

2022–2023 | 123rd Season

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Thursday, February 9, at 7:30

Friday, February 10, at 2:00

Saturday, February 11, at 8:00

Nathalie Stutzmann Conductor

Gil Shaham Violin

Brahms Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Adagio

III. Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace—Poco più presto

Intermission

Brahms Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68

I. Un poco sostenuto—Allegro

II. Andante sostenuto

III. Un poco allegretto e grazioso

IV. Adagio—Più andante—Allegro non troppo, ma con brio—Più allegro

This program runs approximately 2 hours.

These concerts are sponsored by **Ralph and Beth Johnston Muller**.

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**The
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Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

Photos: Pete Checchia, Julia Wesely, Nigel Parry



The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives, a commitment to its diverse communities, and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive future for classical music, and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united to form The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc., reimagining the power of the arts to bring joy, create community, and effect change.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 11th season as the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, in Verizon Hall and community centers, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. In response to the cancellation of concerts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Orchestra launched the Digital Stage, providing access to high-quality online performances, keeping music alive at a time when it was needed most. It also inaugurated free offerings: HearTOGETHER, a podcast

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Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 12 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3*. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

Principal Guest Conductor



Jeff Fusco

Nathalie Stutzmann began her role as The Philadelphia Orchestra's principal guest conductor with the 2021–22 season; she holds the Ralph and Beth Johnston Muller Chair. The three-year contract will involve a regular presence in the Orchestra's subscription series in Philadelphia and at its summer festivals in Vail, Colorado, and Saratoga Springs, New York. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra conducting debut in 2016. She is also in her first season as music

director of the Atlanta Symphony, only the second woman to lead a major American orchestra, and her fifth season as chief conductor of the Kristiansand Symphony in Norway. Ms. Stutzmann is considered one of the most outstanding musical personalities of our time. Charismatic musicianship, combined with unique rigor, energy, and fantasy, characterize her style. A rich variety of strands form the core of her repertoire: Central European and Russian Romanticism is a strong focus—ranging from Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, and Dvořák to the larger symphonic forces of Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Mahler, Bruckner, and Strauss—as well as French 19th-century repertoire and Impressionism. Highlights as guest conductor in the next seasons include debut performances with the Munich Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, and the Helsinki Philharmonic. She will also return to the London Symphony and the Orchestre de Paris.

Having also established a strong reputation as an opera conductor, Ms. Stutzmann has led celebrated productions of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in Monte Carlo and Boito's *Mefistofele* at the Chorégies d'Orange festival in Provence. She began the 2022–23 season with a new production of Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades* at La Monnaie in Brussels and makes her Metropolitan Opera debut this season with two productions: Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and *Don Giovanni*. She also helms *Tannhäuser* at the Bayreuth Festival in 2023.

Ms. Stutzmann began her studies in piano, bassoon, and cello at a very young age and studied conducting with the legendary Finnish teacher Jorma Panula. She was also mentored by Seiji Ozawa and Simon Rattle. Also one of today's most esteemed contraltos, she studied the German repertoire with Hans Hotter. She has made more than 80 recordings and received the most prestigious awards. Her latest album, *Contralto*, was released in January 2021 and received *Scherzo* magazine's "Exceptional" seal, *Opera Magazine's* Diamant d'Or, and RTL radio's Classique d'Or. She is an exclusive recording artist of Warner Classics/Erato. Ms. Stutzmann was named Chevalier in the Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur, France's highest honor, and a Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government.



The
Philadelphia
Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

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Photo: Jeff Fusco

Soloist

Chris Lee



Gil Shaham made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1988 at the Mann Center and has performed regularly with the Philadelphians ever since. He is one of the foremost violinists of our time. His flawless technique, combined with his inimitable warmth and generosity of spirit, has solidified his renown as an American master. The GRAMMY Award winner and *Musical America* "Instrumentalist of the Year" is sought after throughout the world for concerto appearances with leading orchestras

and conductors. He regularly gives recitals and appears with ensembles on the world's great concert stages and at the most prestigious festivals. Highlights of recent years include the acclaimed recording and performances of J.S. Bach's complete sonatas and partitas for solo violin. In the coming seasons, in addition to championing these solo works, he will join his long-time duo partner, pianist Akira Eguchi, in recitals throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Appearances with orchestra regularly include the Berlin, Israel, New York, and Los Angeles philharmonics; the Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco symphonies; the Orchestre de Paris; and multi-year residencies with the orchestras of Montreal, Stuttgart, and Singapore.

