



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2020

Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra's 2020–21 Season: Our World NOW The Natural World, WomenNOW, Identity, and the Digital Age

The Natural World

Composer-in-Residence Gabriela Lena Frank's *Picaflor*:
Retelling of a Peruvian creation myth
through the voices of Philadelphia students and visuals from Mural Arts Philadelphia

Commissioned works from women composers:
Melody Eötvös, Robin Holcomb, Wang Xi, and Hilary Purrington on melting icebergs,
California wildfires, the relationship between nature and the human body, and nature in poetry

Jane:

National Geographic documentary on Jane Goodall with Philip Glass score performed live

The sea and the earth:
Nézet-Séguin conducts Debussy's *La Mer* and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*

WomenNOW

Philadelphia Orchestra premiere of Florence Price's Symphony No. 1 conducted by Nézet-Séguin

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla returns for two-week residency

Nathalie Stutzmann conducts Wagner, Prokofiev, and Tchaikovsky

Xian Zhang makes Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut

Assistant Conductor Erina Yashima and Conducting Fellow Lina Gonzalez-Granados
lead Family Concerts

Identity

South Pacific 2021:
Radical restaging of the Broadway musical explores
institutionalized racism, gender inequity, nationalism, and imperialism,
in partnership with University Musical Society, University of Michigan

Tchaikovsky ballet trilogy with Brian Sanders' JUNK:
Reimagining fairy tales through a modern mash-up of Tchaikovsky ballets

The Digital Age

Beethoven's Missa solemnis 2.0:
Verizon Hall transforms into a virtual, multi-denominational cathedral by digital artist Refik Anadol

World premiere of Mason Bates's Suite from *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*

(*Philadelphia*, March 24, 2020)—Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin and President and CEO Matías Tarnopolsky today announced the 2020–21 season of The Philadelphia Orchestra, **Our World NOW**, a musical exploration of relevant and essential facets of this moment in time: the environment and fragility of nature, the essential role of women in music, the complexity of identity, and the ubiquitous influence of the digital age.

Throughout the season, Yannick and the Orchestra will be joined by music's most compelling voices—some not yet known, others emerging, and many beloved and celebrated—and will convene artists of other disciplines to collaborate on musical events that offer creative juxtapositions.

"For me, music is more than an art form. It's an artistic force connecting us to each other and to the world around us," said Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin. "I love that our concerts create a space for people to gather as a community—to explore and experience an incredible spectrum of music. Sometimes, we spend an evening in the concert hall together, and it's simply some hours of joy and beauty. Other times there may be an additional purpose, music in dialogue with an issue or an idea, maybe historic or current, or even a thought that is still not fully formed in our minds and hearts. What's wonderful is that music gives voice to ideas and feelings that words alone do not; it touches all aspects of our being. Music inspires us to reflect deeply, and music brings us great joy, and so much more. In the end, music connects us more deeply to our world now."

The 121st season will launch on September 30 with the Opening Night Concert and Gala. Led by Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, the program will feature Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto performed by internationally acclaimed superstar **Lang Lang**, and, for the second consecutive year, an audience-participatory musical experience.

"In light of the immediate crisis we face, there is a greater urgency than ever in artistic creation—in composers and artists imagining new works, and in the interpretation and retelling of known and familiar ones," said President and CEO Matías Tarnopolsky. "Music provides a special freedom to engage abstract, complex ideas in responding to the issues of our day. The equalizing effect of the shared experience, in the concert hall or online, is a powerful force. In the 2020–21 season, Yannick and The Philadelphia Orchestra will elevate the

conversation; they will provoke and inspire; and they will share the joy of music performed at the very highest level. Our new season is a beacon to the future.”

