



Boston Symphony  
Orchestra

Boston Pops

Tanglewood

Symphony Hall



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## Andris Nelsons Returns to Conduct Final Five Programs of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's 2023–2024 Season

**Nelsons-led programs begin with the interdisciplinary Music of the  
Senses Festival (March 31–April 14)**

[Click here](#) for a press kit with photos and bios of Andris Nelsons and guest artists



The final five programs of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's 2023–2024 season, led by BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons, celebrate the commissioning legacy of Serge Koussevitzky, highlight some of the greatest living composers of our time, and bring acclaimed soloists back to Symphony Hall, including Yuja Wang and Hilary Hahn.

**Music for the Senses Festival**

The Boston Symphony Orchestra's Music for the Senses Festival (March 31–April 14) invites audiences to expand the way they experience music through pieces that experiment with color, light, sound, and time, anchored by two weekends of BSO performances.

The first of these (April 4–6) is a program inspired by color: it opens with Anna Clyne's *Color Field*, inspired in part by the vibrancy of a Mark Rothko painting, and concludes with Alexander Scriabin's epic *Prometheus, Poem of Fire*, for piano, color organ, chorus, and orchestra. Scriabin's spectacular vision for a color organ, which bathes the performance space in colored light corresponding to the music played, will be actualized for the first time in Symphony Hall by Tony-award winning lighting designer **Justin Townsend** in collaboration with researcher and musicologist **Anna Gawboy, Ph.D.** Esteemed pianist **Yefim Bronfman** and the **Tanglewood Festival Chorus** join to bring this synesthetic work to life. Also on the program are Franz Liszt's symphonic poem *Prometheus*, providing an additional musical interpretation of the Greek myth, and Richard Wagner's ecstatic Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan and Isolde*, a work suffused with the sensual and one that helped expand ideas of musical time.

The following weekend features one of the most exciting performances of the 2023–2024 season: superstar pianist **Yuja Wang**, winner of a 2024 Grammy Award for Best Classical Instrumental Solo, playing Olivier Messiaen's epic *Turangalîla-symphonie*. Commissioned by Koussevitzky and premiered in 1949 by the BSO with Leonard Bernstein conducting, the colossal work is inspired by human love as embodied by the same medieval legend portrayed in Wagner's influential opera *Tristan and Isolde*, music from which is programmed the prior week. Performing the 10-movement *Turangalîla-symphonie* is a massive undertaking that requires the orchestra to immerse itself in Messiaen's highly individual sound-world. The piece calls for a large percussion section as well as solo piano and the ondes Martenot, an early, uniquely timbred electronic instrument here played by **Cécile Lartigau**. Messiaen was inspired by a range of Asian philosophies and music, including music of the Indonesian gamelan. **Gamelan Galak Tika**, led by **Gusti Komin**, artistic director, gives live gamelan demonstrations prior to each *Turangalîla* performance.

Additional festival offerings include intimate chamber concert experiences and enriching panels with researchers at the forefront of music, science, and the humanities. On March 31, the **Boston Symphony Chamber Players** are joined by pianist **Garrick Ohlsson** to perform Messiaen's spiritually powerful *Quartet for*

*the End of Time*. Messiaen composed the piece while in German captivity during World War II, tailoring the instrumentation to the skills of his fellow prisoners. Like *Turangalila-symphonie*, *Quartet for the End of Time* reflects Messiaen's fascination with birdsong, spirituality, and mortality. Mr. Ohlsson performs keyboard music of J.S. Bach to open the program. Messiaen's music is also featured in a short concert for ticketholders before the BSO performance on April 6 as flautist **Anne Chao** and pianist **Cynthia Tseng** perform his *Le Merle Noir* (followed by a panel **How We Hear – the evolution of music perception**). Concluding these additional offerings is a free discussion panel on Wednesday, April 10 **Composing the Future of Health** that explores the emerging field of music as medicine, followed by a chamber music concert featuring BSO Assistant Conductor **Samy Rachid**, the **Callithumpian Consort**, **[nec]shivaree**, pianist **Joseph Vasconi**, **Carduus** chamber choir, and the **Lydian String Quartet** performing music of Messiaen, Feldman, and Boston-based composers Marti Epstein and Tod Machover. For more details on these panels and concerts, including the full list of panelists and their affiliations, see the complete program details below.

