iris*. Set in medieval Japan, this opera represents the turn-of-the-20th-century European fascination with oriental art and scenarios. It tells the story of innocent young girl, Iris, who is kidnapped by a brash young nobleman, Osaka, who leaves her in a geisha house. Iris resists Osaka's sexual advances, and bored by her simplicity, he abandons her. He has a change of heart, but it is too late: the geisha house owner forces her into prostitution, and she kills herself by jumping out of a window. The glorious *Inno al sole* (*Hymn to the Sun*) is



actually sung by the rising sun, personified as a chorus, at the beginning of the opera, as Iris is waking from a troubled sleep. It opens with a perfect orchestral depiction of a sunrise, from a quiet passage for horn quartet, building to luminous music for the full orchestra, before the chorus's entrance. The text is joyful and optimistic throughout, building to a grandiose conclusion on the sun's final words, *Calore, Luce, Amor! Amor!* (Warmth, Light, Love! Love!).



**Carl Orff**  
(1895 - 1982)

### *Carmina Burana*

*Orff's Carmina Burana was composed between 1935 and 1936, and was premiered in 1937, in Frankfurt. Duration 59:00.*

### Background

During the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, a tremendous body of Latin and vernacular poetry was created by poets collectively known as "goliards." To group them together under a single name is a bit misleading, however, for the goliards were drawn from every rank of society. The most famous collection of goliard poetry is the *Carmina Burana* (literally "Songs of Beuren"), a 13<sup>th</sup>-century collection of over 200 poems that was compiled at the Benedictine monastery in Benediktbeuren, south of Orff's hometown, Munich. This richly-illuminated manuscript was probably compiled for a wealthy abbot of the monastery. Most of its poems are written in Church Latin, but there are several poems in a Bavarian dialect of medieval German, and a few poems that are partially in French (for example, No. 16 in Orff's setting).

Carl Orff's "secular cantata" on texts from the *Carmina Burana* is certainly his best-known work. Orff is a familiar name to many music educators—he was the creator of a systematic method of music education for children, and the composer of an important body of *Schulwerke*, educational music. He enjoyed success as a composer in Germany, but aside from *Carmina Burana*, few of his concert or stage works are heard in this country.

### What You'll Hear

The musical style of *Carmina Burana* and much of Orff's later work owes a great deal to the neoclassical music of Stravinsky, and echoes of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*

and *Les Noces* are clear. Orff's style is harmonically simple, with ostinato rhythmic figures repeated over long static harmonies—the entire choral prologue, for example, is set above an unchanging D in the bass. The orchestration is simple, yet colorful: Orff shows a preference for percussive effects that highlight the accents of the text and his own rhythmic figures. Melodic figures are short and frequently repeated, with very little development. There are also moments of pure Romanticism, however, particularly in the baritone's solo lines. The melodic material used in *Carmina Burana* is, without exception, Orff's own: he did not use any of the relatively few extant melodies preserved with goliard poetry. His original settings of these 700-year-old lyrics are imbued with both freshness and mystery.

The texts are arranged into three large sections: I. *Spring*, II. *In the Tavern*, and III. *The Court of Love*, and each of these sections is further divided. The first two texts, serving as a prelude to Section I, deal with the most potent symbol of medieval life: the Wheel of Fortune. In countless manuscript illuminations, including a prominent page in the original *Carmina Burana* manuscript, the wheel is shown being manipulated by a capricious Lady Fortune, who raises and lowers the kings, churchmen, and peasants who cling to it. Section I, *Spring*, reflects an idealized and mythological view of Nature and Springtime. Spring was an important medieval metaphor—both for resurrection and for youth—but here the enjoyment of the season is purely sensuous. In a subsection, titled *On the Green* (Nos. 6-10), the outdoor spirit is directed towards thoughts of love and dancing. This subsection contains the only purely orchestral music in *Carmina Burana*: an instrumental *Tanz* that opens the section, and a *Reie* (round-dance) inserted before the chorus *Swaz hie gat umbe*. The four numbers set in the tavern give four different perspectives of medieval merrymaking: drunken musings, feasting (sung from the perspective of the "feastee," a roasted swan!), a satire of a drunken clergyman (who invokes the spurious St. Decius, patron saint of gamblers), and finally the drunken and entirely democratic free-for-all of *In taberna quando sumus*. The third and longest section, "Court of Love," reflects the twofold conception of love common in medieval thought. There is both the lofty ideal of courtly love—chaste longing for an unattainable lady heard in *Dies, nox et omnia*—and openly erotic love in *Si puer cum puellula*. In most of the texts, these two threads are cunningly woven together. This section ends with *Blanchefleur* and *Helen* (No. 24), a single poem, praising Venus in the same terms often reserved for addresses to the Virgin Mary. A repeat of the opening chorus, *O Fortuna*, serves as a postlude. In returning, Orff neatly encircles *Carmina Burana* within Fortune's Wheel.