Each Philadelphia Orchestra season uniquely features today’s leading musical voices. Rich in Orchestra debuts, special events, highly anticipated visits, and long-awaited returns, the 2020–21 season is no exception. Los Angeles Philharmonic Music and Artistic Director **Gustavo Dudamel** will make his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with a program featuring a world-premiere commissioned work by **Esteban Benzecry**, Ginastera’s Piano Concerto performed by **Sergio Tiempo** in his Orchestra debut, and Shostakovich’s stirring Symphony No. 5. Iconic Hollywood composer and conductor **John Williams** will be joined by virtuoso violinist **Anne-Sophie Mutter** for a one-of-a-kind musical event. In a continued celebration of Yannick’s role as music director of the Metropolitan Opera, and his passion for sharing opera with Philadelphia audiences, he will lead symphonically staged performances of Puccini’s romantic tragedy *La bohème*. **Branford Marsalis** will perform John Adams’s Saxophone Concerto. Jazz legend **Chick Corea** will join Yannick and the Fabulous Philadelphians for Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, as well as Ellington’s *Solitude*. Former New York Philharmonic Music Director **Alan Gilbert** will conduct Brahms’s Symphony No. 1. Departing San Francisco Symphony Music Director **Michael Tilson Thomas** will lead Ives’s *New England Holidays*. Former Philadelphia Orchestra Music Director **Christoph Eschenbach** will return to Philadelphia for a performance of Schumann’s Symphony No. 2 and Chopin’s Second Piano Concerto with **Seong-Jin Cho**. **Mitsuko Uchida** will join The Philadelphia Orchestra for Ravel’s Piano Concerto in G major.

Our World NOW: The Natural World

To better understand Our World NOW through the lens of the natural world, the Orchestra has commissioned a new work from Composer-in-Residence **Gabriela Lena Frank**. *Picaflor* (Hummingbird) is based on a Latin-American creation myth about a hummingbird that pollinates the world and its varying wildlife. To share a message of environmental consciousness and cultural inclusivity, this community commission will be told through the voices of Philadelphians with texts from School District of Philadelphia students and visuals from Mural Arts Philadelphia. Yannick will conduct the world premiere alongside Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*.

Four additional commissioned works from women composers, which speak directly to how we perceive and relate to our environment, will receive their world premieres in the 2020–21 season. Composer **Melody Eötvös** evokes the thunderous cracking of melting icebergs with *When It Hits the Ocean Below*; **Robin Holcomb’s** *Paradise* is an experiential response to California’s deadly wildfires; Wang **Xi’s** *Ensō*, named for a sacred Buddhist symbol meaning circle, considers the flow and togetherness of nature and people; and **Hilary Purrington’s** *Words for Departure* explores nature in poetry. Xi’s *Ensō* and Purrington’s *Words for Departure* are both commissioned by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

A special one-night-only screening of the National Geographic documentary on Jane Goodall, *Jane*, will be accompanied by a live performance of the Philip Glass score. In addition, Yannick will explore the profound relationship between human emotion, the sea, and the earth, in concerts featuring Debussy's *La Mer* and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, featuring mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Gubanova and tenor Piotr Beczala.

Our World NOW: WomenNOW

Women creators, innovators, and thought leaders continue to be at the forefront of the Orchestra's 2020–21 season and beyond. Whether on the podium or as soloists, composers, and protagonists in a musical narrative, women will take center stage.

The Orchestra, led by Nézet-Séguin, will give its first complete performances of trailblazing composer **Florence Price's** Symphony No. 1 December 10–13, 2020. In addition, a range of emerging, ascending, and well-known women conductors will appear on the podium. **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** will return to conduct a two-week residency; **Nathalie Stutzmann** will return to lead works by Brahms, Wagner, Prokofiev, and Tchaikovsky; and **Xian Zhang** will make her Philadelphia Orchestra subscription debut in a program that features the Orchestra debut of organist **Monica Czausz** in the world premiere of **Melody Eötvös's** *When It Hits the Ocean Below*, and violinist **Hilary Hahn** performing Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No 1. Philadelphia Orchestra Assistant Conductor **Erina Yashima** will lead three family-friendly programs and Orchestra Conducting Fellow **Lina Gonzalez-Granados** will conduct Philip Glass's score to the National Geographic documentary *Jane* and the annual Christmas Kids' Spectacular Family Concert.

Our World NOW: Identity

Our world and the ideas and narratives by which we identify have changed drastically in the 71 years since the premiere of Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical *South Pacific*. Directed by Mary Birnbaum, the Orchestra's radical restaging, *South Pacific 2021*, will explore and elevate the themes that were always there: institutionalized racism, gender inequity, nationalism, military imperialism, and more. The production—created in partnership with the University Musical Society, University of Michigan—will cast a new perspective on the white woman who works for the U.S. Army and recognizes her role in systemic racism, a mixed-race couple that finds each other amidst the backdrop of a war on anti-Semitism, and the young Polynesian woman at the heart of the love story.