Mr. Shaham has recorded more than two dozen concerto and solo CDs, earning multiple GRAMMYS, a Grand Prix du Disque, the Diapason d'Or, and *Gramophone* Editor's Choice awards. Many of these recordings appear on Canary Classics, the label he founded in 2004. His recordings include *1930s Violin Concertos*, *Virtuoso Violin Works*, *Elgar's Violin Concerto*, *Hebrew Melodies*, *The Butterfly Lovers*, and many more. His *1930s Violin Concertos Vol. 2* was nominated for a GRAMMY Award. His latest recording of Beethoven and Brahms concertos with the Knights was released in 2021.

Born in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, in 1971, Mr. Shaham moved with his parents to Israel, where he began violin studies at the age of seven, receiving annual scholarships from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation. In 1981 he made debuts with the Jerusalem Symphony and the Israel Philharmonic. In 1982, after taking first prize in Israel's Claremont Competition, he became a scholarship student at the Juilliard School. He also studied at Columbia University. He was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1990 and in 2008 received the coveted Avery Fisher Prize. In 2012 he was named "Instrumentalist of the Year" by *Musical America*. He plays the 1699 "Countess Polignac" Stradivarius and also an Antonio Stradivari violin, Cremona c. 1719, with the assistance of Rare Violins in Consortium, Artists and Benefactors Collaborative. He lives in New York City with his wife, violinist Adele Anthony, and their three children.



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Photos: Jeff Fusco, Bowie Verschuuren



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Symphony

No. 1

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The concert today features two masterpieces by Johannes Brahms written just a few years apart. He composed his Violin Concerto for the celebrated Hungarian violinist, and close friend, Joseph Joachim. He helped Brahms mold the solo part and gave the premiere performance on New Year's Day 1879 in Leipzig with the composer conducting. The sparkling final movement, in the "Hungarian style," nods to their friendship.

In 1853 Robert Schumann hailed the 20-year-old Brahms as the potential savior of German instrumental music. The lavish praise generated enormous expectations for the young composer, especially with regard to writing a symphony. Ever since Beethoven's death in 1827 the musical world had debated what form and style symphonies should take—Brahms's answer was eagerly awaited. At age 43 he finally completed his First Symphony, which was immediately hailed as "Beethoven's Tenth." Without programmatic titles, chorus, or obvious extramusical references, Brahms's First helped to reinvent the genre of the symphony.

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Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

The Music

Violin Concerto

Johannes Brahms

Born in Hamburg, May 7, 1833

Died in Vienna, April 3, 1897



The year 1878 was relatively calm for the restless Johannes Brahms. After coming to terms with Beethoven's shadow—publishing his First Symphony in 1877 after many years of working on it—he set out in the spring with friends on a long-awaited first trip to Italy. He learned some Italian and spent four weeks visiting Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples, among other cities. He sent his longtime confidant, Clara Wieck-Schumann, an update: "How often do I not think of you,

and wish that your eyes and heart might know the delight which the eye and heart experiences here." Upon his return to the tiny town of Pörschach on Lake Wörth, 200 miles southwest of Vienna, Brahms spent a felicitous summer composing his massive Violin Concerto in D major and completing his Piano Pieces, Op. 76.

An "Unplayable" Work At the end of August, Brahms sent his close friend, the violinist Joseph Joachim, two brief letters revealing that he was busy composing a concerto. With typical modesty, Brahms asked Joachim if he might consider playing it: "Naturally, I was going to ask you to make corrections, thought you should have no excuse either way—neither respect for music that is too good, nor the excuse that the score isn't worth the trouble." Joachim received the final solo parts only on December 12, leaving him little time to shape the music before its New Year's premiere at the Leipzig Gewandhaus with Brahms conducting. Infamous early reactions included Joseph Hellmesberger's "it wasn't for, but against the violin" and Henryk Wieniawski's "unplayable." Sentiments quickly changed after Joachim performed it in Vienna on January 14, 1879, with his own cadenza. Brahms remarked, "The cadenza went so magnificently at our concert here that the people clapped right on into my coda." The two spent the next six months perfecting the work, which is now a concert hall staple.

