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Director's Welcome



English composer Malcolm Arnold once said, "Music is the social act of communication among people, a gesture of friendship, the strongest there is." Music is powerful; it connects people and creates a sense of community. For 94 years, EPSON has been sharing and cultivating community through classical music. We are honored to share this season's music with you.

Our season opens September 20-21 with the captivating sounds of Vivaldi's masterpiece, *The Four Seasons*, composed to mirror the spirit of each season through descriptive sonnets. The program also will feature Mahler's thrilling *Symphony No. 1*. As part of our long-standing commitment to partnership with local arts groups, we will join forces with the El Paso Opera on October 18-19 to present an unforgettable evening

of "Great Italian Arias." The first half of the season concludes December 6-7 with "Christmas in Vienna," showcasing the incredible voices of The Choral Union and the talented Candice Reyes as we capture the enchanting spirit of wintertime in Vienna.

Additionally this fall, EPSON is thrilled to continue the Harry Potter film series on November 9 with *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™ in Concert* at the Plaza Theatre. The El Paso Symphony Orchestra will accompany the film on the big screen performing Oscar®-winning composer John Williams' musical score. Don't miss it!

The second half of our season begins January 24-25 with "Beethoven – Love in the Age of War," our annual collaboration with El Paso Pro-Musica. The program will include Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3* and *Piano Concerto No. 3*, with critically acclaimed pianist Awadagin Pratt. Our February 21-22 concerts will embrace Romeo & Juliet and the theme of love. Our 94th season will conclude April 25-26 with "Fabulous Finale – Classical Trio," featuring the music of Dvořák, Rachmaninoff, and Stravinsky.

Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our Board of Trustees, conductor, musicians, and staff, and your ongoing support in attending our events, we will continue to thrive and produce beautiful music for our entire community to enjoy. As the longest continuously running symphony in the Lone Star State, we are committed to maintaining our legacy and continuing our act of communication and friendship with the community — by making beautiful music.

Thank you for joining us tonight. Enjoy the performance by El Paso's finest musicians under the baton of our dynamic leader, Bohuslav Rattay!

Warmest regards,

Ruth Ellen Jacobson
Executive Director



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FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE...

The El Paso Symphony Theatre Box Office, located in the Plaza Theatre, is open every Friday of concert week from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., and on Saturdays of concert week from 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. You may continue to purchase tickets by telephone on these two days through the EPSO Ticket Hotline, (915) 532-EPSO (532-3776). Ticket exchanges or purchase of additional tickets on both concert days will be handled at the theater box office. The El Paso Symphony office is located in the Abraham Chavez Theatre, One Civic Center Plaza, El Paso, Texas 79901.

Tickets are available online at www.epso.org or ticketmaster.com

EPSO Season Calendar

SEPTEMBER 14

7:00pm Gala "Latin Night" – El Paso Country Club
94th Anniversary Celebration

SEPTEMBER 20/21

6:30 p.m. "Opening Notes" – Philanthropy Theatre
7:30 p.m. "Vivaldi Four Seasons – At Last" – Plaza Theatre
Bohuslav Rattay, Conductor
Matthew Vera, Violin

OCTOBER 18/19

6:30 p.m. "Opening Notes" – Philanthropy Theatre
7:30 p.m. "Great Italian Operas" – Plaza Theatre
Bohuslav Rattay, Conductor
Jamilie Lea, Soprano;
Brian Downen, Tenor
Jonathan Hays, Baritone

NOVEMBER 3

3:00 p.m. EPSYO Fall Concert – Plaza Theatre

NOVEMBER 9

7:00 p.m. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™ in
Concert – Plaza Theatre

DECEMBER 6/7

6:30 p.m. "Opening Notes" – Philanthropy Theatre
7:30 p.m. "Christmas in Vienna" – Plaza Theatre
Bohuslav Rattay, Conductor
Candice Reyes
The Choral Union

JANUARY 24/25

6:30 p.m. "Opening Notes" – Philanthropy Theatre
7:30 p.m. "Beethoven – Love in the Age of War" –
Plaza Theatre
Bohuslav Rattay, Conductor
Awadagin Pratt, Piano

