



DES MOINES SYMPHONY

JOSEPH GIUNTA MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR
THE LINDA AND TOM KOEHN ENDOWED CHAIR

LIVE FROM THE TEMPLE

2020-2021

83RD SEASON

JANUARY-MAY PROGRAMS



GREETINGS and WELCOME!



MAESTRO JOSEPH GIUNTA



RICHARD L. EARLY



ANGELA R. SANDERS

Dear Friends,
 More than ever in these extraordinary times, we know that music can provide powerful and meaningful moments of inspiration and edification; even joy when the world around us is challenging. And so we are very grateful and excited to be able to continue to provide live musical experiences through our *Live from the Temple* series.

In answering our audience surveys and with your cards and emails, you have told us that staying connected to our musicians through these livestreamed concerts — the same musicians that you have come to know at our live Civic Center concerts — is important and enjoyable for you. And that connection to our outstanding musicians is perhaps even more intimate and satisfying now that they are filling your video screens in close-ups thanks to our

staff's expert score-reading and our production crew's excellent camera work.

Many of you have also commented on the quality of the sound in our livestreams; this is thanks to our hugely beneficial partnership with Iowa Public Radio (The Radio Home of the Des Moines Symphony) and their outstanding recording and audio production capabilities. For us, staying connected with you through this amazing live audio and video technology is a most welcome opportunity when so much else in our daily lives is upended.

You will hear and see some of the very best of the orchestral repertoire; music that features your own Des Moines Symphony musicians in virtuosic soloist roles; music that represents some of the very best of our own American culture; great classics from around the world; richly diverse music by several exciting but not so often played composers; and some works we would probably never play on the large stage at

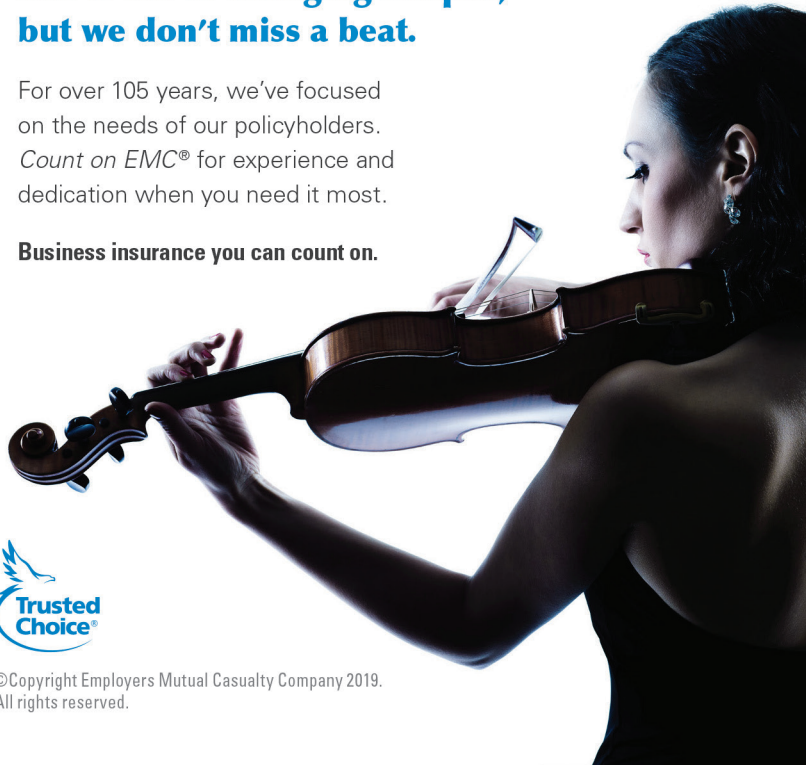


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the Civic Center due to the music's uniquely intimate quality — but the Grand Hall at The Temple for Performing Arts is just the right venue. We are on an extraordinary mission to connect with our community in bold new ways — and we are thrilled to have you join us.

Our outstanding, highly-accomplished professional musicians could not be more eager to play for you live again. But until then, together they will share their gifts and continue to create

something special for you this winter and spring that has never before existed — these Live from the Temple performances, performed and broadcast directly to your homes.

Again, thank you for choosing to join us for these special and historic concerts. We know our musicians are already “hearing” you taking your seats and opening your program books. They know that rustle of anticipation and they will “hear” your applause.

THE CONCERT IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!

JOSEPH GIUNTA
MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

RICHARD L. EARLY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ANGELA R. SANDERS
PRESIDENT, DES MOINES SYMPHONY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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PATRON INFORMATION

TICKETS & CONCERT ACCESS

- Tickets for our “Live from the Temple” concerts can be purchased on our website at dmsymphony.org. For questions about your purchase or accessing the concerts, please contact us at info@dmsymphony.org or leave a message at 515.280.4000.
- Instructions for accessing our livestreamed concerts will be delivered to you via email the day of the concert. To ensure the message isn’t sorted into your junk/spam folder, please add info@dmsymphony.org to your safe senders list.
- Livestreamed concerts will be available for repeat viewing for 30 days after the original performance.

CONCERT WEEK PROGRAMMING

One week before the concert, check our website and our social channels for our Online Concert Prelude Talks, a free preview of the program and discussion of the music, composers, and artists. These videos, hosted by Dr. Eric McIntyre, can be watched at your convenience before our livestreamed programs. Then, join us all week long leading up to each concert for the following slate of special programming:

- **SUNDAY: Symphony with a Twist**
Maestro’s Circle members are invited to join us for Symphony with a Twist, our virtual donor lounge! 7PM, Exclusive to Maestro’s Circle Members.
- **MONDAY: DMSO Listening Room**
Tune into our social channels and our website for a concert-themed episode of the DMSO Listening Room! Maestro Giunta offers insight and information about the music featured in each concert in these short and informative videos.

- **TUESDAY: ReMix**

Join us on Zoom for ReMix, a fun and free evening that combines a live mixology class with music-themed team trivia. 7PM, free, advance registration required.

- **WEDNESDAY: Classical Conversations**

Led by Dr. Eric McIntyre, this online class combines wine, cheese, and great music in an informal setting. Register for the class and add on optional wine & cheese pairings right on our website! \$15.

- **THURSDAY: Live from the Temple**

Tune in at 7PM for our Live from the Temple concert broadcast! Each livestream will include special interviews and behind-the-scenes footage as well as a live Q&A session with Maestro Giunta after the concert. Enhance your experience by adding on multi-course dinner boxes and wine pairings from our local restaurant partners! For more details including menus and ordering information, visit dmsymphony.org.

AMENITIES

- Subscribers receive complimentary access to additional ticketed events based on their subscription level including additional concerts, Classical Conversations, and more.
- To find out what events you have access to, contact us at info@dmsymphony.org.

VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES

- Interested in hosting a viewing of an upcoming Live from the Temple concert for your school, community organization, or retirement home? Contact us at info@dmsymphony.org for details.