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# Rhapsody in Blue

Skyview Concert Hall, Vancouver, WA  
**Salvador Brotons**, Conductor

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## Rhapsody in Blue\*

George Gershwin (1898 - 1937)

\*Marc-André Hamelin, piano

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*Intermission*

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## Symphony No. 1 in D Major

Gustav Mahler (1860 - 1911)

Langsam, schleppend

Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell

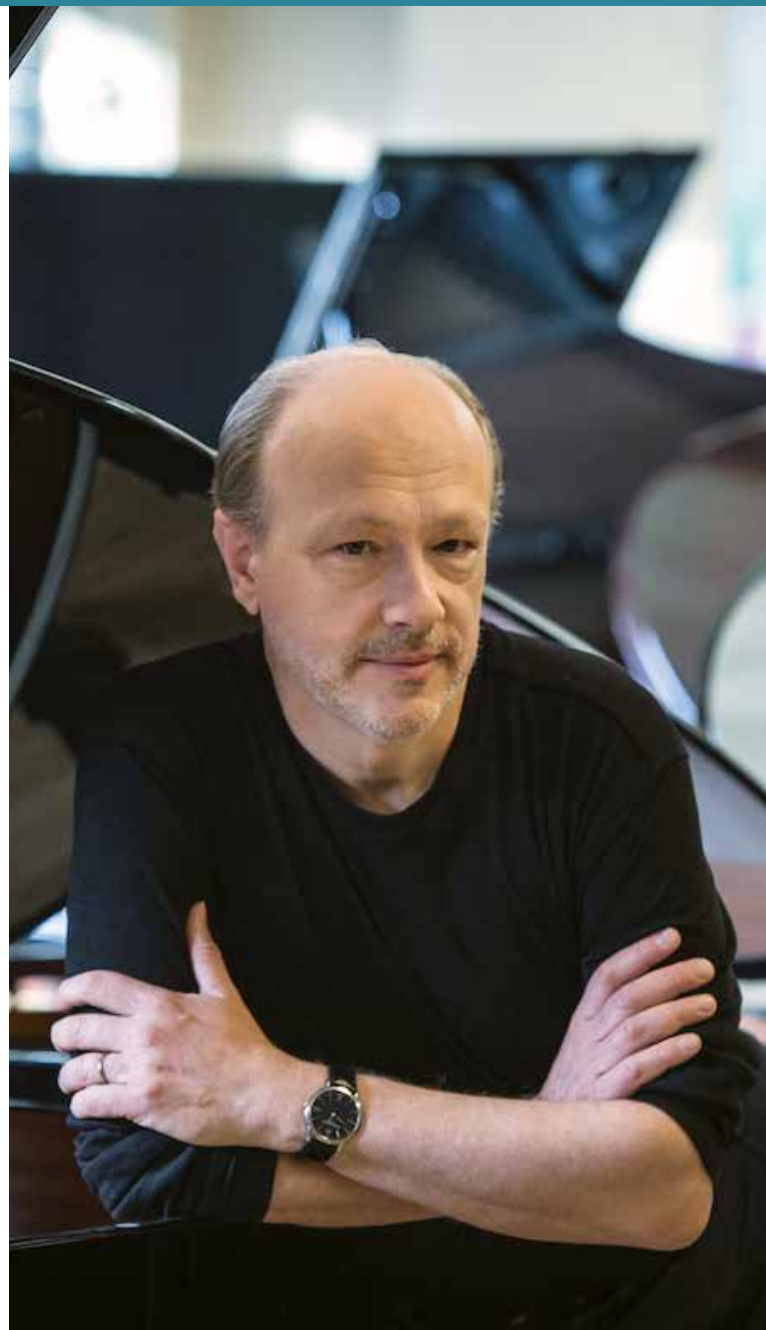
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## Marc-André Hamelin | Piano

