

# PRELUDE

HARTFORD  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

OCTOBER 2024 • MASTERWORKS #2

## Beethoven's Violin Concerto – October 18 – 20, 2024

Aside from the glorious music featured in this concert, one noteworthy aspect of the performance is that our concertmaster, Leonid Sigal, will be featured BOTH as the guest artist AND as the guest conductor. In so doing, our beloved Lenny joins a distinguished list of conductor/musicians, renowned in the world of symphonic music.



Leonid Sigal

Leonid Sigal is certainly not the first musician to step onto the podium. But our pride in Lenny is derived from the fact that **this** gifted artist is “our” concertmaster and our dear friend. In taking on the role of both musician and conductor, he

joins the ranks of other musician/conductors, many of whom are household names. Well-known greats, such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Mahler, all brilliant keyboard artists, often conducted. Mozart was known for conducting his own works while performing as the soloist. Since the tradition began, a handful of remarkable musicians have added the title “Maestro” to their list of musical accomplishments.

One of the most visible and vibrant conductor/musicians today is **Yannick Nézet-Séguin**, a Canadian pianist and currently the Music Director of both the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera. Born in Montreal on March 6, 1975, Nézet-Séguin studied piano, conducting and composition at the Quebec Conservatory in Montreal. In 2012, he was appointed Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, an organization that was just emerging from bankruptcy. To reconnect the struggling symphony with the community, Nézet-Séguin scheduled impromptu concerts at shipyards, churches

and schools. Before his appointments in Philadelphia and New York, he served as Music Director of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain (a post he assumed in 2000, at the age of 25), and the Rotterdam Philharmonic (from 2008 to 2018). Known for his energy, charismatic presence and collaborative style, he is repeatedly invited back to perform with multiple international symphonies and opera companies. The *New York Times* noted that Nézet-Séguin is “widely considered to be one of the most talented conductors of his generation.”

No discussion about conductor/musicians would be complete without **Leonard Bernstein**, one of the most celebrated composers and conductors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The general population likely knows his *West Side Story* but his gifts to the world are much broader. Born in Massachusetts, and originally named Louis, “Lenny” was the name he officially gave to himself at the age of 16. His father, a Russian immigrant, believed that business and success were paramount, thus making “occupations” in arts and culture off-limits to his children. Overcoming parental objections, Bernstein found his way to music on his own and worked to pay for his own piano lessons. A gifted pianist, educated at Harvard and trained at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, Bernstein took the world by storm when, at the age of 25, he filled in for an ailing Bruno Walter to conduct the New York Philharmonic in a broadcast performance, without benefit of a

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rehearsal. He amazed the audience, made front page headlines and, overnight, became the sensation that he remained for the rest of his life. As Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, Bernstein continued to perform as a pianist, often conducting the orchestra from the keyboard. His renown as a composer grew as well, along with an impressive body of work that included multiple Broadway scores. A longtime smoker who was rarely seen without a cigarette, Bernstein battled emphysema and died of a heart attack in 1990 at the age of 72. He was buried with a copy of Gustav Mahler's Fifth Symphony placed over his heart at the Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, alongside his wife, Felicia Montealegre.

**Daniel Barenboim**, also a pianist/conductor, famously collaborated with his wife, the brilliant cellist Jacqueline DuPré (who died tragically and prematurely from multiple sclerosis at the age of 42 in 1987). Barenboim continues to collaborate with his numerous colleagues and friends, including Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman. Like Bernstein, Barenboim began his conducting career early and became known as both a pianist and conductor in 1962, at just 20 years of age. Born in Argentina, Barenboim's extraordinary talent quickly became evident when the family moved to Paris. Barenboim, then nine years old, was quickly recognized as a prodigy, having performed his first concert in South America at the age of seven. By the time he was in his 20s, he was touring and performing extensively as both a conductor and soloist. Barenboim's appointment as Music Director of the Orchestre de Paris ignited his fame as a conductor.

The musician/composer combination is certainly not limited to pianists. The well-known violinist/conductor **Pinchas Zukerman** is also an accomplished violist. Born in 1948 in Jerusalem, Zukerman entered the Tel Aviv Academy of Music at the age of eight and in 1962, sponsored by violinist Isaac Stern, Zukerman moved to New York City to study at The Juilliard School. Zukerman frequently collaborated with his close friends, Itzhak Perlman, Barenboim and DuPré. In 1980, Zukerman, already an accomplished soloist and conductor, was appointed Music Director of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra

in Minnesota, as well as the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Canada. In 2009, he became principal guest conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London.

Although he stepped onto the podium somewhat later in his long and famous career, **Itzhak Perlman**, violinist, can now be seen as principal guest conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, as well as guest conductor with the New York Philharmonic, the San Francisco Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Concertgebouw Orchestra. Most recently, he conducted and performed in an all-Beethoven concert with the Boston Symphony. Other famed violinists who have turned to conducting include **Gideon Kremer** and **Joshua Bell**. Most impressive is conductor **Lorin Maazel**, the only violinist on our list who achieved more fame as a maestro than a violinist. Although Maazel began playing violin at the age of five, he also began to study conducting at age eight and was wildly regarded as a child prodigy. Maestro Maazel led the New York Philharmonic from 2001 until 2009.

