



Colorado Symphony 2023-2024

Colorado Symphony
2023-2024 Concerts



The Colorado Symphony

Welcome to our 2023/24 Classics Season! This season carries special significance as we'll celebrate our Centennial, a milestone we could not have reached without the overwhelming and longstanding support of this community. We are your symphony, and this celebration belongs as much to you and our state as it does to our orchestra.

Our Centennial promises to offer a breathtaking odyssey through some of the finest music ever composed, and we can't wait to share it with all of you. Join us as we celebrate 100 years of music and look ahead to a bright future of music-making in Colorado for generations to come.

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with Peter Oundjian
Sept 15-17
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Our Centennial Celebration begins with Beethoven under the baton of Principal Conductor Peter Oundjian with acclaimed masterworks commemorating a century of symphonic music in Colorado. Superstar pianist Hélène Grimaud lends her prodigious talents to Brahms 'First Piano Concerto, filled with virtuosic beauty and bombast in equal measure while featuring many an homage to his idol, Beethoven. As a musician confronting the fate of impending deafness, Beethoven persisted while documenting hopeful aspirations to prevail in his music and personal journals. Within his monumental Fifth Symphony—perhaps the most recognizable and well-known composition in the classical repertoire—he famously depicts this struggle with the ominous four-note motif signifying “fate knocking at the door.” Today, Carlos Simon takes inspiration from a journal entry written a decade after the Fifth Symphony, which includes a passage from Homer's Iliad, beginning, “But Fate now conquers...” Taken together, we witness as Beethoven grapples against inevitability before ultimately relinquishing himself to the hands of fate.

Peter Oundjian, conductor
Hélène Grimaud, piano

CARLOS SIMON Fate Now Conquers
BRAHMS Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, Op. 15
BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 6 with Peter Oundjian
Nov 3-5
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

In Tchaikovsky's native Russia, “pathétique” suggests impassioned suffering, an eerily suitable description for the psychological drama depicted in his final symphony. His death only nine days after the symphony's premiere gives added weight to this defining work of the Romantic period. Listen to an instrument of the orchestra as you've never heard it before as our own Principal Clarinet, Jason Shafer, performs John Corigliano's electric and dazzling Clarinet Concerto, a live spectacle that will enthrall Classical, Jazz, and Rock 'n' Roll lovers alike. The performance opens with Beethoven's Overture to Egmont, showing the icon at his most forceful in a piece full of trademark orchestral power led by Principal Conductor Peter Oundjian.

Peter Oundjian, conductor
Jason Shafer, clarinet

BEETHOVEN Egmont: Overture
JOHN CORIGLIANO Clarinet Concerto
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74, “Pathétique”

Wolfe & Dragon feat. Chorus, Schumann, and more
Nov 17-19
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

A season-long celebration of our renowned Colorado Symphony Chorus begins, commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the ensemble with their founder and director, Duain Wolfe, conducting Gary Fry's To Dream Again, Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music, and Bruckner's Psalm 150. In the second half, Resident Conductor Christopher Dragon takes the podium on Schumann's gorgeous Third Symphony, an awe-inspiring musical portrait he composed while reveling in the picturesque landscape of Düsseldorf and the majestic Rhine River. Here Schumann brilliantly evokes a folk-like atmosphere with surging music that seems more like a force of nature—perhaps channeling the River Rhine itself.

Duain Wolfe, conductor
Christopher Dragon, conductor
Anna Christy, soprano
Colorado Symphony Chorus, Duain Wolfe, director

GARY FRY To Dream Again
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Serenade to Music
BRUCKNER Psalm 150, WAB 38
SCHUMANN Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 97, “Rhenish”

Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 2
Feb 9-11
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Eun Sun Kim, Music Director of the San Francisco Opera, is the first woman to serve as music director of one of America's largest opera companies. In her Colorado Symphony debut, Kim leads the orchestra through Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto, one of the composer's most youthful and vibrant compositions, featuring sublime musical conversation between Kim, the orchestra, and soloist Inon Barnatan. The flute's gentle siren call, solitary and alluring, beckons listeners into the sensuous dreamscape of Claude Debussy's Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun, a spellbinding opening to a weekend of orchestral beauty.

Eun Sun Kim, conductor
Inon Barnatan, piano

DEBUSSY Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun
BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major, Op. 19
SIBELIUS Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Marin Alsop
Feb 23-25
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Your Colorado Symphony and Colorado Symphony Chorus, plus a star-studded cast of vocal soloists, welcome former Music Director and current Conductor Laureate Marin Alsop for an evening of masterpieces that are sure to delight and inspire. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony—so often enlisted for its brilliance, magnitude, and thematic potency—has endured for almost two centuries as the greatest artwork about peace, freedom for all, and brotherhood, ever created. This grand hymn to humanity will flourish alongside two contemporary works by female composers in Anna Clyne's Dance for Cello and Orchestra and Reena Esmail's See Me, all under the baton of the legendary Maestra Alsop.