Pianist Marc-André Hamelin, a “performer of near-superhuman technical prowess” (The New York Times), is known worldwide for his unrivaled blend of consummate musicianship. He continues to amass praise for his brilliant technique in the great works of the repertoire, and for his intrepid exploration of the rarities of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. He regularly performs around the globe with the leading orchestras and conductors of our time, and gives recitals at major concert venues and festivals worldwide.

His 2025–2026 season spans North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, featuring a full schedule of orchestral, recital, and chamber music performances. An exclusive artist with Hyperion Records, Hamelin has released over 70 albums. Hamelin is the recipient of seven Juno Awards, eleven Grammy nominations, the Jean Gimbel Lane Prize from Northwestern University, and the Paul de Hueck and Norman Walford Career Achievement Award.

Pianist Marc-André Hamelin headlines this program, which opens with Gershwin's jazzy *Rhapsody in Blue*. After intermission, an expanded Vancouver Symphony Orchestra turns to Mahler's massive *Symphony No. 1*.



**George Gershwin**  
(1898-1937)

### *Rhapsody in Blue*

Gershwin composed this work in January and February 1924. He was the piano soloist with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in the premiere, in New York City on February 12, 1924. Duration 16:00

“I frequently hear music in the heart of noise—I suddenly heard—and even saw on paper—the complete construction of the rhapsody.”

### Background

By 1924, Gershwin was a huge success on Broadway, and well-regarded as a pianist. It was at this time that Paul Whiteman conceived one of the most ambitious concerts of the Roaring '20s. Whiteman, the self-styled “King of Jazz”—known for his elaborate, tightly-arranged “symphonic jazz” style—announced an “Experiment in Modern Music” for February 12, 1924, a concert that would supposedly answer the question “What is American Music?” Whiteman planned to bring together jazz of all styles with classical music, and newly-composed works by composers like Irving Berlin

and Victor Herbert. Whiteman and Gershwin had casually chatted about a large-scale jazz-style orchestral work for the Whiteman Orchestra. But this casual commitment became a *fait accompli* when Gershwin read in the *New York Herald's* January 3 announcement that he would be composing a “jazz concerto” for Whiteman's grand concert! Composing a concerto in just over a month was a daunting task for a composer who had never written a work of this scale, and he already had several heavy Broadway commitments on his plate. Rather than attempting a traditionally-conceived concerto, Gershwin settled on a “rhapsody”—a much less rigorous form that would allow him to develop musical ideas freely. According to a letter by Gershwin, the final inspiration for the score came during a train trip to Boston for the opening of his show *Sweet Little Devil*:

“It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattlety-bang that is often stimulating to a composer—I frequently hear music in the heart of noise—I suddenly heard—and even saw on paper—the complete construction of the rhapsody from beginning to end. No new themes came to me, but I worked on the thematic material already in my mind, and tried to conceive the composition as a whole. I heard it as a musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, of our national pep, of our blues, our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston, I had a definite *plot* of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance.”

Given Gershwin's relative inexperience in writing for orchestra, and the short time available, much of the orchestration was done by Whiteman's staff arranger, Ferde Grofé. In the end Whiteman's pretentious and over-long “Experiment” was a qualified success. However, Gershwin's *Rhapsody*—the 24th work on a program of 25 pieces—stole the show.

### What You'll Hear

The *Rhapsody* opens with a famous clarinet *glissando*, the trademark lick of Ross Gorman, Whiteman's lead clarinetist, which Gershwin adopted as the perfect lead-in to the first theme. The piece develops freely, with one theme flowing naturally into the next, and with increasing intensity, until the piano takes a long solo and slows the tempo. The central section is based upon a romantic melody that sounds like a nod to Tchaikovsky with a bit of jazz punctuation. There is a recapitulation, and the piece ends aggressively, with the solo piano playing its loudest.





