

Palm Springs Friends of Philharmonic Presents

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO, CHIEF CONDUCTOR

JANINE JANSEN, VIOLIN

Sponsored by Roberta Holland, Jane & Larry Sherman, and Sheila Stone

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025, AT 7:30 PM

McCALLUM THEATRE, PALM DESERT, CA

PROGRAM:

GEORGE WALKER	Sinfonia No. 5, "Visions"	17'
FELIX MENDELSSOHN	Violin Concerto in E minor, op. 64 <i>I. Allegro molto appassionato</i> <i>II. Andante</i> <i>III. Allegretto non troppo - Allegro molto vivace</i>	26'

-INTERMISSION-

GUSTAV MAHLER	Symphony No. 1 in D major, "Titan" <i>I. Langsam schleppend</i> <i>II. Kräftig bewegt</i> <i>III. Feierlich und gemessen</i> <i>IV. Stürmisch bewegt</i>	53'
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**London
Symphony
Orchestra**

Entry to the hall will not be permitted while music is playing. Ushers will seat late arrivals at an appropriate time. Please remain seated until the performers leave the stage at intermission and at the end of the program. PS Phil audiences are known for the warm and courteous welcome extended to visiting performers - *thank you!*

Photography and recording of any kind are strictly prohibited. Please remember to silence your phone and other devices. Programming and artists subject to change without notice.

PROGRAM NOTES

SINFONIA No. 5. "VISIONS"

GEORGE WALKER

Born June 27, 1922, Washington, DC

Died August 23, 2018, Montclair, NJ

George Walker learned to play the piano as a boy and quickly developed into a virtuoso. He entered the Oberlin Conservatory at age 14, and while there he served as the organist of the School of Theology. Walker continued his studies at the Curtis Institute, where he was a piano student of Rudolf Serkin, and in 1945, he performed Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, becoming the first African-American to appear as soloist with that orchestra. Walker

taught at a number of American universities, including Rutgers, where he was on the faculty from 1969 until 1992. A composition student of Rosario Scalero and Nadia Boulanger, he composed orchestral, chamber, keyboard, and vocal music, and much of this has been recorded. In 1996 Walker became the first African-American composer to win a Pulitzer Prize for music when he received that award for his *Lilacs for Voice and Orchestra*, premiered by Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.



George Walker at the piano, early 1940s

Walker composed no symphonies, but—beginning in 1984—he did write five brief orchestral works that he titled Sinfonias. He had begun work on his Sinfonia No. 5 in June 2015 when a 20-year-old white supremacist entered the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and shot nine parishioners dead. George Walker, then almost 93 years old, was sickened by that act and by the realization that racial violence was still part of American life, and his Sinfonia No. 5 began to take a different shape.

Walker had visited Charleston just before the shooting, and as the piece evolved the composer envisioned a multi-media presentation that would include the reading of individual lines of poetry by five different speakers and a video made by his friend, the photographer and videographer David Schramm. That video, which would begin about half-way through, would show images of contemporary Charleston as well

as images of the slave trade in that city. Recognizing that performances of that version might be infrequent, Walker also prepared a purely instrumental version, which is the version heard on this concert.

As might be expected, a mood of discord and tension runs across the entire quarter-hour span of the Sinfonia No. 5. Despite the subtitle “Visions”—which might suggest the possibility of a better future—there is little consolation in this music. A few moments of relief come as fragmentary lyric gestures break free of a conflicted background, but this music remains unsettled, full of jagged edges and rough outbursts. Within the texture of the music, Walker includes hints of quotations from such songs and spirituals as “*I Dream of Jeannie*,” “*Rock of Ages*,” and “*Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*,” but these are done so subtly that the ear may not recognize them on first hearing. The Sinfonia No.

VIOLIN CONCERTO IN E MINOR, OP. 64

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Born February 3, 1809, Hamburg

Died November 4, 1847, Leipzig

“I would like to write you a violin concerto for next winter. One in E minor keeps running through my head, and the opening gives me no peace.” So wrote Mendelssohn to his lifelong friend, violinist Ferdinand David, in 1838, and that opening has given millions of music-lovers no peace ever since, for it is one of the most perfect violin melodies ever written.

Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto seems so polished, so effortless in its easy flow, that this music feels as if it must have appeared in one sustained stroke of Mendelssohn’s pen. Yet, this concerto took seven years to write. Normally a fast worker, Mendelssohn worked very carefully on this music, revising, polishing, and consulting with David—his concertmaster at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra—at every step of its

5 is scored for a large orchestra, one that includes four percussionists, piano, harp, and electrified harpsichord, and Walker makes full use of these resources.

Walker completed the Sinfonia No. 5 when he was 94 years old, and it would turn out to be his final completed composition. Anxious to hear his new work, Walker arranged to have it recorded by Ian Hobson and the Sinfonia Varsovia in Poland, but he never heard a live performance—the public premiere was given by Thomas Dausgaard and the Seattle Symphony in August 2019, a year after the composer’s death. Those interested in this music should know that the Sinfonia No. 5 has now been recorded by the Cleveland Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, and National Symphony, so the music may be heard in both the purely orchestral version and the version with voices.

composition. He completed the score while on vacation in Soden, near Frankfurt, during the summer of 1844, and David gave the premiere in Leipzig on March 13, 1845. Mendelssohn was sick at that time and could not conduct, so his assistant, the Danish composer Niels Gade, led the first performance.

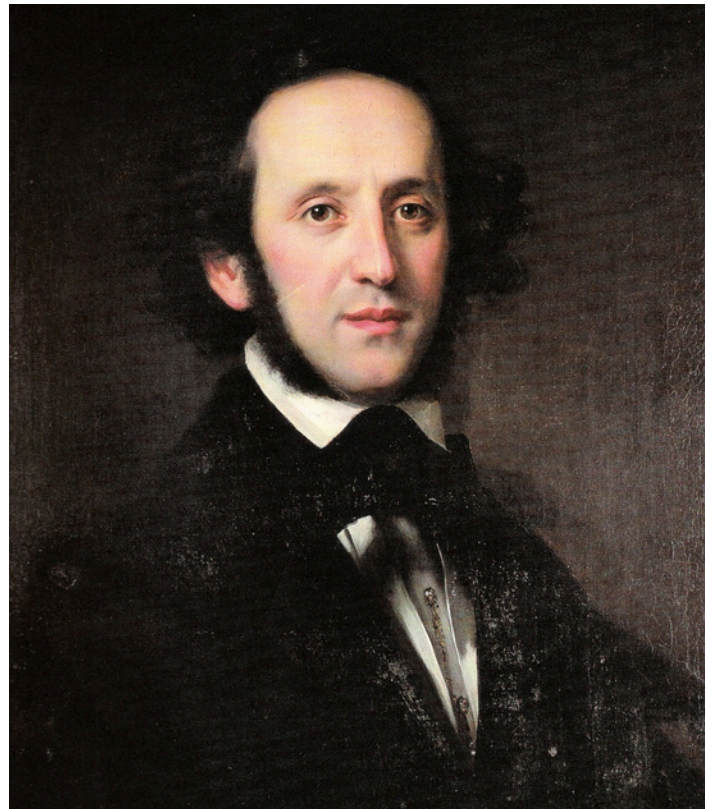
We do not normally think of Mendelssohn as an innovator, but his Violin Concerto is as remarkable for its originality as for its endless beauty. So over-familiar has this music become that it is easy to miss its many innovations. These begin in the first instant: Mendelssohn does away with the standard orchestral exposition and has the violin enter in the second bar with its famous theme, marked *Allegro molto appassionato* and