FEBRUARY 2

3:00 p.m. EPSYO Winter Concert – Plaza Theatre

FEBRUARY 4/5/6

10:30 a.m., El Paso Electric Young People's Concerts –
12:30 p.m. Abraham Chavez Theatre

FEBRUARY 21/22

6:30 p.m. "Opening Notes" – Philanthropy Theatre
7:30 p.m. "Love For Your Valentine" – Plaza Theatre
Bohuslav Rattay, Conductor

MARCH 23

3:00 p.m. EPSO & EPSYO
Side by Side Concert – Abraham Chavez Theatre
March Madness Fundraiser – El Paso Country Club

APRIL 7

11:00 a.m. Golf Tournament
6:00 p.m. Dinner & NCAA Men's Basketball Championship
Game

APRIL 25/26

6:30 p.m. "Opening Notes" – Philanthropy Theatre
7:30 p.m. "Fabulous Finale – Classical Trio" – Plaza Theatre
Bohuslav Rattay, Conductor
Kiron Atom Tellian, Piano

MAY 18

3:00 p.m. EPSYO Final Concert – Abraham Chavez Theatre

STAY TUNED

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reminders and parking alerts.

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"reminder" to (915) 532-3776

or scan QR Code



Concert & Ticket Tips

Here is some helpful information to help you understand the structure of the evening's program and make your experience at the concert even more enjoyable and satisfying.

All program pages are structured in the same manner to help you follow the music (see pages 17 and 31):

- The composer's name is listed first in bold face type.
- The piece of music is listed just below the composer's name in italic.
- Movements, if any, follow in smaller regular type. Movements are like chapters in a book. They usually have a short pause between them. It isn't complete until all the chapters have been read. The conductor may keep his hands raised between movements indicating that the piece is not over.
- When the piece is over, the conductor will lower the baton completely and turn to face the audience.
- Please feel free to show your appreciation at the end of the piece.
- Interested in gaining more insight into the evening's program? Attend "Opening Notes" in the Philanthropy Theatre at 6:30 p.m. This series of pre-concert talks gives you the inside scoop on the composers, compositions and guest artists.

TICKET TIPS & POLICIES

The Symphony Box Office is located in front of the Plaza Theatre. Hours are (concert days only) Fridays from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Box Office phone number is 231-1100. The street address is:

The Plaza Theatre
125 Pioneer Plaza
El Paso, Texas 79901

The Symphony Office, located at the Abraham Chavez Theatre, is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Symphony phone number is 532-3776.

SINGLE TICKETS go on sale two weeks prior to each concert. Tickets may be purchased over the phone at (915) 532-3776, any Ticketmaster outlet or online at www.epso.org.

TICKET EXCHANGES are offered for the convenience of season ticket holders. Tickets may be exchanged for another performance of the same program by calling the symphony office at 532-3776 at least 24 hours before the concert for which they are held.

FLEX PASSES may be redeemed at the symphony office or the theater box office. Flex Tickets may be redeemed by mail after the pass has been received by the symphony office.

GROUP TICKETS are available at a substantial discount for groups of ten or more. Call 532-3776 for more information. All tickets are non-refundable.

EMPTY SEATS DON'T APPLAUD! If you cannot attend a concert for which you have tickets, please return them to the symphony office. The value of your ticket will be acknowledged as a contribution, but more importantly, your seat can be occupied by another person. **Ticket returns are accepted until concert time by calling 532-3776 or mailing your tickets to the Symphony Office, P.O. Box 180, El Paso, Texas 79942.**

EPSO ADMINISTRATION

Ruth Ellen Jacobson, Executive Director
Bohuslav Rattay, Music Director
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Chair's Greeting



The El Paso Symphony Orchestra (EPSO) is the longest continuously running symphony orchestra in the State of Texas. We are privileged to present our spectacular 94th season. The Artistic Advisement Committee collaborated with Maestro Bohuslav Rattay to develop exciting and fresh concert programming. I hope you bought season tickets because this season promises to be our best ever!