**Gustav Mahler**  
(1860 - 1911)

## *Symphony No. I* *in D Major*

Mahler composed much of the *Symphony No. I* between 1883 and 1888, but it was revised extensively over the next eleven years. The composer conducted the premiere in Budapest on November 20, 1889. Duration 53:00.

### Background

Composing a symphony—particularly a first symphony—is a daunting task for any composer, and it often takes a good deal of time (Brahms's first was not completed until he was 43). He began work in earnest in 1883, and by 1888 he had completed the earliest version of the symphony, an immense five-movement work. When he conducted the premiere of the work in Budapest in 1889, it was listed in the program as *Symphonic Poem in Two Parts* with the movements disposed as follows: Part I — 1. Introduction and *Allegro comodo* / 2. *Andante* / 3. *Scherzo*; Part II — 4. In the style of a funeral ceremony 5. *Molto appassionato*. Four years later, when Mahler conducted the work's second performance in Hamburg, he revised the score extensively and affixed a new title, *Titan*, after a novel by Jean Paul Richter. While he retained the structure of the original symphonic poem, he gave programmatic titles to each of the movements: Part I: "From the days of youth": 1. "Endless Spring" / 2. "A collection of flowers" / 3. "Under full sail"; Part II "The Human Comedy": 4. "Funeral march in the style of Callot" / 5. "From the Inferno to Paradise"

Over the next six years, Mahler's conception of the work changed one more time. When he published the score in 1899, it was with considerable revision and without the fanciful titles, published simply as *Symphony No. I in Four Movements for Large Orchestra*. Mahler had revised the music and dropped the original second movement. This first symphony was not an immediate critical success, but Mahler himself was satisfied with the work. Writing to his friend and protégé Bruno Walter from New York in 1909, after he had led the New York Philharmonic in a performance of the *Symphony No. I*, he declared that he was "...really pleased with my youthful effort."

### What You'll Hear

The opening movement, marked *Langsam schleppend* (slowly, dragging), begins in a hazy, undefined mood, with insistent "cuckoo" calls in the woodwinds—this same interval, a descending fourth, will eventually begin the movement's main theme. Distant brass fanfares and more bird calls from the clarinet lead smoothly into the main theme of this movement. Mahler further identifies the feeling of this movement with the words *schleppend wie ein Naturlaut* (drawn out, like a sound of nature), and nothing could be more natural than this lovely melody. The theme is taken from the happiest movement of Mahler's 1883 orchestral song cycle *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer), the song *Ging heut' Morgen übers Feld*—one of the earliest of Mahler's many self-quotations.

This theme is heard first in the low strings and is quickly picked up by the entire orchestra. The theme twice builds towards a climax before we return rather suddenly to the hazy mood of the opening. Intensity builds in leisurely way towards a final development. A return of the trumpet fanfare from the introduction signals the beginning of the coda, which is dominated by the brass and which comes to an abrupt, almost tongue-in-cheek ending.

*This first symphony was not an immediate critical success, but Mahler himself was satisfied with the work.*

Mahler marked the scherzo movement *Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell* (with strong motion, but not too fast). With its robust character, it closely resembles the *Laendler*, a rustic triple-meter Austrian dance. Mahler was closely tied to the Austrian music he had heard as a youth, and much of this movement emulates the sound of dances played by an Austrian military band. In the central section, the *Laendler* gives way to a gentle and whimsical Waltz. The *Laendler* returns in an abbreviated form at the end of the movement.

In the published version of the *Symphony No. I*, Mahler rejected the notion of any programmatic element in the work. However, he did acknowledge that the third movement was inspired in part by a well-known illustration from a children's book, a picture titled *The Hunter's Funeral Procession*. Mahler evokes the satiric mood of this

