

HOUSTON \neq SYMPHONY

PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION



2023-24 SEASON IMPACT REPORT

HOUSTON SYMPHONY

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DEAR FRIENDS OF THE HOUSTON SYMPHONY

As we enjoy our summer, we have a chance to reflect on all that we accomplished together over the 2023–24 Houston Symphony Season. It was Juraj Valčuha's second season as our music director, and the level of artistic accomplishment could not have been higher. We opened with two stunning all-French weeks that had our magnificent orchestra and chorus in the spotlight. We delved into *Symphonic Dances* and *Tragedy and Triumph* with great works by Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Beethoven, and Mahler, and the U.S. premiere of Julia Wolfe's *Pretty*, co-commissioned with the Berlin Philharmonic. And we brought things to a jaw-dropping close with the *Strauss Festival*, glorying in Rachel Willis-Sørensen's *Four Last Songs*, ascending to new musical heights in *An Alpine Symphony*, and basking in a breathtaking concert staging of *Salome* with a cast and orchestra that would be the envy of any opera house. Along the way, we welcomed distinguished guests, including our Conductor Laureate Andrés Orozco-Estrada and former Music Director Christoph Eschenbach, and soloists, including Lang Lang, Emanuel Ax, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Seong-Jin Cho. We featured our own Yoonshin Song and Brinton Averil Smith, and last but certainly not least, we wrapped up Itzhak Perlman's three-year artistic partnership with an unforgettable and joyous celebration of klezmer music.

Our Bank of America POPS series scaled new heights as well, under the inspired leadership of our Principal POPS Conductor Steven Reineke. We welcomed Broadway legends and legends-in-the-making Norm Lewis, Mandy Gonzalez, Ali Stroker, Rodney Ingram, Hailey Kilgore, and Derek Klena to the Jones Hall stage. We celebrated diva legends with LaKisha Jones and Nova Y. Payton, celebrated the legacy of Etta James with Crystal Monee Hall, and enjoyed swingin' Frank Sinatra classics with Tony DeSare. We honored the Gershwin centennial with a superb evening featuring the Marcus Roberts Trio and vocalist Catherine Russell and paid tribute to The Moody Blues with GO NOW!, led by legendary Blues drummer Gordy Marshall. Steven wrapped things up with a focus on our wonderful orchestra, acting as our guide through a galaxy far, far away in a survey of highlights from all nine of John Williams's *Star Wars* scores.

And our musicians weren't just in Jones Hall. They were out in the community, bringing their music to more than 200,000 Houstonians through our free and low-cost education and community engagement programs. We hit a record for attendance at our Student Concerts, with 53,000 upper elementary and middle schoolers hearing the orchestra led by Assistant Conductor Gonzalo Farias—more than double served by any other major American orchestra through a similar concert series, something of which we truly can be proud. Our DeLUXE K!ds In Harmony program

concluded its successful second year which featured the students in a variety of performance settings, giving them a chance to show all they'd learned during their thrice-weekly after-school sessions with our Community-Embedded Musicians and teaching artists from American Festival of the Arts. The blueprint we've developed in the Fifth Ward is one we're working to replicate in other neighborhoods around Greater Houston, news of which I hope to share in the near future. And our Music and Wellness programs—in partnership with Houston Methodist, MD Anderson Cancer Center, and Texas Children's Hospital—continues to serve our fellow Houstonians at some of the most difficult moments of their lives, demonstrating the healing and uplifting power of music.

At the end of the season, we welcomed guests from around the country and the world to Houston for the League of American Orchestras annual conference, which our Symphony hosted for the first time in 79 years. It was a great opportunity to show our colleagues everything we do here, and for our musicians, staff, and volunteers all to put their best foot forward. We shared our successes, what we've learned from our challenges, and hopefully sent everyone home inspired with what's possible when generous supporters, enthusiastic and engaged audiences, and a thriving city come together to make great music possible.

Thank you to all of you for everything you do to support the Houston Symphony, our inspiring musical artistry, and our vital work in our community. This year, thanks to your incredible generosity, we raised more than \$22 million for the Annual Fund and more than \$8 million for our Endowment, which now stands at over \$100 million for the first time in the Symphony's history. While we spend our summer at The Hobby Center, Miller Outdoor Theatre, and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in the Woodlands, crews will be hard at work at Jones Hall finishing the final acoustic transformation of the auditorium. I can't wait to hear how our orchestra sounds when they're back on stage at the end of September.

Thank you so much for a spectacular 2023–24 Season, and for all your generosity does to make what we do possible. I can't wait to welcome you back to Jones Hall in September for another amazing Houston Symphony season.

With gratitude,


John Mangum
Executive Director/CEO
Margaret Alkek Williams Chair

ORCHESTRA ROSTER

Juraj Valčuha

Music Director

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Steven Reineke, Principal POPS Conductor

Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Conductor Laureate

Gonzalo Farias, Assistant Conductor

FIRST VIOLIN

Yoonshin Song, Concertmaster
Max Levine Chair
Eric Halen, Co-Concertmaster
Ellen E. Kelley Chair
Boson Mo, Assistant Concertmaster
Qi Ming, Assistant Concertmaster
Fondren Foundation Chair
Marina Brubaker
Tong Yan
MiHee Chung
Sophia Silivos
Rodica Gonzalez
Ferenc Illeenyi
Si-Yang Lao
Kurt Johnson*
Christopher Neal
Sergei Galperin

SECOND VIOLIN

MuChen Hsieh*, Principal
Teresa Wang+, Associate Principal
Amy Semes
Annie Kuan-Yu Chen
Mihaela Frusina
Jing Zheng
Tianjie Lu
Anastasia Ehrlich
Tina Zhang*
Yankı Karataş
Hannah Duncan
Tianxu Liu+
Samuel Park+

VIOLA

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Wei Jiang, Acting Associate Principal
Sheldon Person
Fay Shapiro
Keoni Bolding
Samuel Pedersen
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Burke Shaw
Donald Howey
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Ryan Avila+

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General Maurice Hirsch Chair
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Associate Principal
Judy Dines,
Acting Associate Principal
Kathryn Ladner

PICCOLO

Kathryn Ladner

OBOE

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Lucy Binyon Stude Chair
Anne Leek, Associate Principal
Colin Gatwood
Adam Dinitz

ENGLISH HORN

Adam Dinitz
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Bobbie Nau Chair
Thomas LeGrand, Associate Principal
Christian Schubert
Alexander Potiomkin

E-FLAT CLARINET

Thomas LeGrand

BASS CLARINET

Alexander Potiomkin

BASSOON

Rian Craypo, Principal
Isaac Schultz, Associate Principal
Elise Wagner
Adam Trussell

CONTRABASSOON

Adam Trussell

HORN

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Nathan Cloeter, Assistant Principal/Utility
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Brian Mangrum
Ian Mayton
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Mark Hughes, Principal
*George P. and Cynthia Woods
Mitchell Chair*
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Robert Walp, Assistant Principal
Richard Harris

TROMBONE

Bradley White, Acting Principal
Ryan Rongone+
Phillip Freeman

BASS TROMBONE

Phillip Freeman

TUBA

Dave Kirk, Principal

TIMPANI

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Matthew Strauss,
Associate Principal

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Mark Griffith
Matthew Strauss

HARP

Allegra Lilly, Principal

KEYBOARD

Scott Holshouser, Principal

LIBRARIAN

Luke Bryson, Principal

**on leave*

+ contracted substitute

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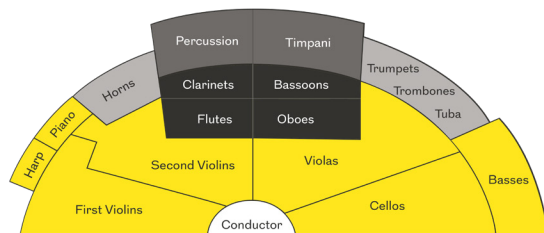
Lindsey Baggett, violin
David Connor, double bass
Rainel Joubert, violin

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Hae-a Lee

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2023–24 SEASON

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2030

As the Houston Symphony's Vision 2025 strategic plan reaches a natural conclusion and the Houston Symphony arrives at a new era of growth and transformation, we recognized the need to create a new plan that will chart our course toward 2030 and beyond. In a yearlong process led by Symphony Governing Director and Chair of our Strategic Planning Committee, Bob Orr, Board members, and Symphony staff, musicians, and constituents worked to develop a new set of organizational goals that reflect the values we hold most dear and reflect our aspirations. This new vision is centered around the elements that are most important to our organization: a commitment to artistic excellence, our role as a cultural institution in Houston, and ensuring accessibility for all.

