

Winter Program

2023/24 Season



Houston Youth Symphony

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* Houston Youth Symphony alum

A Note from the Executive Director

Today I want to recognize the music educators who shape and nurture our young musicians: **a private lesson teacher, a sectional coach, an orchestra director, a band director, a conductor.** It can be one individual or a collection of music educators that instill a lifelong love of music and appreciation for the arts.

One of my greatest mentors as a child was my clarinet teacher. I learned the most from him by hearing him play with his warm tone and effortless technique. But one of the most pivotal moments for me was when he encouraged me to check out a CD(!) and score from the library(!) and listen to a symphony from start to finish. As a 13-year-old, the thought of listening to a symphony with a score seemed a bit boring, but I was wrong. It was life changing. It was the moment that I realized that music could transport me to a time, a place, a feeling. Fast forward to today: though I am not a performing musician, those weekly lessons continue to guide me both musically and in day-to-day life, and it is a privilege that is not lost on me.

HYS is grateful to the music educators who have encouraged someone on this stage today both musically and beyond. You are inspiring young musicians each day with your wisdom and passion for music. Your work is vital to creating a future where classical music thrives and grows. We thank you!

Sincerely,



Amy Chung



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For application information visit esm.rochester.edu/admissions

History

With more than 75 years of history, Houston Youth Symphony (HYS) is the recipient of national acclaim, including the 2023 first prize of the Mark of Excellence Award from the Foundation for Music Education and the 2023 American Prize. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Dr. Michael Webster, this season 415 musicians between the ages of 7 and 19 come from across the greater Houston area to perform in one of five HYS orchestras. In addition to the core orchestra program, HYS offers advanced musicians a chamber music training program and an annual concerto competition.

In the community, HYS provides free private music lessons for talented youth through the Melody Program. In January 2015, HYS launched the Coda Music Program, an after-school effort modeled after El Sistema that brings graduated, intensive string instruction to five elementary schools in Houston's Near Northside neighborhood and four elementary schools in Ford Bend. The program uses classical music and group instruction to build community and social transformation.

To learn more about HYS programs, concerts, and opportunities to support the work of Houston Youth Symphony, please visit HoustonYouthSymphony.org.

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*All photos courtesy
Melissa Taylor*



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*We wish to thank our
generous supporters.*

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25th Anniversary)*

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25th Anniversary)*

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*This listing reflects contributions
received as of 1/09/24.*

2023/24 Season Winter Concert I

February 4, 2024, 2:30 pm
Rice University
Stude Concert Hall

Debut String Orchestra

Jackson Guillén, Conductor

Las Palmas

Bob Lipton (b. 1954)

"Cinema Paradiso"
from the movie *Cinema Paradiso*

Ennio Morricone (1928–2020)
arr. Bob Krogstad

Amadeus Soundtrack Highlights

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)
arr. Larry Moore

Danza de mi Corazón

Steven L. Rosenhaus (b. 1952)

Pause

String Orchestra

Angela Peugnet, Conductor

Sinfonia IV in C minor
I. *Grave—Allegro*

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Phantom Waltz

Chris Thomas (b. 1982)

O Magnum Mysterium

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)
Trans. Sandra Dackow

Ancient Wonders Suite

Todd Parrish (b. 1971)

- I. *Temple of Artemis at Ephesus*
- II. *The Great Lighthouse at Alexandria*
- III. *The Great Pyramid at Giza*
- IV. *Statue of Zeus at Olympia*

Pause

Sinfonia

Brad Smith, Conductor

Peer Gynt Suite

Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)
ed. Carl Simpson

- I. *Prelude*
- III. *In the Hall of the Mountain King*

"Non più andrai"
from *Le Nozze di Figaro*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)
arr. Sandra Dackow

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
arr. Rosenhaus & McAlister

*Photography and video recording strictly prohibited.
Please silence all phones and electronic devices
A ten-minute pause takes place between each orchestra.*

Winter Concert I

Program Notes

Debut String Orchestra

Las Palmas

Bob Lipton (b. 1954)

Inspired by Spanish harmonies and rhythms, *Las Palmas* is a piece that blends Spanish-based melodies with the traditional flamenco clapping from southern Spain, specifically from the region of Andalucía. Several players from different sections of the orchestra are required to do the four clapping parts. The piece begins with a slow melodic line played by the violins in a free manner followed by a solo from the clapping group at a faster tempo. The rest of the piece combines the clapping parts with the rest of the orchestra ending with a short reiteration of the solo clapping part.

“Cinema Paradiso” from the movie *Cinema Paradiso*

Ennio Morricone (1928–2020)

arr. by Bob Krogstad

Regarded by critics as a classic, *Cinema Paradiso* is a film by director Giuseppe Tornatore released in 1988. The film was

well-received by audiences and critics and received several awards including a Golden Globe and an Oscar. The music for the film was composed by Italian composer Ennio Morricone, a prolific film composer and recipient of several awards including two Academy Awards, three Grammys, three Golden Globes, and a BAFTA award for Best Film Score for *Cinema Paradiso*.

This arrangement by Bob Krogstad is based on the famous “Love Theme” and features a piano part that alternates the main melodic material with the strings.

***Amadeus* Soundtrack Highlights**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

arr. by Larry Moore

Released in 1984, *Amadeus* is a biographical film based on the life of Mozart with a plot revolving mainly on the rivalry between Mozart and Italian composer, Antonio Salieri. The film had a good reception and won several awards including eight Academy Awards and four Golden Globes.

