Philharmonia Orchestra
Santtu-Matias Rouvali, *conductor*
Víkingur Ólafsson, *piano*

October 18-19, 2025 • Zellerbach Hall

Above: Santtu-Matias Rouvali. Photo by Marco Borggreve.
Below: Víkingur Ólafsson. Photo by Markus Jans.

Saturday, October 18, 2025, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Philharmonia Orchestra
Santtu-Matias Rouvali, *conductor*
Víkingur Ólafsson, *piano*

PROGRAM

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770–1827) — Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 73, *Emperor* (1809)
- Allegro
- Adagio un poco mosso
- Rondo: Allegro

INTERMISSION

Gabriela ORTIZ (b. 1964) — *Si el oxígeno fuera verde* (2025, Bay Area Premiere)

Jean SIBELIUS (1865–1957) — Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 82 (1915, revised 1916, 1919)
- Tempo molto moderato – Allegro moderato
- Andante mosso, quasi allegretto
- Allegro molto

Leadership support for this performance is provided by The Dr. M. Lee Pearce Foundation, Inc.

Leadership support for the 2025-26 Víkingur Ólafsson residency at Cal Performances is provided by Michael P. N. A. Hormel.

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 73, *Emperor*

There is a certain irony in the subtitle *Emperor* that was later given to Beethoven's fifth and final piano concerto, but never used by the composer himself. By the spring of 1809, when he was creating this concerto, the last person Beethoven would have wanted to honor was the emperor of the day, Napoleon Bonaparte. Years earlier, he had angrily obliterated a dedication to the French leader he had once admired from the title page of his Symphony No. 3, the *Eroica*, after he learned that Napoleon had just crowned himself at Notre-Dame de Paris.

Now in May 1809, Napoleon's armies were actually besieging the city of Vienna. Beethoven's home was in the line of fire of the French cannons, and he was forced to flee to his brother's house, where he holed up in the cellar with a pillow pressed to his still sensitive ears. But his work on the new concerto did not cease.

And yet in many ways, "Emperor," taken in a more generic sense, is an appropriate title for this concerto. It is a work of imperial size and scope—particularly in its huge first movement—and it reflects its war-riven era in its virile, martial tone. Its key, E-flat major, was one of Beethoven's favorites and one he associated with heroic thoughts; it is also the key of the *Eroica*. Sadly, Beethoven was never able to display his own powers as a pianist with this work. Although he had introduced all his other keyboard concertos to the public, his deafness was too far advanced for him to risk playing the 1810 premiere in Leipzig.

The length and complexity of the sonata-form first movement demonstrate Beethoven's new symphonic conception of the concerto. The opening is boldly innovative. First, we hear the pianist sweeping over the keyboard in grand, toccata-like arpeggios and scales, punctuated by loud chords from the orchestra. Then the soloist allows the orchestra to present its long exposition of themes. The first theme, with its distinctive turn ornament, is introduced immediately. The second, a quirky little march, appears first in halting minor-mode form in the strings, then is immediately smoothed out and shifted to the major by the horns. Over the course of the movement, Beethoven will transform both these themes in a wondrous range of keys, moods, and figurations.

After its long absence, the piano begins its version of the exposition with an ascending chromatic scale ending with a long, high trill. Throughout, Beethoven uses this scale as an elegant call-to-attention: whenever we hear it, we are being told that a new section of the movement is beginning. It will mark the opening of the development section and later the closing coda after the recapitulation.

Just before that coda comes the usual moment for the soloist's big cadenza. But here Beethoven has quashed the soloist's customary right to improvise his own exhibition of virtuosity. Fearing the jarring improvisations other soloists might make, the composer wrote in Italian in the score: "Don't play a cadenza, but attack the following immediately."

A complete contrast to the extroverted Allegro, the second movement is a sublime, very inward elegy in B major, a remote key from the home tonality of E-flat. Two themes receive a quasi-variations treatment. The first and most important is the strings' grave, almost religious theme heard at the opening. The second theme is the downward cascading music with which the pianist enters.

