



Civic Orchestra of New Haven

Fables of
**FROSTY
NIGHTS**

SUNDAY
DEC 15 2024

4:00 PM

BATTELL CHAPEL
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WWW.CIVICORCHESTRAOFNEWHAVEN.ORG

HISTORY OF THE ORCHESTRA

In 1939, founding conductor Harry Berman gathered a group of 30 advanced amateur musicians for a first rehearsal. They performed their debut concert on April 7, 1941, at Sprague Memorial Hall on the Yale University campus under the name "Philharmonic of New Haven, Connecticut." The early repertoire focused on light classical selections.

In the 1960s, Gordon Emerson became music director, leading the orchestra for four decades. During his tenure, the group expanded its repertoire to include premieres of works by composers such as Charles Ives and Leonard Bernstein, and began collaborating with instrumental soloists and local school choruses. The orchestra was renamed the Civic Orchestra of New Haven.

Christopher James Hisey took the baton in the 2000s, steering the orchestra through performances of larger, more ambitious works, including a notable rendition of *Carmina Burana*. Hisey's leadership sustained the orchestra's high standards and community involvement.

In 2018, Kalena Bovell, a rising star, became music director. As the only American professional conductor of African-American and Hispanic descent at the time, Bovell brought fresh energy and vision to the orchestra before moving to a position with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra.

Matthew Scinto joined in 2019, leading the orchestra through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic with virtual programming. He left in 2022 to take a faculty position at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Robert "Bobby" Smith then served as Interim Director, guiding the orchestra through a transitional season, followed by Samuel Hollister, who led the orchestra in 2023.

Now in its 86th season, the Civic Orchestra of New Haven is proud to begin a new chapter under the baton of Interim Music Director Nadya Potemkina, an innovative and versatile conductor. Her dynamic approach and commitment to both classical and contemporary repertoire promise to elevate the orchestra's performances and strengthen its connection with the community.

PROGRAM

Fables of **FROSTY NIGHTS**

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
1844 – 1908

Scheherazade, Op. 35

- I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship
- II. The Kalendar Prince
- III. The Young Prince and the
Young Princess
- IV. Festival at Baghdad; The Sea;
The Ship Breaks against a Cliff
Surmounted by a Bronze
Horseman

Intermission

George Chadwick
1854 – 1931

Noël from Symphonic Sketches

Otto Nicolai
1810 – 1849

Christmas Overture

Amy Beach
1867 – 1944

Peace I Leave with You

*Trumbull HS Chamber Singers
Chris Wasko, conductor*

Gabriel Fauré
1845 – 1924

Cantique de Jean Racine, Op. 11

George Frideric Handel
1685 – 1759

Hallelujah from Messiah, HWV 56

Leroy Anderson
1908 – 1975

A Christmas Festival

CIVIC ORCHESTRA OF NEW HAVEN

NADYA POTEMKINA, *MUSIC DIRECTOR*



VIOLIN I

Tae Shik Kim,
Concertmaster
Isabelle Aboaf
Sam Green
Reina Maruyama
Mauranda Men
Julie Ringelheim
Eleanor Schiff

VIOLIN II

Sarah Roman *
Jerry Anne Dickel
Stephen Grodzinsky
Yoshiko Maruyama
Mary Mattheis
Catherine Miller
Will Platt
Lawrence Zukof
Sue Prasad ≠

VIOLA

Molly Zahn *
Mira Debs
Margaret Liddell
Ron Moore
Laurie Ongley
Nathan Rawling ≠

CELLO

Fiona Burdette *
Sarah Alloy
Hoon Cho
Cheryl Martin
Susan Solomon
Linnea Weiss

BASS

Andrew Martin *
Amy Baker ≠

FLUTE

Pam Allen Hunter *
Judith Kramer Koret *
Anna Luther

OBOE

Anthony Marra *
Karen Devonshuk

ENGLISH HORN

Ling-Fei Kang

CLARINET

Amanda Hetric *
Dan Kent

* *principal*
≠ *on leave*

BASSOON

Thomas Heilman *
Adrienne Gallagher

HORN

Jessica Shaver *
Dani Heller Zero
Jean Webb
Cathy Zack

TRUMPET

Sander Cohen-Janes *
Paul Defrances
Ben Heller

TROMBONE

Isaiah Cooper *
Don Harvey
Mike Nicholson

TUBA

Matthew Sanchez
Art Hovey ≠

HARP

Sena Hornby

PERCUSSION

David Liskov

NADYA POTEKINA, *MUSIC DIRECTOR*

Nadya Potemkina currently serves as Adjunct Associate Professor of Music at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT, where she directs the University Orchestra and Concert Choir, and teaches courses in instrumental conducting, orchestral literature, and music theory. She is also the music director of Connecticut FluteFest and the Ad Hoc Bach Collective, both of which focus on performance and outreach for musicians of all ages and backgrounds.