played entirely on the violin's E-string; this soaring idea establishes the movement's singing yet impassioned character from the very beginning. Other themes follow in turn—a transitional figure for the orchestra and the true second subject, a chorale-like tune first given out by the woodwinds. This concerto offers wonderful violin music: Mendelssohn played the violin himself, and he consulted with David at every point—the result is a concerto that sits gracefully under the violinist's hand and sounds to its listeners as poised and idiomatic as it actually is. It is also easy to miss how deftly this concerto is scored: Mendelssohn writes for what is essentially the Mozart-Haydn orchestra (pairs of woodwinds, trumpets, and horns, plus timpani and strings), and he is able to keep textures transparent and the soloist audible throughout, but he can also make that orchestra ring out with a splendor that Mozart and Haydn never dreamed of. The quiet timpani strokes in the first few seconds, which subtly energize the orchestra's swirling textures, are just one of many signs of the hand of a master. Another innovation: Mendelssohn sets the cadenza where we do not expect it, at the end of the development rather than just before the coda, and that cadenza—a terrific compilation of trills, harmonics, and arpeggios—appears to have been largely the creation of David, who fashioned it from Mendelssohn's themes. The return of the orchestra is a masterstroke: it is the orchestra that brings back the movement's main theme as the violinist accompanies the orchestra with dancing arpeggios.

Mendelssohn hated applause between movements, and he tried to guard against it here by tying the first two movements together with a single bassoon note (this has not always stopped audiences, however). The two themes of the *Andante* might by themselves define the term "romanticism." There is a sweetness about this

music that could—in other hands—turn cloying, but Mendelssohn skirts that danger gracefully. The soloist has the arching and falling opening melody, while the orchestra gives out the darker, more insistent second subject. The writing for violin in this movement, full of double-stopping and fingered octaves, is a great deal more difficult than it sounds.

Mendelssohn joins the second and third movements with an anticipatory bridge passage that subtly takes its shape from the concerto's opening theme. Resounding fanfares from the orchestra lead directly to the soloist's entrance on an effervescent, dancing melody so full of easy grace that we seem suddenly in the fairyland atmosphere of Mendelssohn's own incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Several other themes appear along the way (Mendelssohn combines some of them in ingenious ways), but it is the sprightly opening melody that dominates as the music flies through the sparkling coda and concludes on the violin's exultant three-octave leap.



Portrait of Mendelssohn by Eduard Magnus, 1846

SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN D MAJOR. "TITAN"

GUSTAV MAHLER

Born July 7, 1860, Kalischt

Died May 18, 1911, Vienna

Mahler's First Symphony is one of the most impressive first symphonies ever written, and it gave its young creator a great deal of trouble. He began it late in 1884, when he was only 24, and completed a first version in March 1888. But when it was first performed—to a mystified audience in Budapest on November 20, 1889—it had a form far different from the one we know today. Mahler would not even call it a symphony. For that first performance, he called it *Symphonic Poem*, and it was in two huge parts that seemed to tell a story: the opening three-movement section was called "*Days of Youth*," while the concluding two movements made up what Mahler called the "*Human Comedy*." But as Mahler revised the symphony for later performances, he began to let slip quite different hints about the "meaning" of this music. At one point he called it the "*Titan*," borrowing the title of Jean Paul Richter's novel about a wild young hero who feels lost in this world. Some further sense of its content comes from the fact that the symphony borrows several themes from Mahler's just-completed *Songs of a Wayfarer*, which are about his recovery from an ill-fated love affair. But finally, Mahler, who had a love-hate relation with verbal explanations of his music (denouncing them one moment, releasing new ones the next), abandoned any mention of a program. When he finally published this symphony in 1899, he had cut it to only four movements, greatly expanded the orchestration, and suppressed all mention of the "*Titan*" or of any other extra-musical associations. Now it was simply his Symphony No. 1.

And what a first symphony it is! The stunning beginning—Mahler asks that it be "like a nature-

sound"—is intended to evoke a quiet summer morning, and he captures that hazy, shimmering stillness with a near-silent A six octaves deep. The effect is magical, as if we are suddenly inside some vast, softly-humming machine. Soon, we hear twittering birds and morning fanfares from distant military barracks. The call of the cuckoo is outlined by the interval of a falling fourth, and that figure will recur throughout the symphony, giving shape to many of its themes. Cellos announce the true first theme, which begins with the drop of a fourth—when Mahler earlier used this same theme in his *Wayfarer* cycle, it set the disappointed lover's embarking on his lonely journey: "I went this morning through the fields, dew still hung upon the grass." A noble chorus of horns, ringing out from a forest full of busy cuckoos, forms the second subject, and the brief development—by turns lyric and dramatic—leads to a mighty restatement of the *Wayfarer* theme and an exciting close.