At the close of the movement, the pianist experiments hesitantly with a new melodic/rhythmic idea. Suddenly, the spark is struck, and the theme explodes into the exuberant finale. Beethoven stresses the weak beats of his dancing meter, giving the theme an eccentric, hobbling gait. An important element is the incisive rhythm first heard in the horns; this martial, drum-like motive returns us to the wartime world of

the concerto's birth. Near the end, Beethoven gives this to the timpani, in eerie duet with the soloist, before the concerto's triumphant finish.

GABRIELA ORTIZ
Si el oxígeno fuera verde

Honored at the Grammy Awards in February 2025 with three prizes—including the award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition—Gabriela Ortiz is finally achieving the international acclaim her extraordinary 40-year career deserves. Gustavo Dudamel, a longtime champion of her music, says of her: "Gabriela is one of the most talented composers—not only in Mexico, not only in our continent—in the world. Her ability to bring colors, to bring rhythm and harmonies that connect with you, is something beautiful, something unique." Commissions have poured in from the United States (seven commissions from the Los Angeles Philharmonic alone), Europe, and South America, as well as her native Mexico. She has just completed a year as composer in residence at Carnegie Hall and assumes that role with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw this season.

Born to a musical family in Mexico City, Ortiz has always felt that she didn't choose music—music chose her. "My childhood was around music all the time, and my parents founded this incredible group called Los Folkloristas, dedicated and devoted to promoting the music of Mexico," she says. Band rehearsals with folk instruments from across Latin America served as the soundtrack of her upbringing. "I felt very grateful and lucky to be able to listen to this incredible music and to learn how to play it." Progressing from playing *charango* and guitar, Ortiz mastered classical piano as well, earning a master's degree from London's Guildhall School of Music and a doctorate from London City University. All these strands have been woven into her highly rhythmic, irresistibly colorful music, an ingenious merging of distinct sonic worlds. Her many accolades include the 2022 Bellas Artes Gold Medal, Mexico's National Prize for Arts and Literature.

Tonight, we will hear her 2025 work *Si el oxígeno fuera verde* ("If Oxygen Were Green"), which has just been premiered by the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. Here are Ortiz' notes on this work:

> *Si el oxígeno fuera verde* is a work dedicated to the memory of my friend and fellow Mexican musician Jorge Verdín, founder of the Nortec Collective and known by his artist name "Clorofila." Verdín's musical originality lay in the way he combined electronic sounds with *banda* music from northern Mexico, forging a style that reflected the borderland between Tijuana and San Diego.
>
> Although I never had the chance to ask him why he chose the word *clorofila* ("chlorophyll") as his artist name, I decided to take the meaning and implications of that word as a starting point for this piece, within the framework of my sonic imagination.
>
> Chlorophyll is a biomolecule of vital importance to life on our planet. Without it, the process of photosynthesis—carried out by plants and other organisms—would not be possible, and without photosynthesis, oxygen would not be present in our atmosphere.
>
> Nature is made up of numerous cycles that are fundamental to the functioning of ecosystems and the maintenance of life on Earth. These cycles are interdependent and form a complex network that keeps our environment in balance. They are essential for conserving natural resources and protecting the planet. With these reflections in mind, I began to imagine particles of oxygen as sonic fractals ringing in the atmosphere, celebrating life in its purest, most essential form.
>
> Just as fractal geometry features self-replicating patterns on different scales, in this piece I use rhythmic patterns and melodies that develop independently, gradually transforming through a mechanical sonic process akin to those found in nature. These groupings evolve through subtle variations, creating a sense of continuity and growth—forming diverse, intricate musical structures.

