

LONDON SYMPHONIA **2023-24** SEASON



APRIL 6, 2024 | 7:30 pm | Metropolitan United

A BOHEMIAN LIFE

Guest Artists

- Tania Miller, *conductor*
- Midori Marsh, *soprano*
- Christine Newland, *cello*
- Scott Good, *composer*

Funded by:



London
Symphonia



Dear Friends,

On behalf of London City Council, let me welcome you to the London Symphonia's 2023-24 Season. As we gather together in the name of music and art, we celebrate not only the remarkable talents of this orchestra but also the vibrant cultural tapestry of our beloved city.

London, often referred to as the Forest City, is indeed a place where music runs deep within its veins. We stand tall as the first UNESCO City of Music in Canada, a distinction that underscores the profound significance of music in our community.

London Symphonia has long been a shining star in our artistic constellation, serving as a creative catalyst that ignites our collective passion for excellence, the love of music, and innovative collaborations. Through inclusive programming, you provide us with a unique opportunity to explore and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures that call London home.

I join with you in celebrating the dawn of London Symphonia's 2023-24 Season. May this season be a symphony of unforgettable moments, a crescendo of creativity, and a fortissimo of artistic excellence. As we come together in the name of music, let us embrace the harmonious melodies that unite us and the shared vision of a culturally enriched London.

Best wishes to all for another positive and memorable experience!

Kind regards,

Josh Morgan
Mayor, City of London

300 Dufferin Avenue
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London, ON Canada
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LONDON.CA

Welcome to A Bohemian Life! We hope you will be transported by this musical celebration of creativity, passion and artistry.

We are very proud tonight to present the World Premiere of *Lasker-Schüler Songs* by Scott Good and delighted to welcome back two favourite guest artists, soprano Midori Marsh and conductor, Tania Miller.

Join us as we continue to welcome a diverse array of extraordinary artists this spring, some of whom you may know, and a new generation of performers and composers. Each concert will take you on a unique musical journey of discovery.

Great music and amazing artistry await you! Upcoming programming includes cherished orchestral masterworks, works by living composers, including a World Premiere, and an eclectic mix of jazz and modern musical genres.

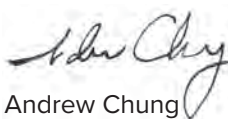
Our audience members are vital to the continued success of London Symphonia. On behalf of the musicians, staff and Board of Directors, thank you for your support.

We look forward to seeing you often.

Sincerely,



April Voht
Executive Director



Andrew Chung
Artistic Producer

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

London Symphonia wishes to acknowledge and honour the land on which we are meeting as the traditional territory of the First Nations peoples; the Chippewa of the Thames First Nation (part of the Anishinaabe), the Oneida Nation of the Thames (part of the Haudenosaunee) and the Munsee-Delaware Nation (part of the Leni-Lunaape). Let us reflect on how we as individuals and as a community can carry this spirit of gratitude into everything we do to honour the work that all the First Nations peoples of the Turtle Island have done, and continue to do, for the land that supports us all.

A BOHEMIAN LIFE

APRIL 6, 2024

7:30 pm

Metropolitan United

Tania Miller, *conductor*
Midori Marsh, *soprano*
Christine Newland, *cello*
Scott Good, *composer*

Claude Debussy

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

Antonín Dvořák

From the Bohemian Forest, Op. 68, B. 182: No. 5, "Silent Woods"

Scott Good

Lasker-Schüler Songs

World premiere. London Symphonia commission

- I. *Styx*
- II. *World-Flight*
- III. *Weltschmerz*
- IV. *Sulamith*
- V. *The Last One*

INTERMISSION

Antonín Dvořák

Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88

- I. *Allegro con brio*
- II. *Adagio*
- III. *Allegretto grazioso – Molto vivace*
- IV. *Allegro ma non troppo*

Supported by Continental Cork Co.

This program runs approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes, and will be performed with a 20-minute intermission.



MEET TANIA MILLER, MIDORI MARSH, CHRISTINE NEWLAND, SCOTT GOOD AND THE MUSICIANS AFTER THE CONCERT

Come to the Great Room, immediately behind the stage.
We're looking forward to seeing you!