Marin Alsop, conductor
Inbal Segev, cello
Colorado Symphony Chorus, Duain Wolfe, director

ANNA CLYNE Dance for Cello and Orchestra
REENA ESMAIL See Me
BEETHOVEN Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, “Choral”

Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with Peter Oundjian
Apr 12-14
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Discussing aspirations for his next symphony, Mahler wrote, “One is, so to speak, only an instrument, played on by the universe. The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything!” No Mahler symphony gives us a greater sense of this cosmic scale than the Third. This great hymn to nature is massive in scale requiring a colossal orchestra and is set in six movements in sequence from the earthly and mundane to the sublime and heavenly. Featuring brilliant mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung, Women of the Colorado Symphony Chorus, and the Colorado Children's Chorale, this is an epic performance that only Mahler and your Colorado Symphony can deliver.

Please Note: This performance does not have an intermission.

Peter Oundjian, conductor
Michelle DeYoung, mezzo-soprano
Women of the Colorado Symphony Chorus
Colorado Children's Chorale, Emily Crile, director

MAHLER Symphony No. 3 in D minor

Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 3
Apr 26-28
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Rachmaninoff's brilliant and challenging Third Piano Concerto is respected, even feared, by many pianists due to its technical and musical demands. Denver favorite Natasha Paremski returns as just the virtuoso to tackle the wiles of this Romantic masterpiece. Filled with drama, conflict, and tension, it ranked as Rachmaninoff's personal favorite among his celebrated piano concertos. In her Colorado Symphony debut, dynamic conductor Karen Kamensek leads a first half that features a glimpse into her GRAMMY®-winning work as an opera conductor in Richard Strauss's Four Symphonic Interludes from the opera Intermezzo and Fazil Say's Grand Bazaar.

Karen Kamensek, conductor
Natasha Paremski, piano

FAZIL SAY Grand Bazaar
R. STRAUSS Intermezzo, TrV 246, Op. 7: Four Symphonic Interludes
RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30

Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 with Jeffrey Kahane
Sept 29 - Oct 1
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Welcome the Colorado Symphony's former Music Director Jeffrey Kahane in his return to Boettcher Concert Hall both as featured soloist and conductor on Beethoven's sublime Fourth Piano Concerto. In the hands of Kahane, an intimate dialogue between the solo piano and the instrumental voices of the orchestra emerges with striking clarity and drama. Kahane then takes the podium to conduct Rachmaninoff's Third and final Symphony, which features the composer's trademark lush melodies and romantic flair, a spellbinding conclusion to an evening of symphonic bliss.

Jeffrey Kahane, piano/conductor

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58
RACHMANINOFF Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 44

Two Titans: Mozart & Mahler
Dec 1-3
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Celebrate the work of two titanic icons: Gustav Mahler and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Featuring Mahler's aptly named “Titan” Symphony, this gripping work is unceasingly energetic and performed by an enormous orchestra, with an otherworldly opening described by Mahler himself as, “Nature's awakening from the long sleep of winter.” Hear it alongside Mozart's stunning Third Violin Concerto, composed when the young Mozart was only 19 years old, and artfully brought to life by the Colorado Symphony's own Concertmaster, Yumi Hwang-Williams. With the effervescent Rune Bergmann on the podium, this concert weekend is sure to keep you on the edge of your seat.

Rune Bergmann, conductor
Yumi Hwang-Williams, violin
Jason Lichtenwalter, English horn

SIBELIUS Swan of Tuonela
MOZART Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major, K. 216
MAHLER Symphony No. 1 in D major, “Titan”

Stravinsky's The Firebird with Christopher Dragon
Mar 8-10
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Stravinsky's The Firebird has captivated listeners for over a century, masterfully blurring the lines between fantasy and reality. The ballet's myth-like storyline features a magical Firebird, who helps a young prince rescue a coterie of princesses from Kashchey, an evil sorcerer. Stravinsky's brilliant orchestrations paint a colorful musical portrait in this masterpiece that is truly dance made audible. From the mind of Danny Elfman—a legend of contemporary film music whose scores have fused pop culture with the Romantic tradition—comes a brand-new Percussion Concerto for orchestra featuring the electrifying Colin Currie—as one critic put it, “surely the world's finest and most daring percussionist.” These works will spring to life in the hands of Resident Conductor Christopher Dragon in a performance that will enchant from the first note to the last.