The Orchestra continues to reinvent classic tales with the help of provocative Philadelphia dance/physical theater company Brian Sanders' JUNK. Yannick and the Orchestra will delve into the realm of community and identity, rethinking how we view even the most enduring of fairy tales. A modern mash-up of Tchaikovsky's ballets, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Nutcracker*, will bring unexpected surprises and gravity-defying choreography to these classic stories.

Our World NOW: The Digital Age

At the convergence of digital technology and sound lies Yannick Nézet-Séguin and The Philadelphia Orchestra's *Missa solemnis 2.0*. Beethoven's seldom-performed Mass will be presented in the context of digital artist Refik Anadol's experiential "computer dreaming." Combining images of religious landmarks, Anadol will utilize artificial intelligence and data visualization to design an immersive digital experience in the form of a virtual, non-denominational cathedral inside Verizon Hall. *Missa solemnis 2.0* has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

In May, Nézet-Séguin will conduct the world premiere of a Philadelphia Orchestra co-commission, Mason Bates's *Suite from The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, his 2017 opera on the seminal figure of the digital age and the proliferation of technology.

Family and Educational Programming

Throughout the 2020–21 season, the Orchestra will present programs and initiatives that will inspire the next generation of music lovers. **Family Concerts**, tailored for children ages six to 12, ignite the imagination and inspire a lifelong love of music. All Family Concerts are sensory friendly and preceded by Pre-Concert Adventures, interactive explorations of music tied to the theme of the concert. The 2020–21 season offers five Saturday morning programs:

- ◆ **Halloween Celebration:** Musicians of the Orchestra and audience members alike dress up in their finest costumes for this program of eerie musical treats, conducted by Erina Yashima. (October 31)
- ◆ **Listen Up! Music is a Language:** Nicholas Kendall, violinist from the internationally acclaimed classical string band Time for Three, joins conductor Erina Yashima and the Orchestra for a morning of storytelling through music. (November 28)
- ◆ **Christmas Kids' Spectacular:** Lina Gonzalez-Granados leads a festive celebration of Christmas favorites and sing-alongs. (December 12)
- ◆ **Holidays Symphony:** Acclaimed conductor Michael Tilson Thomas joins the Orchestra for a look at eccentric American composer Charles Ives's *New England Holidays*. (March 27)
- ◆ **Travels with Peer Gynt:** Assistant Conductor Erina Yashima leads the Orchestra in an exploration of Grieg's *Peer Gynt* Suite, popularized by *Looney Tunes* and *The Simpsons*. Enchantment Theatre Company joins for this special presentation. (May 1)

The Orchestra will also continue to present the **Jane H. Kesson School Concert Program** throughout the season. Introducing 10,000 students in grades 3–5 to the powerful art form of live orchestral music and The Philadelphia Orchestra, these 45-minute full-Orchestra performances integrate musical concepts into existing classroom curriculum. Concerts are free of charge to School District of Philadelphia schools, thanks to a gift from Billy Joel in 2008.

In an ongoing effort to connect with Philadelphians in the communities they call home, The Philadelphia Orchestra's Free Neighborhood Concerts will continue in the 2020–21 season. These full-Orchestra and chamber concerts will introduce the music and musicians of the Orchestra to new audiences and venues outside of Verizon Hall. More details on these events will be released at a later date.

In partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Orchestra will continue its free ticket program for School District teachers, administrators, and staff. Designed to give back to those who devote so much to the children and communities of Philadelphia, **APPLE (Appreciation Program for PhilaSD Leaders in Education)** offers School District employees free general admission tickets to concerts throughout the 2020–21 season.