ELSE LASKER-SCHÜLER POEMS

Translation by Felix de Villiers

STYX

O that I slept a wishless sleep,
That a river ran as deep as my life,
And I with its waters.

WORLD-FLIGHT

I want to flee
Into the boundlessness
Of my self.
It's almost too late,
Now that autumn crocus
Blooms in my soul.
O how I perish with you!
Since you strangle me with yourselves.
I'll wind myself around in threads
Ending uproar!
Distracting
And deterring you,
Flee
Mywards.

WELTSCHMERZ

I, the burning desert-wind,
Froze and took on form.

Where's the sun can break me down,
Or lightning that can shatter me!

Now I rage at all the skies,
A sphinx with a head made of stone.

SULAMITH

O, I found too much bliss
On your sweet mouth!
Already I feel the lips of Gabriel
Burning on my heart....

And the night-cloud drinks
My deep dream of cedars.
O, how your life beckons to me!
And I perish
With a blossoming pain in my heart
And I soar away into space,
In time,
In eternity,
And my soul burns out in the evening colours
Of Jerusalem.

THE LAST ONE

I lean upon the sealed eyelid of night
And listen into silence.

All the stars are dreaming of me
- Ray by ray more golden they seem –
And I more distant, and impenetrable.

Now the wandering moon runs round me
Murmuring its blindly stricken shimmer,
It is a dervish in its wandering dance.

White-yellow young its pendent image,
Thin as foam on night,
And a droning avalanche, sheer above the clouds,
Falls dusky and grey forever,
Grazing on my side its gold.

My homeland sea is listening softly in my lap –
Bright in sleeping – darkly waking...
I bear my people buried heavily in my hand
And seasons draw across me shyly.

I lean upon the sealed eye-lid of night
And listen into silence

*(Else Lasker-Schüler, Stefan George, Dante and Other Poets:
Translations by Felix de Villiers, Lulu.com, 2022)*



TONIGHT'S MUSICIANS

Violin 1

Stephen Sitarski
Andrew Chung
Mikela Witjes
Yanet Campbell Secades*
Mel Martin
Huachu Huang
Sheilanne Lindsay
Natasha Penny

Violin 2

Émilie Paré
Michele Dumoulin
Sarah Wiebe
Chia-Hsuan Chen*
Calvin Tsang
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John Wiebe

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Ben Bolt- Martin
Patrick Theriault
Cathy Anderson
Eve Thompson*

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Brian Baty
Fil Stasiak

Flute

Laura Chambers
Kevin O'Donnell

Bassoon

Spencer Phillips
Julie Shier

Oboe

Graham Mackenzie
Melissa Scott
(English Horn/Oboe)

Clarinet

Graham Lord
Ross Edwards

Horn

Ron George
Kate Stone
Sasha Gorbasew
Deborah Stroh

Trumpet

Shawn Spicer
Scott Harrison

Trombone

Mike Polci
Rachel Thomas
Peter Collins

Tuba

Brent Adams

Harp

Angela Schwarzkopf

Timpani

Tim Francom

Percussion

Dan Morphy

*London Symphonia Fellows from Western University

GUEST ARTIST BIOS



TANIA Miller
Conductor

Canadian Conductor **Tania Miller** has distinguished herself as a dynamic interpreter, musician and innovator. A visionary leader and innovator with a deep commitment to contemporary repertoire and composers, Maestra Miller has gained a national reputation as a highly effective advocate and communicator for the arts.

Recently named Artistic Director of the Brott Music Festival, Tania Miller is also Artistic Director and Conductor of the National Academy Orchestra of Canada and of Brott Opera. Maestra Miller's 2023-24 season includes her debut with Vancouver Opera in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, a recital with the Vancouver Opera Orchestra and Opera West with soprano Sondra Radvanovsky and debuts with the Baton Rouge Symphony, Illinois Symphony, and return engagements to the Springfield Symphony, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and London Symphonia, among others. Miller served as interim Principal Conductor of the Rhode Island Philharmonic in 2022-23, and recently made her debut with the Warsaw Philharmonic, I Musici de Montreal, and the New Haven Symphony. She conducted Calgary Opera's 2022 production of Lehar's *Merry Widow* and numerous opera productions as Artistic Director of Michigan Opera Works and guest conductor of Opera McGill in Montreal. Maestra Miller was Music Director of the Victoria Symphony for 14 years and was named Music Director Emerita for her commitment to the orchestra and community.