A versatile musician, Potemkina regularly performs chamber music as a violist, with a focus on new works and underrepresented composers. Her commitment to expanding the musical repertoire is evident in her programming choices, where she highlights diverse voices and innovative compositions.

Highly sought after as a conductor and adjudicator, Potemkina frequently collaborates with regional orchestras, youth ensembles, and festivals. Her dynamic leadership and insightful interpretations have earned her recognition from musicians and audiences alike.



Before relocating to Connecticut in 2013, Potemkina served as Assistant Conductor of the University of Memphis Orchestras and as music director of the Mid-South Young People's Orchestras in Memphis, TN. She holds degrees in viola performance, pedagogy, and conducting from Herzen State Pedagogical University, the University of Northern Iowa, Ball State University, and the University of Memphis.

TRUMBULL HS CHAMBER SINGERS

CHRIS WASKO, *DIRECTOR OF CHORAL MUSIC*



The THS Chamber Singers are Trumbull High School's auditioned honors vocal ensemble. Prior to the pandemic, the Singers had toured extensively throughout Europe, Canada, and the US. They performed in England, France, Austria, Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic giving concerts at places such as Notre Dame Cathedral, L'église de la Madeleine, Worcester Cathedral, the University Church of Oxford, Salzburg Cathedral, St. Peter's Basilica, Basilica De San Francesco, Santa Maria del Duomo, and Santa Maria Maggiore.

In 2016, the group traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana, where they toured and performed at St. Joseph Cathedral, Loyola

University, and the World War II Museum. The Chamber Singers have had the honor of performing at Carnegie Hall by invitation on nine separate occasions. They performed major works in the standard repertory as well as three world premieres.

In addition, the Trumbull High School Choirs performed *Messiah* at Avery Fisher Hall (now David Geffen Hall) at Lincoln Center. The Chamber Singers often share the gift of music with school, community, and charitable organizations in the area, as well as performances for the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, the Greater Bridgeport Symphony, the Civic Orchestra of New Haven, and the American Choral Directors Association.

SOPRANO

Bailey Chapin
Claudia Cleri
Isabella Corica
Lillian Miller
Nicole Yezersky
Natalia Covino
Mars Czarnecki
Emelia Field

ALTO

Bianca Armellino
Jane Hall
Catalina Mozzo
Kelly Oliver
Hadassa Padilha
Elaina Treacy
Samantha Rose
Espiritu
Megan Marchetti

TENOR

Lawrence Bartley
Oliver Corvera
Andria Gerold
Maxime Moise
Hudson Zentz

BASS

George Blake
David Ilagan
Mac Gray Jerome
Francis Mastriani
Britton McGrath

Chris Wasko is serving his fifth year as the director of choirs at Trumbull High School where he also teaches digital music technology, introduction to piano, music fundamentals, and AP music theory. Wasko has previously served as the assistant conductor of the Vernon Chorale in Vernon, CT, Tapestry Choir in New York City, and the A Viva Voce Festival Chorus, during their concert tour of Ireland.

Wasko earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut, where he graduated *summa cum laude* and completed a prestigious University Scholar project exploring the historical, cultural, and musical contexts

of Irish rebel songs, three of which he arranged for mixed choir. Wasko has formerly served as both Membership Chair and the Middle School Repertoire & Resources Chair for the Connecticut Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association, and was the Choir Chair for the CMEA Western Region Middle School Festival for four years. In 2018, Wasko was the guest conductor for the Connecticut Technical High School System All-District Choir festival, and in 2023 he directed the Eastern Region Middle School mixed choir.

Wasko is currently pursuing his doctorate in music education at Teachers College, Columbia University.