The September concert features the long-awaited Vivaldi *Four Seasons*. EPSO has not presented this entire piece for at least 60 years. In 2017, we presented a “mash-up” of portions of both Vivaldi’s and Piazzolla’s *Four Seasons* but not the full Vivaldi work, and in 1968, we presented Vivaldi’s *Autumn*. The soloist for this year’s presentation will be Matthew Vera, our Concertmaster. Matthew made his solo debut on the viola with the Tucson Philharmonia at age 14 and has been a member of the Boston Philharmonic’s first violin section since 2010.

In October, we present a concert of Italian arias in collaboration with the El Paso Opera. Guest soloists include soprano Jamille Lea, tenor Brian Downen, and baritone Jonathan Hays. Both Jamille and Brian appeared with EPSO in October 2021 when they performed in the world premiere of Jorge Martin’s lovely *El Paso Requiem*. I look forward to hearing these artists again in this special concert.

Once again, we present a holiday concert in December with Christmas in Vienna as this year’s theme, featuring El Paso’s beloved Chorale Union and renowned jazz vocalist Candice Reyes. The holiday concert has become a very popular EPSO mainstay.

One of the jewels of the Symphony is the Opening Notes held before each subscription concert in the Philanthropy Theater adjacent to the Plaza Theatre (entrance near the box office), presented by Nathan Black. Notes begin at 6:30 p.m. and provide not only a more fulfilling and enriching concert experience but also a way to beat the parking rush and ensure an on-time concert arrival.

Outside of our normal subscription series, the orchestra will accompany the film *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*™ on Saturday, November 9. November also brings the fall concert for the El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestra, on November 3, featuring over 200 area students.

The second half of our concert series season in the spring also promises to be fabulous. And watch our website for more exciting events in the spring, including our annual March Madness fundraiser with a viewing of the final basketball game of the NCAA men’s tournament.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, I thank you — our patrons — for your support of our awesome orchestra. I hope to see you at many concerts in the years to follow. I also extend a very special thank you to our concert sponsors and our many donors.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marise".

Marise Textor, Chair, EPSO

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to bring the traditional and innovative together in a manner exciting and fresh for his audience. He is renowned for his unique concert programs, incorporating special audience discussions and including multi-media elements. He is also appreciated for his passion for the classics, with special appreciation often given to his insightful understanding of the music of his native Bohemia. Rattay has been praised for his ability to communicate the depth of a diverse range of music to his audience, for the classics, "Rattay is certainly the man for Tchaikovsky's fourth" (*Charleston Today*, 2011), and for the fashionable, "Watching him conduct is like watching a painter creating rich imagery to live music on a large canvas" (*El Paso Times*, 2013). His intelligent and vast programming allows him to connect to a broad range of audience, creating new symphony-goers while entertaining the enthusiasts.

Czech-American conductor Bohuslav Rattay is a busy ambassador for classical music, working with orchestras across the globe to produce symphonic works of all kinds to a diverse audience. Rattay is the music director of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, currently in his seventh season; and the Midland Symphony Orchestra in Michigan. As he gains a reputation as one of the finest young talents of his generation, Mr. Rattay combines impassioned and virtuosic musicianship with a determination to bring great music into the lives of all people. An enthusiastic promoter for classical music, Mr. Rattay strives

Rattay's talents and abilities are highly praised. He is internationally acclaimed by critics and audiences alike for his fresh and inspired musical interpretations. He has received accolades for his "vibrant" performances and his "elegant panache," (*Charleston City Paper*, 2009), his ability to lead the orchestra with his "infectious zest and physicality," (*Midland Daily News*, 2013), and his one-of-a-kind artistry,

bringing "personal perspective... that will be remembered for many years," (*Duluth News Tribune*, 2012).

His overflowing passion for classical music is highly solicited, recently appearing as guest conductor with the Colorado Symphony, the Duluth-Superior Symphony, the Hilton Head Symphony, and the Teplice Philharmonic in his native Czech Republic. Other recent engagements include the Virginia Symphony, West Michigan Symphony, Prague's Dvořák Symphony Orchestra, and the Charleston (SC) Symphony, where he received several critical accolades. He has also conducted the National Symphony Orchestra as part of the National Conducting Institute and was selected by the American Symphony Orchestra League to participate in its Conducting Fellowship Program.