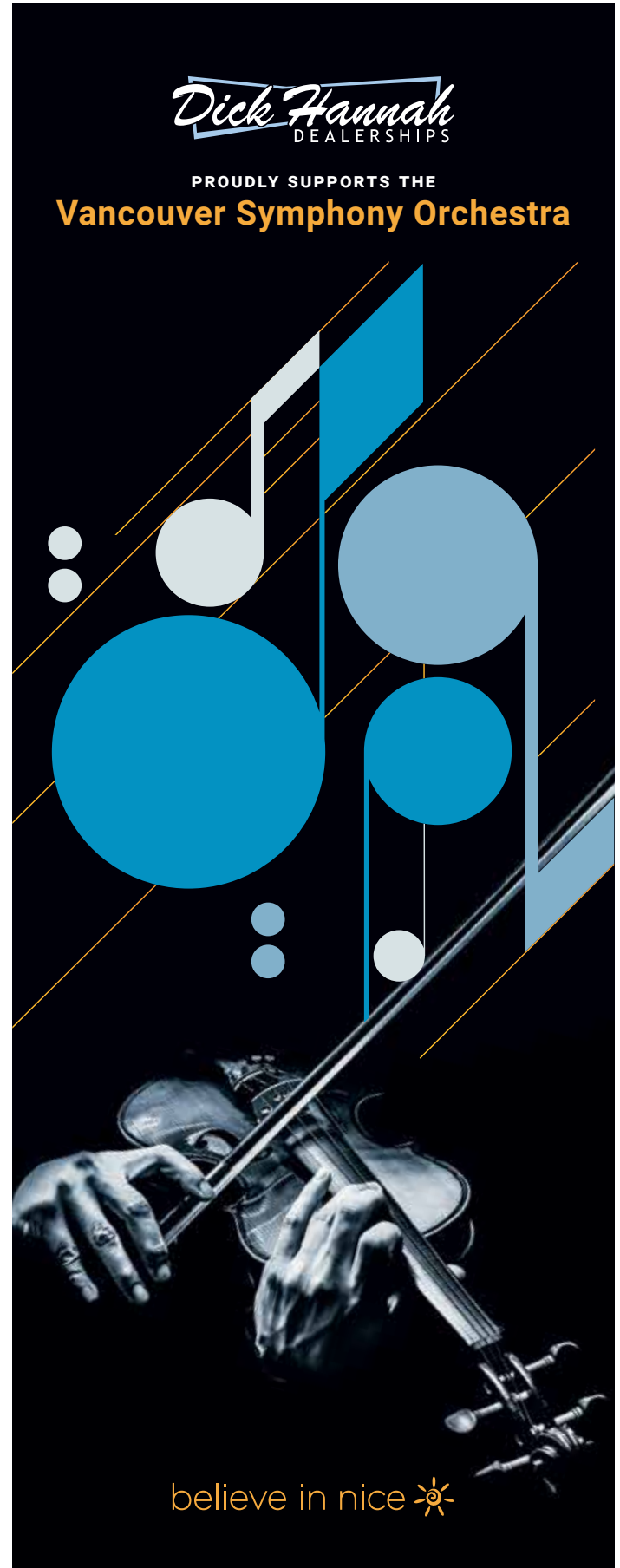
picture—forest animals pretending to be sad as they carry the hunter's coffin—by adopting a minor-key version of the children's tune *Frere Jacques* as the main theme. After developing this in rather doleful counterpoint, Mahler interrupts the music with a return to the country-band character of the previous movement (with a healthy dose of *klezmer* flavoring!). *Frere Jacques* returns briefly, only to be interrupted again by a long quotation from the despairing final song of Mahler's "Wayfarer" cycle. The movement ends by combining the band music with the main theme and dying quietly away.

The final movement follows immediately after the end of third. This is a critical moment in the symphony, as Mahler explained in the 1896 Marschall letter:

"...[in the third movement], the important thing is the *mood* which is expressed, from which the fourth movement then springs suddenly like lightning from a dark cloud. It is the cry of a deeply wounded heart, preceded by the spooky, ironically brooding oppressiveness of the funeral march."

Mahler's "lightning from a dark cloud" explodes with a cymbal crash and a dissonant brass chord. The minor-key main theme is heard first in the brasses and often takes on a rather violent marchlike character. The mood changes drastically with lyrical passage for the violins (perhaps the journey from Hell to Heaven described in Mahler's Hamburg program). The violence returns again, only to resolve suddenly into a major key, and dissolve into a reminiscence of the opening of the first movement and a placid interlude. The marchlike theme returns once more, mingled with other fragments of other themes, building into a gigantic orchestral crescendo. The exultant coda is dominated once again by the brass, particularly by the eight horns. Bruno Walter best summarized the effect of this final movement, "Here, he unleashes the tempest, a wild eruption, a life-and-death struggle leading to a triumphant conclusion."