Mozart’s compositions constitute the main body of the film’s soundtrack. Today you will enjoy selections/excerpts from this album such as the Piano Concerto No. 22,

K. 482, "Confutatis" from the *Requiem*, K. 626, the Piano Concerto No. 20, K.466, and Symphony No. 25, K. 183.

Danza de mi Corazón

Stephen L. Rosenhaus (b. 1952)

In the words of the composer: *"There is nothing more exciting to me than music intended for dancing."* Commissioned and premiered by the Hershey Middle School Orchestra, *Danza de mi Corazón* is a piece that combines rhythms from different parts of Latin America. For this, the composer decided to title the piece in Spanish. The piece starts with the main theme played in unison by the entire orchestra. From the beginning, the uplifting rhythms and harmonies create an atmosphere of joy and celebration that will carry through the entire piece.

Notes by Jackson Guillén

members. These symphonies were written in tribute and study of classical period symphonies, especially those by Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Mozart. Mendelssohn's No. IV is structured in three movements in the style of a divertimento, a lighthearted piece meant to be played at social functions.

Phantom Waltz

Chris Thomas (b. 1982)

A cinematically styled piece, this work started with the composer's reaction to a photo of "a ghostly, forgotten ballroom in Shanghai, China...There was something captivating about this apparitional, forgotten ballroom that seemed to still echo with the melancholy sound [of] waltzes past." The cello duet that starts and ends the work makes for beautiful sound imagery of a phantom couple still dancing.

O Magnum Mysterium

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

trans. by Sandra Dackow

Originally a Gregorian chant in Latin, *O Magnum Mysterium* (O great mystery), has been set to music by many composers over the centuries. Lauridsen's version, written in 1994 as an a cappella choral motet, is the piece that made him famous. Lauridsen described his intentions in the work,

String Orchestra

Sinfonia IV in C Minor

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Felix Mendelssohn wrote thirteen string symphonies between the ages of 12–14 years old, the ages of many of our HYS String Orchestra

"I wanted this piece to resonate immediately and deeply into the core of the listener, to illumine through sound." The work is meant as "a quiet song of profound inner joy." This transcription for string orchestra has challenged our orchestra to listen, blend, breathe, and color our sound to imitate the connected and uniform sound of a skilled vocal ensemble. There were several rehearsals where students were literally moved out of their comfort zone and usual seating patterns to see and hear their ensemble in a different way.

Ancient Wonders Suite

Todd Parrish (b. 1971)

The listed Seven Wonders of the Ancient Western World are celebrated as stunning achievements of ancient engineering. Sadly, the passage of time has destroyed all but one. Todd Parrish composed soundscapes for four of these wonders: the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Great Lighthouse at Alexandria, the Great Pyramid at Giza (still standing at 4,000 years old), and the Statue of Zeus at Olympia. The first movement portrays the "awe-inspiring grandeur and size of the Temple of Artemis located in Ephesus." The movement also includes iterations of the "Dies Irae" motif (Day of Wrath) as Artemis is the Greek goddess of the hunt. Listen for it in the bass clef parts.

The ocean waves and dark mystery of the sea can be heard in the movement of the Great Lighthouse. The third movement (a student favorite) easily transports our minds to the sands and mystery around the Great Pyramid. Finally, we end with the spirit and energy of Olympic victory as we are greeted by the Statue of Zeus.

Notes by Angela Peugnet

Sinfonia

Peer Gynt Suite

Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)

ed. by Carl Simpson

Peer Gynt is a Norwegian fairy tale and was the inspiration for a play written by Henrik Ibsen. Composer Edvard Grieg was asked to write music for the play and composed 26 movements in all. However, only eight of those movements are often heard in modern-day concert halls. Two of those movements are heard from this edited version containing the Prelude, which is a mini-overture of three contained sections of contrasting music. That will move right into Grieg's most famous melody, "In the Hall of the Mountain King", which has been featured in countless film and television settings. Perhaps the

most familiar to many audience members is its prominent use in early Bugs Bunny cartoons.

“Non più andrai”

from *Le Nozze di Figaro*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)
arr. by Sandra Dackow

Mozart’s bass aria, a humorous military march from *The Marriage of Figaro*, has taken a place as one of the highlights of the opera, which is itself generally considered among the very best in all operatic repertoire, especially comedic opera. “Non più andrai” is a jaunty tale with the title character Figaro using this opportunity to cheer up his fellow servant Cherubino, the Count’s page. In short, Figaro is having a little fun giving advice to the young gentleman who has just been sent to the army by the Count, showing empathy, yet making sure Cherubino understands that his time in the military will be a far cry from the life he leads now. Mozart masterfully takes rather simple elements of a tuneful march and transforms them into something, well, “Mozartian!” This setting is a wonderful opportunity for the full orchestra to take a turn as the bass soloist, passing around the lyrical tune in a light and magical setting.

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)

arr. by Rosenhaus & McAlister

Liszt composed nineteen Hungarian Rhapsodies for solo piano in 1847. Of those, perhaps the most famous remains the 2nd, which is played today in an orchestral arrangement. The music is very much in a gypsy style, which the composer at one time believed encompassed most of the folk music of his native Hungary. You will hear abrupt changes of style and feeling, from big and grand, as in the opening, to light and virtuosic. There are significant solos for clarinet and flute, both in a very improvisatory style. As with the Grieg *In the Hall of the Mountain King*, this work contains melodies that were so infectious that they found their way into television and movie scores. Liszt takes us on a wild journey, ending with a frenetic and grandiose exclamation point!