Brahms initially intended his Violin Concerto to have four movements, like his symphony (and Second Piano Concerto) but by November 1878 conceded, "The middle movements have fallen out—naturally they were the best! I have replaced them with a poor adagio." In 1853, when Brahms was only 20 years old, Robert Schumann created epic expectations for him by naming him the heir to Beethoven and calling his early piano sonatas "veiled symphonies." But perhaps

one should understand Brahms's Violin Concerto as a veiled piano sonata. It sparkles with witty pianistic thirds, beefy chords, and two-against-three rhythms. Written for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, trumpets, four horns, timpani, and strings, the work features traditional orchestration, more typical of Romantic Franz Schubert than early modern Gustav Mahler. The Austrian violinist Fritz Kreisler, who championed the work in the 20th century, donated a copy of the score in Brahms's hand to the Library of Congress in 1948.

A Closer Look The Concerto contains a range of musical elements reflecting the vast Austro-Hungarian Empire ruled by Franz Joseph I and his stylish wife, Elisabeth. The opening movement (**Allegro non troppo**) suggests a conflict between the external opulence and internal loneliness of Schönbrunn—the Habsburg's country palace close to Vienna surrounded by graveled paths, pedestaled sculptures, and manicured gardens. The piece is written in double-exposition concerto form and begins with strings and woodwinds in a carefree triple meter. The first theme's arpeggios capture a sense of security and pride, much like the first measures of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony. Soon unison strings in a loud dynamic provide a contrasting mood. An oboe announces a more introspective timbre, which will repeat in the second movement. A sudden dotted rhythm in minor presupposes the arrival of the soloist, who enters tempestuously and attacks this mercurial movement, challenging the most virtuosic of violinists.

The **Adagio** leads the listener into the Austrian countryside. Echoing Beethoven's struggle against fate in the Fifth Symphony, a plaintive oboe momentarily steals the show, once prompting Pablo de Sarasate, the Spanish virtuoso, to quip that he refused to "stand on the rostrum, violin in hand and listen to the oboe playing the only tune in the adagio." Before long, however, the violinist spins the tune into different layers of splendid melody. The third movement (**Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace—Poco più presto**) starts with an understandably impatient soloist, as in Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto. Dickey double stops and hammering hemiolas add variety to the rapid rondo. Brahms did not include a cadenza here, as the soloist has enough knotty passages in Hungarian style to satisfy any player. A humble decrescendo precedes the final loud chords, one more nod to the unshakable Beethoven.

—Aaron Beck

Brahms composed his Violin Concerto in 1878.

Fritz Kreisler was the soloist in the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the piece, in 1907 with Carl Pohlig on the podium. Most recently the work was performed at subscription concerts with violinist Augustin Hadelich and Andrés Orozco-Estrada in February 2016.

The Orchestra has recorded the Concerto three times, all for CBS: in 1945 with Eugene Ormandy and Joseph Szigeti; in 1956 with Ormandy and Zino Francescatti; and in 1960 with Ormandy and Isaac Stern.

The score calls for solo violin, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Brahms's Violin Concerto runs approximately 40 minutes in performance.

The Music

Symphony No. 1

Johannes Brahms



As a young composer, Johannes Brahms enjoyed the close friendship and enthusiastic support of Robert and Clara Schumann, two of the most influential musical figures of their day. In 1853, when Brahms was only 20 years old (and with merely a handful of songs, piano solos, and chamber pieces under his belt), Robert proclaimed to the world that his young friend's piano sonatas were "veiled symphonies," and that this composer was the rightful heir to Beethoven's stupendous musical legacy.

Schumann's enthusiastic promotion of Brahms was a double-edged sword. While it was flattering to be regarded as the savior of German music, Brahms was intimidated by the pressure to write symphonies worthy of the standard Beethoven had established. It would take him another 23 anxious years, and several abandoned attempts, before he could bring himself to tackle a symphony "after Beethoven," as he put it. And even then he worried it would not be good enough.

The Path to a First Symphony Brahms began sketches for a first symphony as early as 1854, though subsequent progress was slow and sporadic. In 1862 he showed the first movement of a proposed symphony in C minor to some friends. Then, six years later, he sent Clara a postcard with the alhorn melody that would eventually find its way into the finale of his Symphony No. 1 in C minor. But by the early 1870s Brahms despaired of completing the work, lamenting to a friend, "I shall never write a symphony! You have no idea how it feels for someone like me always to hear the footsteps of such a giant as Beethoven marching along behind me!"

Still, the specter of a first symphony did not prevent Brahms from writing other orchestral works in the meantime. He produced two orchestral serenades, a piano concerto, and the masterly *German Requiem*, all of which had started out with symphonic aspirations. And in 1873 his orchestral Variations on a Theme of Haydn enjoyed enough success to convince him that perhaps a real symphony was not as impossible as it had once seemed. By 1876 Brahms had completed his Symphony No. 1 at the relatively advanced age of 43.