Supporting all of this are four strategic pillars, each with specific action plans and measurable outcomes. These pillars will serve as the blueprint for achieving our vision.

2030 VISION, MISSION, AND STRATEGIC PILLARS

STRATEGIC VISION & MISSION

VISION:

World-class orchestra and Houston cultural leader, creating
extraordinary musical experiences for all

MISSION:

Inspire and engage a large and diverse audience in Houston and beyond through exceptional musical performances, and create enduring impact in our community

STRATEGIC PILLARS

1

Establish
the Houston
Symphony
as a world-
class
orchestra

2

Grow the
endowment
to transition to
an endowment-
enabled
business model

3

Build the
Houston
Symphony
to have
enduring
impact

4

Make
extraordinary
musical
experiences
available
for all



One of the strategic pillars most central to our 2030 Strategic Plan is growing the Houston Symphony Endowment and transitioning towards an endowment-enabled business model. We currently follow a traditional business model that relies on annual fundraising to support most of our operations funding in combination with a five percent annual draw from our Endowment. Orchestras that follow endowment-enabled business models are able fund a significant portion—about 20 to 30 percent—of their operations from regular endowment draws. After analyzing our major U.S. orchestra peers that follow an endowment-enabled model, we found that their endowments were roughly five times their annual operating budget. In comparison, we have a ratio that is closer to two and half times our annual operating budget. During the process of creating the plan, it was agreed that we should work to grow our Endowment and transition to an endowment-enabled model so we can support a larger percent of our annual operations. To jumpstart our efforts, we are aiming to grow the Endowment to four times our annual operating budget.

This shift will allow the Symphony to further improve our financial position, more effectively plan for the future, and better invest in our strategic plan initiatives. Having a strong Endowment is vital to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our organization and this transition to an endowment-based model will be a critical priority for the Symphony going forward.

For more information on the Strategic Plan and our plans to grow the Endowment, scan here:





2023-24 SEASON

ARTISTIC HIGHLIGHTS

151 CONCERTS

79 HOUSTON
SYMPHONY DEBUTS

217 GUEST ARTISTS/
CONDUCTORS

1 WORLD
PREMIERE

1 U.S.
PREMIERE

29,016 LIVE FROM JONES HALL
LIVESTREAM VIEWS

JANICE H. & THOMAS D. BARROW CLASSICAL SEASON



Top right: Music Director Juraj Valčuha signs his contract extension at Jones Hall. Top left: Valčuha with Houston Symphony Society Board President Barbara J. Burger (left) and Executive Director/CEO John Mangum (right) after signing his contract extension.



JURAJ & THE ORCHESTRA

Music Director, and holder of the *Roy and Lillie Cullen Chair*, **Juraj Valčuha** returned for his second season leading the Houston Symphony, continuing the tradition of artistic excellence that the Symphony has come to be known for. At the close of the 2022–23 Season, Valčuha approached leadership and requested a one-year extension of his current contract. This extension—a reflection of the artistic successes of the 2022–23 Season, as well as the deep respect between Valčuha, the orchestra, the Board of Trustees, and management—will now see him leading the orchestra through the 2025–26 Season. Valčuha will continue his innovative approach to programming, marked by thematic weekends and festivals, semi-staged opera performances, new music and commissioned works, and diverse repertoire.



Favorite Masters



Gold Classics



OPENING NIGHT CONCERT AND GALA

The 2023–24 Janice H. and Thomas D. Barrow Classical Series opened on September 29, 2023, at Jones Hall. Valčuha led the orchestra and Houston Symphony Chorus through a night full of dazzling French masterworks alongside world-renowned soprano **Erin Morley**. He started the performance with Messiaen's *Les offrandes oubliées*, then led the orchestra and chorus through Poulenc's playful and celebratory Gloria, before building to a rapturous ending with Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe*.



ConocoPhillips

Concert Sponsor &
Lead Corporate Gala Underwriter

JANICE H. &
THOMAS D.
BARROW

2023–24 Classical Season

Left: Soprano Erin Morely with Valčuha and the Symphony at the Opening Night Concert, September 29, 30, and October 1, 2023.

NEW MUSIC

This season saw the premiere of two new commissioned works at the Houston Symphony. The first was the world premiere of "First Contact", the first movement from the upcoming Symphony No. 4 (*Eclipse*) by former Houston Symphony Composer-in-Residence **Jimmy López Bellido** on April 26–28, 2023. Inspired by the total solar eclipse that passed over the United States in 2024, the piece draws the listener into the first crucial moments of an eclipse.

The second new work was the U.S. premiere of *Pretty* by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer **Julia Wolfe** on November 17–19, 2023. The piece was co-commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, the Houston Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and had its world premiere in Berlin in June 2023. Inspired by rock and roll, but composed for a symphonic scope, Wolfe's *Pretty* examines the connotations of the word "pretty" and the complex relationship it has with gender and society.



Jimmy López Bellido

"Witnessing a total solar eclipse can be an exhilarating, cathartic, and life-changing experience. They have the power to stir our deepest emotions, bring us to tears, and awaken feelings of kinship and interconnectedness with the cosmos. In this piece, I have strived not only to paint in music the different stages of an eclipse, but also the emotions elicited by it."

—Jimmy López Bellido

"The word 'pretty' has had a complicated relationship to women. It implies an attractiveness without any rough edges, without strength or power.... My *Pretty* is a raucous celebration – embracing the grit of fiddling, the relentlessness of work rhythms, and inspired by the distortion and reverberation of rock and roll."

—Julia Wolfe



Julia Wolfe



Jean-Yves Thibaudet with Valčuha and the orchestra during the *Symphonic Dances Festival*, November 17-19, 2023.

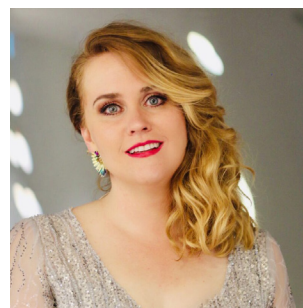
FESTIVAL WEEKENDS

Over the course of the season, Valčuha led 10 of the 18 Janice H. and Thomas D. Barrow Classical subscription concerts, all demonstrating the programming hallmarks that made his first season so memorable—the most notable being his multi-weekend festivals. These themed weekends of dynamic programming—the *Symphonic Dances*, *Tragedy and Triumph*, and *Strauss* festivals—allowed audiences to explore several different composers, eras, and cultural influences on music.

November brought the *Symphonic Dances Festival*, a themed weekend of concerts focusing on breathtaking works by Rachmaninoff and Ravel. November 10–12, 2023, Juraj led the orchestra in Rachmaninoff's glittering final masterpiece, *Symphonic Dances*, and audiences witnessed "the most perfectly accomplished pianist of his generation" (*The Independent*), **Behzod Abduraimov**, tackle Prokofiev's fiery, notoriously difficult Piano Concerto No. 2. The concert opened with Gabriela Ortiz's *Kauyumari*, inspired by the Mexican legend of the Blue Deer. The second weekend, on November 17–19, 2023, featured audience-favorite **Jean-Yves Thibaudet** as he returned for Ravel's blues-tinged Piano Concerto in G. Valčuha unveiled *Pretty*, by composer Julia Wolfe in its U.S. premiere with the Houston Symphony and later, the Viennese waltz took a walk on the wild side in Ravel's showstopping *La valse*.

Juraj returned in March to lead two weekends of concerts centered around the themes of *Tragedy and Triumph*. Immense and intense, the full forces of the orchestra amassed in Jones Hall on March 15–17, 2024, for the all-encompassing drama of Mahler's Symphony No. 6, *Tragic*, culminating in the sonic and visual spectacle of earth-shattering "hammer blows of fate." The next weekend, March 22–24, 2024, the orchestra performed Beethoven's groundbreaking *Eroica*, a symphony that commanded audience's attention from the dramatic opening chords to the triumphant finale. **Emanuel Ax** performed Mozart's exquisite Piano Concerto No. 25, and the orchestra performed Missy Mazzoli's *These Worlds In Us*, a work that reflects on the worlds of memory that exist within us all.

June marked the start of the Symphony's *Strauss Festival* where Juraj led the orchestra, and special guest artists in masterpieces by German composer Richard Strauss. On June 1 and 2, 2024, the Symphony tackled one of the natural wonders of the music world in the epic *An Alpine Symphony*, featuring an impressive 117 musicians in Jones Hall. Acclaimed soprano **Rachel Willis-Sørensen**, an alumna of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, returned to Houston to join the orchestra for Strauss's nostalgic and poignant *Four Last Songs*. On June 7 and 9, 2024, a scandalous play by Oscar Wilde met the explosive music of Strauss in *Salome*: the result was musical storytelling at its most spellbinding. Soprano **Jennifer Holloway** brought her celebrated interpretation of the title role to Jones Hall for these performances.