Notes by Brad Smith

Debut String Orchestra Musicians

Violin I

Andres Sanchez

concertmaster

Eric Liu

assistant concertmaster

Rachel Lee

Theia Doescher

Angeli Fetizanan

Ava D'Souza

Andrew Huang

Kelly Su

Justin Park

Lotus MacGloin

Bennett McLeod

Amina Crawford

Hannah Cha

Vishakha Rao

Emily Leong

Joshua Lee

Samuel Kim

Violin II

Yuechen Wang

principal

Joanna Wu

assistant principal

Austin Zheng

Michael Lee

Emma Koo

Jane Lozada

Mia Cha

Jiale Lu

Lorenzo Rubio

Candace Huang

Carolina Laronga

Michaela Chong

Vrishni Krishnan

Chloe Jang

Connor Chang

Jasmine Zhang

Henry McLeod

Viola

Nirvan Kudithipudi

principal

Tishe Odejide

assistant principal

Arya Prasad

Aarush Bhavanam

Maria Lopez

Juan Lopez

Ariana Correa

Connor Chen

Yin-Shiuan Tsai

Cello

Noah Chan

principal

Danna Sun

assistant principal

Aidan Polatbekov

Mia Li

Timothy Lee

Benjamin Le

Maria Paulina Arriola

Alvarado

Lilyann Wang

Kathleen Zhang

Michael Liang

Evalynn Lu

Bass

Rudra Singh

principal

Bruce Manning »*

Piano

Lucien Guo

Orchestra Liaison

Yanxin Li

» *Substitute Musician*

* *HYS Alum*

String Orchestra Musicians

Violin I

Dylan Chan

concertmaster

Coral Hoan-Chau Khieu

assistant concertmaster

Devon Chan

Ethan Suh

Jinoo Kim

Kelly Kim

Bella Ragsdale

Varun Akondy

Micah Chong

Emily Lei

Cesar Rodriguez

Emily Lozada

Kayla Le

Evelyn Kao

Emma Lee

Violin II

Charles Han

principal

John Li

assistant principal

Phoebe Caffey

Madeline Lee

Sewon Cho

Aanya Shree Gautam

Joseph Hu

Jordana Elizabeth Zhao

Eric Jia

Grace Hao

David McGrew

Juan Pablo Pereira

Laya P. Keshav

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Gavin Yu

Claire Shim

Luke Trahan

Viola

Evan Lee

principal

Ishaan Koukuntla

assistant principal

Sydney Watson

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Mason McMurrey

Melody McMurrey

Gabriela Capetillo

Sebastian Gael Garza

Elaine Aiko Ayala

Mason Wilmore

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Sophie Hong

principal

Benjamin Lewis

assistant principal

Mikaela Wood

Varsha R. Chandupatla

Joshua Segreaves

Lachlan McFarland

Ethan Xiao

Joshua Wang

Alejandro Castillo

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Kaviya Dhir

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Bass

Shadrack Akinkunmi

principal

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assistant principal

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Lachlan Burns

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Cindy McMurrey

Nick McMurrey

Sinfonia Musicians

Violin I

Jenessy Morones
concertmaster

Ashley Liu
assistant concertmaster

Ilina Trahan

Scotty Ragsdale

Madeleine Marie
Melancon

Ana Cristina Franco

Maya Ikegami

Daniel Hribik

Ian Park

Claire Yang

Maggie Huang

Maple MacGloin

S. Emily Liu

Mario Avalos

Joseph O. Davis

Klesta Kurhani

Violin II

Max Bosen Xiao
principal

Allison Lu
assistant principal

Celeste L. Smith

Gaya Kulatilaka

Zoya Cherry

Alexander Gao

YeJin Lee

Sophia Franco

Priyanka Nayar

Aaron Bradberry

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Andy Sun

Joey Zhu

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Tavishi Sinha

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principal

Riley Chang

assistant principal

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Victor Puente

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Isaac Lu

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principal

Brady Minh-Thong

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assistant principal

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Joanne Bach

Rose Hébert

Marcus Lee

Elliott Nelsen

Mark Doan

Emelia Thompson

Michael Z. Wu

Amani Kalkattawi

Sherine Liu

Bass

Ryder J. McBride

principal

Sahiti Venigalla

assistant principal

Abraham Melesio Zepeta

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Jaira Bandela

Flute

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Xavi Gallart

Tuba

Jared Granier

Harp

Miranda Rinaldi

Timpani

Xavier Baines #
Joshua A. Colomine
Puentes ‡
Logan Punwasi ^

Percussion

Xavier Baines
Logan M. Chopin
Joshua A. Colomine
Puentes
Logan Punwasi
Caleb Thornton
Edwin Wang

Orchestra Liaison

Jane Stones

*Wind and Percussion
musicians are listed
alphabetically.*

‡ Principal Grieg
^ Principal Mozart
Principal Liszt

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To assist HYS in reporting requirements for various federal, state and city grants, please take a few minutes to complete this brief survey.

Click Here.

Thank you for your time!

2023/24 Season Winter Concert II

February 4, 2024, 7:00 pm
Rice University
Stude Concert Hall

Philharmonia

Michael Isadore, Conductor

Coronation March

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Scissor-Tailed

Jaylin Vinson (b. 2002)

Symphony No. 8, G Major, Op. 88
IV. Allegro ma non troppo

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

Pause

Symphony

Michael Webster, Conductor

Two Lieder from

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)

Des Knaben Wunderhorn

Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt (Antonius of Padua's Fish Sermon)

Urlicht (Primal Light—also the fourth movement of Symphony No. 2)

Luisana Rivas, Mezzo-Soprano

Symphony No. 2, C minor,
"Resurrection"

Gustav Mahler

I. *Allegro maestoso*

The three movements will be performed without pause.

Please withhold applause until the end.

Photography and video recording strictly prohibited.

Please silence all phones and electronic devices.

A ten-minute pause takes place between each orchestra.