MIDORI Marsh
Soprano

Midori Marsh is an American-Canadian soprano, hailing from Cleveland, Ohio. She received her Bachelors of Music at Wilfrid Laurier in 2017 and her Masters of Music in Opera at the University of Toronto in 2020. In fall 2019 she took home both first prize and audience choice award at the Canadian Opera Company's Centre Stage competition and recently completed her third year with the COC's young artist ensemble. While at the COC she was seen as Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, the soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem*, Annina in *La Traviata*, Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte* and Frasquita in *Carmen*.

A "polished and poised performer", with "a truly gorgeous, expressive sound" she is a known quantity in the Canadian Opera scene, performing with Tapestry Opera, Against the Grain Theatre, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the National Arts Centre and more.

In 2020 she was named one of the CBC's "30 hot Classical Musicians under 30" and in 2022 she was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for her portrayal of Papagena in the COC's 2022 production of *The Magic Flute*. She took first prize at the 2023 Quilico awards, was a semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera's 2023 Laffont competition and a 2023 Lotte Lenya finalist.

Recently she took home both first prize and Audience Choice Award at the Mildred Miller International Voice Competition. Upcoming performances include appearances with Wolfrap Opera, Calgary Opera, the TSO, and more.



CHRISTINE Newland

Cello

After playing with London Symphonia and the former Orchestra London for 48 years as principal cello, **Christine Newland** has retired from the orchestra.

Highly regarded by her fellow musicians for her talent, enthusiasm, dedication and hard work, especially throughout the orchestra's years of financial difficulty, Christine will be greatly missed.

The great cellist, Jacqueline Du Pré, played an important role in Christine's life, as a musician and friend. Ms. Du Pré invited Christine (aged 17) to play her famous "Davidov" Stradivari cello, insisting when she became overwhelmed. Quotes from her letters to Christine can be found in Carol Easton's biography "Jacqueline Du Pré".

An amazing champion and tireless fundraiser, Christine channelled her boundless energy and creativity to support the orchestra: organizing concerts, including the sold out Jacqueline Du Pré Tribute Concert in 2000, performing, and donating her artwork for sale.

Christine is a two-time recipient of the Jack Richardson London Music Award (2008 and 2017). Her rare Italian 1730 cello, now part of the Canada Council for the Arts Music Instrument Bank, was renamed the "Newland Giovanni Franciscus Celoniatus" in her honour.

Christine continues to perform solo and chamber concerts and makes recordings with various local artists.

Bravissima, Christine! Thank you for all you have done to bring London Symphonia to where we are today. Enjoy your next chapter.

Christine dedicates her performance of "Silent Woods" to her beloved husband Walter Beitlberger, who attended every concert she played in their 20 years together. Walter passed away on February 19, 2023.



SCOTT Good

Composer

Scott Good is a composer, conductor, concert designer and trombonist whose music is driven by the desire to create beauty, evoke emotion, and play with groove. His music has been described as "a kind of majestic bestial reality" (Globe and Mail), "gloriously cacophonous" (Ottawa Citizen), "sumptuously orchestrated" (Montreal Gazette), and "dynamic, vivid" (Winnipeg Free Press).

As Composer with London Symphonia (2015-present) and the Vancouver Symphony (2008-2011), Good has written numerous orchestral works and orchestral arrangements, including the oratorio *The Sleepers* (2019). Upcoming projects include two silent film scores: *The Passion of Joan of Arc* for a mixture of voices and period instruments to be premiered by Ensemble Caprice in Montreal in 2026, and a two-and-a-half hour score for large orchestra and chorus to the epic silent film classic *Metropolis* with the Kingston Symphony.