The Des Moines Symphony is a not-for-profit, professional orchestra formed in 1937 to enrich, educate and inspire the community by performing great orchestral music. The Symphony Association, governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees and operating on an annual budget of \$4.2 million, supports the Symphony Academy and its numerous music education programs including five youth ensembles, and supports the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra which performs seven pairs of Masterworks concerts, a Pops series including the traditional New Year’s Eve Pops, education, outreach and family concerts, and other special events in its home at the Des Moines Civic Center. The organization also produces and performs a summertime Water Works Pops series as well as the Des Moines Symphony’s Yankee Doodle Pops concert in July on the grounds of the Iowa State Capitol, which attracts more than 100,000, the largest single day attendance of any concert event in the State.



DES MOINES SYMPHONY
JOSEPH GIUNTA MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR
THE LINDA AND TOM KOEHN ENDOWED CHAIR

DINNER & A SHOW

Want to enhance your experience? Join us for dinner and a show!

We've partnered with local restaurants to pair a custom multi-course dinner box with each of our livestreamed concerts. Dinner boxes are available for \$35/person, with wine pairings from \$15-\$20 per bottle.

Already have your tickets? It's easy to add on a dinner box! Just find the concert you're attending on dmsymphony.org and click "tickets." You'll find the full range of options available for purchase, including multi-course dinner boxes and wine pairings from our partner restaurants. Please note orders must be placed one week before the concert.

- Thursday, January 21: Dance, Rhythm, & Blues / **HoQ Restaurant**
- Thursday, February 11: Past and Present / **Cyd's Catering**
- Thursday, March 18: Spring Serenade / **Table 128**
- Thursday, April 15: Fireworks & Fanfare / **Alba Restaurant**
- Thursday, May 13: Fantaisie en Français / **Aposto Restaurant**



NEWCOMER'S GUIDE TO THE DES MOINES SYMPHONY

How long is a typical concert? Our Live from the Temple performances are just over an hour, and made up of several shorter pieces of music than you might typically hear at the Civic Center.

Can I download the concert videos? Because of our contractual agreement with the American Federation of Musicians, unauthorized audio and video recordings may not be made during this performance.

What am I listening to? You can learn about the pieces we're playing today and the musicians performing them in this program book. Our program notes provide historical context, analysis, instrumentation and performance history.

Prefer to follow along on your mobile device? Our mobile app, EnCue, delivers helpful information about the music as it's being performed live by our musicians. All you need is a smart phone or tablet with internet connectivity (WiFi or cellular) to follow along with our mobile program notes. Visit dmsymphony.org/howtostream for more information!

How do I access the concert livestream?

Visit our website, dmsymphony.org, and find the concert you want to access. Click "Tickets" to

purchase your livestream pass. On the day of the concert, you'll receive an email from the Symphony with full access instructions. There is no software to download. To make sure you receive the email with instructions, add info@dmsymphony.org to your safe senders list. Be sure to search your junk/spam folders for the confirmation email!

Can I watch the concert on my TV? Yes! You can watch our concerts on your home theater system with a smart TV, connected mobile device, or streaming service like Apple TV. In addition, some devices allow you to mirror your computer, tablet, or smartphone to your TV using Apple AirPlay, Roku, Google Chromecast, or similar methods. For further guidance and detailed information, visit dmsymphony.org/howtostream.

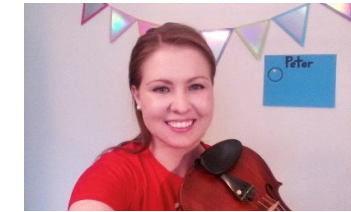
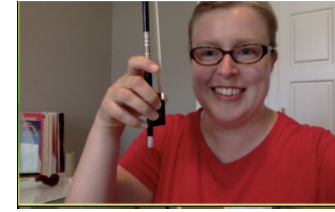
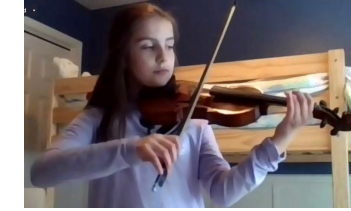
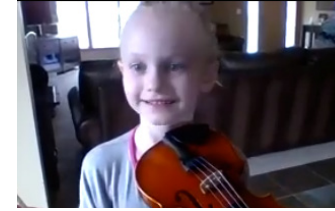
If I miss the livestream, can I watch the concert later? Yes. If you've purchased a streaming pass, you will continue to have access to the livestream for 30 days after the original broadcast. Just use the same access instructions provided in your confirmation email!

THANK YOU FOR WATCHING AND ENJOY THE PERFORMANCE!



DES MOINES SYMPHONY ACADEMY

The Des Moines Symphony Academy aims to provide the very best music education experiences for musicians of all ages. Since its founding in 2003, the Des Moines Symphony Academy has become a musical community of excellence where talented and motivated instrumental students of all ages can learn from renowned professional musicians and educators.



The Symphony Academy is open!

Thanks to creative thinking and clever use of technology, the Academy moved its programs online in March 2020. Through technologies such as Zoom, Facetime, and Skype, faculty members have been able to continue private and group lessons from their own homes. They've even begun teaching new students, some who have yet to step foot inside our doors!

“Being able to continue their violin lessons during this time provided consistency when so much else changed. We appreciate all the hard work that went into making virtual lessons not only possible, but effective.”

—Reischl Family

Marissa Ferro, violin, viola and beginning strings instructor, enjoys the ability to connect virtually with her students. “So many people are working hard to make the best of this situation, and I really do look forward to all my online lessons and classes as a much needed escape from all that’s happening around us,” said Marissa. “Even though it’s not in person, I love being able to connect and learn with all my students!”

“It’s been different and we’ve had a few challenges, but we’ve had lots of fun overall and I’ve noticed that this online format requires all of us to be more intentional with how we listen and respond,” said Renee Brechtel, violin and beginning strings instructor. “Though I can’t wait to see all my students in person again, I’m so glad we can still see each other each week and connect for a few moments with a familiar face amidst all that’s going on in the world outside!”

It is an essential to the Academy’s mission that we maintain a high quality of music education for our community. Despite the challenges we are all facing, we are thrilled to be able to continue music education through these new and exciting methods in order to provide a sense of normalcy and continuity for young musicians. Our “digital” doors are open for new and returning students!

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MAESTRO JOSEPH GIUNTA

One of America's most distinguished, versatile and dynamic conductors, Joseph Giunta is a musician of international acclaim. He is recognized as an important American conductor for his innovative programming and for his compelling interpretations of traditional and new music. His musical depth combined with his boundless energy and contagious enthusiasm makes him one of the most respected and successful orchestra leaders in the United States.

Giunta has been the Music Director of the Des Moines Symphony for thirty-two years and is currently riding the crest of the most successful era in the Orchestra's rich history. He has transformed the Orchestra into one of the finest regional orchestras in America. Over the past three decades he held a similar position with the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony for fourteen seasons, and has guest conducted many of the great orchestras of the world including the Chicago Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, the London Philharmonic and the Philharmonia Orchestra of London. In the United States, he has conducted the orchestras of Indianapolis, Nashville, North Carolina, Charlotte, Florida and Vermont, among others. He has also conducted orchestras in Mexico, South America, Europe, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom.

