

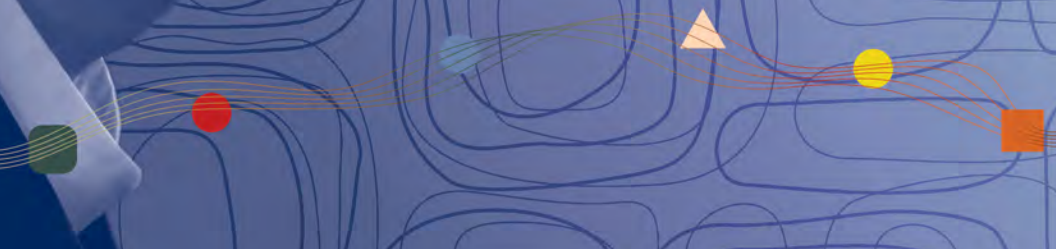


90  
Years



BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

March 7 – March 30, 2025



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## CONTACT

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786 Delaware Ave. Buffalo, NY 14209  
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## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



With spring upon us at last, our BPO musicians share the warmth of music with a talented group of guest artists from Buffalo and beyond this month. This collection of concerts pays tribute to a musical icon, brings cinematic scores to life, and shares profound lyrical storytelling.

Honoring the “Queen of Rock 'n' Roll,” Broadway’s Tiffany Mann and Shaleah Adkisson sing Tina Turner’s greatest hits alongside vocalist Tyler Huckstep, pianist John Boswell, and the full orchestra. This performance concludes the 2024-25 BPO Rock Series, celebrating the songs that elevated Tina Turner to superstardom.

Enrico Lopez-Yañez, Principal Pops Conductor of the Detroit, Nashville, and Pacific Symphonies, returns to our podium to conduct music from classic Western films and orchestral works that capture the spirit of the “Wild West.” This marks Lopez-Yañez’s third performance with our orchestra in three concert seasons, as he has quickly become a fan-favorite.

In our Classics Series, Music Director JoAnn Falletta leads a program of fairy tale-inspired 20<sup>th</sup>-century works by Stravinsky and Ravel. British-born Canadian mezzo-soprano Susan Platts returns to tell the tales of *The Faun and the Shepherdess* and *Shéhérazade*.

We end the month with *Sanctuary Road*, a powerful oratorio that shines light on the courageous journeys made along the Underground Railroad. From the Pulitzer Prize-winning team of Buffalo-born composer Paul Moravec and librettist Mark Campbell, this poignant work draws on the records of abolitionist William Still with a stellar cast of vocalists and the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus to share the story. Margaret Bonds’ *The Montgomery Variations*, dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., completes the program. Leading this deeply moving concert is Grand Island-native conductor Malcolm Merriweather, Director of the New York Philharmonic Chorus.

Your enthusiasm and support for live music make it possible for us to bring world-class performances to the western New York community season after season, for 90 years and counting. With that in mind, I warmly invite you to join the BPO family for another concert season of unforgettable performances, starting this September. Subscription packages for the 2025-26 season are available now, online at [bpo.org](http://bpo.org) or at the Box Office in Kleinhans Music Hall.

Thank you for joining us today!

Sincerely,



Scott R. Stencil  
 Chair, Board of Trustees  
 Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Society, Inc.

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## JOANN FALLETTA MUSIC DIRECTOR

Multiple GRAMMY Award-winning conductor JoAnn Falletta serves as Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, Music Director Laureate of the Virginia Symphony, Principal Guest Conductor of the Brevard Music Center, and Conductor Laureate of the Hawaii Symphony. Named as one of the 50 great conductors of all time by Gramophone Magazine and among the top 10 conductors today by David Hurwitz of Classics Today, she is hailed for her work as a conductor, recording artist, audience builder, and champion of American composers.

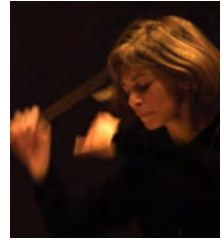


Photo by Mark Dellas

As Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, Falletta became the first woman to lead a major American orchestra and has been credited with bringing the Philharmonic to an unprecedented level of national and international prominence. The Buffalo Philharmonic has become one of the leading recording orchestras for NAXOS, with two GRAMMY Award-winning recordings, a 2024 GRAMMY nomination for Best Orchestral Performance, and 2025 GRAMMY nominations for Best Orchestral Performance and Best Classical Compendium.

Internationally, Falletta has conducted many of the most prominent orchestras in Europe, Asia, and South America, including recent and upcoming concerts in France, England, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Brazil, Croatia, and Mexico. Her recent and upcoming North American guest conducting includes the National Symphony, the orchestras of Dallas, Boston, Baltimore, Detroit, Nashville, Indianapolis, Houston, Milwaukee, Calgary, Vancouver, Quebec, Tulsa, Charleston, Nashville, and Rochester, and at premier conservatories including Juilliard, Curtis, Cleveland Institute of Music, Indiana University, the Manhattan School, Mannes, and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

With a discography of over 125 titles, Falletta is a leading recording artist for NAXOS. She has won two individual GRAMMY Awards, including the 2021 GRAMMY Award for Richard Danielpour's *The Passion of Yeshua* with the BPO and the 2019 GRAMMY for *Spiritualist* by Kenneth Fuchs with the London Symphony, both on NAXOS. Her BPO recording of John Corigliano's *Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan* received two GRAMMYS in 2008, and her 2020 Naxos recording with the BPO of orchestral music of Florent Schmitt received the prestigious Diapason d'Or Award.

Falletta is a member of the esteemed American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has served by Presidential appointment as a Member of the National Council on the Arts during the Bush and Obama administrations, and is the recipient of many of the most prestigious conducting awards. She has conducted over 1,600 orchestral works by more than 600 composers, 135 works by more than 70 women composers, and well over 150 U.S. and world premieres. ASCAP has honored her as "a leading force for music of our time." In 2019, Falletta was named Performance Today's first Classical Woman of the Year, and in 2024, she received the Dallas Symphony's Award of Excellence.

After earning her bachelor's degree at Mannes, Falletta received master's and doctoral degrees from The Juilliard School.

For more information, visit [joannfalletta.com](http://joannfalletta.com).

**FERNANDA LASTRA** ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR, DIVERSITY FELLOW



Fernanda Lastra holds the position of Assistant Conductor, Diversity Fellow for the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, under the mentorship of JoAnn Falletta.

In 2022, Fernanda was appointed as the Conductor Diversity Fellow and was promoted in 2023, which also came with a one-year contract extension. In this role, Fernanda serves as Assistant Conductor, cover conductor, and the main conductor for various BPO performances including the Kids series, Music for Youth concerts, Summer series concerts, and community engagement performances. Additionally, Fernanda is a member of the BPO's artistic team, music education committee, and Diversity Council, among other responsibilities.

Born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, Fernanda Lastra is a passionate and creative conductor with a wide range of interests in repertoire, including symphonic, contemporary, and operatic works. In May 2025, Fernanda is scheduled to make her debut in the BPO's Classics series, featuring pianist Avery Gagliano.

Besides regularly leading the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in several concerts as part of her role as Assistant Conductor, Fernanda collaborates with professional and youth orchestras as a guest conductor. One of her previous engagements includes leading three full performances of Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* alongside musicians from the Boston Symphony at The Birch Festival, held in the Berkshires, Massachusetts. As an assistant and cover conductor, Fernanda has worked alongside esteemed conductors such as JoAnn Falletta, Giancarlo Guerrero, Maximiano Valdés, Gerard Schwarz, Mei-Ann Chen, Josep Caballé Domenech, and Michael Francis, among others.