Believing in the power of education, Mr. Rattay is a committed pedagogue of the younger generations. Rattay is the conductor of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) Symphony Orchestra. He has been a music faculty member of the College of William and Mary, Ball State University, and is a frequent guest conductor of all-state and youth orchestras across the United States. The combination of his youthful energy along with his conducting skills make him highly valued as an inspirational mentor.

Mr. Rattay holds degrees from the Prague Conservatory, Rice University and the Peabody Institute of Music. He names Gustav Meier, Larry Rachleff, Benjamin Kamins, and Neeme Jarvi as his most influential teachers.

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EPSYO 2024-2025 CONCERT SERIES

NOVEMBER 3, 2024
FALL CONCERT
3:00pm Plaza Theatre

FEBRUARY 2, 2025
WINTER CONCERT
3:00pm Plaza Theatre

MARCH 23, 2025
SIDE BY SIDE CONCERT
3:00pm Abraham Chavez Theatre
featuring EPSO, EPSYO and TOCANDO

MAY 18, 2025
FINAL CONCERT
3:00pm Abraham Chavez Theatre

September Guest Artist



MATTHEW VERA, Violin

Mexican-American violinist Matthew Vera is known for his versatility as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral leader.

As an orchestral musician, Matthew can be heard all over the country. He has been a member of the Boston Philharmonic's first violin section since 2010 and is occasionally a guest concertmaster. Matthew will join the El Paso Symphony as concertmaster in the fall of 2024 where he has been serving as guest concertmaster since the spring of 2022. Matthew frequents the stages of the Boston Ballet, the Portland Symphony, the Rhode Island Philharmonic, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, among others. Most recently Matthew served as concertmaster for the revival of *Evita* at the American Repertory Theatre during the summer of 2023 and returned to

the A.R.T as concertmaster for a new production of *Gatsby* in the summer of 2024.

An avid chamber musician, Matthew is the first violinist of the emerging Izarra String Quartet. Izarra explores fresh interpretations of the classic repertoire, focusing on amplifying compositional voices of the LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities. Matthew is a violinist with *Castle of our Skins*, a concert and educational series dedicated to celebrating Black artistry through music. He also has been heard with Aurea Ensemble, Radius Ensemble, Juventas New Music Ensemble, and Monadnock Music.

Matthew made his solo debut on the viola with the Tucson Philharmonia at age 14. He has appeared as a soloist with the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Tucson Philharmonia, the Tucson Symphony, the World Youth Symphony Orchestra, and the New England Conservatory Symphony. He has attended numerous festivals including Tanglewood, the Heifetz Institute, Brevard Music Center, Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, and more.

A native of Tucson, Arizona, Matthew's early musical training was fostered through the Tucson Unified Public Schools and Tucson Junior Strings, a unique conductorless orchestra training program for young people. He graduated from the New England Conservatory where he studied with James Buswell, Lucy Chapman, and Donald Weilerstein. His mentors have included: the Borromeo String Quartet, Roger Tapping, Martha Katz, and John Heiss.

September Program

Friday, September 20, 2024
Saturday, September 21, 2024
7:30 p.m.
Plaza Theatre

BOHUSLAV RATTAY, Conductor
MATTHEW VERA, Violin

VIVALDI

The Four Seasons

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

Intermission

MAHLER

Symphony No. 1 D major (Titan)

Langsam, Schleppend

Kräftig bewegt

Feierlich und gemessen

Stürmisch bewegt

Programs and artists are subject to change.

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*With the support of the Museums and Cultural Affairs Department,
the Texas Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.*

September Program Notes

Antonio Vivaldi

Born March 4, 1678 – Venice, Italy
Died July 28, 1741 – Vienna, Austria

The Four Seasons

It seems that the further back in history you look, the accomplishments of singular human beings become more and more impressive. For some reason, while we live in a time filled with incredible tools like personal computers and artificial intelligence that allow us to be more efficient than ever before, we pale in comparison to the great human miracles of the distant past.