To broaden the scope of our Music for the Senses programs, the BSO asked Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) to suggest artworks that have relevance to the music performed in these concerts. These include Jackson Pollock's *Troubled Queen*, works of John Singer Sargent, and photographs of Hindu sculpture, the latter reflecting the Asian influences on Messiaen's *Turangalila-symphonie*. The imagery will appear on [BSO.org](#) and in our program books.

## Hilary Hahn performs the Brahms Violin Concerto

From April 18–20, international star **Hilary Hahn**, winner of the prestigious 2024 Avery Fischer Prize, joins Andris Nelsons and the BSO to perform one of the most beautiful and virtuosic works in violin repertoire: Brahms' Violin Concerto. Brahms composed this rich, lyrical work in 1878 for, and with the advice of, his friend Joseph Joachim, a towering virtuoso of the age. Hahn has an impressive history with the piece, from winning a Grammy Award in 2003 for her recording with the Academy of St. Martin In the Fields to performing the concerto to [great acclaim](#) at last summer's opening weekend of the Tanglewood season. A musician committed to sharing her process (as notably exemplified by her [viral Instagram campaign #100daysofpractice](#)), Hahn joins the BSO to offer audiences a unique window into the collaborative work of preparing the concerto at an Open Rehearsal on the morning of April 18.

Opening the program is W.A. Mozart's charming Symphony No. 33, last performed at Symphony Hall in 1995. It is followed by the Boston premiere of Anna Thorvaldsdottir's monumental recent work *Archora*, a recording of which was named among the best of 2023 by the *Boston Globe*, *New York Times*, and *NPR*.

## Enduring Legacy of Koussevitzky

Concerts from April 25–27 highlight the BSO's longstanding commitment, established by Koussevitzky in 1930, to playing and commissioning works by living composers. The program begins with eminent composer Sofia Gubaidulina's *The Wrath of God*, a dramatic work composed in 2019 and dedicated to Ludwig van Beethoven. Andris Nelsons recorded the piece with the Gewandhausorchester as part of a 2021 Deutsche Grammophon album of Gubaidulina's music, but it will be the first time the BSO has performed the piece.

Following Gubaidulina's piece is another recent work by a prominent contemporary composer: Detlev Glanert's Trumpet Concerto, performed by BSO principal trumpet **Thomas Rolfs**. The eclectic concerto was commissioned for Rolfs by the BSO, and he premiered it with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in summer 2019. Both Glanert and Rolfs are former Tanglewood Music Center fellows, a program founded by Koussevitzky in 1940. A staunch advocate for both music education and contemporary composers, Koussevitzky commissioned and premiered the program's final piece, Sergei Prokofiev's Symphony No. 4, in 1930, in honor of the BSO's 50th anniversary the following year. These performances feature the rarely heard original version of the Fourth, which Prokofiev later expanded and revised.

## Closing the Season, Berlioz *Roméo et Juliette*

For the final performance of the 2023–2024 BSO season, Andris Nelsons leads one of Berlioz's most vibrant works, *Roméo et Juliette*, featuring mezzo-soprano **J'Nai Bridges**, tenor **Nicholas Phan**, and bass-baritone **John Relyea**, alongside the **Tanglewood Festival Chorus**. Inspired by his passion for Shakespeare, Berlioz called *Roméo et Juliette* a "symphony with choruses," highlighting the importance of the orchestra and of the work's overall form. These performances celebrate the role of French repertoire in the BSO's rich history; the complete

symphony and movements from it were frequently programmed by Pierre Monteux, Koussevitzky, Charles Munch, and Seiji Ozawa.

## Complete Program Listing

All programs are ticketed and occur at Symphony Hall unless otherwise noted

\*BSO Debut

^Symphony Hall subscription debut

°Koussevitzky150

Thursday, March 28, 5:30 p.m. (*newly added: companion to March 28–30 BSO program featuring Sierra's Sinfonia No. 6*)

**"What I Hear" - Roberto Sierra**

***Musical direction: Stephen Drury***

**Anne Chao, flute**

**Jakob Schoenfeld, percussion**

**August Baik, Viona Natalie Sanjaya, Kexin Tian, Yujin Han, Cynthia Tseng, Nan Ni, piano**

Roberto SIERRA *Estudio de ejecución transcendental No. 1*

LISZT *Transcendental Etude No. 1*

SIERRA *Piezas Líricas*

XENAKIS *Rebonds B*

SIERRA *Bongo-O*

MESSIAEN *Le Merle Noir*

SIERRA *Eros*

SIERRA *Estudio Ritmicos y Sonoros No. 1*

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### ***Music of the Senses Programs (March 31–April 14)***

Sunday, March 31, 3 p.m.

Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory

**Boston Symphony Chamber Players**

**Garrick Ohlsson, piano**

J.S. BACH Preludes and Fugues Nos. 13 and 14 from *The Well-tempered Clavier*, Book 2

J.S. BACH (arr. Busoni) *Nun komm der heiden Heiland*

MESSIAEN *Quartet for the End of Time*, for clarinet, violin, cello, and piano

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Thursday, April 4, 10:30 a.m. (High School Open Rehearsal, pre-rehearsal talk  
9:30 a.m.)

Thursday, April 4, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 5, 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 6, 8 p.m. (includes 6:15 p.m. panel discussion, see below)

**Andris Nelsons, conductor**

**Yefim Bronfman, piano**

**Anna Gawboy, lighting research\***

**Justin Townsend, lighting designer\***

**Tanglewood Festival Chorus,**

**James Burton, conductor**

Anna CLYNE *Color Field*

WAGNER Prelude and Liebestod from *Tristan and Isolde*

LISZT *Prometheus*

SCRIABIN *Prometheus, Poem of Fire*°, for piano, color organ, chorus, and orchestra

Saturday, April 6, 6:15 p.m. (*Admission included with 8 p.m. concert ticket on April 6*)

**Anne Chao, flute**

**Cynthia Tseng, piano**

MESSIAEN *Le Merle Noir*

**Panel Discussion: *How We Hear – the evolution of music perception***

- **Dr. Lisa Wong, moderator** (Associate Co-Director, Arts & Humanities Initiative, Harvard Medical School)
- **Dr. Aniruddh D. Patel** (Tufts University, author of *Music, Language, and the Brain*)
- **Alexandra Rieger** (Cognitive Neuroscientist, Mechatronic Sensory Design Engineer, and Multi-Instrumentalist)

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Wednesday, April 10 (Free and General Admission)

**7 p.m. Panel Discussion: Composing the Future of Health**

- **Tod Machover, moderator** (composer, Muriel R. Cooper Professor of Music & Media, MIT Media Lab)
- **Li-Huei Tsai, Ph.D.** (Picower Professor of Neuroscience & Director of Picower Institute for Learning & Memory, MIT)

- **Psyché Loui** (Northeastern University, Music Neuroscience Researcher)

**8 p.m. Concert**

**Samy Rachid and Stephen Drury, conductors**

**Callithumpian Consort**

**[nec]shivaree**

**Joseph Vasconi, piano**

**Carduus**

**Holly Druckman, director**

**Lydian String Quartet**

Tod MACHOVER *Gammified*, for string quartet and electronics

Marti EPSTEIN *Troubled Queen*

MESSIAEN *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, No. 3: 'Le Merle Bleu'

FELDMAN *Rothko Chapel*

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Thursday, April 11, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 12, 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 13, 8 p.m.

Sunday, April 14, 2 p.m.

**Andris Nelsons, conductor**

**Yuja Wang, piano**

**Cécile Lartigau, ondes Martenot**

MESSIAEN *Turangalîla-symphonie*°

*BSO Concerts April 11–14 include a pre-concert demonstration by Gamelan*

*Galak Tika, Gusti Komin, Artistic Director, in the O'Block/Kay Room*

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Thursday, April 18, 10:30 a.m. (Open Rehearsal)

Thursday, April 18, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 19, 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 20, 8 p.m.

**Andris Nelsons, conductor**

**Hilary Hahn, violin**

MOZART Symphony No. 33

Anna THORVALDSDOTTIR *Archora*

BRAHMS Violin Concerto

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Thursday, April 25, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 26, 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 27, 8 p.m.

**Andris Nelsons, conductor**

**Thomas Rolfs, trumpet**

Sofia GUBAIDULINA *The Wrath of God*

Detlev GLANERT Trumpet Concerto

PROKOFIEV Symphony No. 4°

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Thursday, May 2, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 3, 1:30 p.m. (Friday Preview by Marc Mandel, 12:15 p.m.)

Saturday, May 4, 8 p.m.

**Andris Nelsons, conductor**

**J'Nai Bridges, mezzo-soprano<sup>^</sup>**

**Nicholas Phan, tenor<sup>^</sup>**

**John Relyea, bass-baritone**

**Tanglewood Festival Chorus,**

**James Burton, conductor**

BERLIOZ *Roméo et Juliette*

Sung in French with English supertitles

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**TICKETS FOR THE 2023–24 BSO SEASON ON SALE  
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