He has been commissioned by orchestras across Canada, including Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic, Winnipeg Symphony, Orchestre de la francophonie, and the Esprit Orchestra. Recent major works include his multimedia family concert *The Caboose Who Got Loose* with solo cello, narration, and projections (Calgary Philharmonic 2022).

Good's role has evolved to include artistic direction, where he meshes his conducting skills with his knowledge as a composer and arranger to design and produce innovative concerts. These programs, which focus on modern compositions and hybrid genre music, imbue inclusivity by creating bridges and connections that reveal our common humanity through music.



PROGRAM NOTES

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune

In 1884 Claude Debussy concluded eleven contentious years at the Conservatoire de Paris by winning France's highest musical honour, the Grand Prix de Rome. Like Berlioz 54 years earlier, he did it by subjugating his originality to the pedantic strictures of the ultraorthodox jury; and also like Berlioz, he chafed at the conditions imposed by the award, a three-year residence in Rome with compulsory annual submissions to the adjudicators. He decamped a year early, and though he completed the assignments, he refused to provide an overture for the formal valedictory performance of these works, which was then cancelled.

Shortly after his return to blessedly French Paris, Debussy fell in with the so-called 'Decadent' group of Symbolist poets associated with Stéphane Mallarmé. Mallarmé had long been trying unsuccessfully to get a staged performance of his theatrically conceived poem "Monologue d'un faune" – revised in 1876 as "L'Après-midi d'un faune" – before Debussy took an interest in it. He began a "Prélude, Interlude et Paraphrase finale pour L'Après-midi d'un faune" in 1892, which was unfinished in time for a scheduled premiere in 1893. Within the next year, the concept of a three-part staged recitation was apparently scrapped, and Debussy completed the remaining instrumental Prelude, which was first heard on December 22, 1894.

In it he brought together all of the characteristics and tendencies that had so horrified his teachers and adjudicators in his student years, to produce his first and most revolutionary masterpiece: free in form, ambiguous in key, flexible in rhythm and imaginative in the use of instrumental colour, evoking a world completely removed from 19th century France.

Mallarmé, after hearing Debussy play it at the piano, commented, "I wasn't expecting anything like that! This music prolongs the emotion of my poem and conjures up the scenery more vividly than any colour."

Truly, no-one expected anything like that, because nothing like it had previously been written. Pierre Boulez, himself a revolutionary 20th-century composer, asserted that "the flute of the Faun brought new breath to the art of music...what was overthrown was not so much the art of development, as the very concept of form itself...one is justified in saying that modern music was awakened by *L'Après-midi d'un faune*."

Where traditional composers would have attempted to describe the events of the poem in music cast in a structure presenting one or two themes, then 'developing' them by creating tension--breaking them up, combining them, changing their keys, reorchestrating them – and lastly releasing the tension by essentially repeating the first section, Debussy recreates the moods of the poem without reference to its narrative, with minimal tension. His opening theme, indeterminate as to key and meter, is for flute alone at first; this, denoting the hollow reed instrument created by the mythological goat-god Pan, is Debussy's only definite characterization, representing the satyr Faun who narrates the poem. The melody is repeated several times with new accompaniments and different continuations; a brief rush of excitement leads to a languorous yearning melody which attains its own level of passion, before the flute returns to its subject. After a couple of skirmishes in the oboe section, a definite key is established, gradually allowing the theme to dreamily drift off.

Accounts of the opening night reception of the Prelude are at odds. The conductor on the occasion wrote of his "special ability" to feel "the completely captivated public" behind his back, that the triumph was complete and that he therefore broke the rule

prohibiting encores. The composer Charles Koechlin reported that the rehearsals were inadequate and the performance bad. The poet Camille Mauclair recalled walking home with Mallarmé, “struck with consternation at the hisses of a public which denounced this music as lacerating the ears...”. And the press – was indifferent. In fairness, the audience had a lot of novelty to process in addition to the unexpected form: strange scales, harmony that refused to resolve as it was supposed to, percussive harps, and string sections reduced to shimmering accompanists for a seemingly endless series of wind solos. While the Faun revealed Debussy to be a composer of note, it was only after the success of his opera *Pelleas and Melisande* that it achieved repertory status.