Mahler marks the second movement *Kraftig bewegt* ("Moving powerfully"); his original subtitle for this movement was "*Under Full Sail*." This movement is a scherzo in A-B-A form, and Mahler bases it on the *ländler*, the rustic Austrian waltz. Winds and then violins stamp out the opening *ländler*, full of hard edges and stomping accents, and this drives to a powerful cadence. Out of the silence, the sound of a solo horn rivets our attention—and nicely changes the mood. The central section is another *ländler*, but this one sings beautifully, its flowing melodies made all the more sensual by graceful slides from the violins. The movement concludes with a return of the opening material.

The third movement opens what, in Mahler's original scheme, was the second part of the symphony. Deliberately grotesque, this music was inspired by a woodcut picturing the funeral of a hunter, whose body is borne through the woods by forest animals—deer, foxes, rabbits, shrews, birds—who celebrate his death with mock pageantry. Over the timpani's quiet tread (once again, the interval of a fourth), solo doublebass plays a lugubrious little tune that is treated as a round; the ear soon recognizes this as a minor-key variation of the children's song *Frère Jacques*. The first episode lurches along sleazily over an "oom-pah" rhythm; Mahler indicates that he wants this played "with parody," and the music echoes the klezmer street bands of Eastern Europe. But a further episode brings soft relief: muted violins offer another quotation from the *Wayfarer* songs, this time, a theme that had set the words "By the wayside stands a linden tree, and there at last I've found some peace." In the song cycle, these words marked the disappointed lover's escape from his pain and his return to life. The march returns, and the timpani taps this movement to its nearly-silent close.

Then the finale explodes. It is worth quoting Mahler on this violent music: "the fourth movement then springs suddenly, like lightning from a dark cloud. It is simply the cry of a deeply wounded heart, preceded by the ghastly brooding oppressiveness of the funeral march." Mahler's original title for this movement was "*From Inferno to Paradise*," and while one should not lean too heavily on a program the composer ultimately disavowed, Mahler himself did choose these words and this description does reflect the progress of the finale, which moves from the seething tumult of its beginning to the triumph of the close. Longest by far of the movements, the finale is based on two main themes: a fierce, striving figure in the winds near the beginning and a gorgeous, long-lined melody for violins

shortly afterwards. The development pitches between extremes of mood as it drives to what seems a climax but is in fact a false conclusion. The music seems lost, directionless, and now Mahler makes a wonderful decision: back comes the dreamy, slow music from the symphony's very beginning. Slowly this gathers energy, and what had been gentle at the beginning now returns in glory, shouted out by seven horns as the symphony smashes home triumphantly in D major, racing to the two whipcracks that bring it to a thrilling conclusion.

What are we to make of Mahler's many conflicting signals as to what this symphony is "about?" Is it about youth and the "human comedy?" Is it autobiographical, the tale of his own recovery from an unhappy love affair? Late in his brief life, Mahler even suggested another reading. When he conducted his First Symphony with the New York Philharmonic in 1909, Mahler wrote to his disciple Bruno Walter that he was "quite satisfied with this youthful sketch," telling him that when he conducted the symphony, "A burning and painful sensation is crystallized. What a world this is that casts up such reflections of sounds and figures! Things like the Funeral March and the bursting of the storm which follows it seem to me a flaming indictment of the Creator."

Finally, we have to throw up our hands in the face of so much contradictory information. Perhaps it is best just to settle back and listen to Mahler's First Symphony for itself—and the mighty symphonic journey that it is.