Music has had many of these remarkable people. Perfect examples include composers like Dimitri Shostakovich who could write a symphony from start to finish over a few days. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was churning out timeless masterpieces while still a teenager. Johann Sebastian Bach, perhaps the greatest musical mind the Western world has ever seen, practically defined what music would become over the next quarter millennium. And then there's Antonio Vivaldi, whose life work inside and out of music was breathtakingly beautiful.

Vivaldi was destined to become a priest. Baptized immediately after birth, he was ordained at age 25. However, due to severe asthma, he would eventually become barred from holding mass. Instead, he would continue his liturgical work at the Ospedale della Pieta, an orphanage and hospital in Venice where Vivaldi would win the post of resident violinist and music teacher. This turn of events would lead to Vivaldi's true legacy and over the next three decades he would compose so much music that his final catalog is still disputed to this day, as many as 1,200 works total.

Most of Vivaldi's music was written for the children under the care of the orphanage as Vivaldi would quickly find himself teaching more than playing the violin. His pieces were not just intended to be great music, however, but pedagogical tools designed for the specific skill levels of individual student musicians under his care. The more skilled the child, the more intricate and complex Vivaldi's new piece would be.

These remarkable pieces by Vivaldi are performed regularly all over the world. Still, there are four that would define Vivaldi's fame throughout the 20th century, becoming staples of what everyday people consider "classical music." They are all violin concertos: *Concerto No. 1 in E major, Op. 8, RV 269 "Spring," Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 8, RV 315 "Summer," Concerto No. 3 in F Major, Op. 8, RV 293 "Autumn,"* and *Concerto No. 4 in F minor, Op. 8, RV 297 "Winter."*

As the subtitles suggest, each concerto creates a soundscape representing one of the seasons within nature. Contrary to popular belief this was a strategy of Vivaldi's own doing, extraordinary, given that non-operatic program music was exceedingly rare before the 19th century. The works are also unique because they are more often performed as a set rather than individual concertos. The combined length of all four pieces equals a similar performance time of a romantic or 20th-century concerto, perfect for today's concert halls.

Gustav Mahler

Born July 7, 1860 – Bohemia
Died May 18, 1911 – Vienna, Austria

Symphony No. 1 in D Major (Titan)

The end of the 19th century was a polarizing time in the music world as an

September Program Notes

opinion war had broken out between composers as to how to approach the future. Looking back at the turn of the same century, Ludwig van Beethoven was busy changing the game. The personal musical evolution across his 56-year life was enough to change music forever as musicians are still holding themselves to the Beethoven standard today. Beethoven, however, would not live to be surprised by the fact that only half a century later the game would be changed again, and this time musicians wouldn't follow suit so easily.

The true battle began in 1894 when Claude Debussy completed his orchestral tone poem *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, a work so beautiful and so shockingly unique that textbooks would later refer to it as "the beginning of modern music." However, not everyone was convinced as there were plenty who still firmly believed in the structure and harmonic techniques of the Beethoven school. One of those individuals was Gustav Mahler, who would later be cemented as one of the late-romantic era's greatest champions whose work demands the utmost respect from the audience and the performers in today's concert halls.

Mahler's first symphony would be premiered in Budapest in 1889. It is the perfect introduction to Mahler's style and intentions as he would push back against the full turn to modernism for the rest of his career. Mahler would ultimately be remembered as a symphonist and while many of his works are enormous and intimidating, *Symphony No. 1*, known as "Titan," is a tremendously easy piece of music to enjoy.

Symphony No. 1 in D Major was completed in 1888 but would not reach its final form until a decade later. Though now universally performed in four

movements, Mahler originally intended a five-movement orchestral tone poem. Music entitled *Blumine* (flower piece) acted as the work's second movement for its premiere and two performances after, but was officially withdrawn from the piece by Mahler himself in 1894. *Blumine* was not original to the first symphony and had been sourced from incidental music written by Mahler in 1884. It remains rarely performed at all today. Regardless, there are a few recordings readily available that feature *Blumine* as the symphony's second movement.