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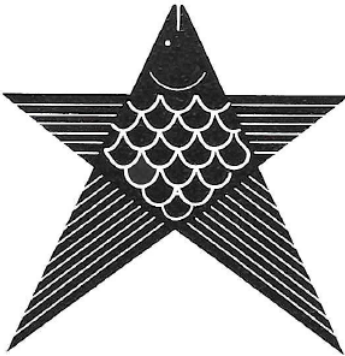
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PROGRAM NOTES

Scheherazade, Op. 35

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
(1844–1908)

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, a former Russian naval officer turned master composer, knew how to tell a good story. Though his time in the Navy didn't lead to a life on the high seas, it certainly influenced his music, and nowhere is that clearer than in *Scheherazade*, a vivid, colorful work inspired by the tales of *One Thousand and One Nights*. Written in 1888, this symphonic suite is as much a journey for the imagination as it is for the ears, taking us from stormy seas to royal palaces and bustling markets in Baghdad.



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Scheherazade, the clever storyteller, keeps herself alive by spinning tales so captivating that the rather ill-tempered Sultan, who has a bad habit of disposing of his wives, can't bring himself to end her life. Night after night, she weaves fantastic stories of adventure, all while hoping to see another sunrise.

Rimsky-Korsakov, a wizard of orchestration, brings these stories to life with stunning use of the orchestra. He didn't intend the music to be a literal retelling of each tale, but there's no denying the vivid scenes he conjures. The opening movement swells with the rise and fall of ocean waves, while the delicate solo violin theme represents Scheherazade herself, subtly guiding the listener through each adventure.

The suite unfolds in four movements, each its own self-contained story:

- The Sea and Sinbad's Ship – Feel the ocean swell as Sinbad sails off on his latest adventure.
- The Kalandar Prince – Full of mystery and excitement, this wandering prince's adventure is laced with intrigue.
- The Young Prince and The Young Princess – A romantic interlude, where lush melodies paint a picture of young love.
- Festival at Baghdad; The Sea;

The Ship Breaks Against a Cliff
– A dramatic finale with lively
festivals and a shipwreck that
brings the adventure full circle.

Though Rimsky-Korsakov preferred
to keep things a bit abstract,
it's hard not to hear these tales
unfold in the music – from the
sweeping grandeur of the sea to
the delicate romance between
the young prince and princess.

By the time the ship crashes in the
final movement, you'll have been
through adventures that rival any
modern-day epic. *Scheherazade*
remains a brilliant showcase of
Rimsky-Korsakov's talent, a work
that captures the imagination
while showcasing the beauty
and power of a full orchestra. So,
settle in for a captivating musical
journey, and maybe thank your
lucky stars you don't have to
come up with 1,001 tales to keep
your head on straight.

Noël from *Symphonic Sketches*

George Chadwick
(1854–1931)

George Chadwick, one of the
leading representatives of the
Second New England School of
American Composers, brings a
distinctly American voice to his
Symphonic Sketches. The Noël
movement, written between
1895 and 1904, is his musical take
on the warmth and magic of the
holiday season. Opening with a
serene, pastoral theme, it paints
the peacefulness of a winter
night, snow softly blanketing the
world. But Chadwick doesn't
stop there—he introduces hints
of holiday festivity, like distant
choral sounds or candlelight in
the windows. His orchestration
blends warmth and playfulness,
with shimmering strings and
woodwinds adding a sense of
anticipation, as if the winter
wonderland is coming to life.
Though part of a larger suite,
Noël stands beautifully on its
own, offering listeners a nostalgic,
festive glimpse of Christmas.



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PROGRAM NOTES

Christmas Overture

Otto Nicolai (1810–1849)

Otto Nicolai, best known for his opera *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, composed his *Christmas Overture* in 1833. Based on the well-loved carol “Vom Himmel hoch, da komm’ ich her” (“From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”) by Martin Luther, Nicolai brings the melody to life with rich orchestration and festive flair. The overture opens with a majestic brass fanfare before weaving in the familiar carol theme, moving between

reflective moments and bold, celebratory passages. It’s like a musical Christmas tree—bright, colorful, and full of sparkle. Though Nicolai passed away young, this overture is a testament to his skill in blending classical elegance with holiday cheer. The piece concludes with a rousing, joyful coda where the composer makes room for an optional organ and choir singing the chorale (which will be your task this evening!), perfectly capturing the spirit of the season.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the Christmas Overture. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are in German and are written below the vocal line.

