

VIOLIN VIRTUOSO JOSHUA BELL & ALEXANDER SHELLEY

Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026 @ 8 p.m.

Alexander Shelley, conductor
Joshua Bell, violin
Pacific Symphony

JESSIE MONTGOMERY *Banner*

LALO *Symphonie espagnole, Op.21*
Allegro non troppo
Scherzando: Allegro molto
Intermezzo: Allegretto non troppo
Andante
Rondo
Joshua Bell, violin

KEVIN PUTS "Earth" from *The Elements*
Joshua Bell, violin

—INTERMISSION—

BERNSTEIN *Overture to Candide*

JOAN TOWER *Sixth Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman*

FLORENCE PRICE *Andante Moderato for string orchestra*

KORNGOLD *Kings Row Suite*

BARTÓK *Romanian Folk Dances*
Jocul cu bâta (Stick Dance)
Brâul (Waistband Dance)
Pe loc (Stamping Dance, or On the Spot)
Buciumeana (Hornpipe Dance)
Poarga româneasca (Rumanian Polka)
Maruntel (Quick Dance)

GERSHWIN *Overture to Girl Crazy*
Arr. Don Rose

Management for Joshua Bell: Park Avenue Artists
Booking for Joshua Bell: Primo Artists

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Joshua Bell, violin

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Program Book



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Joshua Bell, violin



With a career spanning almost four decades, GRAMMY® Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell CBE is one of the most celebrated artists of our time. He has performed with virtually every major orchestra in the world, and regularly appears as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician,

conductor, and as the Music Director of London's Academy of St Martin in the Fields (ASMF). In 2025, he was awarded an honorary Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for services to Music.

Bell continues to champion the rediscovered Violin Concerto by Thomas de Hartmann in the 2025-26 season, following his world premiere recording of the work. He gives its UK premiere at London's BBC Proms, its North American premiere with the New York Philharmonic, and its Canadian premiere during his season-long tenure as a Toronto Symphony Spotlight Artist. With ASMF, he leads extensive tours, including returns to Vienna Konzerthaus and Carnegie Hall.

Other highlights include his first appearances as Principal Guest Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony; an Asian tour with Hamburg's NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra; trio programs with Steven Isserlis and Evgeny Kissin in the U.S. and Europe; and duo recitals with Jeremy Denk at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Ravinia Festival.

In 2011, Bell succeeded founder Sir Neville Marriner as Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. He is also the Founder and Music Director of Chamber Orchestra of America (COA), which aims to empower the next generation of artists.

Bell has commissioned and premiered works by John Corigliano, Edgar Meyer, and Nicholas Maw. His recording of Maw's Violin Concerto won a GRAMMY® Award, and his work on the film soundtrack for *The Red Violin* helped secure Corigliano's Academy Award. Bell's collaborators include Emanuel Ax, Chris Botti, Chick Corea, Renée Fleming, Josh Groban, Lang Lang, Dave Matthews, Anoushka Shankar, Regina Spektor, Sting, and Daniil Trifonov. He has made three guest appearances on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson and numerous appearances on the Amazon series *Mozart in the Jungle*. His extensive discography has been recognized with GRAMMY®, Mercury, Gramophone, and Opus Klassik awards.

Born in Bloomington, Indiana, Bell began playing the violin at age four, starting studies with his mentor, Josef Gingold, eight years later. At 14, Bell debuted with Riccardo Muti and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and at 17 he made his Carnegie Hall debut with the St. Louis Symphony. He signed with his first label, London Decca, at 18, when he also received the Avery Fisher Career Grant. Since then, Bell has been nominated for six GRAMMY® Awards, named "Instrumentalist of the Year" by *Musical America*, selected as a "Young Global Leader" by the World Economic Forum, and recognized with the Avery Fisher Prize. He received the 2003 Indiana Governor's Arts Award and, in 2000, was honored as an "Indiana Living Legend." Bell has performed for three American presidents and the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. After participating in former president Barack Obama's Committee on the Arts and Humanities' first cultural mission to Cuba, he headlined the subsequent Emmy-nominated PBS *Live from Lincoln Center* special. Bell performs on the 1713 Huberman Stradivarius violin.