In 2010, he conducted the Iowa debut of *Beyond the Score*, a partnership between the Des Moines Symphony and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 2007, invited to substitute for Kurt Masur, Giunta guest-conducted the Orquesta Sinfonica Brasileira in Rio de Janeiro in the famed Teatro Municipal. The two sold-out performances received multiple standing ovations. He also conducted the SODRE Orchestra in Montevideo, Uruguay to critical acclaim. One



JOSEPH GIUNTA

critic wrote "Giunta moves like a ballet dancer. He has a dignified and refined technique with great passion and command for the music. The orchestra sounded energized and unified under Giunta's thoughtful and persuasive baton." In the fall of 2010, Giunta served as a judge at the BNDES International Piano Competition in Rio de Janeiro, also conducting several concerto rounds and the Grand Finale Concert.

Highlights of Giunta's tenure in Des Moines include a live recording of all nine Beethoven symphonies and a recording with internationally renowned pianist Earl Wild on the Chesky Records label. The American Record Guide said about this recording that "Wild, Giunta and the Des Moines Symphony play the music to the hilt." And the late Wild in his book, *A Walk on the Wild Side — A Memoir by Virtuoso Pianist Earl Wild*, said "Joseph Giunta is another fine American conductor, who is... conducting well." *The Des Moines Register* has praised Giunta's performances as "stirring." His discography also includes world-wide recordings with the London Philharmonic Orchestra featuring the music of Khachaturian and Britten.



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BRAVOGREATERDESMOINES.ORG

He continues to pursue his life-long goal of exposing as many people as possible to great classical music at all age levels. He inaugurated the Des Moines Symphony's Yankee Doodle Pops, which is now, after 27 years, the largest single day concert event in Iowa, attended by more than 100,000 people each July. In 2003, he developed and launched the Des Moines Symphony Academy, housed in The Temple for Performing Arts in downtown Des Moines. The Symphony Academy currently has more than 600 students enrolled in private lessons, chamber music, a Youth Wind Ensemble, and four Des Moines Symphony Youth Orchestras. The many honors and distinctions awarded to Joseph Giunta include the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) Award for adventurous programming and commitment to new American music. He has commissioned 25 works for the Des Moines Symphony by renowned composers Augusta Read Thomas, Michael Torke, Lukas Foss, Libby Larsen, Adolphus Hailstork, David Ott and many others. Recently, he and the Des Moines Symphony commissioned *Symphony in Sculpture*, a 30-minute work inspired by the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park and written by Emmy Award-winning composer

Steve Heitzeg, in recognition of the Des Moines Symphony's 75th Anniversary Season. DVDs of *Symphony in Sculpture* and *Symphony in Sculpture I, II, and III* feature multi-track, five-channel, surround sound recordings of the pieces accompanied by original films created by Blur MediaWorks, plus a behind-the-scenes making-of documentary. He has also received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Simpson College, the 1984 Helen M. Thompson Award presented by the League of American Orchestras to the outstanding young conductor in the USA, and the 2002 Iowa Arts Award for his contributions to excellence in musical performance throughout the world. In 2015, he, along with Simon Estes, became the inaugural inductees into the Mid-America Music Association Hall of Fame.

Giunta is a graduate of Northwestern University and studied conducting with Henry Mazer, John Paynter, William Smith and Bernard Rubenstein. He also worked with Georg Solti, Carlo Maria Giulini, Leonard Bernstein, Eugene Ormandy and Klaus Tennstedt and has served as stand-by conductor for many of the world's great conductors including Sir Georg Solti, Carlo Maria Giulini, Charles Dutoit, Klaus Tennstedt, Erich Leinsdorf and Sir Neville Marriner.



ABOUT THE DES MOINES SYMPHONY

The Des Moines Symphony Orchestra, celebrating its 83rd season in 2020-2021, is one of Iowa's and the Midwest's premiere arts institutions. Led by Music Director Joseph Giunta for the past 32 years, the Orchestra has established an outstanding national reputation as one of the country's leading regional orchestras. In 2016, the Orchestra was hailed by Phillip Nones of *Bachtrack* as "dazzling, with the Des Moines brass bursting forth with stentorian power..." and delivering a "soul-satisfying triumph." The Orchestra performs a regular series of Masterworks, Pops, Family and Education Concerts, as well as performing for special events. With the establishment in 2003 of the Des Moines Symphony Academy, the organization is one of only five American orchestras to sponsor an Academy of Music as an integral part of its core mission.

The Symphony, a founding member of the League of American Orchestras in 1942, is the principal resident company of the 40-year-old, acoustically acclaimed 2,662-seat Des Moines Civic Center. The Symphony performs seven

pairs of Masterworks concerts there each season, which have included the major works of the orchestral repertoire and collaborations with some of the music world's most prominent soloists including John Browning, Van Cliburn, Alicia De Larrocha, Simon Estes, Sherrill Milnes, Itzhak Perlman and Yo-Yo Ma, and in 2011, the Martha Graham Dance Company in a special Des Moines Performing Arts presentation.

Under the leadership of Joseph Giunta, the Orchestra received the Bravo Greater Des Moines Encore Award for offering a well-received, highly creative and diverse mix of programming; including commissions and world premieres of 25 new works during the last 27 years. The Orchestra and Joseph Giunta together received the League of American Orchestras' prestigious ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming in recognition of their commitment to contemporary music. Recently, Joseph Giunta and the Des Moines Symphony commissioned *Symphony in Sculpture I, II, & III*, works inspired by the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park and written by Emmy Award-winning composer Steve Heitzeg. DVDs of *Symphony in Sculpture I,*

II, and *III* feature multi-track, five-channel, surround sound recordings of the pieces accompanied by original films created by Blur MediaWorks, plus a behind-the-scenes making-of documentary, were released in 2013, 2016, and 2020 respectively. In August 2016, the Des Moines Symphony accepted an invitation by the Iowa State Blue Ribbon Foundation to perform Peter Hamlin's *Symphony On A Stick* on the opening night of the 2016 Iowa State Fair – the very event which had inspired its commission by the Symphony in 2015.

In addition, the Orchestra performs a Pops series, including its annual New Year's Eve Pops at the Civic Center, and has collaborated throughout its history with some of the leading popular artists of the day including Ella Fitzgerald, Roger Williams, Audra McDonald, Kristin Chenoweth and Leslie Odom, Jr., among others. In July 2019, the Symphony launched a free summer series, Water Works Pops, at the newly built Lauridsen Amphitheater at Water Works Park. The organization also produces and performs the much anticipated free, annual Des Moines Symphony's Yankee Doodle Pops concert in July on the grounds of the Iowa State Capitol; attracting some years more than 100,000 listeners, the largest single-day attendance of any concert event in the State.

All of the Orchestra's Masterworks programs are broadcast statewide on Iowa Public Radio Classical, the radio home of the Des Moines Symphony, and the Orchestra can be heard on several compact disc recordings with Joseph Giunta conducting, including a collection of all nine Beethoven symphonies

recorded as a unique series, and on the Chesky Records label with acclaimed American pianist Earl Wild.