Christopher Dragon, conductor
Colin Currie, percussion

KORNGOLD Theme and Variations, Op. 42
DANNY ELFMAN Percussion Concerto
STRAVINSKY The Firebird: Suite (1945)

Brahms Symphony No. 3
May 10-12
Fri-Sat 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

For much of his life, Johannes Brahms felt the omnipresent weight of Beethoven's shadow looming over him but by the time he reached this, his third and perhaps most stirring symphony, he had emphatically found his own unique voice and flourished into an icon in his own right. The Third is richly Romantic, featuring sweeping, lyrical string lines and beautifully autumnal woodwind passages that make this symphony a delight from start to finish. Electrifying violinist Stefan Jackiw—called “...one of the most insightful violinists of his generation” by The Boston Globe—lends his athletic virtuosity to Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto which features a lively and dance-like final movement that will leap off the stage under the baton of Jun Märkl.

Jun Märkl, conductor
Stefan Jackiw, violin

SMYTH Prelude to Act II: “On the Cliffs of Cornwall” from The Wreckers
PROKOFIEV Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 63
BRAHMS Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90

Shostakovich Symphony No. 5
Oct 13-15
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

The lives and music of Dmitri Shostakovich and Aram Khachaturian were unquestionably influenced by their shared socio-political climate as composers in the Soviet Union. Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, which he called “a response to my critics,” sprang forth during a time of tremendous oppression and conflict, leaving listeners to wonder whether the composition was a triumphant work of patriotism or a hidden note of subversion against the oppression of Stalin. Serbian violinist Nemanja Radulović has taken the classical music world by storm with his extraordinary virtuosity, which will be on full display in Khachaturian's Violin Concerto, an exhilarating work full of Armenian folk flourishes and a hypnotically beautiful second movement. It's all led by orchestra favorite Jaime Martín, on loan from his post as Music Director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

Jaime Martín, conductor
Nemanja Radulović, violin

SAINT-SAËNS Samson et Dalila: Bacchanale
KHACHATURIAN Violin Concerto
SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

Litton Conducts feat. the New York City Ballet
Jan 12-14
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun 1:00 pm

Andrew Litton once served as Music Director of your Colorado Symphony, and since then has led the illustrious New York City Ballet. This weekend, the Manhattan Music Director returns to Denver along with some incredible dancers, transporting audiences from the concert hall to the ballet stage. Join us for a night you'll need to see to believe, replete with works from ballets like Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, Stravinsky's Agon, and much more.

Andrew Litton, conductor
Lauren Lovette, dancer
Amar Ramasar, dancer

TCHAIKOVSKY Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy
STRAVINSKY “Pas-de-deux” from Agon
BORODIN Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances
GERSHWIN “The Man I Love” pas-de deux from Who Cares?
TCHAIKOVSKY “Russian Dance” from Swan Lake
BORODIN Symphony No. 3 in A minor
TCHAIKOVSKY “White Swan pas-de-deux” from Swan Lake

Mozart's Requiem with Peter Oundjian
Mar 22-24
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Witness Mozart's final and greatest masterpiece with Principal Conductor Peter Oundjian, your Colorado Symphony, and Colorado Symphony Chorus. The Requiem's genesis is shrouded in mystery – one that makes the piece all the more fascinating and emotionally stirring. Composed while on the edge of consciousness, Mozart willed his last creation into life with his final breaths, bestowing upon the world a choral tour de force that remains remarkably poignant to this day. Immerse yourself in this exalted Requiem alongside two quintessentially French compositions in Fauré's Pavane—a stunning take on a 16th-century Spanish court dance—and Debussy's Nocturnes, rounding out a performance that will leave you awe-struck.

Peter Oundjian, conductor
Colorado Symphony Chorus, Duain Wolfe, director

FAURÉ Pavane, Op. 50
DEBUSSY Nocturnes
MOZART Requiem K. 626

An Alpine Symphony with Peter Oundjian
May 24-26
Fri-Sat at 7:30 pm, Sun at 1:00 pm

Your Colorado Symphony and Principal Conductor Peter Oundjian present an unforgettable sendoff to our Centennial Season, highlighted by a fitting homage to the Centennial State with Richard Strauss' An Alpine Symphony. Musically recreating a day's mountain climb, it begins in the hours before sunrise, which are painted in dark and somber tones before the brassy emergence of the sun sets the climbers on their way to a rhythmic, rising theme. A grand trombone fanfare and rich orchestral passages create the glorious panorama revealed at the summit while the descent is represented by falling intervals and a clever inversion of the rising theme heard during the ascent. Back at the mountain's base, night has come as Strauss brings the listener full circle. Pianist Bruce Liu—a rising star who rose to widespread renown in 2021 after winning the XVIII International Chopin Piano Competition—breathes new life into Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto, containing the composer's trademark magic and virtuosity, part of a monumental season finale that will leave you simply spellbound.

Peter Oundjian, conductor
Bruce Liu, piano

GLINKA Ruslan and Lyudmila: Overture
PROKOFIEV Piano Concerto No. 3 in C major, Op. 26
R. STRAUSS Eine Alpensinfonie, Op. 64