Top: Emanuel Ax took on Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25 during the *Tragedy and Triumph* festival. Middle: Jennifer Holloway lent her dazzling voice to the title role in *Salome*. Bottom: Soprano Rachel Willis-Sørensen joined the orchestra for *Four Last Songs* during the *Strauss Festival*.



HOUSTON SYMPHONY CHORUS

The Houston Symphony Chorus made seven appearances with the orchestra over the course of the 2023–24 Season. This included the Opening Weekend Concert performance of Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* (September 29, 30 and October 1, 2023), Handel's *Messiah* (December 15–17, 2023), Very Merry POPS (December 20–23, 2023), Takemitsu + Brahms Requiem (January 19–21, 2024), *Carmina burana* (April 26–28, 2024), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™ In Concert* (May 10–11, 2024), and Adams's *El Niño* (May 25–26, 2024).



MUSIC DIRECTOR FUND

In 2022, the Houston Symphony entered a new era with the introduction of internationally acclaimed conductor, Juraj Valčuha, as its music director. Since his arrival, Juraj has revealed his vision of a future with extraordinary concerts and exceptional service to the city of Houston, all of which requires the proper resources to accomplish. The purpose of the Music Director Fund is to provide leadership support to Juraj Valčuha and his artistic endeavors as music director.

Music Director Fund donors provide dedicated resources to support the production of Juraj's signature artistic projects such as multi-concert festivals and opera projects, the hiring of top-level orchestra musicians whose selection is overseen by Juraj, and invitations to guest soloists of the highest caliber. His leadership will continue to elevate the orchestra's level of artistry on the Jones Hall stage, raise its international reputation, and increase its relevance to the Houston community.

The Symphony is grateful to the donors who have made a gift of \$50,000 or \$100,000 above and beyond their annual giving to support the Music Director Fund:

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For more information or to join the Music Director Fund, please contact Christine Ann Stevens, Senior Director, Development at Christine.Stevens@HoustonSymphony.org or 713.337.8521.



Jennifer Holloway and other cast members perform *Salome* at Jones Hall, June 7, 2024.

SALOME

The 2023–24 Janice H. & Thomas D. Barrow Classical Season concluded with an explosive performance of Strauss's *Salome*, on June 7 and 9, 2024. Based on Oscar Wilde's equally scandalous play of the same name, this controversial opera is the retelling of the biblical story of John the Baptist's martyrdom, which focuses on the daughter of Herodias, Salome. Her strange fascination with John the Baptist ultimately leads to the demise of her and her father in this tragic opera. World-renowned soprano **Jennifer Holloway** joined forces with the orchestra to take on the title role—one of opera's most challenging vocal feats. She was joined by baritone **Mark S. Doss** (Jochanaan), tenor **John Daszak** (Herodes), mezzo-soprano **Linda Watson** (Herodias), and tenor **Issachah Savage** (Narraboth) in the principal roles.

This performance served as a precursor for Maestro Valčuha, who again led *Salome* later that year at the Semperoper in Dresden, Germany, the opera house where *Salome* first debuted in 1905. The operatic performance at Jones Hall gave Houston audiences the opportunity to experience this world-class opera first, with specially designed sets and visual elements created by **Adam Larsen** that breathed new life into the iconic work.

LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS CONFERENCE

On June 6-8, 2024, the League of American Orchestras hosted their national conference in Houston for the first time in its 79-year history. The Conference, aptly themed "Dream Big!", was an exciting opportunity for us to highlight Houston's diverse cultural landscape and vibrant arts scene on a national platform. Several Houston Symphony staff members presented on panels for the conference as we showcased the very best of our artistic achievements, educational programs, and community engagement initiatives, while also learning from and collaborating with our peers from across the nation. The League of American Orchestra constituents also had the opportunity to see our Symphony's performance of *Salome* on Friday, June 7, 2024, followed by a special party at Lynn Wyatt Square.



Top: League constituents enjoy a special party at Lynn Wyatt Square Park following the performance of *Salome* at Jones Hall. Lower: League of American Orchestra constituents at Jones Hall ahead of the June 7, 2024 performance of *Salome*.

GUEST ARTISTS & SYMPHONY SOLOISTS

In the 2023–24 Season, the Symphony welcomed some of the greatest guest artists in the world to Houston, including world-renowned pianists **Jean-Yves Thibaudet**, **Seong-Jin Cho**, and **Alexandra Dariescu**; violin virtuosos **Augustin Hadelich** and **Itzhak Perlman**; celebrated jazz legend **Marcus Roberts**; Broadway stars **Norm Lewis**, **Ali Stroker**, and **Hailey Kilgore**; and opera superstars including **Susanna Phillips**, **Davóne Tines**, **Kelley O'Connor**, **Rachel Willis-Sørensen**, and **Jennifer Holloway**.

Houston Symphony musicians also took center stage as soloists. On January 12–14, 2024, Valčuha led the orchestra through Mendelssohn's timeless jewel, the *Scottish Symphony*, and Concertmaster **Yoonshin Song** stepped into the spotlight to take on Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 2. Then on March 29 and 30, 2024, Principal Cellist **Brinton Averil Smith** performed Dvořák's Cello Concerto—one of classical music's most popular cello concertos—under the direction of guest conductor **Xian Zhang**.



Left: Principal Cellist Brinton Averil Smith performing Dvořák's Cello Concerto, March 29–30, 2024. Right: Concertmaster Yoonshin Song performing Bartók's Violin Concerto No. 2, January 12–14, 2024.

FRESH FACES: WELCOMING NEW ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR GONZALO FARIAS

In September 2023, we welcomed rising young Chilean conductor **Gonzalo Farias** as the Symphony's assistant conductor. The engaging orchestral conductor, award-winning pianist, and passionate educator previously served as associate conductor of the Kansas City Symphony, associate conductor of the Jacksonville Symphony, and assistant conductor of the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. In the 2023–24 Season, he curated and led our beloved Student Concert Series, and led several Symphony concerts both at Jones Hall and in the Houston Community, including Hocus Pocus POPS at Cynthia Mitchell Woods Pavilion; Duke Ellington's *Nutcracker* with the Jazz Houston Orchestra; a holiday concert at Houston Methodist Hospital; and a performance at the mayoral inauguration ceremony for Houston Mayor John Whitmire in January.



Assistant Conductor Gonzalo Farias leads the orchestra.

A FAMILIAR FACE: ANDRÉS OROZCO-ESTRADA AS CONDUCTOR LAUREATE

For the first time since his heartfelt farewell in April 2022, former Music Director **Andrés Orozco-Estrada** returned to the Jones Hall stage as the Symphony's conductor laureate. On December 1, 2, and 3, 2023, Orozco-Estrada led an all-Shostakovich program featuring the composer's Violin Concerto No. 1 with violin luminary **Augustin Hadelich**. Also on the program was Shostakovich's richly evocative Symphony No. 11, *The Year 1905*—a piece with special significance to Houston since the Houston Symphony gave its United States premiere in 1957 and released the first-ever commercial recording shortly after. Orozco-Estrada returned on April 19–21, 2024 to lead the orchestra, soloists, and the Houston Symphony Chorus in Orff's monumentally popular *Carmina burana*. On the same program, Orozco-Estrada also conducted a world premiere commission by former Symphony Composer-In-Residence Jimmy López Bellido, "First Contact," the first movement of his upcoming Symphony No. 4 (*Eclipse*).



Andrés Orozco-Estrada leads the orchestra during the Symphony's performance of *Carmina burana*.

ARTISTIC PARTNER ITZHAK PERLMAN'S FAREWELL SEASON

For the past three seasons, **Itzhak Perlman**, the legendary violinist renowned for his extraordinary musicianship, has acted as the Symphony's Artistic Partner. Announced in January 2020, the partnership was initially delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic before resuming and eventually blossoming into a beautiful partnership that elevated the orchestra's artistry and inspired musicians and audiences alike. The 2023–24 Season was particularly poignant as it marked the final chapter of Perlman's notable partnership with the orchestra, bringing a significant era to a close.