Music education has always been an important commitment, and in 2003, the Des Moines Symphony inaugurated the Des Moines Symphony Academy, housed in the beautifully restored 1913 former Masonic Temple building in downtown Des Moines now called The Temple for Performing Arts. The Symphony Academy, now in its 18th year, is a year-round institution dedicated to providing outstanding music education opportunities for students ages three to adult including private lessons, group classes, chamber music, four outstanding Des Moines Symphony Youth Orchestras and a Youth Wind Ensemble, which attract more than 600 accomplished young instrumentalists from throughout Central Iowa each week. The Academy's annual Artist Residency program has hosted violinist Midori, composer Andrew Norman, Symphony Concertmaster Jonathan Sturm, among others, and "Maestro Classes" with guest conductors Gerard Schwarz, Christopher Seaman, JoAnn Falletta, and Peter Oundjian. The Academy continues to grow its unique Beginning Strings Program called "Project Encore" in collaboration with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa. The Academy has continued its outreach by establishing partnerships with Waukee, Urbandale, Ankeny and Johnston School Districts to provide on-site and group lesson instruction. In addition, the Des Moines Symphony performs its school-day Youth Concerts for more than 5,000 schoolchildren each year at the Civic Center.



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DES MOINES SYMPHONY

JOSEPH GIUNTA MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR
THE LINDA AND TOM KOEHN ENDOWED CHAIR

83RD SEASON
2020-2021

ORCHESTRA

First Violins

- Jonathan Sturm
Concertmaster
Connie & David Belin Chair
- Julie Fox Henson
Associate Concertmaster
- Yi-Miao Huang
- John Helmich
- Tracy Engman
Finkelshteyn
- Aaron Hanson
- Linda Pfund Swanson
- Danna Pins
- Seaeun Lee
- Leah Kolner
- Christine Johnson
- Sara Goplin
- Hanna Wolle

Second Violins

- Misha Rosenker
Principal
John & Irene Graether Chair
- Madeline Capistran*
- Mary Dahlby
- Lucy Duke
- Robert Espe**
- Thomas Juneau, Jr.
- Matt Meyer
- Benjamin Munson
- Gretchen Theesfield
- Bethany Washington

Violas

- Yee Ling Elaine Ng**
Principal
R.W. & Mary Nelson Chair
- Benjamin Burgdorf
Acting Principal
- Charles Miranda
- Betty Miller
- Linda Benoit
- Nathalie Cruden
- Abby Hendricks
- Jonanne Tucker
- Julia McCormick**

Violoncellos

- Julie Sturm
Principal
Robert & Gloria Burnett Chair
- Jesse Nummelin
- Mary Pshonik
- Michele Senger
- George Work
- Rachael Means
- Andrew Holm
- Paul Virgilio

Double Basses

- Dominic Azkoul
Principal
John Merriman & Dr. Barbara Beatty Chair, in Honor of Eva & James Brauning

- Kory Johnson
- Donita McCoy
- Ashley Eidbo
- Patricia Silva Weitzel**
- Michael Van Ryn
- Brett Wagner
- Jason Wells

Harp

- Erin Brooker-Miller
Principal
Audrey & Harlan Rosenberg Chair

Flutes

- James Blanchard
Principal
Irene T. Sideman Chair
- Sonja Giles

Piccolo

- Hannah Peterson

Oboes

- Jennifer Wohlenhaus
Principal
Meredith Corporation Foundation Chair
- Susan Odem

English Horn

- Benjamin Holthaus

Clarinets

- Gregory Oakes
Principal
- Clarence Padilla

E-flat Clarinet

- Kariann Voigts

Bass Clarinet

- Joyce Wheeler

Bassoons

- Kevin Judge
Principal
Eileen & Paul Tyler Chair
- Timothy Gale

Contrabassoon

- Matthew Ransom

Horns

- Bret Seebeck
Principal
Robert E. & Gladys G. Wilkins Chair
- Michael Wilson
Assistant Principal
- Peter Kortenkamp
- Charles Harris
- Joshua Johnson

Trumpets

- Andrew Bishop
Principal
Drs. Robert & Rebecca Shaw Chair
- Carl Eitzen**
- Andrew Classen
- Craig Swartz

Trombones

- Casey Maday
Principal
- William Mann

Bass Trombone

- Matthew Halbert

Tuba

- Ravil "Bo" Atlas
Principal
Gene Wibben Memorial Chair

Timpani

- Michael Geary
Principal
Kruidenier Family Chair, in Honor of Elizabeth & David Kruidenier

Percussion

- Aaron Williams
Principal
Gardner & Florence Call Cowles Foundation Chair
- Robert Meunier
- Thomas Mackey

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- Clarence Padilla

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- Rachel Lowry

* Second Violinists, other than the Principal, are listed in alphabetical order. Seating is on a rotational basis.

** Leave of absence

The Des Moines Symphony Orchestra frequently employs additional musicians to meet the instrumentation requirements and musical demands of the works performed.

The musicians of the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra are represented by Local 75 of the American Federation of Musicians.



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83RD SEASON
2020-2021

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Des Moines Symphony Orchestra

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83RD SEASON
2020-2021

A PAGE FROM OUR HISTORY

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bio

DR. RICHARD E. RODDA PROGRAM ANNOTATOR

Dr. Richard E. Rodda is a native of New Jersey and now lives in Cleveland, Ohio. A graduate of Baldwin-Wallace University and Case Western Reserve University, Dr. Rodda has taught at CWRU and the Cleveland Institute of Music, and provided program notes for the orchestras of Cleveland, Chicago, Boston, Colorado, Washington, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Jacksonville, Harrisburg, Tampa, Kansas City, Charlotte and Hartford, as well as the Kennedy Center and Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C., Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Grant Park Music Festival (Chicago), CAL Performances (Berkeley), Princeton University Concerts, Peninsula Music Festival (Wisconsin), Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival and many other ensembles and



organizations across the country. He is a contributor to *Stagebill Magazine*, and has written liner notes for Telarc, Sony Classical, Decca, Angel, Arabesque, Newport Classics, Delos, Azica, Bis and Dorian Records. Dr. Rodda is winner of the 2010 ASCAP Deems Taylor Award.

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Meet the Musicians



JAMES BLANCHARD, PRINCIPAL FLUTE

As early as seventh grade, James Blanchard knew he wanted to play in an orchestra. Using Interlochen Arts Camp in Michigan for two summers as a stepping-stone, he attended the Interlochen Arts Academy for his senior year of high school; Rice University in Houston, Texas, for his undergraduate degree; and The Juilliard School for his Master's degree, where he had the opportunity to work with fantastic conductors and other young musicians from around the world. Of this experience, James says, "being surrounded by so much talent and musical conviction elevated the standards I set for myself and developed my musical and expressive sensibilities."

As a musician, James loves losing himself in someone else's emotion and inner world. Being a musician means providing an audience with some measure of wonder, amazement, and break from reality, another one of James' favorite things. "And," he says, "the chance to travel the world to do all of this isn't so bad either."