Si el oxígeno fuera verde is structured in four main sections, each conceived as an autonomous life cycle within an infinite universe:

- Fractal structures and sound particles floating in the atmosphere
- A nocturnal song nourished by the soul of a forest
- The dawn of plants transforming light into oxygen
- The dance of chlorophyll begins

The title's metaphor suggests the fragile green murmur of life—where a disruptive, ecological nature can be imagined as a forest that, after a transformative event, reinvents itself and blooms with greater diversity and sustainability. The piece concludes with a final dance, becoming a symbol of the interdependence of all living beings—a reminder that each of us, as human beings, holds an urgent responsibility to help build a future that is more balanced and harmonious with the natural world.

JEAN SIBELIUS
Symphony No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 82

In September 1914, Jean Sibelius began the most difficult creative journey of his career, but one that ultimately produced one of his greatest works: his Fifth Symphony. The journey took five years and three different versions until it would be ready for its first public hearing on November 24, 1919 in Helsinki under the composer's baton. During those years, Europe was convulsed by World War I, the Russian Revolution spread to Finland, and Sibelius found himself for a time a political prisoner in his own home.

World War I cut the composer off from the outside world and made him a virtual recluse at his rustic villa, Ainola, north of Helsinki. Money was tight, food scarce. When Russia was swept by revolution, Finland seized her opportunity and declared independence on December 6, 1917. But Finland also became embroiled in the power struggle between the Red Bolsheviks and the White monarchists/democrats, and the Bolsheviks briefly placed Sibelius under house arrest and tore his possessions apart looking for a nonexistent arms cache.

It was the composer's passionate, virtually religious attachment to nature that saved his sanity and animated his new symphony. Ainola, overlooking Lake Tuusula and surrounded by Finland's deep, mysterious woods, was an ideal place for nature worship. The wheeling patterns and wild cries of the migratory swans, geese, and cranes over the lake filled the composer with profound wonder and joy. On April 21, 1915, he wrote in his diary: "Today at ten to eleven I saw 16 swans. One of my greatest experiences! Lord God, that beauty! They circled over me for a long time. Disappeared into the solar haze like a gleaming silver ribbon. Their call the same woodwind type as that of cranes, but without tremolo. The swan-call closer to the trumpet. … The Fifth Symphony's finale-theme: Legato in the trumpets!!" From that mystical experience came the great swinging theme, the Swan Hymn that dominates the Fifth's magnificent finale.

It is clear from Sibelius' diary entries that these cries of nature and Finland's brooding Nordic landscapes inspired his unique orchestral sound. And he created this sound world, full of mysterious wind rustlings and epic power, using simply the standard 19th-century orchestra. At its heart are the woodwinds, evoking the wild voices of untamed Nature.

Even the symphony grows like life itself by natural evolutionary processes rather than by being squeezed into traditional symphonic formal molds. We hear this at the beginning of the first movement. Out of a mysterious horn chord, a little upward flip of a motive emerges in the high woodwinds. At each reiteration, it grows a bit, soon acquiring a trilling tail, which in turn spawns a shimmering, exotic flight of woodwinds. Slow to make their entrance, the strings finally arrive with a sharp initial sting and a whirring, buzzing sound that opens a new

Luca Migliore

musical phase of passionate struggle. The string buzzing becomes faster, wilder, and more menacing; only a majestic brass climax can control it. But then another cycle begins with the angry buzzing growing ferociously dissonant.

The music suddenly metamorphoses into a light-footed 3/4 dance—the composer's deft telescoping of what was originally a second-movement scherzo into his opener. Listen closely: the themes remain the same. The powerful finale built from this playful episode grandly caps the whole movement.

The second movement is much gentler; commentator Michael Steinberg aptly calls it "variations on a rhythm." We hear a little five-note phrase played by plucked strings and flutes. Sibelius builds a number of melodic themes from it, some warmly Romantic, others faintly disturbing. But under the grace and lightness of this music there are latent powers barely in check. Though we can't hear it yet, the finale's Swan Hymn is striving to be born.