Program notes by Eric Bromberger

ARTIST BIOS

SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO, CONDUCTOR

One of today's most sought-after conductors, acclaimed for his charismatic leadership and inspirational performances in both symphonic and operatic repertoire, Sir Antonio Pappano is Chief Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra and was Music Director of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden from 2002 until 2024. He is Music Director Emeritus of the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, having served as Music Director from 2005-2023. Nurtured as a pianist, répétiteur and assistant conductor at many of the most important opera houses of Europe and North America, including at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and several seasons at the Bayreuth Festival as musical assistant to Daniel Barenboim, Pappano was appointed Music Director of Oslo's Den Norske Opera in 1990, and from 1992-2002 served as Music Director of the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. From 1997-1999 he was Principal Guest Conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Pappano is in demand as an opera conductor at the highest international level, including with the Metropolitan Opera New York, the State Operas of Vienna and Berlin, the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals, Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Teatro alla Scala, and has appeared as a guest conductor with many of the world's most prestigious orchestras, including the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Bavarian Radio, the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestre de Paris and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, as well as the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago and Boston Symphonies, and the Philadelphia and



Photo by Frances Marshall

Cleveland Orchestras. He maintains a particularly strong relationship with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Highlights of the 2024/25 season and beyond include return visits to Boston Symphony, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and a new production of *Die Walküre* at the Royal Opera House. In his first season as Chief Conductor of the London Symphony, Pappano takes the orchestra on a wide-ranging touring to the USA, including Carnegie Hall, Japan, Korea, China and across major European capitals and festivals. This collaboration also includes flagship concerts at London's Barbican Centre with concertante performances of Puccini's *La rondine* and Strauss' opera *Salome*, and symphonic repertoire including Mahler's and Walton's first symphonies, Holst's *Planets*, Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben*, Tippett's *A Child Of Our Time*, and Vaughan Williams' first and ninth symphonies in the continuation of Pappano's Vaughan Williams recording cycle for LSO Live.

JANINE JANSEN, VIOLIN

"Among the world's star soloists, she's as keen a listener, as adept and intimate a chamber partner, as it gets."

-*New York Times*

Violinist Janine Jansen works regularly with the world's most eminent orchestras and conductors. In season 21/22, she joins Berliner Philharmoniker under Chief Conductor Kirill Petrenko to perform their prestigious New Year's Eve concerts as well as returning later in the season for concerts with Sakari Oramo. Further highlights include engagements with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks/Mallwitz, Tonhalle Orchestra/Järvi, Santa Cecilia Orchestra/Pappano, Orchestre de Paris/Saraste, Swedish Radio Symphony/Mäkelä, Philharmonia Zurich/Nosedo and Camerata Salzburg. In spring 2022 also returns to London Symphony Orchestra for performances under Gianandrea Noseda.

Orchestral tours across Europe are planned with Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Amsterdam Sinfonietta and Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen under Paavo Järvi.

Together with pianist Denis Kozhukhin she will offer a duo recital programme across major cities including Vienna, Amsterdam, London, Berlin, Munich, Madrid, Barcelona, Brussels and Rome.

Janine records exclusively for Decca Classics. Her latest recording, *12 Stradivari*, released in September 2021, is a unique exploration of 12 great Stradivarius violins and the repertoire these extraordinary instruments inspired. The chosen repertoire is specially curated by Janine Jansen to showcase the unique qualities of each violin.

Aside from her successful Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* recording back in 2003, her discography includes



Photo by Marco Borggreve

performances of Bartok's Violin Concerto No. 1 with the London Symphony Orchestra and Brahms' Violin Concerto with the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia conducted by Sir Antonio Pappano. Other recording highlights include Beethoven and Britten with Paavo Järvi, Mendelssohn and Bruch with Riccardo Chailly, Tchaikovsky with Daniel Harding, Prokofiev Concerto No 2 with Vladimir Jurowski as well as two recordings featuring works by J.S. Bach. Janine has also released a number of chamber music discs, including Schubert's String Quintet and Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and Sonatas by Debussy, Ravel and Prokofiev with pianist Itamar Golan.