James was one of the first Des Moines

Symphony Musicians to participate in the DMSO at Home project. James hosted his first livestream in April, where he performed works by Faure, Rhene-Baton, and Poulenc. The ability to present musical projects to an audience connected by thousands of miles and a computer screen has been an enjoyable and gratifying experience, especially since audiences are almost as starved for live performance as the musicians themselves. James also participated in a woodwind-themed Family Concert in July, where he demonstrated the flute and played the excerpt that made him decide to play the flute, Tchaikovsky's *Peter and the Wolf*. Most recently, he streamed a recital in November featuring soprano Maya Kherani and accompanied by Christopher James Ray in which he selected five pieces that track music's evolution as an expressive art. He feels lucky that the Symphony has been able to "sur-thrive (survive and thrive)," and is excited to continue this dedication to the audience throughout the rest of the season.

When James is not playing the flute, he has an abundance of hobbies and interests to keep him occupied. Some of his favorite pastimes

include reading, cooking, baking, and playing video games. At the moment, James is re-reading *Jane Eyre*, which he intersperses with playing Super Smash Bros, Zelda, and Rocket League. Like many others over the past year, James has been keeping busy in the kitchen. Some of his most recent cooking and baking adventures include gazpacho, tonkatsu (a Japanese dish consisting of breaded tempura cutlets), tortellini, and fired-roasted jalapeno salsa. His cooking endeavors do not stop there, as he has plans to make hand-filled pasta, tonkotsu ramen, focaccia, Bolognese (using Marcella Hazan's recipe), doughnuts, and much more in the future.

James believes a good coffee shop is invaluable to almost every artist. His favorite spot in Des Moines is Horizon Line, which he cannot recommend strongly enough. You can spot James there when the Symphony has

morning rehearsals enjoying a cup of cold brew and one of their delicious pastries.

The ability to share music with people is important to James. To introduce newcomers to classical music, he recommends Prokofiev's *Symphony No. 1*. Prokofiev called this symphony the "Classical Symphony" and composed it as if Haydn were alive and composing during the 20th century. This Symphony embodies everything Haydn and Mozart held dear: form, good structure and proportion, and irreverent charm. After listening to more of his work, listeners can detect Prokofiev's own humor and virtuosic invention. A very digestible and "crazily fun" piece to listen to, this symphony is under 20 minutes long.

Join us on Thursday, May 13 to hear James perform Gluck's *Dance of the Blessed Spirits* and Faure's *Fantaisie* in Live from the Temple: *Fantaisie en Français*.



AARON WILLIAMS, PRINCIPAL PERCUSSION

As a member of both the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra and its administrative staff, Aaron Williams is particularly familiar with the music industry. His first encounter with music came from watching the 80s cartoon Alvin and the Chipmunks. He was hooked on all of the singing

and harmonizing. Back then, he could even sing along in the same octave! From junior high, Aaron knew he wanted to make a living playing percussion. After sixth grade, he quit playing baseball, started going to music camps every summer, and began taking private lessons with a second percussion teacher. He has been at it ever since.

Continues

Aaron spent his first summer at Interlochen Arts Camp when he was sixteen. In that summer, he got to play *Carmina Burana* for the very first time. As a teenager, this was his ultimate symphonic work and he was thrilled at the opportunity to play the timpani part – the first thing you hear in *Carmina Burana* before the choir comes in. He says, “I will never forget the energy, excitement, and pure elation I felt in that performance. And to this day, I still feel that sixteen-year-old exuberance when I get to perform *Carmina*.”

At any orchestra, the Director of Operations oversees the on-stage and backstage logistics for every rehearsal and concert. Depending on the organization, the responsibilities can also include overseeing orchestra personnel, overseeing guest artists, organizing tours, organizing musician auditions, producing outdoor concerts, and much more. Like the rest of the Symphony’s administrative staff, Aaron has certainly had to make some adjustments as we launched our Live from the Temple concert series!

Aaron’s first season with the DMSO was 2010-2011; a season in which Maestro Giunta had programmed Ravel’s *Bolero*. It was also Aaron’s first time playing the piece’s signature solo snare drum part. At one particularly memorable rehearsal, Maestro Giunta decided to place the snare drum at the very front of the stage, in front of the First Violins. Aaron was terrified, but it’s definitely a moment he’ll never forget.

Aaron typically begins focusing his practice towards a specific concert two weeks out from a Des Moines Symphony performance (one week out from the rehearsals). During that time, he practices his parts, listens to the music in order to get reacquainted, and plays along with different recordings of the piece. If he has a

particularly challenging or exposed solo part in a concert, he begins working on it three or four weeks ahead of the performance. Over the course of last year as his performance schedule has lightened, Aaron’s practice routine has shifted towards general maintenance and working on solo pieces for his own enjoyment.

During the launch of our *Live from the Temple* series, Aaron has been focused on logistics as Director of Operations, and has not performed in any of the fall 2020 concerts. He is excited to play his first performance with the Des Moines Symphony this season in *Dance, Rhythm, & Blues*. Because the pieces being performed are for mixed-instrumentation groups of fewer than ten players, Aaron’s biggest challenge will be performing multi-percussion parts and on drum set, which he doesn’t get to do often with the full orchestra.

Aaron also frequently plays in the pit of touring Broadway shows at the Civic Center, which he says really keeps him on his toes as a performer. Playing in the percussion section with the full orchestra and playing in the pit for a Broadway show are very different experiences, each with their own unique demands. When playing in the pit, Aaron is responsible for playing every single percussion instrument in the score. “I usually end up surrounded, and I mean that literally, by no fewer than 20 different instruments. It’s very constant playing, moving rapidly from one instrument to the next. Navigating my way from instrument to instrument is easily the biggest challenge of pit work.”

When Aaron is not at the office or on stage, he tries to get outside to ride his bike on the miles and miles of Des Moines bike paths or take his kayak out on a nearby river or lake. Because quarantining has afforded him so much more free time than usual, Aaron spent the

warmer months on his bike exploring trails that he had never pedaled. He biked the entire Neal Smith Trail from Des Moines up to Big Creek State Park and back, which had been a goal of his for a number of years. Aaron also enjoys collecting and playing modern designer board games (you can catch a glimpse of his enviable

board game collection in his first DMSO at Home video, originally posted in June and available to watch on our website).

We can’t wait to hear Aaron featured as soloist in our January Live from the Temple concert, *Dance, Rhythm, & Blues*.



JONATHAN STURM, *CONCERTMASTER*

Now in his 30th season with the Des Moines Symphony, Jonathan Sturm is its longest serving concertmaster. Despite his long career he still loves the passion and precision this kind of work requires, as well as contributing to the great performances experienced by audiences in this growing city.

When Jonathan was just two years old, he remembers his mother taking violin lessons. Even at that young age, he was interested in trying out the feel of the instrument under his chin and scraping away at the strings. At the age of seven he began his own journey with music and the violin, and has been playing ever since.

When Jonathan was eight years old, he experienced his first professional orchestra concert; a memorable experience as Isaac Stern performed the Brahms *Violin Concerto* with the Indianapolis Symphony. His father took him backstage at intermission, and the master violinist said, “I have only one question to ask you, young man: Do you *like* to play the violin?” Jonathan nodded, and the master violinist responded, “That is all that matters.” He was right.