Mahler Text and Translations

German source: Anonymous; English translation by Michael Webster

Des Antonius von Padua

Antonius zur Predigt
die Kirche find't ledig!
Er geht zu den Flüssen
und predigt den Fischen!

Sie schlag'n mit den Schwänzen!
Im Sonnenschein glänzen,
im Sonnenschein, Sonnenschein
glänzen,
sie glänzen, sie glänzen, glänzen!

Die Karpfen mit Rogen
sind all' hierher zogen;
hab'n d'Mäuler aufrissen,
sich Zuhör'n's beflissen.
Kein Predigt niemalsen
den Fischen so g'fallen!

Spitzgoschete Hechte,
die immerzu fechten,
sind eilends herschwommen,
zu hören den Frommen!

Auch jene Phantasten,
die immerzu fasten:
die Stockfisch ich meine,
zur Predigt erscheinen!

Antonius of Padua's Fish Sermon

Antonius the preacher,
he finds the church empty!
And goes to the river
to preach to the fishes!

With all their tails thrashing!
And gleaming in sunshine,
in sunshine, in sunshine, they're
gleaming,
they're gleaming, they're gleaming,
gleaming!

The carp, fat with carp roe,
have joined the procession;
their mouths open wider,
to pay close attention.
No sermon was ever
so pleasing to fishes!

The pike, all sharp-snouted,
who always are fencing,
swim quickly together
to hear the devout one!

The strangest of creatures,
who always are fasting:
I mean that the codfish
appear for the sermon!

Kein Predigt niemals
den Stockfisch so g'fallen!

No sermon has ever
so pleased all the codfish!

Gut Aale und Hausen,
die vornehme schmausen,
die selbst sichbequemen,
die Predigt vernehmen!

Good eels and good sturgeon
had planned on a big feast,
themselves condescending,
to come hear the sermon!

Auch Krebse, Schildkroten,
sonst langsame Boten,
steigen eilig vom Grund,
zu hören diesen Mund!

The crabs and the turtles
are very slow movers,
but they hurry along
to hear what he says!

Kein Predigt niemals
den Krebsen so g'fallen!

No sermon has ever
pleased crabs in such numbers!

Fisch' große, Fisch' kleine!
Vornehm' und gemeine,
erheben die Köpfe
wie verständge Geschöpfe:

Large fish and the small ones!
The high and the lowly
lift heads at attention,
like intelligent creatures:

Auf Gottes Begehren
die Predigt anhören!

Obeying God's wishes,
to come hear the sermon!

Die Predigt geendet,
ein jeder sich wendet!
Die Hechte bleiben Diebe,
die Aale viel lieben;

The sermon has ended;
all turn who attended!
The pike remain robbers,
the eels remain lovers;

die Predigt hat g'fallen,
sie bleiben wie allen!

the sermon that pleased them
did nothing to change them!

Die Krebs' geh'n zurücke,
 die Stockfisch' bleib'n dicke,
 die Karpfen viel fressen,
 die Predigt vergessen, vergessen!

The crabs still go backwards,
 the cods are still fattest,
 the carps are still gorging,
 the sermon forgotten, forgotten!

Die Predigt hat g'fallen,
 sie bleiben wie allen!
 Die Predigt hat g'fallen, hat g'fallen!

The sermon that pleased them
 did nothing to change them!
 The sermon has pleased them,
 pleased them!

Urlicht

O Röschen rot!
 Der Mensch liegt in grösser
 Der Mensch liegt in grösser Pein!
 Je lieber möcht' ich im Himmel sein,
 Je lieber möcht' ich im Himmel sein!

Primal Light

Oh little red rose!
 Man lies in deepest need!
 Man lies in deepest pain!
 I would rather be in heaven,
 I would rather be in heaven!

Da kam ich auf einen breiten Weg,
 da kam ein Engelein und wollt' mich
 abweisen.
 Ach nein! Ich liess mich nicht
 abweisen,
 Ach nein! Ich liess mich nicht
 abweisen!

I came upon a broad path,
 An angel came and wanted me to
 turn away.
 Ah no! I would not be turned away,
 Ah no! I would not be turned away!

Ich bin von Gott, und will wieder zu
 Gott!
 Der liebe Gott, der liebe Gott
 wird mir ein Lichtchen gehen,
 wird leuchten mir bis an das ewig,
 selig Leben!

I am from God, and will return to
 God!
 Beloved God, beloved God
 will give me a little light,
 will light me to eternal, blessed life!

Winter Concert II

Program Notes

Philharmonia

Coronation March

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Tchaikovsky was commissioned in March of 1883 by the Mayor of Moscow to compose the *Coronation March and Cantata* for the festival at Sokolniki Park for the coronation of the Tsar Alexander III. These requests came while Tchaikovsky was in Paris, finishing up his opera, *Mazeppa*, which premiered a few months later. Due to an imposed timeline, Tchaikovsky completed the two works in three weeks for performances in May.

Coronation March, originally known as the “Festival Coronation March”, was retitled in 1891 by Tchaikovsky to *Marche Solennelle* (*Solemn March*). This was done for a performance he conducted at the opening concert of the Carnegie Music Hall in New York. Regardless, the march is a very regal and stately work, befitting of the original title. From the opening chords, the listener can tell this is a majestic and pompous work. As in the *1812 Overture*, Tchaikovsky quotes the

Russian National Anthem “God, Save the Tsar.” I knew this would appeal to our low brass members. In later versions, these measures were replaced with other material, but we will be performing the original notation.