The finale begins with agitated, whirring strings. Then the horns begin the mighty, tolling Swan Hymn; above it rides a yearning melody in high woodwinds. It is the goal toward which the whole symphony has been striving, its great swings implied in the earlier movements. Later, the hymn struggles to return to the home key of E-flat and finally achieves it with a splendid pealing of brass. But Sibelius will not permit us to wallow in this grandeur. In an abrupt, startling ending, he suddenly wraps matters up with six loud, sharp chords, separated by oddly spaced pauses. Their blunt power reflects the tough, idiosyncratic Nordic genius who created them.

—Janet E. Bedell © 2025

Janet E. Bedell is a program annotator and feature writer who writes for Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Caramoor Festival of the Arts, and other musical organizations.

Please note: Orchestra background and biographies of Santtu-Matias Rouvali and Víkingur Ólafsson will be found beginning on page 17A.

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Sunday, October 19, 2025, 3pm
Zellerbach Hall

Philharmonia Orchestra

Santtu-Matias Rouvali, *conductor*
Víkingur Ólafsson, *piano*

PROGRAM

Jean SIBELIUS (1865–1957) — *Finlandia*, Op. 26 (1899, revised 1900)

Maurice RAVEL (1875–1937) — Piano Concerto in G major (1929–1931)
- Allegramente
- Adagio assai
- Presto

INTERMISSION

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975) — Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47 (1937)
- Moderato
- Allegretto
- Largo
- Allegro non troppo

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JEAN SIBELIUS

***Finlandia,* Op. 26**

Finland today tops the list of the world's happiest countries. In 1900, when *Finlandia* was introduced, what was then the Grand Duchy of Finland was part of the Russian Empire, and if happiness then as now remains far from the Russian psyche, the bleakness that rose from St. Petersburg shrouded the Tsar's Finnish territory as well. In 1899, Russia commenced a policy of "Russification," its aim eventually to absorb Finland. Only Nicholas II's abdication and his government's collapse in 1917 would enable Finnish independence.

If you wonder why Sibelius's countrymen love him, the answer starts with *Finlandia,* his most famous effort to give Finland concert music all its own. Already in 1892 he had laid down his cultural credentials with *Kullervo,* a choral work based on the *Kalevala,* Finland's national epic. That poem would inspire more of his music in years to come. But none of his nationalist statements are as terse, direct, and packed with patriotic sentiment as *Finlandia*.

When *Finlandia* was first heard, the country for the past year had been struggling against the slow asphyxiation of its culture and language. Press censorship increased. Finnish men faced conscription in the Russian military. *Finlandia* meant to rouse national pride and passion, and so stirring is it that early performances were given under different titles to elude Russian censors. The majestic tune at its heart and in which it culminates is not lifted from Finnish folk music, as many have thought. Sibelius invented it. *Finlandia* is his, every note, his gift to the country that honors him every December 8, which is Finnish Music Day, and also his birthday.

MAURICE RAVEL

Piano Concerto in G major

In 1928, the French composer Maurice Ravel toured the United States for four months, giving concerts in 20 cities. At his New York stop he met George Gershwin, whose music intrigued him, especially its bluesy, jazzy flavors. With Gershwin, Ravel visited Harlem clubs and listened to Duke Ellington's orchestra. Ravel liked what he heard, and he filled the first movement of his G major Piano Concerto with his impressions of American jazz. He meant his concerto to be fun, to make his audience smile, and since the work's first performance in 1932 it has continued to hit that mark.

A crack of the slapstick launches a twitter in piano and winds, and then swirling keyboard glissandos give way to virtuoso trumpets and an orchestral *tutti*. The piano enters dreamily, and in muted brass we hear a kind of blues. The piano responds with gorgeous sounds, polished and urbane. You might imagine yourself in some idealized club. Winds echo the keyboard, and the soloist ignites piano fireworks. Those bluesy sounds keep coming back in the orchestra, which at last joins the soloist's fast-paced cadenza, ending in a flourish.