Symphony No. 1 is referred to as "Titan," a confusing nickname given that this work is one of Mahler's shortest contributions to the genre. This becomes quite meaningful when realizing the majority of Mahler's symphonies take well over an hour to perform. Only Mahler's first and fourth symphonies stay below the 60-minute timeframe. "Titan" refers back to Mahler's original intentions to create a large-tone poem as he would coin the subtitle himself after the piece's first major revision in reference to his inspiration via Jean Paul's 1800 novel of the same name. Although Mahler would only use this subtitle briefly before a third major rework of the symphony, "Titan" remains the nickname of choice and comes with the instant realization that you are about to hear one of the landmark works from the very end of the nineteenth century.

Nathan Black is the general manager of the El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestras and a section cellist in the El Paso Symphony Orchestra. In addition, he produces and hosts 88.5 FM KTEP's *El Paso Symphony Orchestra Broadcast*, and as of 2022 is the resident lecturer of EPSO's "Opening Notes" series.

El Paso Music Teachers Association

The El Paso Music Teachers Association, an affiliate of Texas Music Teachers Association and Music Teachers National Association, is a professional organization composed of local music teachers. The following activities are available to member teachers and their students:

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- Local Annual Recitals (many themes: Zoo, Halloween, Patriotic, Women in Music, and Around the World)



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October Guest Artists



JAMILLE LEA, Soprano

Soprano Jamille Lea received her master's degree at the University of Texas at El Paso. She received her undergraduate degree in Vocal Performance from the University of North Texas, where she studied under tenor Richard Croft. During her undergraduate career, she performed the roles of *Lucy in The Three Penny Opera*, and Oberto in Handel's *Alcina*. She was a featured soloist during the A Cappella choir tour of South Korea. Jamille Lea has been a member of the Gilbert and Sullivan Company of El Paso for many years and has performed lead roles in *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *The Sorcerer*, *Patience*, *The Gondoliers*, and *Trial By Jury*. She also made her debut as Cosette in the UTEP Dinner Theater's production of *Les Misérables* in the Spring of 2014. Jamille Lea served as a Young Artist with El Paso Opera for two years under the direction of Justin Lucero and David Holloway. Most recently, she performed the roles of Zweite Dame and Papagena in El Paso Opera's production of *Die Zauberflöte*. Jamille Lea is currently pursuing her doctorate at the University

of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign under bass-baritone Ricardo Herrera. While pursuing her doctorate, Jamille Lea was the soprano soloist in the world premiere of *The El Paso Requiem* with the El Paso Symphony Orchestra and she performed the role of The Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.



BRIAN DOWNEN, Tenor

Brian Downen, tenor and Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Texas at El Paso, has sung leading roles in more than 85 productions for opera houses worldwide. Mr. Downen is known for his portrayals of leading men in the *bel canto* operas of Mozart and Rossini including numerous productions of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Cenerentola*, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Don Giovanni* and *Die Zauberflöte*. He debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in 2016 in *Roberto Devereux* and has since returned as Triquet in *Eugene Onegin* and as an understudy for the four servants in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*.

Engagements in 2023-24 included the role of Philemon in the Haydn marionette opera *Jupiter's Journey to the Earth* with the Little Opera Theatre of New York; Gastone in *La Traviata*, and tenor soloist in *Mozart by Moonlight* with El Paso Opera. Mr. Downen is a finalist for the 2024 American Prize national

October Guest Artists

competition in the categories of the Ernst Bacon Memorial Award for the Performance of American Music, and the Friedrich & Virginia Schorr Memorial Award for the Performance of Art Song and Oratorio.



JONATHAN HAYS, Baritone

Baritone Jonathan Hays has performed the leading roles with the Los Angeles Opera, Washington National Opera, Lincoln Center Festival, Bel Canto at Caramoor, Opera de la Colombia, Cape Town Opera, Central City Opera, and Portland Opera, and has appeared as a soloist with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Mostly Mozart

Festival, American Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Springs Philharmonic, Pasadena Pops, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Alabama Symphony, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and many others.