Committed to featuring diverse voices in concert halls, Fernanda is an advocate for Latin American composers, particularly those from Argentina. She is equally dedicated to creating well-balanced and diverse programs that enhance the overall concert experience. Fernanda is passionate about community engagement and music education, as she believes in the transformative power of music to unite, heal, and to develop emotional intelligence.

In November 2024, Fernanda received the "Career Advancement Award" at the Women in Classical Music Symposium hosted by the Dallas Symphony. Additionally, in 2023, Fernanda received a prestigious recognition from Argentina's National Classical Radio at their annual Premios Nacional Clásica, in the category of "established female conductor."

Fernanda earned two bachelor's degrees from La Plata University, Argentina, in orchestral and choral conducting, a master's degree in orchestral conducting from Penn State University, and a doctoral degree from the University of Iowa. She is trained in piano and viola.

## BRADLEY THACHUK CONDUCTOR, POPS & ROCK CONCERTS



Canadian conductor Bradley Thachuk is the Music Director of the Niagara Symphony Orchestra in Canada. He is also the conductor for the BPO Rock series, conductor and arranger for Steve Hackett's "Genesis Revisited" project, and a lecturer in Orchestral Literature at the world-renowned Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

As an in-demand guest conductor in North America and Europe, Mr. Thachuk's recent and upcoming guest engagements include the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the English Symphony Orchestra (U.K.), the Heart of England Philharmonic, the Wuppertal Symphony Orchestra (Germany), the Chautauqua Institute's Music School Symphony Orchestra, the Kamloops Symphony Orchestra, the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, the Reading Symphony Orchestra, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra (Canada), the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Pops, the Richmond Symphony, the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, and the Hradec Kralove Philharmonic (Czech Republic).

An advocate of contemporary music, he has led world, Canadian, and U.S. premieres of works by John Estacio, Joseph Schwantner, Kevin Lau, Stewart Goodyear, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Roydon Tse, Robert A. Baker, and Ronald Royer, amongst others.

Mr. Thachuk, a versatile musician and highly sought-after symphonic arranger, has also established himself globally as one of the handful of conductors who moves easily between the classical and rock worlds. His work on Steve Hackett's worldwide Blu-Ray/DVD/CD release, "Genesis Revisited Band & Orchestra: Live at Royal Festival Hall," and appearances in Europe with this project have been met with critical acclaim. Recent and upcoming projects include work with Chris Botti, Blue Rodeo, Dave Mason of Fleetwood Mac and Traffic, Bahamas, ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" franchise, Tony-Award winning Heather Headley, Sarah Slean, Chantal Kreviazuk, The Beach Boys, and Air Supply.

## RON SPIGELMAN CONDUCTOR, POPS & FILM CONCERTS



Australian conductor Ron Spigelman is an honors graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, London. Earlier in his career he was the Associate Conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Fort Worth Symphony, Music Director of the Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, San Angelo Symphony, Texas Chamber Orchestra, Springfield Symphony (MO), and the Lake Placid Sinfonietta where he is now Conductor Emeritus. He has also served as Principal Pops Conductor of the Fort Worth and Syracuse symphonies.

Recent guest conducting appearances include the Atlanta, St. Louis, Baltimore, Utah, Oregon, Kansas City, Vancouver, and Nashville symphonies, and the Minnesota Orchestra. He has conducted symphonic, ballet, opera, musical theater and pops selections, plus over 30 live-to-film productions including all eight *Harry Potter* films. Guest artists he has accompanied include Horacio Gutiérrez, Rachel Barton Pine, Richard Stoltzman, Marvin Hamlisch, Peter Paul & Mary, James Taylor, Leslie Odom Jr., and Gladys Knight.

Career highlights include the world premiere of *Pegasus* by Lowell Liebermann with the Dallas Symphony, his Carnegie Hall debut with the BPO in 2004, and the world premiere recording of *Sylvan* by Michael Torke with the Lake Placid Sinfonietta.

Ron lives in Tulsa, OK with his wife Laura, and they have a combined six children. He is Board President of Harmony Project Tulsa, bringing instrumental instruction to underserved youth in collaboration with Tulsa Public Schools. He also recently graduated *summa cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in Family and Human Development at Arizona State University, receiving the Dean's Medal for Academic Excellence.



## HISTORY OF THE BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

As Buffalo's cultural ambassador, the GRAMMY Award-winning Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra under Music Director JoAnn Falletta presents more than 120 Classics, Pops, Rock, Family and Youth concerts each year.

After the rise and fall of several forerunners, the BPO was founded in 1935, performing most often at the Elmwood Music Hall. The hall was located at Elmwood Ave. and Virginia St., and was demolished in 1938 as the BPO's permanent home, Kleinhans Music Hall, was constructed. During the Great Depression, the orchestra was initially supported by funds from the Works Progress Administration and the Emergency Relief Bureau. Over the decades, the orchestra has matured in stature under outstanding conductors including William Steinberg, Josef Krips, Lukas Foss, Michael Tilson Thomas, Maximiano Valdés, Semyon Bychkov, and Julius Rudel. The orchestra has welcomed many distinguished guest performers such as Isaac Stern, Aaron Copland, Van Cliburn, Igor Stravinsky, Renée Fleming, and Yo-Yo Ma. During the tenure of JoAnn Falletta, who has served as music director since 1998, the BPO has rekindled its history of radio broadcasts and recordings, including the release of over 60 albums.

The BPO's NAXOS recording of composer John Corigliano's "Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan" won two GRAMMY Awards, and their NAXOS recording of Richard Danielpour's "The Passion of Yeshua" with the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus won one GRAMMY. Their recordings are heard on classical radio worldwide.

## HISTORY OF KLEINHANS MUSIC HALL

Since 1940, the orchestra's home has been Kleinhans Music Hall, which enjoys an international reputation as one of the finest concert halls in the world due to its superb acoustics.

Kleinhans Music Hall was built thanks to the generosity and vision of Edward and Mary Seaton Kleinhans and the stewardship of their charitable dreams by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, and the support of the federal government. The Community Foundation was bequeathed the estates of Mr. and Mrs. Kleinhans, who made their fortune from the clothing store that bore their name, and who died within three months of each other in 1934. The Public Works Administration, an agency of the New Deal, provided crucial funding that made it possible to complete the hall.

The Kleinhanses, who were music lovers, specified their money was to be used "to erect a suitable music hall...for the use, enjoyment and benefit of the people of the City of Buffalo."

The BPO performed at Kleinhans Music Hall's official opening on Oct. 12, 1940, under the baton of Franco Autori.

Kleinhans Music Hall was designed by the Finnish father-and-son team of Eliel and Eero Saarinen, along with architects F.J. and W.A. Kidd. Kleinhans is known for its combination of graceful structural beauty and extraordinary acoustics. Eliel Saarinen's aim was to create "an architectural atmosphere...so as to tune the performers and the public alike into a proper mood of performance and receptiveness, respectively." In 1989, the hall was designated a National Historic Landmark, the highest designation of significance a site or structure can receive.

Kleinhans is owned by the City of Buffalo and operated by a separate 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Board of Directors is comprised of Jeremy Oczek, Chair; Karen Arrison, Vice Chair; Peter Eliopoulos, Treasurer; Tania Werbizky, Secretary; Cindy Abbott Letro; Akruiti Babaria; and city official David Rivera, Niagara District Council member.