Tsar Alexander III was a supporter of Tchaikovsky and his music. The emperor presented Tchaikovsky with awards and gifts throughout his life and upon his death declared that he should be given a state funeral. I felt this was a great work for HYS because the *Coronation March* is representative of Tchaikovsky’s larger works, but in a five-minute footprint, allowing for an exciting concert opener with involved parts for all sections.

Scissor-Tailed

Jaylin Vinson (b. 2002)

Jaylin Vinson has been a familiar face around the Houston Youth Symphony, both as an intern last season and working with the video production team during our fall concert. A native of Oklahoma, Mr. Vinson is pursuing a BM degree in composition at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music and is a rising star, having recently received a commission by the prestigious Kennedy Center.

Texture and color are important elements in Mr. Vinson's music. This style requires technical and musical independence from the musicians as string stand partners will not be playing the same notes or changing bows together. Color swells are created as brass members crescendo and decrescendo at different rates than their section mates. On top of this texture, Mr. Vinson uses creative pairings of instruments to create unique orchestral colors. The wind melody at the beginning is a great example as it is heard in progression, first in the clarinet, then flute, clarinet and flute together, and finally the wide range of the piccolo and bass clarinet. These solos and combinations each have their own special sound quality.

Jaylin Vinson provides detailed notes about Scissor-Tailed in the score: :

As a native Oklahoman, I have always been moved by the beauty and resilience of my home state. Oklahoma's rich Native American heritage, vast open plains, and developing urban communities have continuously inspired the creation of music that captures the essence of this special place. Scissor-Tailed is a perfect

symbol of the spirit of Oklahoma, named after the state bird of Oklahoma. The scissor-tailed flycatcher is known for its graceful flight and striking appearance. This piece is an open letter, paying tribute to the state's rich history and cultural traditions.

The piece begins with a slow and lyrical section, which showcases the beauty and sense of community that is integral to life in Oklahoma. The strings provide an ethereal texture, evoking the state's open spaces and natural beauty. This section features an original melody inspired by Creek folk music, honoring the Native American heritage of Oklahoma.

The second section of the piece is faster and more energetic, reflecting the hustle and bustle of Oklahoma's growing urban communities. This section serves as a metaphor for Oklahoma's history as an agricultural community transitioning to an urbanized landscape. The full orchestra comes together to create a powerful and uplifting sound, conveying the spirit of growth that has always defined Oklahoma.

In the final moments, the orchestra builds to a triumphant crescendo as the flycatcher takes flight, soaring above the skyscrapers and bustling streets of modern Oklahoma. The strings shimmer with a sense of hope and possibility, while the woodwinds and brass burst with energy and determination. This is a musical tribute to the resilience in the face of change. With the final notes, one could be left with a sense of pride and connection to this special place, and a renewed appreciation for the beauty of the scissor-tailed flycatcher and all it represents.

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

When one looks at symphony programs, we see names of the historical composers—Brahms, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, Prokofiev, and the list goes on. Going through school, I can say that I never really thought about the relationships of these composers to each other, save for some interesting facts that I uncovered. For example, Mahler, Nielsen, and Sibelius were only 5 years apart in age. Mahler and Ives, despite their age difference, were composing at the same time and met in NY! Through my research

for Dvorak's Eighth, I came across an article comparing Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony and the possible influence it had on the creation of Dvorak's Eighth Symphony!

Tchaikovsky conducted his Fifth Symphony in Prague in 1888, shortly after its premiere. On this visit, Tchaikovsky invited Dvorak to Russia and perhaps coincidentally two days after this encounter, Dvorak began to compose the Eighth Symphony. There is no definitive conclusion as to whether Dvorak took this trip and subsequently brought the eighth, but the important take-away is that even in the 1800's composers interacted with each other.

Considered Dvorak's most peaceful symphony, the Eighth Symphony was composed at Dvorak's summer home in Vysoké, southwest of Prague. Like Tchaikovsky's quick composition speed of the March and Cantata, Dvorak composed the Eighth very quickly, with the fourth movement taking only six days. The orchestration for the symphony was then done several weeks later. Unlike traditional symphonic fourth movements, Dvorak uses a theme and variations to close out the symphony. Beginning with a trumpet fanfare, the cellos introduce us to the theme which resembles the opening theme of the first

movement. Dvorak composed ten different versions of this melody before settling on the final version. After the more serene opening phrases, the tempo jolts and we are taken through a recurring and uplifting melody, a virtuosic flute variation, a much darker development section in minor, with layers upon layers of musical ideas, and finally a return to the slow introduction. The conclusion sees one last joyful statement followed by a coda which continually increases in tempo and intensity until the final moments.

Notes by Michael Isadore

Symphony

Symphony No. 2 in C minor

“Resurrection”

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)

Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 has been getting a lot of press lately. In the movie, *Maestro*. Here is the Cast of Characters:

- Bradley Cooper as Leonard Bernstein
- Carey Mulligan as his wife, Felicia Montealegre
- Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 as itself

In the climactic scene, Bradley Cooper, impersonating Leonard Bernstein, conducts the London Symphony in a five-minute excerpt. How is it that a work that had such difficulty getting off the ground became the epitome of Romanticism?

The first movement was written simultaneously with the first symphony in 1888 as a stand-alone symphonic poem entitled *Totenfeier*, a funeral rite for the hero of the first symphony. Mahler played it on the piano for his mentor, the renowned conductor, Hans von Bülow, whose reaction was, “If that is still music then I do not understand a single thing about music.” As a result, Mahler held

Totenfeier from performance or publication until deciding, five years later, to convert it into the first movement of his second symphony.

In 1888, there was an ongoing conflict between writing symphonic poems and symphonies.