Over the years, his collaborations with the Symphony have included both conducting and performing, allowing audiences to experience his dual talents. Perlman made his first appearance as Houston Symphony Artistic Partner, on May 22 and 23, 2021, with the program *All-Beethoven with Itzhak Perlman*, featuring radiant Violin Romances, the *Coriolan* Overture, and Symphony No. 7. He returned to Jones Hall later that season on February 13, 2022, for *An Afternoon with Itzhak Perlman*. During the program, Perlman shared stories from his life and career, and personal photos and footage from his archives including footage from the Grammy-nominated documentary about his life, *Itzhak*. This multimedia event was interspersed with musical performances with his longtime friend and pianist, **Rohan De Silva**. In the 2022–23 Season, Perlman made three appearances beginning with his performance of Beethoven's Violin Concerto led by Valčuha on October 20, 22, and 23, 2022. On February 26, 2023, Perlman was joined by Rohan de Silva for a special solo violin recital. Then Perlman returned on April 1 and 2, 2023, to lead the orchestra and Houston Symphony Chorus in a choral masterpiece, Mozart's Requiem.

The 2023–24 Season included a series of concerts that highlight his exceptional career and contributions. In his final year as Houston Symphony Artistic Partner, Perlman made two significant appearances in this season. On February 8, 10 and 11, 2024, he acted as soloist and conductor when he performed *Winter* from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. Also on that program, Perlman led the orchestra in Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, and George Walker's *Lyric for Strings*, a work inspired by Barber's famous *Adagio for Strings* and dedicated to Walker's grandmother who had begun life as a slave. He returned May 12, 2024, for a special concert, *Itzhak Perlman: In the Fiddler's House*, in which he was joined by special guests from the **Klezmer Conservatory Band** to perform his recorded collection of traditional klezmer music. Perlman originally released the music from *In the Fiddlers House* as an album 25 years ago, which he then presented as a PBS Special in 1995. Houston audiences got to experience the same exciting program from the special that earned Perlman his third Emmy Award.

From performing beloved violin concertos to conducting masterworks, Perlman's farewell season was a celebration of his enduring legacy at the Houston Symphony.



Above: Itzhak Perlman with members of the the Klezmer Conservatory Band, May 12, 2024.
Top: Itzhak Perlman with the orchestra leading them in Mozart's Requiem, April 1 and 2, 2023.

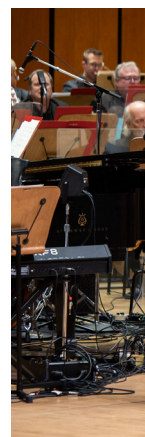
POPS SERIES

Principal POPS Conductor **Steven Reineke** returned for his seventh season presiding over the Houston Symphony's Bank of America POPS Series with a dazzling programmatic array of musical genres that encompassed everything from Broadway, to Swing, to the Roaring '20s, Etta James, The Moody Blues, and everything in between.

Bank of America is the title sponsor of the Bank of America POPS Series which features popular music performances and is a beloved part of the Houston Symphony's programming. Their sponsorship ensures that the Symphony can continue to provide quality musical performances to Houstonians and exemplifies their commitment to enriching lives through the arts.

Top Row - Left: Principal POPS Conductor Steven Reineke returned for his seventh season leading the Symphony. *Top middle:* Audience members were transported to a galaxy far, far, away as the Symphony performed music from all nine films in the Skywalker saga at *The Music of Star Wars*, May 17-19, 2024. *Lower middle:* Vocalists LaKisha Jones (left) and Nova Y. Payton (right) joined conductor Lucas Waldin for *I Will Survive - Diva Legends* (November 24-26, 2023). *Far right:* Broadway star Mandy Gonzalez brought her energy and gravity-defying voice to yuletide favorites in *Very Merry Pops*, December 20-23, 2023.

Bottom Row - Top left: The world-renowned Marcus Roberts Trio and Grammy Award-winning jazz singer Catherine Russell (pictured) joined the orchestra for timeless love songs by George Gershwin in *Jazz, Love, and Gershwin: A Century of Rhapsody in Blue*, February 2-4, 2024. *Top right:* Crooner Tony DeSare and the Houston Symphony Big Band rang in the new year with swing standards in *Swingin' Sinatra A New Year's Celebration*, January 5-7, 2024. *Lower left:* World-class rock musicians from the band *GO NOW!* joined the Symphony for a tribute to The Moody Blues, October 27-29, 2023. *Lower right:* Broadway legend Norm Lewis (pictured) belted musical favorites in *Blockbuster Broadway* with Norm Lewis, September 22-23, 2023. *Far right:* Broadway sensations Rodney Ingram, Ali Stoker, Hailey Kilgore, and Derek Klarna perform with TUTS Pre-Professional Company Members for *21st Century Broadway*, April 5-7, 2024.





PNC FAMILY SERIES

The Houston Symphony welcomed families back to Jones Hall for the 2023–24 PNC Family Series. Designed for the whole family, targeting ages two to nine, these casual, interactive concerts allow children the opportunity to dance, move, and engage with family-friendly music, sparking a lifetime appreciation for the art form. The PNC Family Series is enhanced with free lobby activities at every concert, including our popular Instrument Petting Zoo which allows children an up-close, hands-on opportunity to learn about and play the instruments they see on stage. Concertgoers are also encouraged to dress in costumes that match the concert's theme. The 2023–24 PNC Family Series featured four concerts—*Halloween Spooktacular*, *Holly Jolly Holiday*, *Get Up and Dance!*, and *I'm a Superhero!*—on select Saturday mornings at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. led by a host of talented conductors at the podium.



Top left: Young concertgoers don costumes in the lobby for *Get Up and Dance*, February 3, 2024. *Top right:* Audience members enjoy dancers in the lobby at a PNC Family Concert. *Lower left:* A young audience member enjoys the Instrument Petting Zoo. *Lower right:* Audience members at a PNC Family Concert.



Top: Vikingur Ólafsson Plays Bach at Zilkha Hall, January 24, 2024. Lower left: Lang Lang performs with the Symphony, October 6, 2023. Lower right: The Jazz Houston Orchestra joined the orchestra for Duke Ellington's *Nutcracker Suite*, December 12, 2023.

2023-24 SPECIALS

In addition to our Classical and POPS programming, the Symphony offers a variety of Special concerts that can be added on to regular subscription packages. These Symphony Specials include everything from holiday performances, movie scores performed to live film screenings, and collaborations with renowned guest artists. By adding these concerts to regular season subscription packages, audiences can enjoy a diverse array of performances that go beyond the classical repertoire, making your season truly and uniquely “special.”

The 2023-24 Season Specials included holiday performances of Disney Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (December 9-10, 2023), a collaboration with the Jazz Houston Orchestra for Duke Ellington's *Nutcracker* (December 12, 2023), and performances of Handel's *Messiah* (December 15-17, 2023) led by conductor **Jeannette Sorrell**. Other Specials included a one-night only performance with piano superstar **Lang Lang** on October 6, 2023; **Vikingur Ólafsson** Plays Bach on January 24, 2024, at the Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall; Disney's *Encanto* in Concert Live to Film (April 20, 2024); and the orchestra performing John Williams's score for *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™* live to the film on May 10-11, 2023.



Summer Sounds at The Hobby Center for Performing Arts.

SUMMER SOUNDS CONCERT SERIES

While renovations were underway at Jones Hall, the Houston Symphony headed to The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts for our Summer Sounds concert series, presented by Stella Artois. The series included *The Music of Queen*, a Queen tribute concert that featured fan favorites hits like “Bohemian Rhapsody” and “Killer Queen” with guest vocalist **MiG Ayesa** and guest conductor **Brent Havens**. The Summer Sounds series also included *Star Wars: A New Hope In Concert* where audiences enjoyed the iconic George Lucas film while the Symphony brought in John Williams’s epic score to life. Audiences also relived the magic of the Wizarding World with our performances of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone™ In Concert* at The Hobby Center and a new Summer Series venue, the Smart Financial Centre.



LIVESTREAM SPOTLIGHT

We continued to make Classical and Bank of America POPS concerts available for home viewing via our award-winning *Live from Jones Hall* livestream series. In the 2023–24 Season, we produced 27 livestream concerts and we received 29,016 livestream views from 43 states and 42 countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and South Korea.

Our Live from Jones Hall livestreams and other recording endeavors are made possible due to the generous contributions of our **Media Consortium Donors**:

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If you’re interested in contributing, contact Christine Ann Stevens, Senior Director of Development at 713.337.8521 or Christine.Stevens@HoustonSymphony.org.

WELCOMING NEW MUSICIANS

Curating and cultivating the highest caliber of musicians to fill vacancies within the orchestra is a key priority of Music Director Juraj Valčuha. During the 2023-24 Season, three outstanding new musicians joined the orchestra in permanent positions and five other new musicians were also named by Maestro Valčuha to begin their positions during the 2024-25 season. Get to know these new exceptional musicians in our orchestra!