As Concertmaster, Jonathan has many behind-the-scenes responsibilities, principal of which is to begin the process of bowing the music so that phrasing and articulations reflect composer’s intentions and to ensure that the

Continues



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Meet the Musicians *continued*

violin section looks and sounds more coordinated. “Bowing” means to determine which direction a player should pull their bow when playing a particular note, as well as any stylistic notations. You may recognize the Concertmaster as the musician arriving “late” to the stage to tune the orchestra; historically, the Concertmaster was the conductor for early orchestral performances and would lead from the first chair. The Concertmaster still arrives before welcoming the Conductor or Music Director as a sign of the upcoming collaboration between the orchestra and Conductor to interpret the evening’s program.

Jonathan says, “The most fulfilling aspect of serving as Concertmaster must be hearing the full orchestra, and my section in particular, create a compelling performance. When everything clicks and all are playing our hearts out, it is a glorious thing of which to be a part. A recent performance of Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade for Strings* brought me that kind of pride in all of the DMSO strings. It was top class!”

Jonathan has many wonderful memories of playing with the Des Moines Symphony, but a few standouts include performances with Yo Yo Ma, Gil Shaham, Itzhak Perlman, Earl Wild, Emanuel Ax, and Ray Charles. “Some other fun moments have happened when I got to dance onstage with Duke Ellington’s granddaughter and got kissed onstage by Kristen Chenoweth. My chair does have a few unwritten benefits!”

Jonathan typically begins working on pieces as soon as he receives them from the Music Librarian – sometimes months in advance of a concert. For those that he has played many times before, he typically begins about 3 weeks in advance. While the pandemic has kept him at

home more than usual, he’s had the opportunity to practice much more – he teaches music history and private violin lessons at Iowa State University and has served as the President of the faculty senate.

Outside of music, Jonathan loves wine tasting. “There is so much variety between grapes, growing regions, producers, and vintages! It is like a symphony in a glass. Perhaps in retirement I will work in a wine shop.” When he’s not practicing violin, he also spends time trying to improve his golf game and even better if he gets to travel while doing so (though of course that has curtailed this year). He also periodically scuba dives and loves being in nature – hiking, biking, and canoeing. During quarantine, he has made a little extra time to try doing crossword puzzles and, if they’re not too hard, he quite enjoys them.

“It has been the joy of a lifetime to perform with the Des Moines Symphony for 30 seasons, to have made some wonderful friends, met many outstanding musicians, performed the best orchestral music that history has to offer, welcomed several of my talented students into the orchestra, and met my wife there, too. And though the audience must necessarily have some different members in it today than it did when I arrived in 1991, yet you and they are fundamentally the same—you love the sound of great art and love the experience of watching people work hard to realize the best version we can of the elusive, challenging, strenuous, yet perpetually delicious masterpieces that history has left to us all to enjoy.”

Jonathan Sturm is featured in our January Live from the Temple concert *Dance, Rhythm, & Blues*.



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Sixth Program



LIVE FROM THE TEMPLE: SPRING SERENADE

Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 7:00pm

Streamed Online from The Temple for Performing Arts, Des Moines

Joseph Giunta, conducting

- R. STRAUSS** Serenade for Winds in E-flat Major, Op. 7 (1882)
- GOUNOD** Three Movements from *Petite Symphonie for Winds* (1885)
I. Adagio – Allegro
III. Scherzo: Allegro moderato
IV. Finale: Allegretto
- MOZART** Allegro con brio from *Symphony No. 25 in G Minor, K. 183* (1773)
- DELIUS** “On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring” from *Two Pieces for Small Orchestra* (1913)

Supporting Sponsor: **Bankers Trust**

These concerts are being recorded for later broadcast on **IPR Classical**, 90.1 FM HD-2, The Radio Home of the Des Moines Symphony. Visit dmsymphony.org to find broadcast dates.

PERFORMING AT THIS CONCERT

First Violins

Jonathan Sturm
Concertmaster
Connie & David Belin Chair

Julie Fox Henson
Associate Concertmaster

Sara Goplin
Aaron Hanson
Hanna Wolle
Leah Kolner

Second Violins

Gretchen Theesfield
Acting Principal

Madeline Capistran
Bethany Washington
Lucy Duke
Thomas Juneau, Jr.
Benjamin Munson

Violas

Benjamin Burgdorf
Acting Principal

Charles Miranda
Abby Hendricks
Jonanne Tucker

Violoncellos

Julie Sturm
Principal
Robert & Gloria Burnett Chair

Jesse Nummelin
Rachael Means
Paul Virgilio

Double Basses

Dominic Azkoul
Principal
John Merriman & Dr. Barbara Beatty Chair, in Honor of Eva & James Brauning

Michael Van Ryn

Flutes & Piccolo

Sonja Giles
Acting Principal
Hannah Peterson

Oboes

Jennifer Wohlenhaus
Principal
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Clarinets

Gregory Oakes
Principal
Clarence Padilla

Bassoons

Kevin Judge
Principal
Eileen & Paul Tyler Chair
Timothy Gale

Contrabassoon

Matthew Ransom

Horns

Bret Seebeck
Principal
Robert E. & Gladys G. Wilkins Chair
Peter Kortenkamp
Charles Harris
Michael Wilson

notes

March 18

LIVE FROM THE TEMPLE: SPRING SERENADE

By Dr. Richard E. Rodda

30 SECOND NOTES: The late-18th-century *Serenade* was music for entertainment. Such compositions were ordered by the wealthy of Mozart's time along with the catering and the party decorations for their wedding receptions, family reunions, dinner parties and other festive gatherings, and were particularly popular at garden parties during the summer, where wind instruments were favored outdoors because of their sturdy sound. The genre enjoyed renewed interest at the end of the 19th century, as attested by Richard Strauss' *Serenade, Op. 7* and Gounod's *Petite Symphonie*, both heard at this Des Moines Symphony concert. Frederick Delius' bucolic *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* is related to the Serenade in its sylvan mood if not its musical form, while Mozart's stormy *Allegro con brio* from his *Symphony No. 25 in G Minor* (which you may recognize from the opening to the film *Amadeus*) provides a foil that throws the surrounding music into high expressive relief. 🎵



RICHARD STRAUSS

Born June 11, 1864 in Munich;
died September 8, 1949 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

SERENADE FOR WINDS IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 7

- First performed November 27, 1882 in Dresden, conducted by Franz Wüllner.
- This concert marks the first performance of this piece by the Des Moines Symphony. (Duration: ca. 10 minutes)

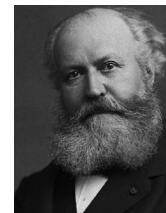
"No genius, I am convinced, but a run-of-the-mill talent" was the distinguished pianist-conductor Hans von Bülow's first estimate of Richard Strauss after examining the seventeen-

year-old composer's *Five Piano Pieces*, Op. 3, in 1881. At that same time, Strauss was finishing a one-movement piece modeled in spirit and instrumentation on the *Andante* from Mozart's great Serenade for *Thirteen Winds*, K. 361. Strauss' *Serenade*, Op. 7 (also for thirteen winds and no strings), his earliest work for wind ensemble, was performed late the next year by the Dresden Tonkünstlerverein, and shortly thereafter came to the attention of Bülow. In light of that new musical evidence, he radically changed his earlier opinion of Strauss, and offered to perform the *Serenade* with his orchestra at Meiningen. The piece was so successful that it became part of that distinguished ensemble's regular repertory at home and on tour. As a result of the *Serenade's* popularity, Bülow asked Strauss to write another work for winds for the Meiningen Orchestra.