Additional 2020–21 Season Highlights

- ◆ 12 weeks of concerts led by Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**.
- ◆ **Nézet-Séguin** and the Fabulous Philadelphians launch the 121st season with an **Opening Night Concert and Gala** featuring legendary pianist **Lang Lang**. The glamorous evening, marking the start of Nézet-Séguin's ninth season as music director, will also feature Rossini's overture to *La scala di seta* (September 30)
- ◆ **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** opens the subscription season with his musical friend and frequent collaborator violinist **Lisa Batiashvili** for a program that will include Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, which will feature new Principal Oboe **Philippe Tondre**; Szymanowski's Violin Concerto No. 1; Chausson's *Poème*; and Ravel's *Bolero*. (October 1–3)
- ◆ Verizon Hall transforms into a virtual, multi-denominational cathedral by digital artist **Refik Anadol** for performances of Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, conducted by **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**. *Missa solemnis 2.0* has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. (October 9–11)
- ◆ **Film Series:** The Orchestra celebrates the timeless scores of five beloved movies, performed live alongside each of the films.
 - National Geographic documentary *Jane*, conducted by Lina Gonzalez-Granados (October 13)
 - *The Princess Bride*, conducted by David Newman (October 16–18)
 - *Home Alone*, conducted by Constantine Kitsoupoulos (December 4–6)
 - *City Lights*, conducted by William Eddins (January 2–3)
 - *Jurassic Park*, conducted by Damon Gupton (January 29–31)
- ◆ **Performances at Carnegie Hall**
 - Beethoven: *Missa solemnis 2.0* (October 14)
 - A Night with John Williams and Anne-Sophie Mutter (January 27)
 - Songs from the Earth (March 2)
 - Mitsuko Meets Yannick (May 7)
- ◆ **Joyce DiDonato** returns to Philadelphia to perform Mahler's *Ruckert Lieder* and Symphony No. 4, conducted by **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**. (November 12–14)
- ◆ **Lahav Shani** conducts masterful pianist **Yefim Bronfman** and The Philadelphia Orchestra in a program of Russian works, including Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3. (November 20–22)

- ◆ **Stéphane Denève** leads the Orchestra in the complete version of Ravel's love story ballet *Daphnis and Chloé*, as well as The Philadelphia Orchestra's first performances of Connesson's Cello Concerto. (February 12–14)
- ◆ Master of the piano and musical interpretation **Emanuel Ax** joins the Orchestra, led by **Louis Langrée**, for Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 9. (March 4–6)
- ◆ **Garrick Ohlsson** returns to perform Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2, led by **Michael Tilson Thomas**. The Orchestra also performs Charles Ives's *New England Holidays*, a radical-for-its-time look at Americana. (March 25–28)
- ◆ **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** and The Philadelphia Orchestra travel to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center for a performance of Schubert's Symphony No. 8 and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. (April 9)
- ◆ Erich Korngold is the rare composer renowned both for his Hollywood movie scores and his classical works. **Gil Shaham** brings life to Korngold's Violin Concerto, led by Tugan Sokhiev. (April 29–May 1)
- ◆ **Mitsuko Uchida** joins The Philadelphia Orchestra for Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major. (May 6–9).
- ◆ For one night only, **Paolo Bordignon** joins **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** in Philadelphia for a presentation of selections from Bach's late masterwork *The Art of the Fugue*, arranged for organ and chamber ensembles. The Orchestra also performs Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8. (May 14)
- ◆ **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** conducts Tchaikovsky's final symphony, the "Pathétique," in the Orchestra's last concerts of the season. (May 21 & 22)

Special Presentations

- ◆ The Orchestra celebrates the scary season with **Organ Halloween Extravaganza**, including the signature "organ pump" experience following the concert. This concert is one of several programs which are a part of the Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ Experience, supported by the Wyncote Foundation. (October 28)
- ◆ As a long-term strategic partner of The Philadelphia Orchestra, Beijing's **National Centre for the Performing Arts Orchestra (NCPAO)** visits Philadelphia. Led by Lü Jia, the concert features a world premiere by Bright Sheng, Unsuk Chin's *Su* for sheng and orchestra with sheng virtuoso Wu Wei, and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. (October 30)
- ◆ Iconic film composer **John Williams** and superstar violinist **Anne-Sophie Mutter** bring a special program of Williams's beloved film music (*Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, *Schindler's List*, and more) to Verizon Hall for one night only. (January 26)
- ◆ Acclaimed conductor and composer **Tan Dun** joins the Orchestra to celebrate the Year of the Ox at the **Chinese New Year's Concert**. (February 4)
- ◆ The renowned **Chamber Orchestra of Europe** pays a rare visit to Philadelphia. Recently named an honorary member of the ensemble, **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** conducts an all-Brahms program with longtime friend and collaborator **Lisa Batiashvili** as soloist. (March 12)
- ◆ **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** leads the Orchestra and a superb cast, including **Ailyn Pérez** and **Charles Castronovo**, in Puccini's great opera *La bohème*. (May 13–19)
- ◆ **Joyce DiDonato** joins **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** on the piano for an intimate afternoon performance of Schubert's *Winterreise*. (June 20)