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# Holiday Pops with Liz Callaway

Skyview Concert Hall, Vancouver, WA

**Salvador Brotons**, Conductor

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Enjoy Broadway hits and holiday favorites with Tony Award nominee and Emmy Award-winning vocalist Liz Callaway! Full program notes by Michael Allsen will be available as a program insert at the December performance.

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## Liz Callaway | Vocalist

Liz Callaway is a Tony and Grammy nominee and Emmy Award-winning actress, singer and recording artist. She made her Broadway debut in Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along*, received a Tony Award nomination for her performance in *Baby*, and for five years, won acclaim as *Grizabella* in *Cats*. She has also starred in the original casts of *Miss Saigon*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *The Look of Love*.

Off-Broadway she received a Drama Desk nomination for her performance in *The Spitfire Grill* (Playwrights Horizons), and appeared in *Brownstone*, *No Way to Treat a Lady*, *Marry Me a Little*, and *Godspell*. Other New York appearances include the legendary *Follies in Concert* at Lincoln Center, *A Stephen Sondheim Evening*, *Fiorella!* (Encores!), and *Hair in Concert*. Regional and international credits include the one-person play "Every Brilliant Thing", *Dot in Sunday in the Park with George*, Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*, the

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European premiere of *Sondheim on Sondheim* at London's Royal Festival Hall.

Her extensive concert and symphony career has included appearances in London, Paris, Iceland, Spain, Australia, China, and nearly every major city in the U.S. She performs regularly with her sister Ann Hampton Callaway and composer Stephen Schwartz and has had the great pleasure of singing with Jimmy Webb, Paul Williams, and the legendary Johnny Mathis.

Liz sang the Academy Award-nominated song "Journey to the Past" in the animated feature *Anastasia* and is also the singing voice of Princess Jasmine in Disney's *Aladdin* and the King of Thieves and *The Return of Jafar*. Other film work includes *The Swan Princess*, *Lion King 2: Simba's Pride*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Brave Little Toaster Goes to Mars*, and *The Rewrite* with Hugh Grant.

She received an Emmy Award for hosting *Ready to Go*, a daily, live children's program on CBS in Boston. Other TV credits include *In Performance at the White House*, *Inside the Actor's Studio: Stephen Sondheim*, *In Performance at the White House*, and *Senior Trip* (CBS Movie of the Week).





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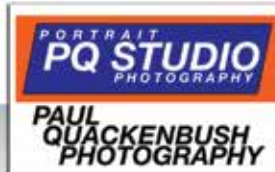
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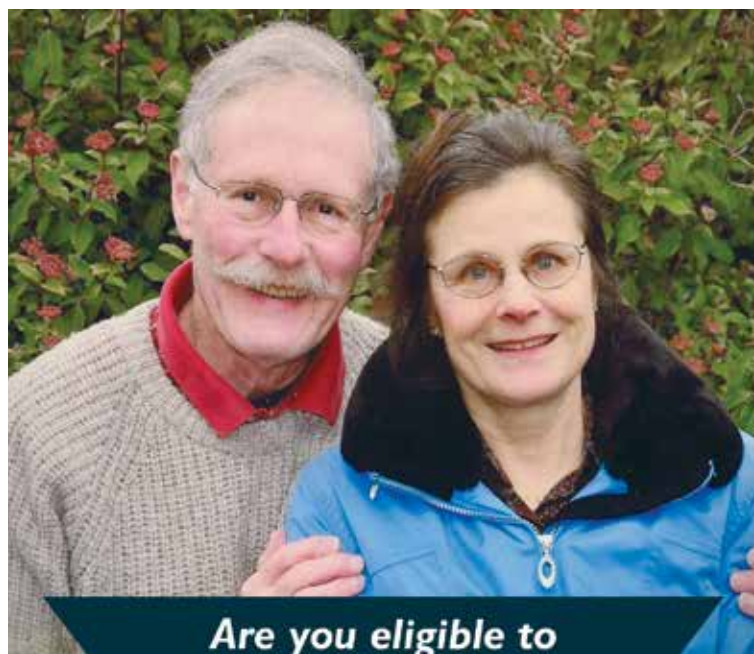




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