System 1:
Lob, Ehr sei Gott im höch-sten Thron, Der uns schenkt sei-nen ein'-gen Sohn. Des

System 2:
freu-en sich der En-gel Schar und sin-gen uns solch neu-es Jahr.

Glory to God in highest heaven, Who unto man His Son hath given!
While angels sing with pious mirth A glad New Year to all the earth.

Peace I Leave with You

Amy Beach (1867–1944)

Amy Beach, one of America's first celebrated female composers, wrote *Peace I Leave with You* in 1934 as a deeply heartfelt setting of John 14:27. Drawing on her spirituality, Beach crafts a serene and comforting work that captures the promise of peace through flowing melodies and lush harmonies. The piece balances simplicity with emotional depth, creating a timeless choral gem that offers calm and hope to all who hear it.

Cantique de Jean Racine, Op. 11

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Gabriel Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine* is a serene and deeply moving choral work,

created when the composer was just 19 years old. Written when Fauré was a student at the École Niedermeyer in Paris, this piece won first prize in composition, and it's easy to hear why. Based on a 17th-century French text by Jean Racine, *Cantique* is full of Fauré's signature elegance, blending delicate harmonies and lush textures.

The music opens gently, like the quiet unfolding of dawn, with a flowing melody that builds into moments of quiet majesty. Fauré's restraint keeps the piece beautifully simple, while its rich harmonies and flowing lines create a sense of calm and reverence. Whether performed with organ or full orchestra, *Cantique* offers a timeless, meditative experience—perfect for moments of quiet reflection.

TRANSLATION:

Verbe égal au Très-Haut, notre unique espérance,
Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux,
De la paisible nuit nous rompons le silence:
Divin Sauveur, jette sur nous les yeux.

Répands sur nous le feu de Ta grâce puissante;
Que tout l'enfer fuie au son de Ta voix;
Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme languissante
Qui la conduit à l'oubli de Tes lois!

Ô Christ! sois favorable à ce peuple fidèle,
Pour Te bénir maintenant rassemblé;
Reçois les chants qu'il offre à Ta gloire immortelle,
Et de Tes dons qu'il retourne comblé.

Word of the Highest, our only hope,
Eternal day of earth and the heavens,
We break the silence of the peaceful night;
Saviour Divine, cast your eyes upon us!

Pour on us the fire of your powerful grace,
That all hell may flee at the sound of your voice;
Banish the slumber of a weary soul,
That brings forgetfulness of your laws!

O Christ, look with favor upon your faithful people
Now gathered here to praise you;
Receive their hymns offered to your immortal glory;
May they go forth filled with your gifts.

PROGRAM NOTES

Hallelujah from Messiah

George Frideric Handel
(1685–1759)

The "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah* is one of the most instantly recognizable pieces of classical music. Written in 1741, *Messiah* is an oratorio that tells the story of Christ's life, and the "Hallelujah Chorus" comes at the triumphant conclusion of Part II, celebrating Christ's resurrection. The chorus's joyful energy with its soaring melodies and majestic "Hallelujahs" has made it a staple of holiday concerts around the world.

Legend has it that when the piece premiered in London, King George II stood up during this chorus, and audiences have been following suit ever since. Whether standing or seated, listeners can't help but be swept up in the sheer power and glory of this iconic work.

A Christmas Festival

Leroy Anderson (1908–1975)

Leroy Anderson, a native of Cambridge, Massachusetts, is celebrated for his light orchestral works, many of which were premiered by the Boston Pops under Arthur Fiedler. A Harvard University and New England Conservatory graduate, Anderson wrote playful and vibrant music to celebrate the holidays. *A Christmas Festival* is a medley of beloved carols, bringing the festive spirit to life with his signature charm.

The Civic Orchestra has also performed Anderson's *Bugler's Holiday* and *Sleigh Ride*—the latter, ironically, composed during a sweltering summer in 1946, long before it became a Christmas classic.

Program Notes by Dani Heller Zero

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The Civic Orchestra of New Haven is looking for talented musicians to join our well established group. If you or someone you know is interested in auditioning, please email us at info@civicorchestraofnewhaven.org

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Civic Orchestra of New Haven

Roots and Reflections

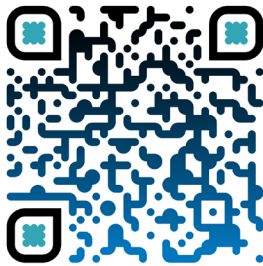
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