Leonard Bernstein wrote that the essence of composing was knowing which note should follow inevitably from the last. To hear Ravel's slow movement, you would think it had come to him fully formed, so perfectly does he place every note and gesture. In fact he ground out this music a bar or two at a time, with a maximum of sweat. This hard labor produced a lovely, delicately tinted serenade, filled with nostalgia and gratitude. "The Adagio," wrote Michael Steinberg, "is the reason we not only delight in this concerto but truly love it."

In the finale, a dance of keyboard, winds, and brass, Ravel proves that entertainment and art are not opposing terms. This short movement could become its own encore. Often, that's just what happens.

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

In 1937, when Dmitri Shostakovich began his Fifth Symphony, he knew he had one chance to deliver music that would save his life. If you find that melodramatic, consider what he was up against. At age 29, he was one of the Soviet Union's brightest musical stars. For two years already, his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* had been delighting audiences. Then Joseph Stalin attended a performance. Two days later the front page of *Pravda* announced that Stalin hated *Lady Macbeth*. The sex and the language—scandalous. The music—dissonant, unfriendly, ugly. Such so-called art failed to edify the public and undermined Soviet ideals. Overnight, Shostakovich went from *wunderkind* to enemy of the people. In Stalin's Great Purge, between 1936 and 1938, such enemies were terrorized and killed, hundreds of thousands of them and perhaps many more.

In his 15 symphonies, Shostakovich often commemorates events. Symphony No. 7, the *Leningrad,* was meant to bolster the city's inhabitants' during the Nazi siege. The subject of No. 11, titled *The Year 1905,* is the massacre that triggered the Russian Revolution. Even untitled works are heavy with extra-musical suggestion. No. 8, from 1943, seems permeated with the gloom of the Second World War.

Shostakovich composed his Symphony No. 5 for the twentieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Although the work bears no title, the composer said it had a theme: "the making of a man. I saw man with all his experiences as the center of the composition…. In the finale the tense impulses of the earlier movements are resolved in optimism and the joy of living." That statement, and an apotheosis heard as triumphant, convinced the authorities that Shostakovich had returned to the fold.

Perhaps. But with the publication in 1979 of *Testimony,* the Shostakovich memoirs "as related to and edited by" musicologist Solomon Volkov, views of the composer and his music changed. The Shostakovich of *Testimony* claims that the finale of the Fifth Symphony is not what it seems, and that it, like much of his music, includes a subtext that, if recognized, would have labeled him more a subversive than a Hero of Socialist Labor. *Testimony* details Shostakovich's lifelong ordeal, how he struggled on an artistic rack, summoned by his muse while enduring state scrutiny. After the *Pravda* attack, he had suppressed his fabulously adventurous and resolutely un-edifying Symphony No. 4 before its premiere, and in years to come he would hold on to other music until he felt the time was right. He suffered more official abuse in 1948, condemned for his music's Western influences, only to see his reputation revived in 1959. Lesser men would have snapped.


Dmitri Shostakovich (c. 1941)

But *Testimony*'s authenticity has been questioned. The book's "as related to and edited by" subtitle raised suspicions among those convinced that the composer had used his music to glorify the regime. Reject-

ing *Testimony*, these anti-revisionists continued to label Shostakovich a coward—"a wuss," to quote one musicologist. Others took *Testimony* as evidence of moral courage, proof that Shostakovich merely posed as champion of oppressors too blind to notice his raised middle finger. Nothing is as simple as the anti-revisionists or revisionists would have it. And before calling Shostakovich names, consider your own reaction to Stalin's secret police. Not everyone can be a Navalny.