When this *Suite*, Op. 4, was finished late in 1884, Bülow insisted that the composer lead the premiere, even though he had never before conducted in public. The 21-year-old Strauss succeeded splendidly as both composer and conductor, and in October 1885 Bülow appointed him co-conductor of the Meiningen Orchestra. A month later he became its sole music director to begin one of the most meteoric careers in the annals of music.

Though Strauss late in life called the *Serenade*, Op. 7 "nothing but the respectable work of a music student," it is actually a composition displaying inordinate skill and technical polish. The lyrical main theme of its sonata form is presented quietly at the beginning by the oboe accompanied by clarinets and bassoons. The second theme, built from short phrases, is more sprightly in nature than the preceding melody. The development section maintains the sun-dappled mood of the exposition while shading it with some chromatic harmonies influenced by the music of Schumann and Brahms. The earlier themes are recalled in the recapitulation before the *Serenade* comes to rest on a cloud of sweet sonority.

The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon and four horns.



CHARLES GOUNOD

Born June 17, 1818 in St. Cloud, France;
died October 18, 1893 in Paris.

THREE MOVEMENTS FROM PETITE SYMPHONIE FOR WINDS

- First performed on April 30, 1885 in Paris.

- This concert marks the first performance of this piece by the Des Moines Symphony. (Duration: ca. 15 minutes)

The 19th century was a time of swift technical innovation during which the burgeoning knowledge of science touched on virtually every aspect of life. Music, or, more precisely, the manufacture of musical instruments, was not immune to such progress, and benefited enormously from advances in metallurgy and acoustics. Though the string instruments had been largely perfected by early in the 18th century in Cremona by Antonio Stradivarius and his successors, the wind instruments of Beethoven's time were still quite primitive, awkward of fingering, suspect of intonation, and recalcitrant of tone production. (The slide trombone is an exception. Its simple mechanism has been essentially unchanged since at least the 15th century.) By the middle of the 19th century, trumpets and horns were fitted with valves that allowed them to play all the available chromatic notes within their range; the tuba was invented; Adolphe Sax devised entire menageries of wind instruments, his most famous creation becoming indispensable to jazz bands throughout the world. The woodwinds owe their current "perfected" status (though parents of a beginning oboist might disagree with that adjective) to the work of Theobald Böhm, a German flutist who published in 1847 a treatise (*Über den Flötenbau und die neuesten Verbesserungen desselben* — "On the Construction of Flutes and the Most Recent Improvements Thereto") that largely solved the acoustical and practical problems hitherto plaguing the instruments.

Among the great virtuosos of the late 19th century whose musicianship was rooted in recent development in the wind instruments was Paul Taffanel (1844-1908), a native of Bordeaux

who settled in Paris and became principal flutist of the orchestras of the Opéra and the Conservatoire Concerts. So rich was his musical talent that he was later appointed conductor for both of those august institutions. Taffanel also served as professor of flute at the Conservatoire, where he was mentor to some of the following generation's best players, including Marcel Moyse. A few recordings made at the end of his life attest to Taffanel's mastery of the instrument and the sensitivity of his expression. In 1879, Taffanel formed a "Chamber Music Society for Wind Instruments" (elegantly titled, in French, "Société de Musique de la Chambre pour Instruments à Vent") to promote the production and performance of music for woodwinds. He asked a number of *belle époque* composers to contribute to the repertory of the new organization, and one of those who responded was Charles Gounod, the renowned composer of what was then probably the most popular opera in the world — *Faust*. Gounod wrote his *Petite Symphonie for Nine Winds* early in 1885, and the piece was first played on April 30th at the Salle Pleyel. The *Petite Symphonie* was one of only a handful of non-sacred works he produced after abandoning opera with *Le Tribut de Zamora* in 1881, having fallen completely into an almost wacky religious mysticism that had been inherent in his personality throughout his life. The *Petite Symphonie* is, however, free of any proselytizing, and is one of the most delightful scores in the wind ensemble's library.

Gounod chose for his *Petite Symphonie* the standard wind octet of Mozart's serenades — pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns — and added to it a part for single flute for Taffanel. A slow introduction prefaces the main body of the opening movement, a frothy sonata-allegro. The vigorous *Scherzo* is perhaps the finest portion of the work in its kaleidoscopic use of wind sonorities. A suave, sonata-form finale brings the charming *Petite Symphonie* to a close.

The score calls for flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons and two horns.



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born January 27, 1756 in Salzburg;
died December 5, 1791 in Vienna.

ALLEGRO CON BRIO FROM *SYMPHONY NO. 25 IN G MINOR, K. 183*

- First performance unknown, but it was composed in 1773 in Salzburg.
- The first and only previous performances by the Des Moines Symphony occurred on January 24 & 25, 1986 with Yuri Krasnapolsky conducting.

(Duration: ca. 10 minutes)

Vienna was the home to many of the most outstanding musicians of the late 18th century. Hasse, Gluck, Gassmann, Wagenseil, Salieri, Haydn, Dittersdorf, Vanhal and many others made Vienna the greatest music city of the day. Several of those composers, most notably Joseph Haydn, were experimenting in the 1770s with a style that brought a new, passionately romantic sensibility to their music — the so-called *Sturm und Drang* ("Storm and Stress") — that was characterized by minor keys, expressive harmonies, and rhythmic agitation. By 1773, Haydn had composed some fifty symphonies of which at least six were in minor keys, including the "Lamentation" (No. 26 in D Minor), "Mourning" (No. 44 in E Minor), the well-known "Farewell" (No. 45 in F-Sharp Minor) and "Passione" (No. 49 in F Minor). During his visit to Vienna that summer, the seventeen-year-old Mozart heard another of

Haydn's minor-key symphonies, No. 39 in G Minor, and it stirred his interest in exploring the expressive possibilities of this revolutionary musical language. On his return to Salzburg in September, Mozart wrote his own *Sturm und Drang* symphony — No. 25, K. 183. He cast it in G Minor, his first orchestral piece in that somber key except for the overture to the early oratorio *La Betulia liberata*, K. 118 (1771). He was to write only one other minor-key symphony: the sublime No. 40, K. 550 of 1788, also in G Minor.

The occasion for which the "Little" G Minor Symphony was composed is unknown, as is the date of its premiere. Some commentators assert that Mozart composed it to vent his anger and frustration over his "Salzburg captivity," as he rather injudiciously dubbed his position at the archiepiscopal court in his hometown. It is unlikely, however, that he would have voiced his rage in just this one isolated piece. Not only are the works surrounding it of consistently sunny countenance, but Mozart also deliberately kept the emotions of his daily life separate from those of his music. It is more probable that, in this daring work, he was simply trying the limits of the newly discovered *Sturm und Drang* style. Such a notion aligns with the development of his music at that time toward enriching his earlier sweet, *gallant* style based on Italian music with the harmonic and textural weight of the German composers.