Mallarmé’s poem has been translated into English, which process removes much of the flavour of the French, and probably makes clear a good deal more than the poet intended. Put prosaically, the Faun dreams of observing two nymphs bathing and of abducting both, only to be thwarted in his erotic intent by their escape. However, Mallarmé’s stated aim in his poetry was to “evoke in a deliberate shadow the unmentioned object by illusive words.” Debussy obviously took this manifesto as a point of departure – yet a programme note attributed to him at least suggests that the music was inspired by “the successive scenes of the Faun’s desires and dreams on that hot afternoon”. Audience members who had read the poem doubtless knew what he was talking about, so why shouldn’t you?

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88

“He is never at a loss for an idea like the rest of us”, wrote Brahms of Dvořák, rather enviously. In contrast to the prolonged pangs which attended the birth of the former’s First Symphony – over 20 years! – Dvořák completed his Symphony No.8 in under

eleven weeks. In August, 1889, the month he began it, he could tell a friend that his hand could not keep up with the ideas that were coming to him, and in truth there are few works with such a profusion of delightful and memorable melodies.

Dvořák was born in a village and felt most at home in a rural setting; in 1884 he at long last purchased a summer home in the Czech countryside, where he could compose close to his beloved Nature. The present symphony, one of the works created there, is almost invariably described as “pastoral” or “idyllic”. Whereas the composer’s smouldering Seventh Symphony in D minor had quite successfully taken on Brahms at his own heaven-storming intellectual game, the Eighth almost nonchalantly sidesteps the symphonic problem, emphasising national character, and ‘Nature-al’ expression, over rigour of structure and seriousness of substance. Brahms’ response – “Everything fine, musically captivating and beautiful – but no main points!” – has since been the source of a surprising amount of critical carping, which has not prevented the piece from becoming nearly as popular as Dvořák’s greatest hit, the Ninth, or *New World*, Symphony.

The Eighth opens somewhat plaintively with a minor key theme played by the cellos, which magically dissolves into the major – it is as though the composer, having arisen unwillingly in his darkened bedroom, had pulled aside the curtains to reveal a perfect summer morning: a bird flutes a jaunty tune and excitement pulls him out of doors. There, he can expand his chest in the freshness of another cello melody (containing a characteristic Czech melodic fragment resembling “Three Blind Mice”) and observe what could be the passing of a peasant cart to a jogging accompaniment of second violins and violas. After a repeated downward scale like a peal of joyous chimes, the plaintive opening clouds the scene and eventually ends the development section in a bluster – but again, everything melts into sunshine.

In the Adagio, Dvořák, brings back the peeling chimes from the first movement, ultimately in a mighty paean. His third movement, waltz-like without a waltz's after-beats, has a tender trio. The lively coda gives a nod to the customary scherzo.

A trumpet fanfare introduces the finale. The theme, which illustrates that the simplest things are often the most difficult, is seemingly derived from the flute melody of the first movement, but is actually the end product of ten reworkings of an originally completely different idea. After it is restated, the variations become decreasingly active until roused from their reverie by the uproarious coda.

(Abridged. Complete text and audio files are available on londonsymphonia.ca.)

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Composer's Reflection: *Lasker-Schüler Songs*

I was introduced me to the poet Else Lasker-Schüler by my good friend Felix de Villiers, who had translated many of her poems. I distinctly remember first reading them on a beautiful summer day while camping in Northern Ontario. Her words roused deep feelings and emotions.

I asked Felix to choose a collection of Lasker-Schüler's poems to form an effective song cycle and was thrilled by his choices. These five poems create a tapestry of emotional mood and energy, facilitating a wide-ranging musical response, ideal for a colourful and dynamic song cycle, while at the same time providing a vivid window into the life of the poet, and the struggles she faced.

The cycle begins on the banks of the river Styx, where a yearning to be free of desire, a paradox central to Lasker-Schüler's voice, is explored. The music ebbs and flows like a restless river in hues of blackish indigo, underpinning the longing cry of the soprano from the edge of the bank.

In the second song, *World-Flight*, we spin into a chaos of the boundless self, and are hastened into action as the "*autumn crocus blooms in (her) soul*". The music follows and interprets each line closely, highlighting the almost unhinged drama with sudden changes in textures and dynamics.