## JOANN FALLETTA, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Angelo and Carol Fatta Endowed Chair

## FERNANDA LASTRA, ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR, DIVERSITY FELLOW

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concertmaster  
Amy Glidden  
assoc. concertmaster  
*Louis P. Ciminelli Family  
Foundation Endowed Chair*  
Anton Shelepov  
asst. concertmaster  
Yeji Kim  
2nd asst. concertmaster  
Douglas Cone  
Deborah Greitzer  
Diana Sachs  
Alan Ross  
Andrea Blanchard-Cone  
Loren Silvertrust  
Hee Sagong (L)  
Zhen Liu  
Aleksandar Ivanov  
Mari Jones\*\*

### SECOND VIOLIN

Antoine Lefebvre  
principal  
Jacqueline Galluzzo  
assoc. principal  
Richard Kay  
in memoriam  
Frances Morgante  
Robert Prokes  
Shieh-Jian Tsai  
Xiaofan Liu  
Andrew Lin  
Aika Ito  
Chloe Yu Gong  
Lisa Jihyeon Kim  
Jonathan Hwang\*\*

### VIOLA

Caroline Gilbert  
principal  
Anna Shemetyeva  
assoc. principal  
Natalie Piskorsky  
Matthew Phillips  
Kate Holzemer  
Janz Castelo de Armas  
Joshua Lohner

### CELLO

Roman Mekinulov  
principal  
*Jane D. Baird Endowed Chair*  
Feng Hew  
assoc. principal  
Nancy Anderson  
Robert Hausmann<sup>2</sup>  
David Schmude  
Amelie Fradette  
Oleg Babkov\*\*

### BASS

Daniel Pendley  
principal  
*Garman Family Foundation  
Endowed Chair*  
Brett Shurtliffe  
assoc. principal  
Michael Nigrin  
Edmond Gnekow  
Jonathan Borden  
Nicholas Jones  
Gary Paul Matz

### FLUTE

Christine Bailey Davis  
principal  
Linda Greene  
Natalie Debikey Scanio

### PICCOLO

Natalie Debikey Scanio

### OBOE

Henry Ward  
principal  
Joshua Lauretig  
Anna Mattix

### ENGLISH HORN

Anna Mattix

### CLARINET

William Amsel  
principal  
Patti DiLutis  
Salvatore Andolina

### E-FLAT CLARINET

Patti DiLutis

### BASS CLARINET AND SAXOPHONE

Salvatore Andolina

### BASSOON

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principal  
Doron Laznow  
Natalya Rose Vrbsky

### CONTRABASSOON

Natalya Rose Vrbsky

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principal  
*Kay Koessler Endowed Chair*  
Daniel Kerdelewicz  
assoc. principal  
Sophia Filippone  
Jay Matthews  
Daniel Sweeley

### TRUMPET

Alex Jokipii  
principal  
Geoffrey Hardcastle  
Philip Christner

### TROMBONE

Jonathan Lombardo<sup>1</sup>  
principal  
Timothy Smith

### BASS TROMBONE

Filipe Pereira

### TUBA

Seth Rawleigh  
principal

### TIMPANI

Matthew Bassett  
principal  
Dinesh Joseph  
asst. principal

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principal  
*Nancy E. Schmid Endowed  
Chair*  
Dinesh Joseph

### HARP

Madeline Olson  
principal

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<sup>1</sup> Chair dedicated to the  
memory of Scott Parkinson

<sup>2</sup> Chair dedicated to the  
memory of Maer Bunis

\*\* Temporary Appointment

(L) Leave of Absence

Friday, March 7, 2025 at 7:30 PM


**BPO ROCK SERIES**  
**SIMPLY THE BEST:**  
**THE MUSIC OF TINA TURNER**

**Bradley Thachuk, conductor**  
**Tiffany Mann, vocals**  
**Shaleah Adkisson, vocals**

**Tyler Huckstep, vocals**  
**John Boswell, piano**

*Program to be announced from the stage.*

Tonight's concert is presented by **HodgsonRuss**

The Rock Series is presented by the  **YURTCHUK  
FOUNDATION**

Patrons are asked to turn off all electronic devices.  
The use of cameras and recording devices is strictly prohibited.

---

## **TIFFANY MANN, VOCALS**



Tiffany Mann is best known for her powerhouse vocals and standout performances in Encores' *Jelly's Last Jam* and *Ragtime*, Broadway productions of *Waitress* and *Be More Chill*, her recent star-turn as Effie in *Dreamgirls* at the MUNY, and her Lucille Lortel award-winning performance in *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. Her television credits include *Orange is the New Black* and *New Amsterdam*.

Her empowering single, "Do It Anyway," is an anthem and declaration to push past your fears and go for your dreams. Tiffany also shares her passion for mental health advocacy, relatable transparency, and self-love through social media in what she calls "joy infused healing." And yes, she's one of the Manns (if you know, you know). Tiffany is managed by The Rosenzweig Group.



## SHALEAH ADKISSON, VOCALS



Shaleah Adkisson is a singer and actress who has been delighting audiences across the country for the last 18 years. She has been seen on Broadway and on tour in *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*, and as Joanne in the off-Broadway revival of *Rent*. Other theatrical credits include *Clybourne Park*, *Avenue Q*, *The Hot Mikado*, *Beehive: The '60s Musical*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Grease*, *Nunsense*, and *Children of Eden*. Since 2013, she has performed around the country with dynamic all-female tribute shows *Back to the Garden* (tributing Joni Mitchell, Carole King & Laura Nyro) and *August 1969: A Tribute to the Women of Woodstock*. When not on stage, Shaleah works at New York City Center theater in the Education & Community

Engagement department managing their in-school theater and dance programs. She dedicates this performance to her superhero husband, Jose and her sweet baby boy, Lucas.

## TYLER HUCKSTEP, VOCALS



Tyler Huckstep hails from the Hoosier state and is thrilled to be making his debut with the Buffalo Philharmonic. After graduating with a BFA in Musical Theatre from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, he began his journey performing in such shows as *Shrek the Musical* (International Tour), *The Sting* (Paper Mill Playhouse), and even a stint on Celebrity Cruise Lines as their lead vocalist. Other credits include *Gypsy* (The Engeman Theater), *Forever Plaid* (Merry-Go-Round Playhouse), *Legally Blonde* (Manship Theater), and concerts with Spot-On Entertainment, including performing with the philharmonic orchestras of Abilene, Plymouth, Lexington, and here in Buffalo!

When he is not performing, he can be found teaching in the Bronx, where he has overseen a middle school history department for the last two years. He would like to thank his husband, Ryan, for his unwavering love and support, his family back in Indiana, and everyone in this audience for coming out to support live music.

## JOHN BOSWELL, PIANO



John Boswell has served as musical director for Judy Collins, Andy Williams, Bob Newhart, Scott Coulter, Maude Maggart, Faith Prince, Carmen Cusack, Babbie Green, Jason Graae, and a host of other fine talents. John played the role of Moose in the national tour of *Crazy For You*, appeared on *The Tonight Show*, *Today Show*, *CBS This Morning*, *Live with Regis and Kathie Lee*, and *General Hospital*, and was the piano-playing hands of Nancy McKeon on the sitcom, *The Facts of Life*.

Recent concerts with symphonies have included Jerry Herman: The Broadway Legacy Concert, Blockbuster Broadway!, Sheena Easton and Scott Coulter: *The Spy Who Loved Me*, and *Music of the Knights*. John has been heard singing in the shows *Three Men and a Baby...Grand*,

*Cinema Toast*, *Broadway Today*, *Wise Guys*, and the New York cult hit, *Cashino*. Broadway/Off-Broadway credits include *Crazy For You*, *The Secret Garden*, *LIZA! Steppin' Out at Radio City Music Hall*, *Back to Bacharach and David*, and *The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives*. His monthly concerts in 2017 at The Gardenia in Los Angeles have been crowd-pleasers. John has eight albums of original piano music and a ninth on the way. While a student at UCLA, John received the Frank Sinatra Award for popular instrumentalists.