NATHAN CLOETER

Assistant Principal Horn/Utility Horn • Lake Jackson, Texas

Nathan has lived in the Houston area his whole life and joined the Houston Symphony this past May after graduating from Rice University. He's thrilled to be a part of the orchestra that he has been watching since middle school!

“ *How long have you been playing your instrument, and what do you love the most about it?*

I have been playing the horn for 11 years, starting at age 11. When I started horn, I was drawn towards the challenge of playing, and practicing was like a fun puzzle to solve each day. As I have grown on the instrument, the challenge is still renewed each day!



BRIAN MANGRUM

Third Horn • Montreal, Quebec

Brian joined the Houston Symphony as Third Horn in June 2023, following in the footsteps of Nancy Goodearl in the position. Previously, he served as Principal Horn of the Columbus Symphony for five seasons. Brian holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Rice University and is excited to be back in Houston!

“ *What do you love the most about Houston?*

Having recently moved back here from Ohio, I'm appreciating the hustle and bustle of the city. I love the energy, the cultural scene, and the great food of Houston.



YANKI KARATAŞ

Second Violin • Istanbul, Turkey

Yanki was born and raised in Turkey (Türkiye) and moved to the US in 2014. She recently finished up a fellowship with the New World Symphony in Miami Beach and was beyond thrilled to join the Houston Symphony!

“ *Outside of classical music, what genre of music is your favorite?*

I've been obsessed with progressive rock from such a young age as to me it resembles the form and development of classical music in so many ways. I also enjoy funk and jazz.

To learn more about these musicians and all the wonderful musicians in our orchestra, scan here:



ESSE H JONES HALL FOR THE PER

Upper Elementary Concert



2023-24 SEASON

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

158,363 HOUSTONIANS SERVED THROUGH EDUCATION AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

54 ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS AND
COMMUNITY-EMBEDDED MUSICIANS
PARTICIPATED IN NEARLY

550 EVENTS IN SCHOOLS,
HOSPITALS, SENIOR CENTERS,
AND COMMUNITY VENUES

5 FREE CONCERTS AT
MILLER OUTDOOR
THEATRE

5 FREE NEIGHBORHOOD
CONCERT SERIES
CONCERTS

6 FREE/LOW-COST
CONCERTS AT CYNTHIA
WOODS MITCHELL PAVILION

25 STUDENT
CONCERTS

8 PNC FAMILY SERIES
CONCERTS

DELUXE K!DS IN HARMONY

DeLUXE K!ds In Harmony, the Houston Symphony's community-based music education program in partnership with the Fifth Ward Cultural Arts District's DeLUXE Theater and the American Festival of the Arts (AFA), completed its second year this season. This program, with curriculum created and taught by Symphony Community-Embedded Musicians (CEMs) and assistance from AFA Teaching Artists, provided free comprehensive violin instruction for students from 10 elementary schools in the Fifth Ward neighborhood. The program expanded since its inaugural year and evolved to combine music education with even more community-building activities and student-led learning to strengthen their musical community. Family involvement is also encouraged, creating a strong support network that fuels the students' enthusiasm for music.

Throughout the year, the students had several opportunities to perform in concerts at the DeLUXE Theater for families and their community. Additionally, the students had three lobby performances at PNC Family Concerts in Jones Hall, a performance at AFA's annual Bayou City Duck Race, and a performance during the Fifth Ward's Lyons Avenue Renaissance Festival in the spring. They also attended Symphony concerts at Jones Hall and enjoyed chamber ensemble performances from orchestra musicians during their classes.



Left: DeLUXE K!ds In Harmony students and CEMs in front of DeLUXE Theater in the Fifth Ward. Top right: Lead CEM Lindsey Baggett teaches a DeLUXE K!ds In Harmony student. Lower right: Lead CEM Lindsey Baggett and DeLUXE K!ds In Harmony students perform for friends and family at a holiday concert.



Program Guarantor:
Dr. Sippi & Mr. Ajay Khurana



Top left: CEM David Connor coaches a student at Carver High School. Bottom left: CEMs Lindsey Baggett and Rainel Joubert during hospital visit. Right: Moores School of Music CEF Sam Sanivich helps a DeLUXE K!ds In Harmony student during practice.

COMMUNITY-EMBEDDED MUSICIANS & COMMUNITY-EMBEDDED FELLOWS

The Symphony's **Community-Embedded Musicians (CEMs)** are a vital part of the Symphony's mission to provide high quality music education programs and performances for the Houston community. Every year, our CEMs—along with the **Community-Embedded Fellows (CEFs)** whom they mentor—typically present over 400 musical experiences for people throughout Greater Houston.

This season, violinist **Linsdey Baggett** joined our long-serving CEMs **David Connor** and **Rainel Joubert** to lead our robust Education and Community Engagement initiatives. Additionally, while our Shepherd School of Music Brown Foundation Fellow, **Christian Harvey**, who began his fellowship in the 2022-23 Season stayed on with us a second year as a CEF this season, we welcomed a new teaching artist fellow from the Moores School of Music—**Samuel Savanich**. Originally designed for graduate students, the Moores School of Music Community-Embedded Fellowship has shifted to accept undergraduate students interested in developing their skills in music education. Samuel, violin, is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree in music performance and music education. Our CEMs and CEFs are critical to ensuring the transformative power of music reaches every corner of Houston.



Principal Corporate Guarantor



Top: Assistant Conductor Gonzalo Farias interacts with students at an Upper Elementary Student Concert. Middle left: CEM David Connor at Campbell Middle School for a pre-concert visit. Middle right: Students at Jones Hall for an Upper Elementary Student Concert. Bottom left: Students at Jones Hall for an Upper Elementary Student Concert. Bottom right: Students arrive at Jones Hall for an Upper Elementary Student Concert.

STUDENT CONCERTS

This was a landmark year for our Student Concert series, led by new Assistant Conductor Gonzalo Farias. This season, we served **53,000** students through **25** concerts—our biggest turnout since before the pandemic and **more than double the number of students served by any other major American orchestra through a similar concert series**. This year also saw the return of our pre- and post-concert classroom visits by the Symphony's Community-Embedded Musicians (CEMs). These in-person visits, which took place at six middle schools before and after the Student Concerts, allowed the CEMs to build a deeper relationship with more than **400** students through interactive activities that promoted a better understanding of the music they heard at the concerts.

Our Upper Elementary School Concerts began on October 18, 2023, at the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion for Conroe students. The Upper Elementary School program introduced students to the basic elements of the Symphony—the instruments in the orchestra, the musicians who play them, the conductor, and even the audience's role in a performance. The Middle School Concerts, which kicked off on November 2, 2023, are for students who already participate in their school's orchestra or band programs, with the aim of inspiring students to continue playing their instruments. This year, the Middle School program explored friendships between composers and the many ways they demonstrated those friendships through the expression of music.

Scan here to watch
a video about the
Student Concert Series:



“My students got so much more out of this concert because of the pre-concert videos that were sent out! They were able to follow along and find patterns in the music which helped them stay engaged. The conductor did a fabulous job introducing each piece and giving them a reminder about what to listen for.”

—**Jamie Adams**,
Clear Creek ISD Educator

“Often, these concerts provide what could possibly be [a student's] first time experiencing a piece of music played by a professional orchestra of this caliber. My hope is that students—even without fully being conscious of it—find something they can remember, attach to, and resonate with so that they can feel accepted, valued, and listened-to through music.”