Richard Strauss's *Don Juan* and Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony were both written that year. Mahler was caught in the middle. He wanted to write symphonies, but *Totenfeier* was far away from the symphonic ideal of sonata-allegro form. In addition to its dramatic, dynamic, thematic, and rhythmic contrasts, *Totenfeier* perplexed von Bulow because the sequence of themes is so bizarre and unpredictable. In fact, I have named the principal themes and devised a "Cast of Characters" that is far more complex than that of *Maestro*. At this point, any good movie critic might post a "spoiler alert," to warn that the plot is about to be given away. If you choose to listen with a fresh ear, read no further! There is a multitude of surprises in store. On the other hand, music of this complexity benefits from many repeated hearings, and a road map can enhance the listener's connection with the music.

Here is the Cast of Characters, in order of appearance, as though it were a stage play:

- 1) Wake-up call (W): five notes in the low strings, fast and furious
- 2) Procession (P): the rhythmic underpinning of the funeral march, juxtaposing dotted rhythms (long, short) with triplets. It appears throughout the movement, often not coordinated with the main melody.
- 3) Hero (H): the melody above the procession, using a similar blend of dotted rhythms and triplets, heard first in the oboes. Later, it is heard either in its entirety, or in smaller extracted motifs, but never exactly the same twice.
- 4) Afterlife (A): a total contrast, starting with a slow, soft, inwardly expressive upward rising scale
- 5) Fate (F): A strong upward chromatic dotted rhythm, usually in the brass (derived from H but distinct)
- 6) Resignation (Res): A plodding, downward bass line featuring a chromatic triplet
- 7) Requiem (Req): A solemn theme, first heard in English horn and bass clarinet above P rhythms
- 8) Cymbals (C): Among the cymbal crashes, two are so important that they receive billing.

Sonata-allegro form does not easily describe *Totenfeier* because it is impossible to tell where the exposition ends and

the development begins. Instead, Sections 3–6 contain elements of both, in a dazzling array that perplexed von Bülow.

Section 1 (Prologue): W, P, H, A

Section 2 (Exposition): W, H, F, Res

Section 3: A (extended), P, Req (EH, bscl), F, H, F

Section 4: C, P, A (flute—fast tempo)

Section 5: W, P (cellos and basses), Req (tr, trb), H

Section 6: C, H, F

Section 7 (Recap): W, P, H, A

Section 8 (Coda): Res, F, H (a remembrance: soft and slow).

In the entire 22-minute movement, there are only two measures that come anywhere near exact repetition. P, H, and A are continually varied. It is particularly rewarding to follow the evolution of A, which can be interpreted as the hero's desire for "transfiguration" after death, interrupted by earthly passion in its first iteration, appearing way too fast in the flute, then achieving resolution in its last appearance in section 7.

Once Mahler had decided to build a symphony with *Totenfeier* as the first movement, he experienced considerable writer's block coming up with an appropriate finale. He had determined to use a chorus but was stuck finding an appropriate

text. Ironically, he found inspiration at the 1894 funeral of Hans von Bülow, the original detractor of *Totenfeier*, largely responsible for his writer's block. There, the Friedrich Klopstock chorale, *Aufersteh'n* (Resurrect), "struck me like a thunderbolt and everything stood clear and vivid before my soul." Thus, Mahler built his unappreciated child into the iconic symphony that is the perfect expression of Leonard Bernstein's extroverted conducting style in *Maestro*.

Length and lack of a chorus prevent HYS from performing the entire symphony. As a symphonic poem, however, *Totenfeier* stands on its own. To give a feeling of context within the symphony, we will precede it with two songs from ***Des Knaben Wunderhorn***, (The Youth's Magic Horn), a collection of folk poetry that captivated Mahler and supplied material for his first four symphonies.

"Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt" (Antonius of Padua's Fish Sermon), forms the basis of the third movement, which adds the-matic material to make it three times as long as the song. A glance at the text of "Antonius" shows its sarcasm: Antonius finds the church empty and goes to the river to preach to the fish. The carp, pike, codfish,

eels, sturgeon, crabs, and turtles love what they hear, but swim away unchanged, forgetting everything.

The fourth movement, "**Urlicht**" (Primal Light), is the polar opposite: heartfelt and sincere. It is identical to the *Wunderhorn* song, chosen by Mahler to introduce the text of the monumental finale: *Aufersteh'n wirst du* (You shall rise again). Together the texts *Urlicht* and *Aufersteh'n* engendered the

nickname, "Resurrection," which was not given by Mahler, but which is totally appropriate. Over the course of many years, *Totenfeier* grew into a magnificent expression of religious fervor, making the Second Symphony Mahler's most beloved and the perfect vehicle for expressing the essence of Leonard Bernstein.

Note by Michael Webster



Luisana Rivas, Mezzo-Soprano



Photo: Shayne Gray

Praised for her “heart-rending expression” (Music City Review), mezzo-soprano Luisana Rivas passionately shares the music of underrepresented composers. In her 2023–2024 season, she will perform as La Zelatrice (Suor Angelica) with Operativo Houston, and in the recital “Boleros and Arias.” Notable appearances include Suzuki (Madama Butterfly) and La Zelatrice with Spotlight on Opera, along with diverse roles in Gianni Schicchi with Opera Steamboat.

In the 2022–23 season, Luisana featured in Austin Opera’s Concerts at the Consulate series and appeared with Houston Grand Opera’s Opera to Go! program singing the role of Monkey Queen/Lord Tiger (Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers) and Rosina in The Barber of Seville in Texas, touring extensively throughout Houston-area schools.

Dedicated to showcasing Latin American classical music, Luisana performed a variety of works from Latine composers with Gateway Chamber Orchestra, Apollo Chamber Players, and most notably with Ponce Project Foundation. A frequent interpreter of trouser roles, Luisana has recently portrayed characters including Cherubino, L’enfant, Turnspit, and Hänsel.