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Saturday, March 8, 2025 at 7:30 PM

**BPO POPS SERIES**  
**SYMPHONIC SHOWDOWN:**  
**THE WILD WEST IN CONCERT**

**Enrico Lopez-Yañez, conductor**

**BRUCE BROUGHTON** Themes from *Silverado*

**TIOMKIN / arr. Palmer & Russ** *High Noon* Symphonic Suite  
Theme from *High Noon*  
Clock, Showdown and Finale

**TIOMKIN / arr. Russ** The John Wayne "Duke" March from *Circus World*

**MOROSS** Main Title from *Big Country*

**MARKOWITZ / arr. Roy Phillippe** *The Wild, Wild West*

**JAMES NEWTON HOWARD** Suite from *Wyatt Earp*  
Wyatt Earp (Main Title)  
The Wedding  
It Happened That Way

**JOHN WILLIAMS** *The Cowboys Overture*

INTERMISSION

**BERLIN / arr. Bennett** Overture to *Annie Get Your Gun*

**COPLAND** Buckaroo Holiday from *Rodeo*

**GROFÉ** On the Trail from *Grand Canyon Suite*

**ANDERSON** *Fiddle-Fiddle*

**ROSSINI** Finale from *William Tell Overture*

**COPLAND** Variations on a Shaker Melody

**COPLAND** Hoe-Down from *Rodeo*



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## ENRICO LOPEZ-YAÑEZ, GUEST CONDUCTOR



Enrico Lopez-Yañez is the Principal Pops Conductor of the Detroit, Nashville, and Pacific Symphonies, as well as the Principal Conductor of Dallas Symphony Presents and Principal Guest Conductor of Pops at the Indianapolis Symphony. Lopez-Yañez has quickly established himself as one of the nation's leading conductors of popular music and become known for his unique style of audience engagement. Also an active composer/arranger, he has been commissioned by the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, Houston Symphony, San Diego Symphony and Omaha Symphony, and has had his works performed by orchestras including the Atlanta Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, National Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Seattle Symphony, and Utah Symphony, among others.

Lopez-Yañez has conducted concerts with a broad spectrum of artists including Nas, Patti LaBelle, Itzhak Perlman, Trisha Yearwood, Kenny Loggins, Stewart Copeland, Kelsea Ballerini, Leslie Odom Jr., Renee Elise Goldsberry, Portugal The Man, Ben Rector, Cody Fry, Hanson, The Beach Boys, Kenny G, and more. Each year, Lopez-Yañez conducts the annual Let Freedom Sing! Music City July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks show which is televised annually on CMT, reaching millions of viewers across the nation.

This season, Lopez-Yañez collaborates with artists including Dolly Parton, Bernadette Peters, Lyle Lovett, War & Treaty, Ben Folds, Indigo Girls, Joss Stone, Girl Named Tom, Lettuce, and Tower of Power. He will appear with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony, and Toronto Symphony, as well as make return appearances with the Baltimore Symphony, Houston Symphony, National Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Utah Symphony, and more. Previously, Lopez-Yañez has appeared with orchestras throughout North America including the Cincinnati Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, and the San Francisco Symphony, among others.

Lopez-Yañez was the recipient of the 2023 "Mexicanos Distinguidos" Award by the Mexican government, an award granted to Mexican citizens living abroad for outstanding career accomplishments in their field. As an advocate for Latin music, he has arranged and produced shows for Latin Fire, Mariachi Los Camperos, The Three Mexican Tenors, and collaborated with artists including Aida Cuevas, Arturo Sandoval, and Lila Downs.

As Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Symphonica Productions, LLC, Lopez-Yañez curates and leads programs designed to cultivate new audiences. Symphonica's show offerings range from Pops shows to Family and Education productions which have been described as "incredibly special – and something that needs to become the new norm" (Lima Symphony). Symphonica's productions have been performed by major orchestras across North America, including the Baltimore Symphony, Edmonton Symphony, Florida Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Tucson Symphony, and many more.

As a producer, composer, and arranger, Lopez-Yañez's work can be heard on numerous albums including the UNESCO benefit album, *Action Moves People United*, and children's music albums including *The Spaceship that Fell in My Backyard*, winner of the John Lennon Songwriting Contest, Hollywood Music and Media Awards, and Family Choice Awards, and *Kokowanda Bay*, winner of a Global Media Award, as well as a Parents' Choice Award where Lopez-Yañez was lauded for his "catchy arrangements" (Parents' Choice Foundation).



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**Andrea Cicalese, violin**

Fri Apr 25, 7pm  
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**Tim McAllister, saxophone**

Fri May 30, 7pm  
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Friday, March 14, 2025 at 10:30 AM  
Saturday, March 15, 2025 at 7:30 PM

## BPO CLASSICS SERIES STRAVINSKY & RAVEL

**JoAnn Falletta, conductor**  
**Susan Platts, mezzo-soprano**

**STRAVINSKY** *Pulcinella* Suite

- I. Sinfonia
- II. Serenata
- III. Scherzino
- IV. Tarantella
- V. Toccata
- VI. Gavotta con due variazioni
- VII. Vivo
- VIII. Minuetto
- IX. Finale

**RAVEL** *Shéhérazade*

- I. Asie (Asia)
- II. La flûte enchantée (The Enchanted Flute)
- III. L'indifférent (The Indifferent One)

**Susan Platts, mezzo-soprano**

### INTERMISSION

**STRAVINSKY** *The Faun and the Shepherdess*, Op. 2

- I. The Shepherdess
- II. The Faun
- III. The River

**Susan Platts, mezzo-soprano**

**STRAVINSKY** *Le chant du rossignol* (*The Song of the Nightingale*)

- I. Presto
- II. Marche chinoise (Chinese March)
- III. Chant du rossignol (Song of the Nightingale)
- IV. Jeu du rossignol mécanique (The Mechanical Nightingale)

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This is a program of fairy tales, told by two of the greatest composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We are recording an intriguing Stravinsky album for NAXOS, featuring these wonderful myths and stories. *Pulcinella* has its roots in the commedia dell'arte traveling theatre from 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italy, and the naughty Pulcinella was always the star of the show. *The Song of the Nightingale* takes us back to Imperial China, to an Emperor who learns that loving means giving a magical bird her freedom. Stravinsky sets his little-known *The Faun and the Shepherdess* in antiquity, as a girl flees from a faun who has fallen in love with her.

A beautiful addition to the legends of Stravinsky's masterpieces is a tapestry of Maurice Ravel: his gorgeous poetry settings of Asia, sung by the incomparable Susan Platts. Truly an evening of color, magic, mystery, and imagination!

*JoAnn Falletta*

## PROGRAM NOTES

**Igor Stravinsky** (Russian; 1882-1971)

### *Pulcinella* Suite

Composed 1922; Duration: 24 minutes

First BPO Performance: January 21, 1947  
(Igor Stravinsky, conductor)

Last BPO Performance: November 5-6,  
2021 (JoAnn Falletta, conductor)

Whether it was the unbridled romanticism that spilled over into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, or the shocking music in works like Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, the wreckage and disarray brought by the First World War ushered in a welcome return to order and restraint. For a trailblazer like Stravinsky, the path forward was extreme. A radically regressive aesthetic shift was looming when ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev approached Stravinsky about a new score.

Although Russian-born, Igor Stravinsky had made an international reputation from Paris, where he composed several groundbreaking works for the Ballets Russes, led by Diaghilev, who was something of a king-maker among composers. Despite a falling out between the two, Stravinsky was eager to make amends in 1919 by pursuing a new project suggested by the impresario based on an Italian Baroque score.

