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## **BPO holiday concerts ring in the season with debut of new celesta**

**The donated instrument, recognizable from 'The Nutcracker' and  
'Harry Potter', will enhance community's holiday experience for decades**



The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra is delighted to announce the addition of a brand new celesta to its musical family, a gift bestowed by a generous anonymous donor and perfectly timed for their holiday concerts. The instrument, known for its enchanting bell-like sound familiar from *Harry Potter*, *The Polar Express*, and "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy", is set to debut on the Kleinhans Music Hall stage at **JoAnn's Classical Christmas**, December 8-9. It will also be celebrated in **Holiday Pops with John Morris Russell**, December 14-17.

This donation provides a significant upgrade for the orchestra, whose previous celesta – now retired to the role of backup – was in service for over 50 years. Jonathan Parrish, BPO Vice President of Artistic & Orchestra Operations, describes the new Schiedmayer 5.5 Octave Studio Model as "the celesta equivalent to a Steinway." Schiedmayer is the world's leading manufacturer of celestas, and this particular instrument was made to order for the BPO in Germany, taking a week-long journey to reach its new home in Kleinhans Music Hall.

Susan Schuman, BPO keyboardist and featured guest on Holiday Pops with John Morris Russell, comments on the musical value of this exceptional instrument: "I am thrilled to be performing Michael Kurek's Celesta Concertino on the Holiday Pops program, debuting our beautiful new Schiedmayer celesta. It will be the perfect opportunity to highlight the celesta's

sound quality, often described as heavenly and magical. Those characteristics are really brought to life when performed on a high-quality instrument, and we are grateful that this is now possible. We look forward to sharing that magic with everyone this December!"

The orchestra extends deep gratitude to the celesta's anonymous donor, whose generosity will not only enhance the orchestra's performances, but also bring joy and enrichment to the Western NY community for years to come.

There are many opportunities to be immersed in the holiday spirit with family, friends, and the BPO this season. Here is the orchestra's full festive lineup:

**Candlelight Holiday Concert at the Clement House, November 30**

Xiaofan Liu, violin; Zhen Liu, violin; Joshua Lohner, viola; Roman Mekinulov, cello

**The Nutcracker at Shea's Performing Arts Center, December 2 & 3**

Daniel Black, conductor; Neglia Ballet

**Handel's Messiah at St. Mary's Swormville, December 3**

Adam Luebke, conductor; Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus; Rachel Mikol, soprano  
Jessica Ann Best, mezzo-soprano; Nathaniel McEwen, tenor; James Harrington, bass

**Michael Bolton, December 6**

Bradley Thachuk, conductor  
Michael Bolton, Cami Clune & Matt Wilson, vocalists

**JoAnn's Classical Christmas, December 8 & 9**

JoAnn Falletta, conductor; Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus  
Karen Saxon, mezzo-soprano; Natalie Debikey Scanio, piccolo

**Holiday Music Under the Dome at M&T Bank Gold Dome, December 9**

Fernanda Lastra, conductor

**Jingle Bell Jam, December 10**

Fernanda Lastra, conductor; Kathleen Bassett, soprano  
Lancaster Handbell Choir; Royal Academy of Ballet & Dance

**Holiday Pops with John Morris Russell, December 14-17**

John Morris Russell, conductor; Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus; Jennifer Cherest, soprano  
Susan Schuman, celesta; Amy Glidden, violin; John Riesen, tenor; Tom Burns, narrator

*Concerts located at Kleinhans Music Hall unless otherwise noted.*

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# BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

For concert details including dates, times, and programs, visit [bpo.org/holidays](https://bpo.org/holidays). Tickets can be purchased online, in-person at the Box Office in Kleinhans Music Hall, or by calling (716) 885-5000.

Find images [here](#). For additional information, interviews, photos, or video, contact Simone Viola at [sviola@bpo.org](mailto:sviola@bpo.org) or (716) 242-7814.

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*To learn more about the BPO's storied history, distinguished conductors and world-class musicians, and commitment to IDEA, visit the [Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra](#).*



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