I PROGRAM NOTES

Jessie Montgomery

Born: Dec. 8, 1981 in New York City, New York

Banner

Jessie Montgomery is an acclaimed composer, violinist, and educator. Her music interweaves classical music with vernacular music, improvisation, language, and social justice, placing her among the most relevant interpreters of 21st-century American sound and experience. *Banner* was commissioned by the Joyce Foundation and the Sphinx Organization to commemorate the bicentennial of Francis Scott Key's 1814 text for "The Star-Spangled Banner." Originally scored for solo string quartet and string orchestra in 2014, Montgomery expanded it for chamber orchestra in 2017. She calls the work a rhapsody on the national anthem and asks, "What does an anthem for the 21st century sound like in today's multicultural environment?" Drawing on "The Star-Spangled Banner," "Lift Every Voice and Sing," and other patriotic songs, she answers through collage rather than declaration. The result is less a celebration of a fixed symbol than an argument carried out in sound. The solo string quartet becomes an individual voice, at times joining and at times resisting the larger community of the orchestra. Marching-band strains and drum-line rhythms collide with broad brass sonorities until familiar material feels unsettled and newly alive. *Banner* offers no single answer to what an American anthem should be; it makes the act of listening part of the question.

Edouard Lalo

Born: Jan. 27, 1823 in Lille, France

Died: April 22, 1892 in Paris, France

Symphonie espagnole, Op. 21

It is not a symphony, nor is it Spanish. The *Symphonie espagnole* is a fabulously abundant violin showcase—non-stop fun to hear and, if you happen to be a prodigiously skilled violin virtuoso, a joy to play. Its Spanish-inspired melodies challenge the soloist to dig into the strings or skip fleetly over them by turns. So is it a concerto? With five movements and no cadenzas, not really — although it has won a place alongside the most popular violin concertos.

Edouard Lalo, the composer of this glorious anomaly, was born in 1823 in Lille, a city in the northern reaches of France. A gifted string player, he studied at the Paris Conservatory. In 1865 he married the French contralto Julie Besnier de Maligny, who piqued his interest in opera. But Lalo's forward-looking music dramas were perhaps too advanced for their time, and certainly—with their Wagnerian influence—insufficiently Gallic for the French taste. None but *Le roi d'Ys* is still performed. But his excellent Cello Concerto in D minor and the beloved *Symphonie espagnole* have earned Lalo a cherished spot in the string repertory.

The *Symphonie espagnole* may well be a window onto the playing of one of the great violin virtuosos of all time, Pablo de Sarasate, whose playing inspired Lalo. Sarasate, a Spaniard, performed with passion and elegance, projecting a style not quite so Mephistophelian as Paganini's; his fingers seemed to dance over the strings with a fleetness especially suited to the *Symphonie*, which he introduced in 1875. When the *Symphonie*'s melodies begin in darkness they quickly brighten, and its dancing rhythms—especially in the final movement, with its foot-stamping vamp—may well have inspired the many French compositions on Spanish themes that came after it. In composing his own violin concerto, Tchaikovsky was energized by the abundance of melody and structural freedom of the *Symphonie espagnole*.

Leonard Bernstein

Born: Aug. 25, 1918 in Lawrence, Massachusetts

Died: Oct. 14, 1990 in New York City, New York

Overture to *Candide*

The myths surrounding Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* have more to do with its rarity than its merits. With an abundance of glorious music, hilariously satirical scenes, and a book and lyrics by some of the greatest literary talents of its day (including the playwright Lillian Hellmann and the poet Richard Wilbur), why don't we get to hear this 1956 work more often?

That question is not easy to answer; but then, the work itself is not easy to perform. Various called a musical, an operetta, and an opera, it is prodigiously demanding—perhaps most famously in "Glitter and Be Gay," a parody of a coloratura aria that is full of extravagant vocal pyrotechnics capped off by a high E-flat.

We hear that famous theme from "Glitter and Be Gay" in this gleeful curtain-raiser that seems not just to rollick but to careen, reflecting the work's don't-worry, be-happy, best of all possible worlds. The tune seems to laugh and sing at the same time, yet it also sounds dangerously out of control—brilliantly theatrical music that was happily rediscovered when Dick Cavett chose it as the theme song for his talk show. No overture to a Broadway work is more frequently performed in the concert hall.

Kevin Puts

Born: Jan. 3, 1972 in St. Louis, Missouri

"Earth" from *The Elements*

The esteemed, Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer Kevin Puts has established himself as one of America's leading composers, gaining international acclaim for his "plush, propulsive" music (*The New York Times*).

On his website, Puts describes *Earth* as "my contribution to the 'Elements' project, a suite involving five composers which was commissioned by Joshua Bell and premiered in August 2023. The piece begins on solid ground, with a repeating four-note ostinato over which the solo violin and the orchestral violins trade lyrical phrases. This opening idea was drawn from my *Violin Concerto* (2006) but takes a different journey here, eventually 'taking flight' for a brief period. Beyond the fundamental sense of stability and endurance the element earth suggested to me, I hope the music also conveys a more spiritual reverence for the planet Earth itself."