The *Symphony No. 25* opens with a pulsing motive, more rhythmic than melodic, as the first movement's main theme. After a simple, poignant phrase in the oboe and a pregnant silence, the stormy transition from G Minor to the contrasting key begins. Another, briefer pause precedes the second theme, a step-wise motive presented by the violins in B-Flat Major. (Mozart, time and again, used such silences to clarify a movement's structure. Silence in music is, most definitely, *not* nothing.) A compact development

section leads to a recapitulation of the earlier themes, with the second theme heard in the dark coloring of the principal tonality. A short coda returns the opening pulsing motive to close the movement.

The score calls for two oboes, two bassoons, four horns and the usual strings.



FREDERICK DELIUS

Born January 29, 1862 in Bradford, England;
died June 10, 1934 in Grez-sur-Loing, France.

"ON HEARING THE FIRST CUCKOO IN SPRING" FROM *TWO PIECES FOR SMALL ORCHESTRA*

- First performed on October 23, 1913 in Leipzig, conducted by Artur Nikisch.
 - The first and only previous performance by the Des Moines Symphony occurred on March 5, 1961 with Frank Noyes conducting.
- (Duration: ca. 7 minutes)*

In 1899, after a failed attempt to run an orange grove in Florida, stints as a music teacher in Virginia and an organist in New York, and a musical apprenticeship at the Leipzig Conservatory, Frederick Delius used an inheritance from his father (a well-to-do German-born merchant who made his fortune in wool in Manchester) to abandon his native England and settle in France. In Leipzig, Delius met Edvard Grieg, with whom he became fast friends and regularly passed his summer holidays in Norway, and Jelka Rosen, a German painter whom he married. Delius and his bride established their home in the village of Grez-sur-Loing, some distance south of Paris, where Jelka's family had enjoyed a number of

vacations in earlier years.

Delius largely shut himself off from the world thereafter, living in the comfort provided by his wife's substantial inheritance, and writing in short order four of his greatest compositions: *A Village Romeo and Juliet*, *Sea Drift*, *Appalachia* and *A Mass of Life*. Those works and several others established his reputation in Germany and Scandinavia, but his music made little impression in England until Thomas Beecham began championing his compositions with the premiere of *A Mass of Life* at Queen's Hall, London in 1909. By that time, Delius had gathered a growing and fiercely supportive band of partisans who determined to further the cause of his music; chief among them were the eccentric Australian composer-pianist Percy Grainger and Philip Heseltine (penname: Peter Warlock), the English writer and composer who would become Delius' biographer and author of a *Serenade for Delius on his Sixtieth Birthday* before committing suicide in 1930. Both men offered Delius the same advice at the beginning of 1913 to foster his British renown: "Write some short pieces for small orchestra, and English orchestras will devour them" (Heseltine); "I do wish you had in print some piece for not *too big* orchestra & not too wildly hard ... that could be performed with an hour's rehearsal & then form part of the general repertory" (Grainger). Delius took their counsel, and early in 1913 created the exquisite orchestral miniatures *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* and *Summer Night on the River*, which were published together later that year as *Two Pieces for Small Orchestra* with a dedication to the English composer and conductor Balfour Gardiner, another devotee of the Delian cause. The high level of regard for Delius on the Continent was demonstrated when the electrifying Artur Nikisch, director of both the Berlin Philharmonic and Leipzig Gewandhaus

Orchestras and perhaps the most revered conductor of that time, agreed to premiere *First Cuckoo* in Leipzig on October 23, 1913. Willem Mengelberg played the piece with his Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam a few weeks later, and gave it again at Queens' Hall in London on January 20, 1914 with excellent success. *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* — "an epitome of his whole life's work," according to Heseltine — has been among the most beloved and frequently heard of Delius' works ever since.

On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring, the perfect embodiment of Delius' unique blend of English pastoral lyricism with sensuous French Impressionist harmony, is meant not so much to depict the scene of approaching spring as to evoke the bittersweet feelings associated with that renewing season which, in the inevitable cycle of life, must itself eventually fade. The music is based on two inextricably interwoven themes: the first is original with Delius ("a sequence of phrases that echo each other, like distant cuckoo calls," said the composer); the other is derived from a traditional Norwegian melody, *I Ola dalom* ("In Ola Valley"), that Delius found in Grieg's Op. 66 collection of folksongs arranged for piano. (Delius may have intended the piece as an informal memorial to his colleague and friend, who had died in 1907.) The clarinet's whispered hints of the faraway bird's two-note call provide a sylvan counterpoint to the unfolding of the Norwegian song. It is such glowing tonal visions as *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* that caused Thomas Beecham to pronounce Delius "the last great apostle in our time of romance, emotion and beauty in music."

The score calls for flute, oboe, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns and the usual strings.





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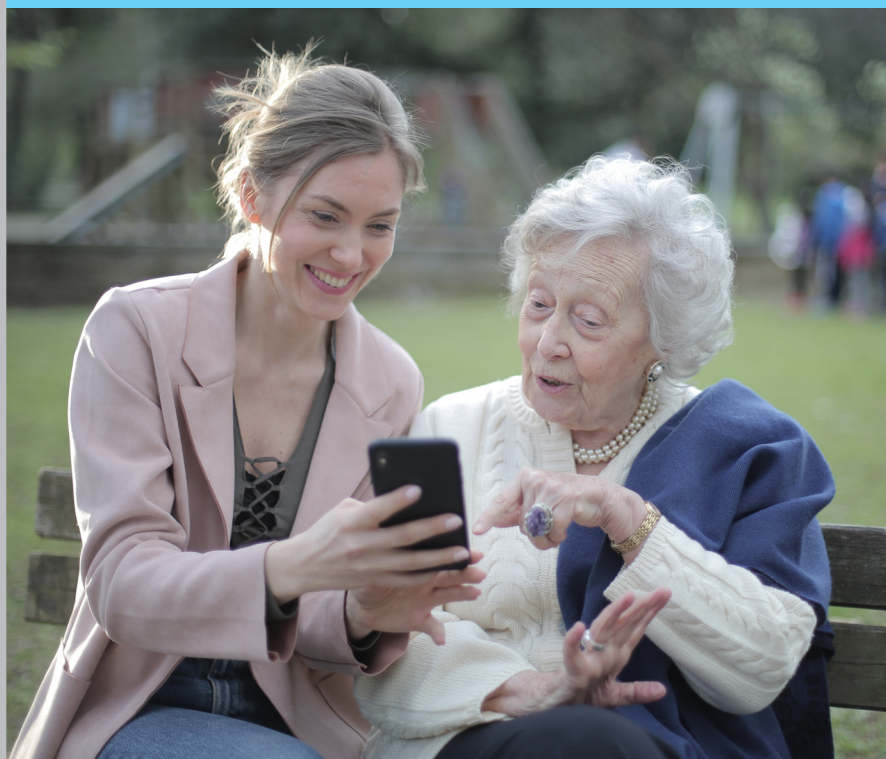
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