Luisana holds dual citizenship from Venezuela and France and has studied in Panama and the United States. She is proud to serve as a Teaching Artist for Houston Grand Opera and Alley Theatre.

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Flute

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Conductor Biographies

Michael Webster,
*Artistic Director and Symphony
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A multifaceted musician, Dr. Michael Webster is known as clarinetist, conductor, composer, arranger, and educator. Professor of music at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, he has been artistic director of Houston Youth Symphony since 1997. He led the Symphony at the inauguration of Houston Mayor Lee Brown, at Carnegie Hall, and at the 2002 National Youth Orchestra Festival in Sarasota, Florida, as one of six orchestras selected from applicants nationwide. Rarely featuring an orchestra, NPR's national radio show "From the Top" invited HYS to perform in September 2012.

For thirteen of the last fifteen years (2008–2022), HYS was the national winner of the Foundation for Music Education's Mark of Excellence. HYS is also the only youth orchestra to be in the top two of The American Prize for eleven years in a row, having garnered eight first and three second prizes. Dr. Webster has won first and second place in The American Prize for conducting eight times. HYS and Dr. Webster swept first place for all three awards in 2020–2021.

Formerly principal clarinetist with the Rochester Philharmonic and acting principal of the San Francisco Symphony, Dr. Webster has appeared as soloist with many orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra with Aaron Copland and the Boston Pops with John Williams. A winner of Young Concert Artists international auditions, he has performed with: the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; the 92nd Street Y; the Tokyo, Cleveland, Muir, Ying, Enso, Dover, Leontóvych, Artaria and Chester String Quartets; Da Camera, Context, and Musiqa in Houston; and the festivals of Marlboro, Santa Fe, Chamber Music West and Northwest, Norfolk, Victoria, Domaine Forget, Sitka, Maui, Steamboat Springs, Park City,

Angel Fire, Orcas Island, Bowdoin, Atlantic, and La Musica di Asolo. He has performed and taught all over the United States and in Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, Europe, Japan, China, New Zealand, and Australia. He has collaborated with musicians including Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua Bell, Rudolf and Peter Serkin, and many others.

Dr. Webster served as assistant conductor of the Asian Youth Orchestra under Yehudi Menuhin, music director of the Wellesley Symphony Orchestra, and director of the Michigan Youth Symphony Orchestra. He has held faculty positions in clarinet and conducting at the University of Michigan, the New England Conservatory, Boston University, and the Eastman School of Music, where he had earned his three degrees as a student of Stanley Hasty. For the past several summers he has been clarinet and woodwind coach for the Texas Music Festival at the University of Houston and Orchestra of the Americas, which meets in a different country every year. Countries represented have included Mexico, Panama, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Belgium, Estonia, Poland, China, Canada and the U.S.

Michael Webster directed chamber music societies in Rochester and Ann Arbor and founded the Webster Trio with his wife, flutist Leone Buyse, in 1988. Webster Trio CDs released by Crystal Records in the U.S. and by the Nami and Camerata labels in Japan all feature Webster's trio arrangements, which, along with his original compositions, are published by Theodore Presser, International Music Company, Schott, and G. Schirmer. Webster also appears on the Arabesque, Beauport, Bridge, Centaur, CRI, and New World labels. Highly regarded as a teacher, he is a member of the editorial staff of *The Clarinet* magazine, having contributed 83 articles entitled "Teaching Clarinet." Michael Webster is a Buffet artist-clinician, playing Buffet clarinets exclusively.

Michael Isadore

Philharmonia Conductor



HYS Philharmonia Conductor Michael Isadore is also the Associate Conductor with the Houston Civic Symphony and the Director of Orchestras at Dulles High School. Known for being an energetic conductor with authentic, moving performances, Mr. Isadore has become a prominent voice in the Houston area.

Since work with young musicians has played an important part of his career, Mr. Isadore has developed a detailed rehearsal strategy and creative ways to spark imagination to communicate the most advanced musical concepts. Under his direction, the Philharmonia Orchestra has won the American Prize in the performance of American Music Category. The Dulles High School orchestra has been a consistent National and Commended winners in the Mark of Excellence competition.

Other honors include multiple performances at the Midwest Clinic convention in Chicago and placements as high as runner up for TMEA Honor Orchestra Competition. Personally, Isadore has won the American Prize in conducting in the Youth Orchestra, Community Orchestra and School Orchestra divisions. In 2010, Mr. Isadore was recognized with the Spec's Charitable Foundation Award for Excellence in Music Education presented by the Houston Symphony.

Mr. Isadore's versatile career involves performances as an orchestral and chamber musician, concerto soloist, recitalist, lecturer and teacher. He holds clarinet positions with the Symphony of Southeast Texas and the Victoria Symphony, and has performed with the Houston Symphony, Victoria Bach Festival, Houston Gilbert and Sullivan Society, and the Corpus Christi Symphony. As a soloist, Isadore has performed concertos with the South Texas Symphony Orchestra, Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra, Houston Civic Symphony, Brazosport Symphony, Houston Sinfonietta, and the Sugar Land Winds.

Instrumental in advancing new music, Mr. Isadore is a founding member of the Flute/Clarinet Duos Consortium (FCDC) with the goal of increasing the repertoire for flute, clarinet, and piano by leading composers. Mr. Isadore and his wife premiered the third FCDC commission by Valerie Coleman at the 2007 National Flute Convention in Albuquerque; he has also lectured on the creation of FCDC and performed at the International Clarinet Association Convention. Mr. Isadore uses his love of contemporary music to bring composers into his orchestra rehearsals and exposes them to music not commonly played by those ensembles.