Slashing strings outline a brief prelude to a solemn, broad theme that dominates the opening movement. Call this theme what it sounds like at first hearing, a dirge. For now, those slashes and their variants weave through that dirge, the brass cresting briefly into the major mode against a screaming three-note figure in the strings. Again things settle down, the first violins singing a lament accompanied by the other strings, *pianissimo,* setting a pulse, one-two-three, one-two-three. Winds and strings ruminate. Abruptly, the piano interrupts, as though impatient with all this reflection. Crude and strident, mocking the strings' gentle pulsing with its own three-tone ostinato, the piano gives license to the brass, who shout a sinister and foreboding version of the dirge. Volume and pace increase and increase again, the center threatens to come undone until brass and percussion muscle forward, transforming the dirge into a march: clipped, fast, and *loud*. The orchestra boils. The slashing opening figures rise in a crescendo of unbearable tension released in an annihilating explosion. The air thus cleared, winds sing above the pulsing strings. A trumpet, playing *pianissimo* above the celesta, sounds the rising figure with which trombones will open the finale. The music ebbs, exhausted.

The short and sardonic second movement allows breathing room. That the authorities accepted this allegretto as emblematic of "the making of a man" suggests Shostakovich understood how words can as easily distract from music's "meaning" as abet it.

The expansive Largo is a bleak lament, thought by some (but not by the officials) to be a requiem for Stalin's victims. Here Shostakovich creates a sense of vast, empty space, and at times forward motion seems about to stop.

Now comes the finale the authorities heard as celebration and which the Shostakovich of *Testimony* calls mockery: "Awaiting execution is a theme that has tormented me all my life. Many pages of my music are devoted to it…. I never thought about exultant finales, for what exultation could there be? I think it is clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. The rejoicing is forced, created under threat…." But not "everyone" was clear about what happens here, and certainly the authorities weren't. This last movement might be triumph or nightmare, and the ambiguity can continue even in light of *Testimony*. Is the opening march brutal or confident? And what about the coda? There, the strings are obsessed with a single figure, played again and again in an ostinato that raises tension ever higher, as at the climax of the first movement, until a great breakthrough into the major mode. Brass reprise the opening march, now broad and grand. Cymbals clash. The timpani pounds out the conclusion. Whether it all signifies victory or despair, it is unmistakably final.

—Larry Rothe

Larry Rothe's books include For the Love of Music *and* Music for a City, Music for the World. *Visit larryrothe.com.*

Marc Gascoigne

Philharmonia Orchestra

Founded in 1945, the Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras.

Finnish conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali took up the baton as Principal Conductor in 2021, and Marin Alsop joined him as Principal Guest Conductor in 2023. They follow in illustrious footsteps: Herbert von Karajan, Otto Klemperer, Ricardo Muti, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Christoph von Dohnányi, Vladimir Ashkenazy, and Esa-Pekka Salonen are some of the key figures who have honed the renowned Philharmonia sound over eight decades.

The orchestra has premiered works by Richard Strauss, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Kaija Saariaho, Errollyn Wallen, Laufey, and many others, and performs with many of the world's most admired soloists.

The Philharmonia thrives on creative collaborations: in the 2025–26 season, pianist Víkingur Ólafsson is Featured Artist, Gabriela Ortiz is Featured Composer, and dance, mime, theater and drag artists Thick & Tight are Artists in Residence.

The Philharmonia is resident at the Southbank Centre in the heart of London, and also holds residencies in Basingstoke, Bedford, Canterbury, and Leicester; at Garsington Opera; and at the Three Choirs Festival. In each of these residencies, the orchestra is deeply embedded in the community. Projects with primary and secondary schools, children in foster care, people living with dementia and their carers, young people learning instruments, and adults who face barriers to experiencing the arts, all testify to the many ways music enriches our lives.

This season the Philharmonia celebrates its 80th birthday with initiatives including offering 80 free tickets for first-time bookers to every concert in its London season; recruiting a team of 80 volunteers to help provide a warm welcome; reaching 80 schools with Orchestra Unwrapped, its program of school concerts and teacher training; and establishing Philharmonia Social, a chance for audience members to meet and find out more about the orchestra.

The Philharmonia tours extensively throughout Europe and has performed in China, Colombia, Japan, Mauritius, and the United States. This month, the orchestra embarks on a major US tour, culminating

in two performances at Carnegie Hall. The season also includes a tour of Korea and performances at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Musikverein in Vienna, and many other leading European venues.