An Homage to Beethoven Brahms tackled the looming shadow of Beethoven by making his own symphony an homage to the master. While Wagner claimed that the only possible path after Beethoven was the music drama and the single-movement symphonic poem, Brahms attempted to show that the four-movement

model of the Classical symphony was still ripe for development, and he used Beethoven's own symphonies as a springboard. Indeed, Brahms's First Symphony from the start has frequently been referred to as "Beethoven's Tenth."

A primary inspiration for Brahms's First Symphony was Beethoven's monumental Fifth. Brahms chose the same key, C minor, and used both the rhythm of its famous "fate" motif and the final apotheosis into C major at the conclusion of his own symphony. The main theme in the finale of Brahms's First bears a striking resemblance, however, to the "Ode to Joy" theme from Beethoven's Ninth. Brahms meant for these references to be overt—when it was mentioned to him that this work shared some resemblances to Beethoven, he reportedly shot back with indignation, "Well, of course! Any idiot can see that!"

A Closer Look The Symphony's first movement opens with ominous drum beats (**Un poco sostenuto**), over which chromatic lines in the strings and woodwinds weave an anxious tapestry. The drumbeat echoes continue throughout the slow introduction before giving way to the dramatically agitated **Allegro**. A gentler second theme adds the contrast that provides the musical light and shadow in this movement.

Brahms's natural gift for lyrical melody and rich harmonizations are evident in the opening of the second movement (**Andante sostenuto**), which then proceeds through a restless middle section before reprising the sumptuous melody in a new scoring for oboe, horn, and solo violin. The brief third movement (**Un poco allegretto e grazioso**) functions as a kind of intermezzo, with a rustic freshness that recalls some of Brahms's earlier orchestral serenades.

The final movement begins like the first, with a slow introduction (**Adagio**) that reintroduces the portentous timpani drumbeats and sinuous chromaticism. But the "alphorn" theme soon clears away the lingering melancholy, turning the harmony toward a triumphant C major (**Più andante**). The strings then present a stately hymn (**Allegro non troppo, ma con brio**) that, together with a majestic trombone chorale, forms the basis for a variety of thematic iterations before reaching a glorious, even euphoric coda (**Più allegro**).

—Luke Howard

Brahms composed his Symphony No. 1 from 1862 to 1876.

The first Philadelphia Orchestra performances were led by Fritz Scheel in November 1902. The most recent subscription performance was in March 2022, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin on the podium.

The Orchestra has recorded the piece five times: in 1927 and 1936 for RCA with Leopold Stokowski; in 1950 and 1959 for CBS with Eugene Ormandy; and in 1989 for Philips with Riccardo Muti. A live recording from 2006 with Rossen Milanou is currently available as a digital download.

Brahms scored the work for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings.

Performance time is approximately 45 minutes.

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Musical Terms

GENERAL TERMS

Arpeggio: A broken chord (with notes played in succession instead of together)

Cadenza: A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

Chorale: A hymn tune of the German Protestant Church, or one similar in style. Chorale settings are vocal, instrumental, or both.

Chord: The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

Chromatic: Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

Coda: A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

Decrescendo: Decreasing volume

Double-exposition concerto form: In the first movement of a concerto, the first section is played twice, first by the orchestra alone and the second time by the soloist accompanied by the orchestra. This became the norm in the Classical period.

Double stop: In string playing, to stop two strings together, thus obtaining two-part harmony

Harmony: The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

Hemiola: The articulation of two units of triple meter as if they were notated as three units of duple meter

Meter: The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

Op.: Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output

Rondo: A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

Scale: The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

Sonata: An instrumental composition in three or four extended movements contrasted in theme, tempo, and mood, usually for a solo instrument

Sonata form: The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

Symphonic poem: A type of 19th-century symphonic piece in one movement, which is based upon an extramusical idea, either poetic or descriptive

Timbre: Tone color or tone quality

Tonic: The keynote of a scale

THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

Adagio: Leisurely, slow

Allegretto: A tempo between walking speed and fast

Allegro: Bright, fast

Andante: Walking speed

Con brio: Vigorously, with fire

Giocoso: Humorous

Grazioso: Graceful and easy

Presto: Very fast

Sostenuto: Sustained

Vivace: Lively

TEMPO MODIFIERS

Ma non troppo: But not too much

Più: More

Poco: Little, a bit

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Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

Photo: Jeff Fusco

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