Joan Tower

Born: Sept. 6, 1938 in New Rochelle, New York

Sixth Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman

Many of the most important, popular and influential composers on today's classical music scene are women, among them Joan Tower. With compositions such as her six-movement suite *Fanfares for the Uncommon Woman* she has confronted cultural attitudes about gender through her music—one subject among many in a career that has transcended classification. The emphatic sixth movement both completes the thematic development of the entire suite and stands as a dramatic fanfare on its own.

Vigorous and eclectic, Joan Tower's distinctive musical style reflects both her talent and the remarkable circumstances of her life. Born in New Rochelle, New York, she moved to Bolivia with her family when she was nine years old. There, the complex, dynamic rhythms of Bolivian music became part of her life, one reason rhythm would

later become such an important element in her work. Aware of his daughter's early musical talent, Tower's father insisted that she receive musical training, especially in piano. Her mastery of the keyboard enabled her to begin her career as a pianist, including as a co-founder and member of the Da Capo Chamber Players.

Tower completed her undergraduate studies at Bennington College and earned a doctorate in composition from Columbia University, a bastion of academic serialism, and modernism. Mastering the rigors of this approach to composition gave Tower a strong foundation for developing a deeply personal style. In the 1970s and 1980s, Tower wrote many pieces for the Da Capo Chamber Players. In their sound and even in their titles, we can see a legacy from her father, who was a mineralogist. Tower explores subjects inspired by nature and finds in them contrasts between soft and hard textures, large and small scales, calmness and forcefulness. We hear these juxtapositions in the poetic tension she creates among instrumental textures, loud and soft passages and complex, energetic rhythms.

Tower's *Fanfares for the Uncommon Woman* comprise a series of six short compositions that together span approximately 25 minutes. Instrumentation is critical. Parts I and II are scored for brass and percussion, reminiscent of Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, with Part II augmenting the percussion forces. Part III is written for double brass quintet, Part IV for full orchestra and Part V for four trumpets. The sixth began as a solo piano composition before Tower expanded it for full orchestra.

The fanfares are among the most popular modern compositions. Written in tribute to women who take risks and pursue adventurous paths, they have been performed by more than 600 ensembles worldwide.

Tower composed the *Sixth Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* for solo piano in 2014 and later created the full orchestral version heard in this performance. Marin Alsop conducted its premiere with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in 2016 in celebration of the orchestra's centennial season. Dedicated to composer Tania León, the work retains the energetic rhythms and bold contrasts associated with the series while drawing upon the colors and power of the full orchestra. Persistent eighth-note patterns, glissandos, changing meters and vivid instrumental combinations propel the music toward a forceful, triumphant conclusion.

Florence Price

Born: April 9, 1887 in Little Rock, Arkansas

Died: June 3, 1953 in Chicago, Illinois

Andante Moderato

Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, Florence Price had a childhood that might have resembled that of any European musical prodigy—except that she was American, Black, and female. When no one in town would accept her for early music instruction, her mother gave her lessons. She graduated high school when she was 14 as valedictorian of her class. For advanced musical study, there was only one possible choice: the New England Conservatory, where she enrolled in 1904 and distinguished herself, earning diplomas in organ studies and education.

Returning to the South, Price became head of the music department in what is now Clark Atlanta University, then resettled in Little Rock. But when racial violence there prompted her to join the Great Migration northward, she settled in Chicago, where she studied composition with the leading pedagogues in the Midwest and became active as a composer. Her career was, and remains, a perplexing combination of creative achievement and public neglect. In the music world, she was acclaimed, becoming the first

African American woman to have a major work performed by a major American orchestra (her first symphony, premiered by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra). But accomplishment did not bring wider recognition or financial security, and to cover expenses she accompanied silent film screenings and composed advertising jingles. Today her wonderful songs and orchestral pieces are being rediscovered.

This Andante Moderato is the second movement of Price's 1929 String Quartet in G Major. The emotion in this section runs deep, combining late-Romantic harmonic traditions with the expressive, pentatonic melodies of African American spirituals. It is often performed by string orchestras as a stand-alone work.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold

Born: May 29, 1897 in Brünn, Austria-Hungary (now Brno, Czech Republic)

Died: Nov. 29, 1957 in Los Angeles, California

Kings Row Suite

Erich Wolfgang Korngold is widely known as a "famous composer," but just how famous—and why—depends upon whom you ask. Musicologists regard him as one of the most remarkable prodigies in the history of classical music, the boy wonder who at age nine was declared a genius by Gustav Mahler. Mahler secured him a position studying with the eminent pedagogue and composer Alexander Zemlinsky, who had also taught Schoenberg, the leader of the revolutionary "Second Viennese School" that also included Alban Berg; while his colleagues looked to Schoenberg as the movement's father, Schoenberg looked to Zemlinsky.