Our list includes two cellists who also achieved fame as a conductor. The first is **Pablo Casals**, born in Vendrell in Spain in 1876. Casals enjoyed an early and brilliant career as a soloist, but with the outbreak of World War I, he moved to New York. He returned in 1919 and founded the Pau Casals Orchestra in Barcelona, which he conducted until 1936. With the outbreak of civil war and Franco's victory in Spain, Casals, an outspoken opponent of fascism, fled and spent the rest of his life in exile, first in France for five years, and then in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where he lived for the rest of his life until his death in 1973, at the age of 96.

Our second famed cellist/conductor is **Mstislav Rostropovich**, a Russian conductor/pianist who became one of the best-known cellists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born March 27, 1927 in what is now Azerbaijan, Rostropovich began touring internationally in 1956. In 1968, he made his debut as a conductor, and when he publicly voiced his support of Soviet writer and dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the Soviet Union government sharply curtailed his ability to travel. In 1974, Rostropovich and his

wife, soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, were finally permitted to leave the Soviet Union and he settled in the United States. In 1977, he became music director of the National Symphony in Washington, DC, a post he held until 1994. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1987 and a Kennedy Center honor in 1992.

Musician/conductor combinations are not limited to instrumentalists. Soprano **Barbara Hannigan** is also a star conductor and her appointment as Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra will commence in 2026. Born in Canada, Hannigan began her career as a soprano, but in 2011, at the age of 40, she also began her career as a conductor, appearing with top orchestras such as the London Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. She has become known for virtuosic performances in which she both sings and conducts from the podium.

The Hartford Symphony Orchestra has welcomed pianist/conductor **William Eddins** as guest conductor on several occasions in the last ten years. A native of Buffalo, Eddins is the Music Director Emeritus of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, and a frequent guest conductor of orchestras around the globe. An accomplished pianist and chamber musician, Maestro Eddins regularly conducts at the piano, with a repertoire that favors Mozart, Beethoven, Gershwin and Ravel. His recent collaborations with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma and Wynton Marsalis have brought him to conduct the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

## TAKE A GUESS!

**Can you identify other musician/conductors? We challenge you to match the photographs below with the artist's name. The answers will appear at the end of this article! (Hint: two artists were not named in the article.)**

**Check the next page to test your knowledge!**



## JOIN US!

**Please join the HSO** on October 18-20, 2024, to hear Carlos Simon's thrilling *Fate Now Conquers*, inspired by words that Beethoven wrote in his journal, along with Bizet's Symphony in C and Beethoven's energetic Violin Concerto performed by HSO Concertmaster Leonid Sigal, who also serves as our guest conductor of this exciting program.

**Did you borrow this *Prelude*? Get your own free copy! Whether you're a ticket buyer, donor, curious about the music, or know someone who is, just send an email to [dshulansky@hartfordsymphony.org](mailto:dshulansky@hartfordsymphony.org). We'll make sure you receive *Prelude* by email, in advance of each HSO Masterworks concert!**



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## WONDERING HOW THE MUSIC OF OUR FEATURED CONCERT WILL SOUND? Try HSO'S LISTENING GUIDE, with links to the pieces you'll hear on our concert stage – and more!

If you want to learn more about *Fate Now Conquers*, and why it is perfectly paired with the music of Beethoven, listen to an explanation by Carlos Simon:

**[THE STORY BEHIND: Simon's "Fate Now Conquers" \(riphil.org\)](https://riphil.org)**

A complete version of *Fate Now Conquers* by the National Symphony Orchestra is the first piece of an hour-long performance of Simon's music:

**[The Music of Carlos Simon | National Symphony Orchestra \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)**

Enjoy the master, Itzhak Perlman, performing Beethoven's Violin Concerto with the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by his friend and collaborator, Daniel Barenboim, recorded in 1992:

**[Itzhak Perlman – Beethoven: Violin Concerto \(with Daniel Barenboim, Berliner Philharmoniker\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)**

Delight in this version of Bizet's Symphony in C performed by the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Leonard Bernstein, the recommendation of Coleman Casey, our in-house audiophile,:

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOPzzhOpSKc&t=3s>**

# CASEY'S CLASSICS

Want the best recordings of the pieces you'll experience on the concert program? Coleman Casey, HSO's dear friend, Director Emeritus and beloved in-house audiophile, offers his recording recommendations of selections featured in our upcoming Masterworks Concert.

Beethoven's **Violin Concerto** is memorably performed by Itzhak Perlman with Carlo Maria Giulini conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra (WARNER).

Bizet's charming youthful **Symphony in C** is performed with Gallic effervescence by Leonard Bernstein leading the New York Philharmonic (SONY).

## REFERENCES

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[Leonard Bernstein: Biography, Conductor, West Side Story Composer](#)

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[William Eddins | William Eddins](#)

[Barbara Hannigan, Daring Singer and Maestro, to Lead Iceland Symphony - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

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[Mstislav Rostropovich | Biography & Facts | Britannica](#)

[Top 5 Violinists-turned-Conductors | Top 5 @ 105 | WQXR](#)

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### PHOTO ANSWER KEY:

1. Mstislav Rostropovich
2. William Eddins
3. Leonard Bernstein
4. Barbara Hannigan

5. Yannick Nézet-Séguin
6. Pablo Casals
7. Yehudi Menuhin
8. Plácido Domingo

9. Daniel Barenboim
10. Itzhak Perlman
11. Pinchas Zukerman
12. Lorin Maazel