Brad Smith
Sinfonia Conductor



Brad Smith joined the Houston Youth Symphony artistic staff as conductor of the Sinfonia Orchestra in 2015. He is the Director of Orchestral Activities at Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in downtown Houston, where he oversees the String program, Symphony, and String Orchestras, coaches chamber ensembles, and teaches conducting courses. Smith has conducted the all-school musical on multiple occasions and worked with the Dance, Theatre, and Visual Arts departments on collaborative projects. Dr. Smith's students consistently achieve recognition in national concerto and chamber music competitions and earn seats in the TMEA All-State Orchestras. Each year, HSPVA graduates gain admission to top conservatories and music schools across the country.

Before joining the Kinder HSPVA faculty in 2014, Smith taught for eleven years at the University of Pennsylvania, where he was the Music Director of the Penn Symphony Orchestra, Audio Nexus contemporary ensemble, Penn Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra, and Penn Wind Ensemble. He taught music theory, graduate ear training, and conducting courses, as well as seminars on multiple topics. While teaching at Penn, Dr. Smith also conducted the Delaware County Youth Orchestra (DCYO), a group based along the Mainline area of Greater Philadelphia.

Brad Smith has been teaching instrumental music and conducting ensembles of all ages since 1995. He holds degrees in Music Education and Conducting from Stephen F. Austin State University and The University of Texas at Austin.

Angela Peugnet,
String Orchestra Conductor



Mrs. Angela Peugnet has served as the head orchestra director at Fort Settlement MS since the fall of 2006. Under her direction, the Fort Settlement Orchestras have been honored as Commended and National Winners with the Foundation for Music Education for 7 years and have been finalists in the Texas Honor Orchestra Competition.

Mrs. Peugnet holds a Bachelor's of Music with Teacher's Certification from the University of Houston with Membership in the Honors College and holds a Master's Degree in Music with a conducting specialization from Colorado State University. Previously, she taught in the Spring Branch Independent School District and was on staff with the University of Houston Moores School of Music's Preparatory and Continuing Studies Department as the Suzuki Strings Program Coordinator. Mrs. Peugnet has worked with some of the profes-

sion's most notable teachers including Dr. Laurie Scott, Mr. William Dick, Mr. Andrzej Grabiec, and Maestros Franz Kraeger, and Wes Kenney.

She is a member of the Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Orchestra Directors Association, American String Teachers Association, Texas Music Adjudicators Association, Suzuki Association of the Americas, Sigma Alpha Iota, and serves as an orchestra committee member for the state UIL String Orchestra Texas Prescribed Music List. She is honored to be a member of Mu Omicron, a peer-nominated honors society of orchestra directors. She has been an invited conductor and clinician with several Houston Area Region Orchestras and has been a section coach with the Houston Youth Symphony, one of the largest non-profit youth symphonies in the United States. In 2019 she was honored with the Music Educator Award by the Houston Symphony and the Spec's Charitable Foundation.

She and her husband, Forrest Peugnet, are proud parents to three girls. When she is not teaching, she performs with the Houston Civic Orchestra, enjoys playing music with her children, backpacking, hiking, camping, reading, archery, and playing board/video games.

Jackson Guillén

Debut String Orchestra Conductor



Honduran violinist and violist Jackson Guillén is the Director of the El Sistema-inspired Houston Youth Symphony Coda Music Program and Conductor of the HYS Debut String Orchestra. Additionally, Dr. Guillén serves as Professor of violin, viola, and orchestra conductor at Lone Star College-Tomball.

Dr. Guillén has performed in venues in the United States, Mexico, Honduras, Colombia, and Chile, and toured several countries of Latin America with the Orchestra of the Americas. He has served as Principal Second Violin of the Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra, Lubbock Symphony, and the Symphony of Southeast Texas, and for the past three seasons, he has been invited as guest concertmaster of the Shreveport Symphony

Orchestra. An avid chamber musician, Jackson completed a two-year Young Artist Fellowship with Da Camera of Houston. He also performs regularly with professional chamber ensembles in the city. In 2016 he co-founded the Terra Nostra Ensemble, recently appointed Ensemble-in-Residence at Houston Baptist University. This ensemble focuses on promoting and performing music by Latin American and Iberian composers. As an arts entrepreneur, Dr. Guillén plays an important role in the yearly organization of the Encuentro Anual de Cuerdas, a string-focused festival that takes place in Honduras. In 2012, he was accepted as a member of the first

generation of the Youth Orchestra of the Americas (now Orchestra of the Americas) Global Leaders Program, participating in missions in Honduras, El Salvador, and Chicago.

Dr. Guillén has performed as a guest artist at the International Music Festival in Medellín, Colombia; the International Music Festival in Naolinco, Mexico; the Victoria-Bach Festival; the Quartz Mountain Music Festival; the Texas Music Festival; and the Masterworks Festival Orchestra, among others. Most recently, he was selected for the Cleveland Institute of Music's Future of Music Faculty Fellowship which addresses underrepresentation in Music School Faculty.



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^ *Current HYS musician*

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Houston Youth Symphony

Spring Concert Sunday, May 5, 2024

Stude Concert Hall at Rice University

Spring Concert I 2:30pm

Spring Concert II 7:00 pm

Tickets \$15 adult/\$10 child

Concert II features the 2023/24
HYS Concerto Competition Winners
Leah Wu, bassoon, and Chanmin
(Joel) Park, cello, performing works
by Villa-Lobos and Shostakovich.

For updates on concert details,
check houstonyouthsymphony.org

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Houston Youth Symphony

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