—**Gonzalo Farias**,
Assistant Conductor



Middle School Concert Series

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Photo Courtesy of MD Anderson

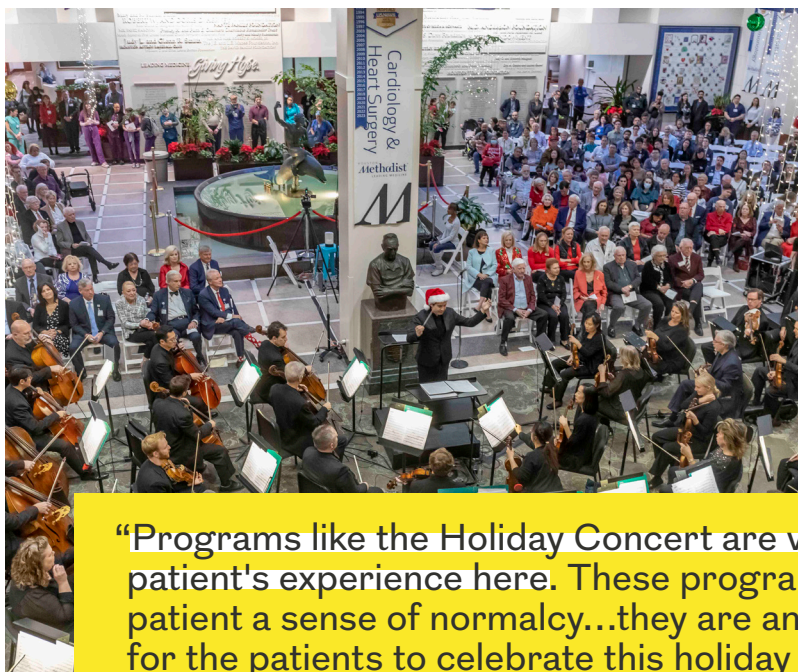
MUSIC & WELLNESS

Music's impact on health has been well-documented with studies showing that live music can help manage pain, reduce anxiety and depression, improve cognitive function, and promote overall well-being. The Symphony's Music & Wellness initiatives and partnerships are designed to complement healthcare throughout the illness trajectory, and increase the quality of life for patients, their families, and caregivers.

Above: CEMs Lindsey Baggett and Rainel Joubert play for patients at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Below: The Symphony performing a holiday concert at Houston Methodist Hospital.



Music & Wellness
Presenting Sponsor



METHODIST HOLIDAY CONCERT

On December 6, 2023, the Houston Symphony, in collaboration with Houston Methodist Hospital's Center for Performing Arts Medicine (CPAM), presented an annual free Holiday Concert in the Crain Garden lobby of Houston Methodist Hospital. The Symphony, along with the Houston Grand Opera, performed for more than 800 patients, their family members and caregivers, and the staff at Houston Methodist. The event was also livestreamed for patients who couldn't make it to the lobby.

"Programs like the Holiday Concert are vital to our patient's experience here. These programs give each patient a sense of normalcy...they are an opportunity for the patients to celebrate this holiday season in a similar way to how they would if they were at home."

—Stephanie Janczak,
Recreational Therapist, Houston Methodist Hospital



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Photo Courtesy of MD Anderson

HOSPITAL VISITS

Our CEMs continued providing bedside visits to patients, including twice each month at The University of Texas MD Anderson Children's Cancer Hospital, working alongside pediatric music therapists who uses the unique skills of our musicians to support clinical outcomes, such as stabilizing blood pressure and breathing, or managing pain. CEMs also continued their monthly visits to Texas Children's Cancer and Hematology Centers, allowing personal interactions for children and their families to provide respite through music.

Above: CEMs perform for staff members at MD Anderson. *Below:* Symphony Principal Bassoonist Rian Craypo (left), CEM Lindsey Baggett (center), and CEM Rainel Joubert (right) perform at Amazing Place Dementia Center.



DEMENTIA CENTER VISITS

This season, we continued the **Dementia Center Performance Series** by providing monthly on-site performances for members of Houston's only drop-in dementia centers, CarePartners and Amazing Place. Our musicians put together customized programs based on the music requested by the members of these sites, with the goal of eliciting memories and reducing agitation, and members of the Symphony joined them to perform throughout the season. Both centers have reported that patients appear to be more alert on the days that the Symphony performances have taken place. This further shows the healing power that music can have on the brain and highlights the effectiveness of these partnerships.

COMMUNITY CONCERTS



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and Hanni Orton.*

SUMMER SYMPHONY NIGHTS AT MILLER OUTDOOR THEATRE

The Houston Symphony returned to Miller Outdoor Theatre for a Houston tradition—*Summer Symphony Nights*. Houstonians enjoyed four free and family-friendly concerts that showcased our talented orchestra musicians as well as outstanding local, national, and international soloists and guest conductors. This summer was especially exciting because it marked the 100th Anniversary of Miller Outdoor Theatre and celebrated more than 80 years of partnership with the Symphony. This season also saw the return of *Star-Spangled Salute*—the Symphony's Independence Day concert. Principal POPS Conductor Steven Reineke led the orchestra in a free concert featuring several all-American favorites, followed by a firework spectacular.

*Above: The Houston Symphony performs the *Star-Spangled Salute* concert at Miller Outdoor Theatre.*



NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERT SERIES

Every year, the Houston Symphony partners with churches, schools, and community centers throughout Greater Houston to present free full-orchestra concerts to Houstonians as part of our Summer Neighborhood Concerts series. In June 2023, the Houston Symphony performed five full orchestra concerts at Kashmere High School, Willowridge High School, Stephen F. Austin High School, Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, and Waltrip High School for nearly **1,200** audience members. These concerts, led by current Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Assistant Conductor **Jacob Joyce**, featured classical music staples like Rossini's Overture to *The Barber of Seville*, as well as popular favorites such as the *Theme from Jurassic Park* by John Williams. These free Neighborhood Concerts are made possible due to the generous contributions from our donors.

Top left: Audience members enjoy the Instrument Petting Zoo before the performance at Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. *Left:* Community volunteers and Symphony Executive Director/CEO John Mangum (center) greet audience members at Austin High School. *Lower left:* Summer Neighborhood Concert performance at Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church. *Bottom left:* Summer Symphony Nights at Miller Outdoor Theatre.

CYNTHIA WOODS MITCHELL PAVILION

The summer also brought some exciting special concerts to the Woodlands at the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. We kicked it off with *Toy Story in Concert* (June 1, 2023) featuring a screening of *Toy Story* with Grammy®-winning composer Randy Newman's musical score performed live to the film. Next up, the king of rock n' roll joined forces with the power of the Symphony for *Symphonic Tribute to Elvis* (June 14, 2023). This was followed by a special performance of *Star-Spangled Salute* on July 3, 2023, providing an early patriotic celebration for those in the Woodlands ahead of Independence Day. Next, audiences enjoyed the dazzling aerial flyers, acrobats, and dancers of Cirque de la Symphonie (July 20, 2023) and families went on an outer space adventure with *Blast Off to Space!* (September 16, 2023). We wrapped up our Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion concerts with a spooky *Hocus Pocus* POPS concert (October 20, 2023), just in time for the Halloween season!

These performances are possible in part thanks to the generous support of the George P. and Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion Concerts Fund within the Houston Symphony Endowment.

HIGH SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

IN-SCHOOL CHAMBER COACHING SESSIONS

The Symphony's work with students doesn't stop at the elementary or middle school level—we also partner with several Houston area high schools for music education programs led by Symphony musicians and Community-Embedded Musicians (CEMs). This season, **20** Symphony musicians visited **15** Houston area high schools to provide **85** chamber music coaching sessions to orchestra and band students. Chamber music is a critical component in students' musical development and is often overlooked in school programs. The musicians visited each school at least two or three times to coach the same students and continue their development under their guidance. Our musicians were able to provide guidance for **250** students through this program.

CARVER HIGH SCHOOL RESIDENCY

We also work with high school students through our Carver High School Residency Program. Carver is part of a feeder pattern of schools in the Independence Heights area of Aldine ISD that have string orchestra programs at every level between pre-K through high school. Over the last three seasons, CEM David Connor has held intensive 8-week residencies at Carver in the spring semester, consisting of weekly 90-minute workshops. These workshops cover a variety of topics with students—from phrasing and rehearsal etiquette to instrument techniques and performance strategies. The long-term goal of the Carver Residency is to strengthen the high school's orchestra program to give the younger students in the feeder pattern schools something to look forward to and work towards. Previously, Carver had trouble retaining students in the orchestra programs between schools. However, since the residency began in 2021, Carver's orchestra has doubled in size, their ensembles can play significantly more challenging music with increased musicality, and **more than 80%** of their students participate in chamber music outside of their regular orchestra classes.

OPEN REHEARSALS & HIGH SCHOOL NIGHTS

In addition to these music education programs in their schools, we also invite high school orchestra and band students to Jones Hall for High School Night performances and open rehearsals. These performances provide a unique opportunity for students to experience live music performed by world-class musicians and inspire them to further their involvement in music. We welcomed nearly **2,000** high school students from **32** schools to Jones Hall for our High School Nights, which took place at four Janice H. & Thomas D. Barrow Classical Season concerts throughout the season. And nearly **360** high school students from six schools attended three open rehearsals this season, getting an inside look at how professional Symphony musicians rehearse for performances.

Top right: Students pose for a group photo in front of Jones Hall at a High School Night concert. *Bottom row - Left:* CEM David Connor leads a workshop at Carver High School. *Right:* Students enjoy a High School Night concert at Jones Hall.