She is Guest Artistic Director at the International Chamber Music Festival Utrecht, a festival she founded back in 2003. Since 2019 she is Professor of Violin at the HÉMU Sion (Haute École de Musique Vaud Valais Fribourg).

Janine has won numerous prizes, including the Herbert-von-Karajan Preis 2020, the Vermeer Prize 2018 awarded by the Dutch government, five Edison Klassiek Awards, der Preis der

Deutschen Schallplattenkritik, NDR Musikpreis for outstanding artistic achievement and the Concertgebouw Prize. She has been given the VSCD Klassieke Muziekprijs for individual achievement and the Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist Award for performances in the UK. In September 2015 she was awarded the

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The London Symphony Orchestra believes that extraordinary music should be available to everyone, everywhere – from orchestral fans in the concert hall to first-time listeners all over the world.

The LSO was established in 1904 as one of the first orchestras shaped by its musicians. Since then, generations of remarkable talents have built the LSO's reputation for quality, ambition and a commitment to sharing the joy of music with everyone. The LSO performs some 70 concerts every year as Resident Orchestra at the Barbican with its family of artists: Chief Conductor Sir Antonio Pappano, Conductor Emeritus Sir Simon Rattle, Principal Guest Conductors Gianandrea Noseda and François-Xavier Roth, Conductor Laureate Michael Tilson Thomas, and Associate Artists Barbara Hannigan and André J Thomas. The LSO has major artistic residencies in Paris, Tokyo and at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and a growing presence across Australasia.

Through LSO Discovery, the LSO's learning and community programme, 60,000 people each year experience the transformative power of music. The Orchestra's musicians are at the heart of this unique programme, leading workshops, mentoring bright young talent, and visiting schools, hospitals and community spaces. The home of much of this work is LSO St Luke's, the LSO's venue on Old Street – which will reopen in

Bremen MusikFest Award. Janine studied with Coosje Wijzenbeek, Philipp Hirshhorn and Boris Belkin.

Janine Jansen plays the Shumsky-Rode Stradivarius from 1715, on generous loan by a European benefactor.

Autumn 2025, following a programme of works, with new state-of-the-art recording facilities and dedicated spaces for LSO Discovery.

The LSO's record label LSO Live celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2024/25, and is a leader among orchestra-owned labels, bringing to life the excitement of a live performance in a catalogue of over 200 acclaimed recordings, and reaching millions through streaming and online broadcasts. Most recently, the LSO has partnered with the leading global streaming service for the performing arts, Marquee TV, to launch a new documentary series entitled *Pappano: Behind the Symphony*. The LSO has been prolific in the studio since the infancy of orchestral recording, and has made more recordings than any other orchestra across film, video games and bespoke audio collaborations.

Through inspiring music, learning programmes and digital innovations, the LSO's reach extends far beyond the concert hall. And thanks to the generous support of The City of London Corporation, Arts Council England, corporate supporters, trusts and foundations, and individual donors, the LSO is able to continue sharing extraordinary music with as many people as possible, across London, and the world.

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LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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CONDUCTOR EMERITUS: SIR SIMON RATTLE

PRINCIPAL GUEST CONDUCTORS: GIANANDREA NOSEDA, FRANÇOIS-XAVIER ROTH

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Maxine Kwok
Elizabeth Pigram
Claire Parfitt
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Olatz Ruiz de Gordejuela
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Miya Väisänen
Matthew Gardner
Naoko Keatley
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Juliana Koch
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Juliana Koch
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Rosie Jenkins

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Sérgio Pires
Chris Richards
Chi-Yu Mo
Sonia Sielaff

BASS CLARINET

Ferran Garcerà Perelló

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Todd Gibson-Cornish
Joost Bosdijk

CONTRA BASSOON

Martin Field

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Mihajlo Bulajic
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Jonathan Maloney
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Merin Rhyd
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helped to make our visit possible.*

*We would also like to extend our
thanks to those who support the
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the American LSO Foundation.*