*Pulcinella* was a folk hero featured prominently among the Neapolitan commedia dell'arte tradition popular in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and was the central figure in a 1700 score Diaghilev found and originally attributed to Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (but was perhaps composed by many others). Stravinsky was almost literal in his adaptation of the original manuscripts, keeping the bass lines and melodies. Stravinsky's personality, or what he described as his own accent, marked the new score with some updated rhythms, harmonies, and orchestration.

The 1920 Paris premiere of *Pulcinella* portrayed its protagonist betraying his love, Pimpinella. Begging forgiveness, Pulcinella pretends to be killed, only to be resurrected and reunited with his love. Although Diaghilev was shocked by Stravinsky's literal commitment to the 18<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts, audiences lauded this return to simplicity. Stravinsky was now entering a new period of modernism, leading the way for composers who sought to forge a new path of objectivity and rationalism by using Classical-era music as their model.

In 1922, Stravinsky created an abridged suite of *Pulcinella*, omitting several movements and the original vocal parts for concert performance. Decades later he returned to his score to make revisions in 1949 and 1965.

**Maurice Ravel** (French; 1875-1937)

***Shéhérazade***

- I. Asie (Asia)
- II. La flûte enchantée  
(The Enchanted Flute)
- III. L'indifférent (The Indifferent One)

Composed 1904; Duration: 19 minutes

First BPO Performance: November 18 & 20, 1951 (Dorothy Maynor, soprano; William Steinberg, conductor)

Last BPO Performance: April 17-18, 2004 (Sebnem Mekinulov, soprano; JoAnn Falletta, conductor)

Scheherazade was the heroine of *The Arabian Nights*, whose stories beguiled a violent king – and Ravel. The first portrayal was *Shéhérazade*, an orchestral overture from 1898 when Ravel was a student with a patchy record at the Paris Conservatoire, where he was the scorn of the school's director for his reputation as a troublemaker with progressive sensibilities. The work was panned as plagiaristic for the mimicking influence of Debussy and Russian composers. The criticism may have been apt, as Ravel would use these influences to piece together a reputation as France's most valuable modern composer.

Ravel's free-thinking reputation made him an obvious member of a group of Parisian creatives, self-dubbed "Les Apaches" (the Hooligans), of which poet Tristan Klingsor was also a member. Inspired by the colorful exoticism of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic suite *Scheherazade* (1888), Klingsor's collection of free-verse poetry was published under the same title. The flop of 1898 forgotten, Ravel composed a second *Shéhérazade* in 1904 in the form of a song cycle, with collaborative settings of three of Klingsor's poems.

*Asie* is the longest of the group, with a meditative text that romantically imagines the sights and scenes of Scheherazade's setting. Languid, invented Persian melodies are tinged with aromatic orchestration. In *La*

*flûte enchantée*, Scheherazade lies awake as the king sleeps. She listens to a flute played outside by her lover. The final song, *L'indifférent*, erotically describes an unattainable attraction.

**Igor Stravinsky** (Russian; 1882-1971)

***The Faun and the Shepherdess, Op. 2***

- I. The Shepherdess
- II. The Faun
- III. The River

Composed 1907; Duration: 10 minutes

First performance of this work by the BPO.

While attending the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, Stravinsky was among Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's loyal followers. He was also in love with Yekaterina Nosenko, whom he had known since childhood. Their marriage in 1906 was a bit awkward for the family as the two were first cousins, but the pair remained together until her death in 1939.

Stravinsky's early works were produced under Rimsky-Korsakov's watchful eye. As a supportive ally, Rimsky-Korsakov organized the first public performance of Stravinsky's music in a 1907 concert that featured his *Symphony in E-flat* and *The Faun and the Shepherdess*, the latter dedicated to his wife and composed in part during their honeymoon. The work is a setting of three poems by Alexander Pushkin.

For many composers, their earliest works don't yet bear out the personality for which they come to be known. Stravinsky later described the work as sounding more like Wagner or Tchaikovsky – whose scores he was no doubt immersed in as a student – but Pushkin's lightly sensual poetry is matched in Stravinsky's evocative setting. The score's rich harmonies sparkle with lucid orchestrations that provide hints at the Stravinsky to come, and serve as a fitting, romantic tribute to his bride.

**Igor Stravinsky** (Russian; 1882-1971)

***Le chant du rossignol (The Song of the Nightingale)***

- I. Presto
- II. Marche chinoise (Chinese March)
- III. Chant du rossignol  
(Song of the Nightingale)
- IV. Jeu du rossignol mécanique  
(The Mechanical Nightingale)

Composed 1917; Duration: 21 minutes

First BPO Performance: January 18, 1970  
(Lukas Foss, conductor)

Last BPO Performance: February 2-3, 2019  
(Ken Lam, conductor)

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov urged Stravinsky to pursue his first opera project in 1908, which would become *The Nightingale*, a three-act opera based on a Hans Christian Andersen tale. At the time, Stravinsky would only complete the first act. In the previous century, Rimsky-Korsakov was at the forefront of Russian composition, but now was seen as a conservative vestige of the past by Stravinsky, who wanted badly to explore modern composition.

Rimsky-Korsakov died in June 1908. Stravinsky mourned the loss of his teacher, but he had been prepared with the technique and vision to embark on an independent career. Ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev was presenting modern ballets to Parisian audiences with his Ballet Russes, beginning in 1909, and was introduced to Stravinsky's music in the same year, leading to a series of groundbreaking commissions: *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), and *The Rite of*

*Spring* (1913). These works sent shockwaves through Paris and beyond, and immediately established Stravinsky's reputation as a provocative modernist with unimpeachable technical ability.

Although reticent, Stravinsky was encouraged by Diaghilev to complete *The Nightingale*. The Ballet Russes staged the completed work in 1914 with singers in the pit. The composition of the first act and the final two were separated by only six years, yet bear stark stylistic differences representing two different Stravinskys: the first a student under the guise of Rimsky-Korsakov, and the other with a newfound modernist personality. He returned to the work in 1917, reworking the new music of Acts II and III into a four-movement concert suite titled *Le chant du rossignol (The Song of the Nightingale)*. The suite was choreographed in 1920, but Stravinsky was dissatisfied with the result. A 1925 revival featured choreography by George Balanchine, which led to a significant long-term creative partnership.

The opera is set in the court of the Chinese Emperor. Revered for the beauty of its song, the Nightingale is brought to the Emperor and he is pleased. However, the Japanese envoy gifts the Emperor with a mechanical nightingale that delights him. The true Nightingale is offended by this, protests, and is then banished by the Emperor. In the final act, the Emperor is visited by Death, but the Nightingale returns and impresses Death, who leaves. The Emperor returns to good health and is forever reunited with the Nightingale.

**Chaz Stuart, 2025**



## SUSAN PLATTS, MEZZO-SOPRANO



British-born Canadian mezzo-soprano Susan Platts brings a uniquely rich and wide-ranging voice to concert and recital repertoire for alto and mezzo-soprano, particularly esteemed for her performances of Gustav Mahler's works. She is a Fellow of the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, which gave her the opportunity to work closely with Jessye Norman.

Ms. Platts has performed at Covent Garden, Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Teatro alla Scala, Teatro di San Carlo, Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center, as well as with the Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Minnesota Orchestras, Orchestre de Paris, London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra, the

symphonies of Montreal, Toronto, Detroit, Milwaukee, Baltimore, and Houston, Les Violons du Roy, Boston's Handel and Haydn Society, as well as the Los Angeles and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras.