High School
Programming



“Working with Dave and his colleagues at the Symphony offers our students a rare glimpse into the 'real' world of classical music. A beloved school activity is transformed into a career opportunity and lifelong pursuit thanks to Dave's inspiring instruction and to the Symphony rehearsals and concerts we have been so fortunate to attend.”

—**Grace Lewis,**
Orchestra Director, Carver High School



SPECIAL EVENTS

The 2023–24 Season brought a whole new slate of glamorous and exciting special events. The funds raised from these events all go towards support the Symphony's Education and Community Engagement initiatives, ensuring that more than 200,000 Houstonians can enjoy our free and low-cost concerts, industry-leading education programs, hospital visits, and other community activities. Our 2023–24 special events were great successes, raising more than **\$2.5 million!**

On September 29, 2023, the Houston Symphony celebrated the start of the 2023–24 Janice H. & Thomas D. Barrow Classical Season with the annual Opening Night Concert and Gala. **ConocoPhillips** served as the Concert Sponsor and Lead Corporate Gala Underwriter for the 37th consecutive year and the event, chaired by **Mariglyn & Stephen Glenn**, raised \$638,000.

Magical Musical Morning took place on December 3, 2023, at the River Oaks Country Club. The festive holiday gathering, chaired by **Gina Saour, Francesca Saour, Jerry Saour, and Carolyn Mohsenzadeh**, featured family-friendly activities, a delicious brunch, and special musical performance from Symphony musicians. The event raised more than \$50,000 for the Symphony's Education and Community Engagement initiatives. The event also celebrated honoree and 'Grandmother Emeritus' **Sybil Roos** for her longtime support of Magical Musical Morning and the Houston Symphony.

Our annual Symphony Ball, *Vienna Fête Impériale*, was held on January 27, 2024, at the Post Oak Hotel. The night of elegance and sophistication was inspired by 18th century Vienna and was chaired by **Tammie & Dr. Charles Johnson** and **Drs. Alice Mao Brams & Matt Brams**. The Ball and auction raised more than \$1 million.

On May 3, 2024, the Symphony celebrated its annual Wine Dinner and Collector's Auction on the Jones Hall stage. The event and silent auction of rare wines, spirits, and related experiences, chaired by **Nancy & Bryan Ruez** with Collector's Auction Chair **Jack Matzer**, raised more than \$865,000.



Top row, from left to right: Wine Dinner Collector's Auction Chair Jack Matzer & Michelle Matzer, Ball Auction Co-Chair Deborah Laws, Magical Musical Morning Chair Gina Saour and Houston Symphony Executive Director/CEO John Mangum, Opening Night Concert and Gala Chairs Stephen and Mariglyn Glenn. Bottom row, from left to right: Wine Dinner Chairs Nancy & Bryan Ruez, Houston Symphony Ball Chairs Dr. Charles & Tammie Johnson and Drs. Alice Mao Brams & Matt Brams, Ball Auction Co-Chair Christine Johnson (Photo courtesy of Gittings).



HOUSTON SYMPHONY LEAGUE

It was another fabulous season for the Houston Symphony League (HSL). Under the leadership of HSL President **Mary Fusillo**, League members devoted their time and talents to raising funds for the Symphony, volunteering at Symphony Education and Community Engagement programs, and planning social events and other activities for members. The 2023–24 Season also marked the League's first year sponsoring an orchestra musician—first violinist **Sophia Silvios**. Spearheaded by President Mary Fusillo and chaired by league members **Jennifer Barron** and **Sonia Soto**, this sponsorship not only helps the Symphony in our goal of securing a sponsor for every musician in our orchestra, but also supports our ability to attract and retain the world's finest talent by demonstrating to prospective and current musicians that they are well-supported and valued. The HSL's commitment and generous support are vital to the success of the Symphony.

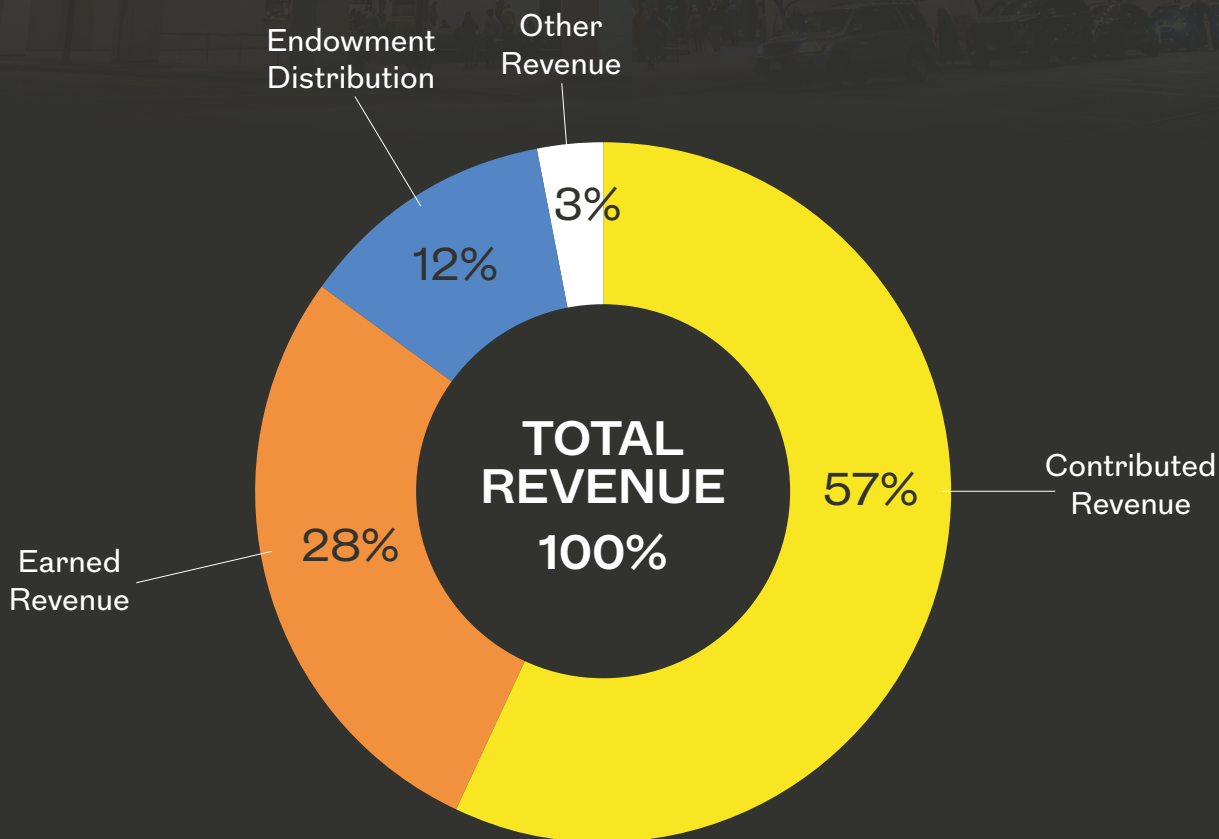
League members volunteered at various Symphony concerts and events, ensuring that our patrons had a positive experience at the Symphony. More than **60** League volunteers also worked as greeters at Student Concerts, welcoming more than **53,000** students and educators to Jones Hall—a record number of students for the series. The HSL hosted one of their most popular fundraising events, the Conversation with an Icon luncheon, on March 20, 2024. The event welcomed more than 200 guests and featured Icon **Janet Gurwitch**, the founder and former CEO of Laura Mercier Cosmetics. The event raised more than **\$51,000** for the Symphony's Education and Community Engagement initiatives. The HSL ended the season with their annual President's Luncheon where League member **Donna Mello** was awarded the Ellen Kelley Volunteer of the Year Award in recognition of her outstanding service to the HSL and the Houston Symphony.

Top left: A Houston Symphony League volunteer works with children at a PNC Family Concert. *Top right:* Incoming HSL President Heidi Rockecharlie with 2023-24 HSL President Mary Fusillo. *Middle right:* League members raising funds for the Musician Sponsorship. *Bottom right:* Ellen Kelley Volunteer of the Year Award recipient Donna Mello with John Mangum at the President's Luncheon.