The Philharmonia is known for embracing innovative technology. The orchestra's recordings include benchmark LPs, more than 150 film and video game soundtracks, and streamed performances. Its recording of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 is travelling through interstellar space on board the Voyager spacecraft, and its immersive installations and virtual reality (VR) experiences have introduced many thousands of people to orchestral music.

The Philharmonia Records label was established in 2023. The orchestra has released live recordings of major works by Strauss, Mahler, Stravinsky, and Shostakovich, with Rouvali at the helm.

The Philharmonia's Emerging Artists Programme nurtures and develops the next generation of instrumentalists and composers, with a focus on increasing diversity within the classical music industry.

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Santtu-Matias Rouvali, *conductor*

"Rouvali draws exquisite colouring, and the quieter moments—the ghostly dying fall at the end of the movement, the minor-key contrast of the old-world minuet with its wraith-like flute stand out first among many—all have the right magic" (*BBC Music Magazine,* October 2023).

The 2025–26 season continues Santtu-Matias Rouvali's tenures as Principal Conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra and Honorary Conductor of Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra, close to his home in Finland.

Deepening his strong relationship with the New York Philharmonic, summer 2025 marked Rouvali's second appearance at Bravo! Vail Festival with the orchestra and soloists Miah Persson and Yulianna Avdeeva-Neudauer. The summer also saw Rouvali conduct the Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall and the Philharmonia Orchestra in its continued residency in Mikkeli, Finland, as well as performances in Hamburg, Bucharest, Rimini, and Merano.

Throughout this and previous seasons, he continues his relationships with top-level orchestras and soloists across Europe, including the Munich Philharmonic, Berliner Philharmoniker, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and he returns to North America for concerts with New York Philharmonic and the Cleveland Orchestra. This season, he also appears with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Oslo Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, and Vienna Symphony Orchestra.

Rouvali works with many international soloists, including Bruce Liu, Lisa Batiashvili, Seong-Jin Cho, Nicola Benedetti, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Nemanja Radulović, Stephen Hough, Augustin Hadelich, Nikolai Lugansky, Christian Tetzlaff, Gil Shaham, Baiba Skride, and Ava Bahari.

Continuing their strong touring tradition, Rouvali and Philharmonia Orchestra are currently touring the United States and will be joined by Clara-Yumi Kang for a tour of Korea in December. In January, they embark on an extensive tour of Europe with concerts in cities including Brussels, Frankfurt, Munich, and Vienna.

The 2024–25 season was Rouvali's final as a Chief Conductor of Gothenburg Symphony, following a successful eight-year tenure. It was marked by a tour to Germany and the Czech Republic, followed by a cele-

bration concert in Gothenburg. He completed his Sibelius Cycle recording with Alpha Classics, the previous releases of which have been highly acclaimed, with awards including *Gramophone*'s Editor's Choice award, the Choc de Classica, a prize from the German Record Critics, the prestigious French Diapason d'Or "Découverte," and Radio Classique's "TROPHÉE."

Philharmonia Records' first release—the double CD album *Santtu conducts Strauss*—was released in March 2023 following recent releases of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5. *Mahler 2*, the second album from Philharmonia Records, was released in September 2023. *Santtu conducts Stravinsky*, released in March 2024, was the third album from Philharmonia Records and features the composer's *Firebird Suite* and *Petrushka*. Another prominent CD—*Beethoven's Triple Concerto* with Benjamin Grosvenor, Nicola Benedetti, and Sheku Kanneh-Mason—was released on Decca in May 2024.

Víkingur Ólafsson, *piano*

Víkingur Ólafsson, Cal Performances' 2025–26 Artist in Residence, is one of the most celebrated classical artists of our time—a unique and visionary musician who brings his profound originality to some of the greatest works in music history. His recordings resonate deeply with audiences around the world, reaching more than one billion streams and winning numerous awards, including the 2025 Grammy for Best Classical Instrumental Solo for his album of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, *BBC Music Magazine*'s Album of the Year, and the Opus Klassik Solo Recording of the Year (twice). Other notable honors include the Rolf Schock Music Prize; *Gramophone*'s Artist of the Year; *Musical America*'s Instrumentalist of the Year; the Order of the Falcon (Iceland's order of chivalry); and the Icelandic Export Award, given by the President of Iceland.