She has collaborated with many of today's leading conductors and soloists including John Adams, Marin Alsop, Roberto Abbado, Sir Andrew Davis, Ludovic Morlot, Leon Botstein, Josep Caballé-Domenech, Christoph Eschenbach, JoAnn Falletta, Jane Glover, Vladimir Jurowski, Jeffrey Kahane, Carlos Kalmar, Keith Lockhart, Kent Nagano, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sir Roger Norrington, Peter Oundjian, Itzhak Perlman, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Bramwell Tovey, Osmo Vänskä, and Pinchas Zukerman. Ms. Platts has appeared on many distinguished art song series including Vocal Arts Society at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Ladies Morning Musical Club in Montreal, Aldeburgh Connection in Toronto, and both the Frick Collection and Lincoln Center "Art of the Song" series in New York City.

Ms. Platts' recent opera highlights include *Die Walküre* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at the Royal Opera House, John Adams' *Nixon in China* with the BBC Symphony, as well as Britten's *Albert Herring* (Pacific Opera, Vancouver Opera), Erda in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* (Pacific Opera), and Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* (Montreal Symphony Orchestra).

Ms. Platts' discography includes a recent release on the NAXOS label of *La Tragédie de Salomé* (Florent Schmitt) with the BPO, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (chamber version) also on NAXOS, *Das Lied von der Erde* (full version) for Fontec Records with the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra, Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with the Smithsonian Chamber Players and Santa Fe Pro Musica for Dorian Records, Brahms' *Zwei Gesänge* with Steven Dann and Lambert Orkis, and a solo disc of Lieder by Robert Schumann, Clara Schumann, and Johannes Brahms on the ATMA label.

In 2021, she pursued her love of baking and wrote a cookbook, titled *Aria Ready for Dessert? – A Musician Takes Center Stage in the Kitchen*. She also started a food blog called "Baking, Bits & Bobs."



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Anthony Parrther



Jordan Pitts



Enrico Lopez-Yañez



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Taylor Raven



Adolphus Halibork

Saturday, March 29, 2025 at 7:30 PM

Sunday, March 30, 2025 at 2:30 PM

## BPO CLASSICS SERIES **SANCTUARY ROAD**

Malcolm Merriweather, conductor  
Benjamin Taylor as William Still  
Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus  
Adam Luebke, BPC music director

Brittany Renee, soprano  
Taylor Raven, mezzo-soprano  
Norman Shankle, tenor  
Sidney Outlaw, baritone

MARGARET BONDS / *The Montgomery Variations*  
ed. John Michael Cooper

- I. The Decision
- II. Prayer Meeting
- III. March
- IV. Dawn in Dixie
- V. One Sunday in the South
- VI. Lament
- VII. Benediction

### INTERMISSION

PAUL MORAVEC / *Sanctuary Road*  
Libretto by Mark Campbell

1. Write
2. Quietly
3. Reward!
4. The Same Train
5. Interview I
6. Run I
7. This Side Up
8. I Waited
9. Run II
10. Interview II
11. Aunt Abigail
12. Run III
13. Interview III
14. Rain
15. Interlude (1861-1865)
16. Finale



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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A historic night at the Buffalo Philharmonic! We welcome Buffalo composer Paul Moravec back to his hometown for a performance of his acclaimed *Sanctuary Road*, a large-scale canvas of the sweeping saga of the Underground Railroad in which soloists and the orchestra convey stories of courage, sacrifice, and perseverance. The libretto by Mark Campbell adapts the writings of William Still, who facilitated the escape of 800 enslaved people into Canada.

In another homecoming, we also welcome Maestro Malcolm Merriweather, a native of Grand Island who is now the Director of the New York Philharmonic Chorus. An evening of history and triumph that is a landmark event of this season!

*To Ann Fallette*

## PROGRAM NOTES

**Margaret Bonds** (American; 1913-1972)

### *The Montgomery Variations*

- I. The Decision
- II. Prayer Meeting
- III. March
- IV. Dawn in Dixie
- V. One Sunday in the South
- VI. Lament
- VII. Benediction

Composed 1963; Duration: 24 minutes

First performance of this work by the BPO.

Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat and the subsequent Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955 was a pivotal moment that set in motion a series of events establishing Montgomery, Alabama as central to the Civil Rights movement. The moment is memorialized in the first variation, "The Decision," of Margaret Bonds' *The Montgomery Variations*.

Bonds' father was a physician and writer whose work in the Civil Rights movement supported other Black physicians, and her mother was a pianist who hosted prominent Black artists and musicians at their Chicago home. Margaret Bonds' musical talents flourished in this environment and equipped her to navigate racial prejudices during her education at Northwestern and Juilliard. Among her remarkable career achievements as a pianist, she was the first Black person to perform with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and would return to premiere

her teacher Florence Price's piano concerto. As a composer, she had a close relationship with Langston Hughes, collaborating with him on song settings and librettos.

For the central theme of the variations, Bonds chose the poignant spiritual, "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me," which pleads for Jesus in times of sorrow and strife. The melody frames a powerful sense of strength and resistance in the face of the Jim Crow South, and the second variation, "Prayer Meeting," recalls how churches served as organizational meeting places with religious leaders serving as leading figures in the Civil Rights movement. A young Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to prominence as a key player during the Bus Boycott, and soon became a nationally recognized figure. Bonds dedicated the work to him.

The work continues with "March," symbolizing the unity of the Bus Boycott, where for 382 days, the city's Black community carpooled and walked, avoiding the buses, ultimately leading to a Supreme Court decision that the segregation laws were unconstitutional. "Dawn in Dixie" marks the beginning of an era of change.

Bonds visited Montgomery while on tour as accompanist for baritone Eugene Brice and the Manhattan Melodaires in 1963. Shortly after Bonds returned home, on September 15, 1963, white supremacist terrorists perpetrated and bombed the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church, killing four young girls, and injuring more than a dozen others. Bonds' visit to the city, followed by the devastating attack, led her to chronicle

the events in one of her few orchestral works. The fifth variation offers an innocent portrait of Sunday morning churchgoers, followed by "Lament," a heartfelt reflection of the tragedy. The final variation, "Benediction," provides a summary of Bonds' experience and perspective, the idea that Jesus ushers the Black community through turmoil.

**Paul Moravec** (American; b. 1957)

**Libretto by Mark Campbell**

(American; b. 1953)

***Sanctuary Road***

Composed 2017; Duration: 50 minutes

First performance of this work by the BPO.

Buffalo native Paul Moravec's penchant for ecstatic scores rooted in a tonal tradition gained recognition with the 2004 Pulitzer Prize, awarded for his chamber work, *Tempest Fantasy*. The Harvard and Columbia alum boasts several other prizes (the Prix de Rome, the Charles Ives Prize, an NEA fellowship, to name a few), and is a Professor at Adelphi College and faculty member at the Mannes School of Music.

Mark Campbell is perhaps the busiest librettist today, creating texts for some 40 operas, including Moravec's 2016 *The Shining*. The two continued their collaboration with the 2017 oratorio *Sanctuary Road*, which was then reworked into an opera in 2022. About the oratorio, Moravec has written the following:

"Sanctuary Road is an oratorio, the second in a series of my large-scale works I call 'American historical oratorios'.

"In addressing this important chapter in American history, Mark Campbell chose to focus on William Still, an African-American conductor of the Underground Railroad. Still was based in Philadelphia and facilitated the escape of some 800 fugitive slaves, recording in detail their accounts and eventually compiling them in his landmark 1872 book, *The Underground Railroad*. The astonishing stories of Ellen Craft, Wesley Harris, and others make up the substance of the libretto's narrative. At the center of it all stands the majestic Mr. Still, whose words and resolute spirit guided me as a com-

poser through the challenge of imagining this work's musical universe.

"In Mark's libretto, William Still assumes the roles of both narrator and active participant. As narrator, Still begins the oratorio by stressing the need to document and remember the history of the Railroad, a sentiment echoed by the other solo voices and chorus ("Write"). As an agent in the action, in movements 5, 10, and 13, Still conducts interviews with fugitive slaves for the records that will form the basis of his book.