Song 3, *Weltschmerz*, is the dramatic climax of the cycle. When I reflect on these words, I feel most distinctly the pain and suffering that Else Lasker-Schüler endured in her life. The imagery of the sphynx and the expression of rage carved out of stone, inspired music best described as an "apocalyptic ritual". A quietly insistent driving Afro-Cuban rhythm underlies slow moving dissonance to begin, steadily growing until the singer enters declamatory and resolute. The music then dissipates, becomes more rhythmic, and the soprano incants a spell, leading us to the depth of her rage represented by an explosion of sonic force from the orchestra.

Song 4, *Sulamith*, is a richly romantic poem describing lovers both found and lost as a source of bliss and pain. This love transcends the inner-personal, and expresses her feelings about leaving Germany. The poem ends in Jerusalem, her new home. Laid bare after the cataclysm of the proceeding movement, it is scored for solo soprano.

The cycle concludes with *The Last One*. This luscious text begins and ends with one of Lasker-Schüler's most iconic lines "*I lean upon the sealed eyelid of night and listen into silence*." This delicate gesture becomes rhapsodic, inspired by the night sky and the dance of the moonlight, yet also "*distant, and impenetrable*." And like a wave, it recedes, calming, bringing us back to the water, to the sea, to home, with heavy burden in hand as "the seasons draw across (her) shyly."

This score is dedicated to my dear friend, translator of the poems, and curator of the song cycle, Felix de Villiers. I am very grateful for the support of the Ontario Arts Council Music Creation Projects Fund, and donors Louise Good and Mary Ellen Kirk for sponsoring this commission.

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The listing below includes those whose support we received from November 1, 2022 to January 31, 2024. If we have inadvertently omitted your gift, please contact giving@londonsymphonia.ca and we will make it right!

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In memory of Georgina McIntosh
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The staff and volunteers of Metropolitan United Church, especially Rev. Dr. Jeff Crittenden, for welcoming us into this beautiful concert venue.

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LE VENT DU NORD

FRIDAY | APRIL 19, 2024 | 7:30 pm

The internationally acclaimed Québec group, Le Vent du Nord, is teaming up with London Symphonia for a rollicking evening of Québécois music. Get ready for a good old fashioned kitchen party!



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AN ELEGANT FIRE

SATURDAY | MAY 4, 2024 | 7:30 pm

Cellist Elinor Frey, 2023 JUNO award winner, leads the performance of works by three celebrated 18-century musical stars: Haydn, C.P.E. Bach, and Boccherini.



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THE LONDON YOUTH SYMPHONY
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This Grand Adventure

Saturday, May 11, 2024
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Tickets at the door or
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Kevin Song, *clarinet*



Ben Bolt-Martin, *conductor*

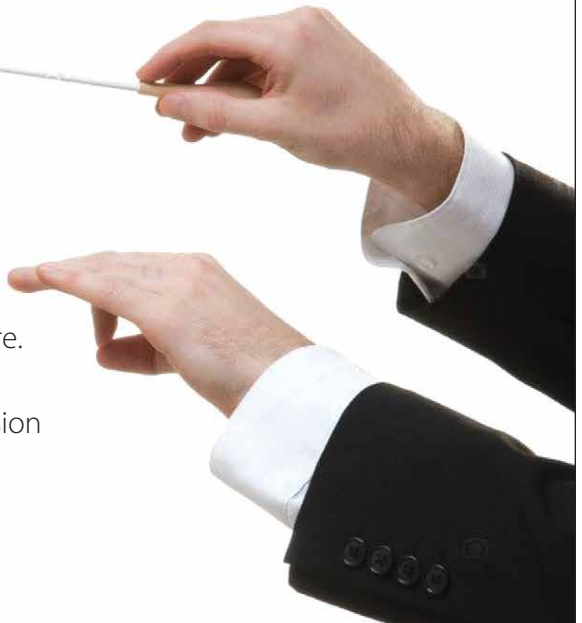
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MAY 25, 2024

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April 19, 2024 at 7:30 pm

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