2023-2024

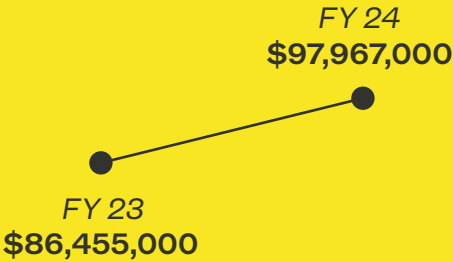
FINANCIAL REPORT

The Houston Symphony is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organization and its mission to provide exceptional musical experiences for our audiences. We ended the 2023-24 Season with **\$38.5 million** in revenue, which is a **\$4.2 million** increase over last year's total operating revenue. We extend our thanks to the Symphony's generous donors, who together contributed **69%** of our 2023-24 Season revenue by making impactful gifts to our Annual Fund and enduring gifts to our Endowment.



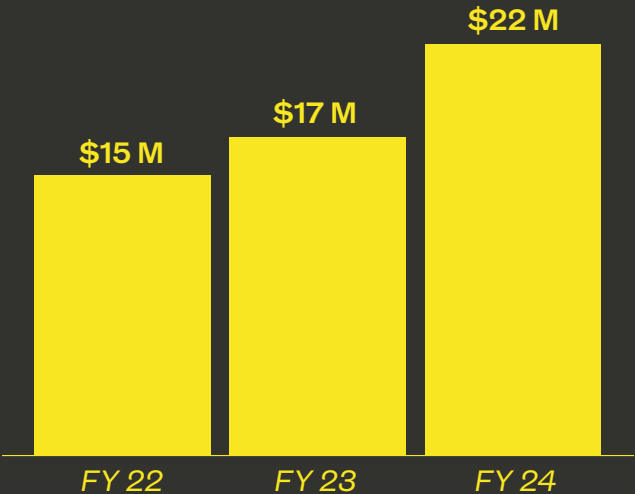
GROWING THE ENDOWMENT

As part of our commitment to the future, the Symphony is prioritizing fundraising efforts to increase the size of our Endowment. An analysis of major U.S. orchestra endowment sizes in relation to their operating budgets showed that peer orchestras have an endowment that is twice the size of the Houston Symphony's endowment. While this growth will require significant effort, we are off to a strong start after securing more than **\$11 million** in Endowment support—including a generous leadership gift from Symphony Board President **Barbara J. Burger**. As of May 31, 2024, the value of the Endowment reached **\$97.9 million**.



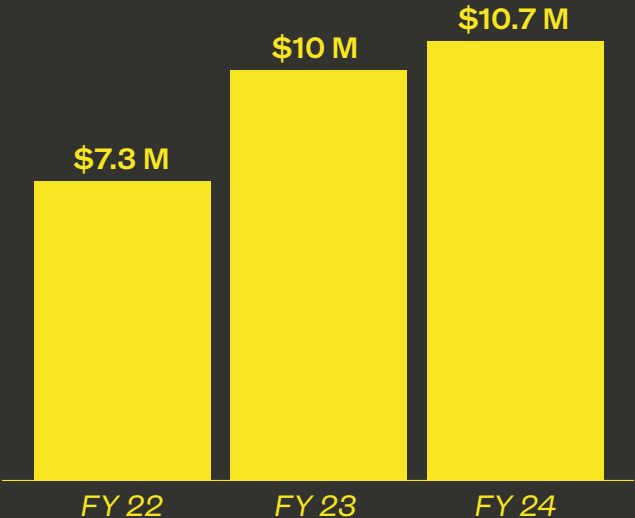
CONTRIBUTED REVENUE GROWTH

Our organization experienced significant growth in contributed revenue in FY24 with a year over year increase of **28%**. Individual Giving saw a record-setting season, raising more than **\$13 million**—nearly **60%** of all contributed revenue—a testament to the generosity and support of our dedicated donors. Our Young Associates Council, the largest young philanthropist group in the Theater District, saw membership rise to over **95** households and supported both the Wine Dinner and sponsored the *Juraj Valčuha Conducts Mahler 6* concert on March 16, 2024. Our Special Events had a remarkable year, raising more than **\$2.5 million** in support of our Education and Community Engagement initiatives. Institutional Giving accounted for nearly **30%** of our FY24 contributed revenue and we secured several new sponsors this year to support the Symphony's many initiatives.



TICKET TRENDS

Building on the success of last season, ticket sales for the 2023–24 Season reached **\$10.7 million** in earned revenue. This season also marked the Symphony's highest grossing year for single ticket sales on record at **\$6.8 million**. Additionally, subscription sales exceeded **\$3 million** for the first time since the pandemic, primarily due to the popularity of the "Pick-Your-Own" subscription packages, which grew **50%** year-over-year and reached the **\$1 million** mark for the first time. The holiday season also continued to see high demand, having contributed **21%** of the overall earned revenue for this season.



JONES HALL RENOVATIONS

Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, the beloved home of the Houston Symphony and a cherished part of Houston's cultural history for nearly 60 years, underwent significant renovations over the summer of 2023. These renovations were a part of an ongoing series of updates aimed at modernizing the space and improving accessibility for audiences. **The Nancy and Charles Davidson Performance Hall** received new seats and an updated seating layout, adding more aisles and handrails to the auditorium and making it easier for audiences to navigate. The new **Janet F. Clark Orchestra Shell** was added to visually brighten up **The Brown Foundation Stage** and provide better sound quality for audiences and the musicians. New and increased restroom facilities on the **Wortham Foundation Courtyard** level make intermission restroom breaks quicker and more efficient than ever.

Other updates were made to the hall to improve the concert experience for donors and patrons, including the all-new and expanded **David and Shirley Toomim Family Green Room**, the reconfigured lobby which includes an area for pre-concert performances and lectures, a new staircase for access to the lower-level restrooms, and a wheelchair lift and accessible entry on Texas Avenue. There were other improvements made to the building that may not be noticeable for guests, but were important nonetheless—we replaced the roof and the glass elevator in the main lobby that audiences use to get to the Mezzanine level and the **Jane and Robert Cizik Family Balcony**, and made extensive upgrades to the audio and visual infrastructure of the building.

Top: Jones Hall for the Performing Arts.
Middle: Shirley and David Toomim Family Green Room. *Bottom:* New seats in The Nancy and Charles Davidson Performance Hall.

Thank you to our Jesse H. Jones Hall Renovation Donors! We are grateful to the generous donors who have contributed \$43,650,000 to date toward our \$60 million goal.

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Nancy & Charles Davidson

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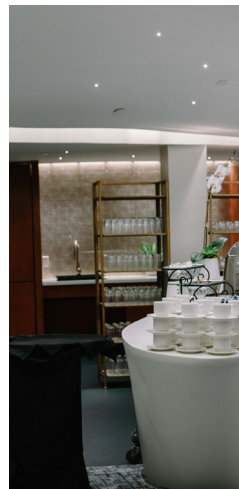
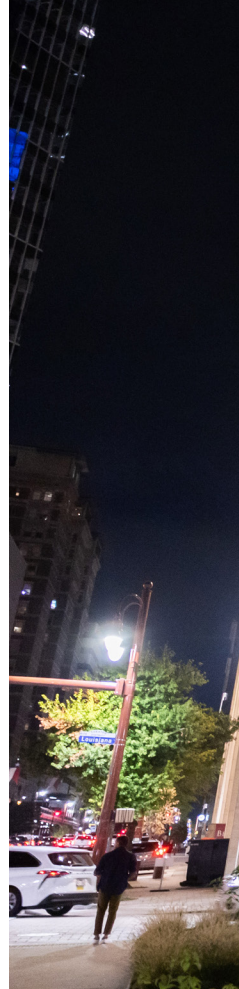
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As of July 16, 2024









2023-24 DONOR EVENTS

This season, the Symphony curated an exciting new series of donor events as a benefit exclusively for Classical and Bank of America POPS donors. These gatherings—which included elegant receptions, intimate meet-and-greets, and rehearsals—allowed donors to engage closely with the musicians and deepen their connection to the Symphony's community.

This season, Bank of America POPS donors met guest artists from *GO NOW! A Tribute to The Moody Blues* and former Principal POPS Conductor **Michael Krajewski** at a private meet and greet. POPS and Classical donors also enjoyed several private rehearsals with pre-rehearsal champagne receptions. As Symphony musicians prepare for upcoming concerts, private rehearsals offer donors a rare opportunity to experience the Symphony like they never have before. Donors also had several “Meet the Orchestra” events where they got a chance to meet the talented musicians of the Symphony, ask them questions, and learn more about their artistic process.

THANKS TO OUR DONORS

ANNUAL SUPPORT

The Houston Symphony gratefully acknowledges those who support our artistic, educational, and community engagement programs through their generosity to our Annual Fund and Special Events. For more information, please contact Emilie Moellmer, Annual Fund Manager, at Emilie.Moellmer@HoustonSymphony.org or 713.337.8526.

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