"In the third movement, 'Reward!', the chorus joins the action as slave-hunters issuing wanted posters for the capture and return of enslaved people to the South. The chorus returns as both actor and observer in 'I Waited,' a setting of Psalm 40 and a continuation of movement 7, 'This Side Up,' in which Henry 'Box' Brown recounts his amazing escape in a crate mailed from Richmond to William Still in Philadelphia. The story goes that when the crate was opened, Brown stood up and recited the psalm to the assembled abolitionists. The chorus' most unusual dramatic role comes in 15, 'Interlude: 1861-1865,' in which I imagine their wordless singing as the ghostly voices of fallen soldiers in the Civil War.

"In the Finale, Still tells of recovering his Underground Railroad records kept hidden during the war, among them letters from fugitive slaves written when they reached Canada. The soloists sing excerpts from the letters expressing gratitude to Mr. Still, and the oratorio ends with an anthem of freedom for the combined forces.

"We too owe a debt of gratitude to William Still. The activities of the Underground Railroad were necessarily secret during its years of operation, but his 'record of facts' ensures that the courage and virtuous resolve of these people struggling for freedom will always be remembered" – Paul Moravec

**Chaz Stuart, 2025**

## MALCOLM MERRIWEATHER, GUEST CONDUCTOR



GRAMMY-nominated conductor Malcolm J. Merriweather is Director of the New York Philharmonic Chorus and Music Director of New York City's The Dessoff Choirs and Orchestra. He is Professor of Music and the Tania León Endowed Chair at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York.

He is a sought-after interpreter of symphonic choral works, most recently conducting grand performances of Bach's *St. John Passion*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Handel's *Messiah*. In addition to core symphonic works, he is known for the world premiere recordings of *The Ballad of the Brown King*, *Credo*, and *Simon Bore the Cross* by Margaret Bonds (AVIE Records) with The Dessoff Choirs and Orchestra. A frequent guest

conductor, he has conducted the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, CHINEKE!, and Novus Orchestra.

Ensembles under his baton have performed at venues that include Queen Elizabeth II Hall at Southbank Centre, Disney Concert Hall, The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Madison Square Garden, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Westminster Abbey, and at the Vatican before Pope Francis. At the invitation of Solange Knowles, he joined the interdisciplinary studio and creative agency, Saint Heron, for performances with Voices of Harlem and The Clark Sisters in *Glory to Glory: A Revival of Devotional Art*.

Dr. Merriweather has earned degrees from Eastman, Manhattan School of Music, and Syracuse University and was a fellow at Tanglewood. Connect with him on social media @maestroweather and at malcolmjmerriweather.com.

## BENJAMIN TAYLOR, BARITONE



Baritone Benjamin Taylor's 24-25 season includes debuts at the Arizona Opera for *La bohème* (Marcello), Madison Opera for *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Figaro), Charleston Opera Theater for *La bohème* (Schaunard), and the Washington National Opera for *Porgy and Bess* (Jake). On the concert stage, he debuts at the Fort Wayne Philharmonic as the baritone soloist in Prokofiev's *Lt. Kije*, at the Charleston Symphony Orchestra and Buffalo Philharmonic for *Sanctuary Road* (William Still), at the Dayton Philharmonic as the baritone soloist in Fauré's *Requiem*, at Opera Omaha for their Opera Outdoors concert, and he returns to the North Carolina Opera for their Opera in the Park concert.

Additional career highlights include returns to Opera Philadelphia for *Simon Boccanegra* (Paolo), Detroit Opera for *Breaking the Waves* (Jan), Bayerische Staatsoper for *La fanciulla del West* (Bello), and The Metropolitan Opera for *Carmen* (Moralès), *The Magic Flute* (Papageno), and *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (Chester). He debuted with the Austin Opera for *Pagliacci* (Silvio) and the Boston Lyric Opera for *La bohème* (Schaunard).

## BRITTANY RENEE, SOPRANO



Renowned for her “luminous tones” and “opulent voice,” and celebrated by *Opera News* for her “plush soprano bloom,” GRAMMY Award-winning soprano Brittany Renee is enchanting audiences with her exquisite artistry and radiant stage presence.

This season, Ms. Renee brings her critically acclaimed portrayal of Musetta in *La bohème* to The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, and Houston Grand Opera in her house debut. She will also grace the Kennedy Center stage with Washington National Opera as Bess in *Porgy and Bess*, and will be featured at National Sawdust as Esther in the world premiere of Paula Prestini’s *Silent Light*. On the concert stage, Ms. Renee will appear as a soloist in Brahms’ *Requiem* with the New York Philharmonic, in addition to *Sanctuary Road* with the Buffalo Philharmonic. Looking ahead, Brittany Renee makes anticipated returns to The Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera in leading roles.

## TAYLOR RAVEN, MEZZO-SOPRANO



Taylor Raven is a “vocal sensation” (*Washington Classical Review*) and quickly establishing herself in opera, concert, and recital. In the 24–25 season, Taylor debuts with The Metropolitan Opera in the company premiere of Adams’ *Antony and Cleopatra* (Charmian), and with Pacific Opera Victoria for *La clemenza di Tito* (Sesto). On the concert stage she debuts with the Minnesota Orchestra for Mozart’s *Requiem*, Duisburger Philharmoniker for Julia Perry’s *Stabat Mater*, the U.S. Naval Academy for *Messiah*, and Quad City Symphony Orchestra for Giddens’ *Omar’s Journey* (Fatima). In recital, Taylor debuts with the Northwest Sinfonietta performing Jessie Montgomery’s *Five Freedom Songs* and makes her New York City solo recital debut with the Kaufmann Music Center. Additional

appearances include a return to North Carolina Opera for their Opera in the Park series.

Taylor began last season with a return to the San Francisco Opera for a role debut as Fatima in Rhianon Giddens’ and Michael Abels’ *Omar*. Other season highlights included returns to Seattle Opera for *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Rosina) and the Los Angeles Philharmonic for a fully staged production of *Das Rheingold* (Flosshilde), conducted by Gustavo Dudamel.

## NORMAN SHANKLE, TENOR



American tenor Norman Shankle is currently enjoying worldwide acclaim for his portrayals of Mozart and Rossini’s most famous tenors. *The Boston Globe* called Shankle “a real find, a singer of elegance, grace and conviction,” and the *San Francisco Chronicle* praised him equally as “clearly a singer to watch.”

The 24–25 season brings Mr. Shankle’s debut with the South Florida Symphony in Handel’s *Messiah* and Mozart’s *Requiem*, and a return to the National Philharmonic for their *Messiah*, in addition to his debut with the Buffalo Philharmonic in *Sanctuary Road*. Previous seasons’ engagements of note include his return to the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra for Saint-Saëns’ *Oratorio de Noël*, as well as his performance in *Elijah* with the Washington Chorus. Mr. Shankle has also been featured in the National Philharmonic’s performances of Berlioz’s *Requiem* and Adolphus Hailstork’s *Symphony No. 5*; Mozart’s *Requiem* with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra; *Messiah* with the Glacier Symphony Orchestra; the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra’s Classical Christmas concert; and *Sanctuary Road* with Penn Square Music Festival.



## SIDNEY OUTLAW, BARITONE



Baritone Sidney Outlaw, described by *The New York Times* as a “terrific singer” with a “deep, rich timbre,” is an internationally acclaimed vocalist known for his “weighty and forthright” singing (*San Francisco Chronicle*). Since winning the Concurso Internacional de Canto Montserrat Caballé in 2010, he has performed widely in the U.S. and abroad.