Philadelphia Orchestra Musicians in Solo Roles

- ◆ Philadelphia Orchestra **First Associate Concertmaster Juliette Kang** takes center stage for Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 2. Led by **Alan Gilbert**, the program also features Brahms's Symphony No. 1 and the Philadelphia Orchestra premiere of Unsuk Chin's *Frontispiece for Orchestra*. (November 27–28)
- ◆ **Nézet-Séguin** and the Orchestra return to the beloved Academy of Music for an all-Prokofiev program featuring Symphony No. 5 and **Principal Cello Hai-Ye Ni** as soloist in the Symphony-Concerto. (January 21–22)
- ◆ **Concertmaster David Kim** takes the spotlight in both Massenet's "Meditation" from *Thaïs* and Sarasate's *Carmen Fantasy* in a program led by **Andrew Davis** that also features Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio espagnol* and Musorgsky's *Pictures from an Exhibition*. (February 5–7)

Holiday Festivities

- ◆ The Orchestra celebrates the scary season with **Organ Halloween Extravaganza**, including the signature "organ pump" experience following the concert. (October 28)
- ◆ Members of the Orchestra's brass section and the Fred J. Cooper Memorial Organ usher in the holiday season with **Organ and Brass Christmas**. (December 3)
- ◆ **Bramwell Tovey** returns to lead the **Glorious Sound of Christmas** program, a tradition since Eugene Ormandy and the Orchestra released the iconic album with that name in 1962. (December 17–22)
- ◆ **Julian Wachner** leads the Orchestra's annual presentation of the cherished masterpiece *Messiah*. The Philadelphia Symphonic Choir, led by Joe Miller, joins the Orchestra and a quartet of stellar vocal soloists (December 20)
- ◆ **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** rings in 2021 as he leads the annual **New Year's Eve** concert. (December 31)

Summer with The Philadelphia Orchestra

The Philadelphia Orchestra proudly returns to its three summer homes for concerts in 2021. Tickets for these residencies will go on sale at a later date.

- ◆ The Orchestra returns to its Philadelphia summer home, the **Mann Center for the Performing Arts** in the heart of Fairmount Park, for special performances under the stars. For more information, visit manncenter.org/.
- ◆ High atop the Rocky Mountains, the Orchestra marks its 15th summer at the **Bravo! Vail Music Festival** in Colorado. Hailed as one of the Top 10 "Can't Miss" Classical Music Festivals in the U.S. by NPR, Bravo! Vail is the only festival in North America to host four acclaimed orchestras in a single season. For more information, visit bravovail.org.
- ◆ Built for The Philadelphia Orchestra and New York City Ballet (NYCB) and opened in 1966, the **Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC)** is the summer home to The Philadelphia Orchestra, NYCB and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. SPAC is located in Saratoga Springs, New York, a world-class cultural destination with exceptional museums, bookstores, theatre, music and dance across all genres. A city full of historic architecture and green space, with close proximity to Lake George and the majestic Adirondacks, make it the perfect confluence of man-made beauty and natural beauty. For more information, visit spac.org.

2020–21 Season Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the 2020–21 season are now on sale. New and renewing subscribers may purchase subscriptions through Ticket Philadelphia by calling 215.893.1955 or by visiting philorch.org/subscribe. Renewing subscribers will receive a special mailing and can renew now.

Subscribers will continue to have the benefit of fee-free exchanges on all subscription tickets for the 2020–21 season. Payment options are available for subscribers, allowing them to split their subscription payment into monthly installments or to pay half now and half later. Other subscriber benefits include free ticket replacement, priority seating, and special promotional offers. Subscribers also have the option of purchasing additional individual tickets to any of the season's subscription concerts or special concerts now with their series purchase, prior to individual concert tickets going on sale to the general public. Discount parking is also available to subscribers.

Orchestra subscribers may renew their subscriptions through the end of May. Individual concert tickets will go on sale to the public in late summer. The Orchestra offers subscription packages of six concerts for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings as well as Sunday matinees. Packages of nine concerts are offered for Friday afternoons. Also available at this time are the popular Create-Your-Own 6-concert series, designed for audiences who like the flexibility of choosing their own concerts, the new Film series, and the Family Concert series.

Subscription packages range from \$30 for Family Concert 3-concert series seats in the 3rd Tier, to \$1,379 for a Friday afternoon, 9-concert series, with premium box seats located in Tier 1. A Ticket Philadelphia processing fee of \$25 is added to each subscription order.

To access the full press kit for the 2020–21 season, including a complete chronological calendar, visit www.philorch.org/presskits.

About [The Philadelphia Orchestra](#)

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