Aficionados of Hollywood film music, who know the name Korngold well, are sometimes unaware that the wunderkind who created a sensation in European classical music circles just before and after World War I is the same person who became famous here for his film scores. The late opera director Bliss Hebert, who was an expert on Korngold and directed American productions of his operas, credited him with virtually inventing the feature film score in swashbucklers such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and making the career of matinee idol Errol Flynn. But in the *Kings Row Suite* we hear something different: more introspective music based on an intense psychological drama. The source material spans a heroic opening and layered, interior passages based on internal struggle, the search for meaning, and the search for a place in American life. *Kings Row* was daring for its time, and afforded Korngold a chance to explore deep, layered emotion.

Korngold's Hollywood connection quite literally saved his life. The year of his relocation to California was also the year of Hitler's Anschluss and Kristallnacht, which plunged Europe into nightmare. Even as he was adjusting to his luxurious California lifestyle and discovering an appreciative new audience, it was clear that he could not return to his homeland.

Béla Bartók

Born: March 25, 1881 in Nagyszentmiklós, Austria-Hungary (now Sânnicolau Mare, Romania)

Died: Sept. 26, 1945 in New York City, New York

Romanian Folk Dances

Born in 1881, Béla Bartók is often credited as one of the founders of modern ethnomusicology as well as a seminal modernist. Like György Ligeti, he was ethnically Hungarian but hailed from a region that now forms part of Romania, where his father was head of an agricultural college and his mother was a teacher. Both were able musicians, and Béla's mother gave him his first piano lessons.

After his father's death the family relocated to the city now known as Bratislava, where Béla's schoolmates included the fellow composer Ernő (Ernst von) Dohnányi.

While the basic facts of Bartók's biography look similar to those of his friend and colleague Zoltán Kodály, his extraordinary gifts as a composer and musical innovator put him on another level of music history. During his lifetime, even as his challengingly modern compositions were going unheard, conductors and fellow musicians sensed the urgency of bringing his extraordinary talents before the public. His own piano concertos were the ideal vehicle; as the musicologist Phillip Huscher notes, Bartók's formidable skills as a pianist would have made him a major figure in 20th-century music even if he had not gone on to a more brilliant career as a composer.

Highly concentrated and full of movement, the six movements of the *Romanian Folk Dances* scarcely last five minutes from beginning to end. Bartók composed this suite in 1915 and orchestrated it in 1917, basing the dances on folksongs and folk dances he encountered in earlier fieldwork; we can easily imagine the energetic stepping and the shepherd's flute, fiddle and bagpipe in both versions. The first movement, a "bot tánc," is traditionally performed with sticks, and in the second is a "braul," or sash-dance, in which the dancers incorporate into their choreography the wide, colorful sashes worn around their waists. In the third movement, generally translated as "in one spot" or "on the spot," dancers step lively without moving from the spot where they stand, much like some clogging or step dancing.

George Gershwin

Born: Sept. 26, 1898 in Brooklyn, New York

Died: July 11, 1937 in Los Angeles, California

Overture to Girl Crazy

It's not always easy to draw the line between America's classical and popular music traditions. But in the case of George Gershwin, that line disappears. George and his lyricist- brother Ira, who collaborated on a string of scintillating Broadway musicals including *Girl Crazy*, were born two years apart. They possessed the ideal combination of talent and temperament to become one of the greatest songwriting duos in history—a team whose success on Tin Pan Alley and in musical theater made them synonymous with the sounds and style of the Jazz Age. Yet George is also acknowledged as one of the seminal talents in America's classical heritage, whose works such as the Piano Concerto in F and opera *Porgy and Bess* are among the most enduringly popular in the standard repertory. What were the odds that Ira Gershwin, born a scant two years earlier than George, would prove to be a lyricist of genius? Ira's sensitivity and precision in matching words to music raised the art of the song lyric in shows and popular hits generally, and was perfectly attuned to George's gifts as a composer.

Girl Crazy opened in October 1930 at the Alvin Theatre and ran for 272 performances—a more than respectable run in those days. The overture previews some of Gershwin's most memorable Broadway melodies, including "But Not for Me" and "I Got Rhythm"—introduced by Ethel Merman, whose rendition stopped the show night after night.

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and has written numerous articles for magazines and newspapers in the U.S. and U.K. and hundreds of program notes for orchestras and opera companies. OperaHound.com