In the 24-25 season, Mr. Outlaw performs recitals with pianist Warren Jones at the Brooklyn Art Song Society and Manhattan School of Music. He debuts with the California Symphony in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, and with the Bozeman Symphony in Mozart’s *Requiem*. He also returns to the Jacksonville Symphony for *Messiah*. On the operatic stage, he reprised the title roles in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*.

This year, Sidney releases his album *Black Pierrot*, featuring music by William Grant Still and B.E. Boykin, including “26 Ways of Looking at a Black Man.” His 2024 EP, *Brahms’ Zwei Gesänge Op. 91*, was also released, both by Lexicon Classics. Mr. Outlaw’s recent highlights include performances with Boston Baroque, the Chattanooga Symphony, Toledo Opera, National Symphony, and appearances at Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher Hall.

## BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC CHORUS

The Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the Western NY region through the performance of high-quality, diverse musical programs and developing singers in the choral arts through original programming and artistic partnerships. The BPC is the winner of the 2020 GRAMMY Award for Best Choral Performance for their recording of Richard Danielpour’s *The Passion of Yeshua* with the BPO and conductor JoAnn Falletta. With a roster of over 140 singers, the BPC is frequently heard as the principal guest chorus of the BPO. The Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus was founded as the Buffalo Schola Cantorum in 1937. In 1992, the Chorus was renamed to more accurately reflect its mission to the community. Now the BPC makes guest appearances throughout the region and produces self-sponsored concerts, including annual performances of Handel’s *Messiah*. Recent collaborators include the BPO, Chautauqua Symphony, Buffalo Chamber Players, Buffalo United Community Choir, SUNY Fredonia School of Music, and more. Recent performance venues include Kleinhans Music Hall, Chautauqua Institution, Artpark, Our Lady of Victory Basilica and Shrine, and Asbury Hall, where the BPC is also a proud member of the Asbury Arts Collaborative.

## ADAM LUEBKE, BPC MUSIC DIRECTOR



Adam Luebke was appointed Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus in 2015. He is the winner of the 2020 GRAMMY for Best Choral Performance, and critics have described his choruses as “splendid” (*Gramophone*), “excellent” (*Musical America*), and “articulate, unified and vividly expressive” (*Chautauqua Daily*). He has conducted at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Chautauqua Institution, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His choruses have been heard on *Performance Today*, and locally on WNEC Classical and WNEC-TV.

He has worked with conductors JoAnn Falletta and Gil Rose; composers Richard Danielpour, Chen Yi, and Paul Moravec; and singers Hila Plitmann and Angela Brown. In August 2024, he worked with GRAMMY-winner Wynton Marsalis, preparing his seminal work, *All Rise*, for performances with Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. He has prepared choruses for the Chautauqua Symphony, Niagara Symphony, Barcelona’s La Fura dels Baus, and Artpark. This year he leads the world premiere of Lee Hoiby’s *A Whitman Symphony*. Currently on the faculty of Bowling Green State University, he was previously a tenured associate professor at SUNY Fredonia.

## BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC CHORUS

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## PAUL MORAVEC, COMPOSER



Paul Moravec, recipient of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize in Music, has composed numerous orchestral, chamber, lyric, choral, and operatic works. Frequently commissioned by notable ensembles and major music institutions, Mr. Moravec's next premiere is *All Shall Rise*, an oratorio about U.S. voting rights to a libretto by Mark Campbell for Oratorio Society of New York (OSNY) at Carnegie Hall. Other recent premieres include *A Nation of Others*, also for OSNY, and *A New Country* for mezzo-soprano Jennifer Cano and the South Dakota Symphony. Recent recordings include his opera *The Shining* (nominated for a 2025 GRAMMY), *A Nation of Others*, and *The Overlook Hotel Suite*.

A native Buffalonian and graduate of Harvard and Columbia universities, he holds the distinguished rank of University Professor at Adelphi University, and recently served as Artist-in-Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, as well as Composer-in-Residence at the American Academy in Rome. His website is [paulmoravec.com](http://paulmoravec.com), and his works are published by Subito Music.

## MARK CAMPBELL, LIBRETTIST



The Pulitzer Prize and GRAMMY Award-winning operas of librettist/lyricist Mark Campbell are among the most successful in the contemporary canon. Mark has written 41 opera librettos, lyrics for 7 musicals, and text for 11 song cycles and 5 oratorios. His works include *Silent Night*, *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, *As One*, *Elizabeth Cree*, *The Shining*, *Sanctuary Road*, *A Nation of Others*, *Stonewall*, *The Nefarious*, *Immoral but Highly Profitable Enterprise of Burke & Hare*, *A Thousand Acres*, *The Cook-Off*, *Bastianello/Lucrezia*, *Edward Tulane*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Unruly Sun*, *Later the Same Evening*, and *Songs from an Unmade Bed*.

Mark mentors future generations of librettists and composers at the American Opera Project, American Lyric Theatre, and as a founding member of the American Opera Initiative. He created and funds the Campbell Opera Librettist Prize, the first award for opera librettists in the history of the art form, and co-created the True Voice Award to support the training of transgender and non-binary singers. Mark was awarded the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Opera Association.



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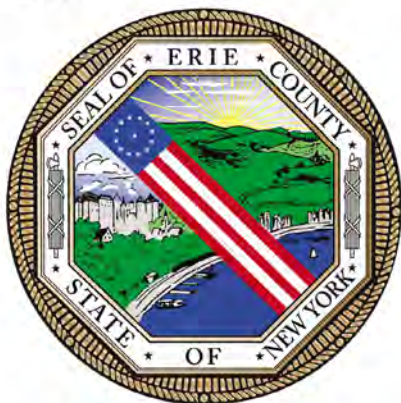
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## WHAT TO KNOW AT THE BPO

- Kleinhans Music Hall will open 90 minutes before a concert's scheduled start, or earlier depending on pre-concert activities
- Special assistance in the areas of parking, seating, and hearing will be accommodated to the best of our ability; Please contact the Box Office ahead of your visit
- Options are available for patrons using mobility aids or requesting a wheelchair accessible location and accompanying companion seating
- Service animals are welcome; Please notify staff upon arrival
- Hearing assistance devices and large print repertoire pages are available at the coat check
- *Please Note: There is no elevator to the balcony level*
- It is strictly forbidden to record, photograph, or film a performance in the Main Auditorium, as it presents a distraction to the musicians and other patrons; Photography is permitted before and after concerts
- Late arrivals will be seated at the first suitable break or at intermission; Late seating may not be in the purchased section
- Security staff is available at all times, and an EMT is on site for all concerts and performances; Please notify an usher or staff member if there is a medical or security need
- Kleinhans Music Hall maintains a smoke-free environment
- All programs and artists are subject to change without notice
- Sorry, no refunds or exchanges on single ticket purchases

## PARKING & SHUTTLE SERVICES

### Kleinhans Music Hall Parking:

- \$10 evening and Sunday performances
- \$5 Friday morning Coffee Concerts
- Free for BPO Kids Sunday afternoon performances

### Free Parking and Shuttle (SELECT Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays):

- D'Youville University Lot E, 260 Connecticut Street 14213 *between Fargo and West Avenue*

*Shuttle service begins at 6pm and ends 30 minutes following the end of the concert. Visit [bpo.org](http://bpo.org) for more information.*

Shuttle service is only available for SELECT dates. Please join our email club at [bpo.org](http://bpo.org) or call the Box Office for updated information.

### Symphony Shuttle 6461 Transit Rd., Depew, NY

- Avoid driving downtown! For \$15 per person, enjoy shuttle service to and from Kleinhans on Saturday nights. To reserve shuttle, call (716) 885-5000 and select shuttle option. *Shuttle leaves promptly at 6:30pm from the rear of the lot near the water tower.*

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