Next month sees Ólafsson present his latest album, *Opus 109,* which places Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 30, Op. 109 at its heart. In an illuminating and thrilling musical dialogue with Schubert, J.S. Bach, and other works by Beethoven, the recording traces the lineages that converge on this masterpiece of the piano literature. He tours the anticipated new program widely, bringing it to the greatest concert halls across Europe and North America, and here to Zellerbach Hall on April 29, 2026.

In 2025–26, Ólafsson opens the season with this current tour of the US as Featured Artist with Philharmonia Orchestra, and returns to the Berlin Philharmonic with Semyon Bychkov and the Czech Philharmonic with Sir Antonio Pappano. He also reunites with John Adams and the Los Angeles Philharmonic for performances of *After the Fall*, a piano concerto written expressly for him. Ólafsson will also mark the Kurtág centenary celebrations in 2026 and appear at MUPA, Budapest.

For more on Víkingur Ólafsson's Cal Performances residency as 2025–26 Artist in Residence, please see the article beginning on page 4.

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

FIRST VIOLIN
Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay
Rebecca Chan
Fabrizio Falasca
Eleanor Wilkinson
Karin Tilch
Lulu Fuller
Emma Lisney
Adrián Varela
Soong Choo
Eunsley Park
Coco Inman
Peter Fisher
Diana Galvydyte
Alberto Vidal

SECOND VIOLIN
Annabelle Meare
David López Ibáñez
Fiona Cornall
Nuno Carapina
Julian Milone
Marina Gillam
Gideon Robinson
Susan Hedger
Emanuela Buta
Ilhem Ben Khalfa
Susan Bowran
Ikuko Sunamura

VIOLA
Scott Dickinson
Ben Norris
Sylvain Séailles
Linda Kidwell
Daichi Yoshimura
Carol Hultmark
Cheremie Hamilton-Miller
Cameron Campbell
Michelle Bruil
Rebecca Carrington

CELLO
Tim Hugh
Richard Birchall
Yaroslava Trofymchuk
Silvestrs Kalniņš
Tamaki Sugimoto
Nina Kiva
Alba Merchant
David Edmonds

BASS
Tim Gibbs
Hugh Sparrow
Gareth Sheppard
Owen Nicolaou
Michael Fuller
Benjamin du Toit
Ryan Smith

FLUTE
Samuel Coles
June Scott

PICCOLO
Robert Looman

OBOE
Timothy Rundle
Imogen Davies

COR ANGLAIS
(19 Oct only)
Rebecca Kozam

CLARINET
Maura Marinucci
Laurent Ben Slimane

E-FLAT CLARINET
(Oct 19 only)
Jennifer McLaren

BASSOON
Francesco Bossone
Matthew Kitteringham
(Oct 19 only)
Luke Whitehead
(Oct 18 only)

CONTRABASSOON
(Oct 19 only)
Luke Whitehead

HORN
Norberto López
James Pillai
Kira Doherty
Eleanor Blakeney
Carsten Williams

TRUMPET
Jason Lewis
Robin Totterdell
Adam Wood
Toby Street

TROMBONE
Donal Bannister
Philip White
Dan Jenkins

BASS TROMBONE
James Buckle

TUBA
(Oct 19 only)
Peter Smith

TIMPANI
Håkon Kartveit

PERCUSSION
Paul Stoneman
Tom Edwards
Jacob Brown (Oct 19 only)
Jeremy Cornes (Oct 19 only)

HARPS
Heidi Krutzen
Anneke Hodnett
(Oct 19 only)

PIANO
(Oct 19 only)
Iain Clarke

CELESTE
(Oct 19 only)
Iain Clarke