Mr. Hays is on the voice faculty of the University of Colorado Springs and Colorado College. For more information, visit jonathanhays.net



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October Program

Friday, October 18, 2024
Saturday, October 19, 2024
7:30 p.m. Plaza Theatre

BOHUSLAV RATTAY, Conductor
JAMILLE LEA, Soprano
BRIAN DOWNEN, Tenor
JONATHAN HAYS, Baritone

VERDI

Nabucco: Overture

DONIZETTI

Don Pasquale: "Bella siccome un angelo"

Lucia di Lammermoor: "Verranno a te sull'aure"

MOZART

Così fan tutte: "Rivolgete a lui lo sguardo"

BELLINI

Norma: "Casta diva"

DONIZETTI

L'elisir d'amore: "Una furtiva lagrima"

MOZART

Don Giovanni: "Là ci darem la mano"

VERDI

Rigoletto: "La Donna è mobile"

Intermission

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Der Rosenkavalier Suite

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October Program Notes

Passionate fans of classical music know some label it as boring and disengaging. Of course, this is complete nonsense. Serious music that is presented in orchestral halls and opera houses is all about listening. Like a beautiful painting meant to be gazed at or a scrumptious wine meant to be savored, music is for our brains to completely smother us with endless intellectual satisfaction.

Nevertheless, if you're up for some rowdy fun as well as sonic stimulation, opera arias are for you. An "aria" is a song within an opera, usually existing as a solo for one of the plot's main characters. Characters with arias are typically sung by the best vocalists in the business — on top of singing, the performers need to "act" out the scene, as opera is a constant combination of theater and music combined. This is not an easy task given you need to fill an entire concert hall with your voice while fighting against an orchestra.

On top of catchy music sung by exceptionally gifted individuals, arias are the most engaging part of a concert for the audience. Just like at a jazz gig, you're encouraged to clap and show your enthusiasm at an aria's conclusion. This means an opera has numerous opportunities for a passionate fan to get their heart pumping joyously.

This evening you will hear a compilation of beloved arias sung in the Italian language. Sit back, relax, be prepared to shed a tear, and get ready to stand and applaud!

Giuseppe Verdi

Born October 10, 1813 — Le Roncole, Italy
Died January 27, 1901 — Milan, Italy

***Nabucco*: Overture**

If there is a composer who wins the award for a life story filled with the most acute tragedy and triumph, it is Giuseppe Verdi. Today Verdi is one of the pinnacles of any opera company — If you're not programming Verdi, you're not truly experiencing opera. Italian opera from 19th-century romanticism remains the center of the genre's popularity today. The Italians knew how to do it: The plots, the songs, the singers, the pacing...it was a formula that worked then and is certainly keeping the buzz alive today. With 28 contributions to the genre, Verdi remains the king of the category, but his personal life will make you weep just as much as any of his compositions.

You could very much compare Verdi's life to an opera plot. He married his first wife Margherita Barezzi in 1836 and quickly fathered two children, Virginia and Icilio. But Verdi's Shakespearean tragedy was soon to begin as Virginia died in the summer of 1838 and Icilio the following spring. As if life wasn't being cruel enough to Verdi, Margherita died in 1840. His life now in ruins, Verdi embraced a defeat — He swore never to compose again.

Thankfully Verdi's musical withdrawal was short-lived as the La Scala opera house in Milan managed to convince him to continue working via a three-opera contract. Accepting this deal became the most important decision of Verdi's life as he was about to write a new piece that would transform his legacy forever.

October Program Notes

Nabucco can easily be considered Verdi's most crucial work as it marked the beginning of an era crowning the composer as the greatest opera figure alive. Remarkably, Verdi completed it in 1841, just one year after the total demise of his immediate family. It was then performed at La Scala for the first time in 1842. The work was so well received that dozens of performances were immediately added to La Scala's upcoming playbills and Verdi was on track to create the legacy he is known for today.

Nabucco is the tale of King Nebuchadnezzar II's (here named Nabucco) persecution and exile of the Hebrew Israelites. As is typical with Italian opera, the primary plot is simply a holding cell for more poignant tales of love, deceit, and tragedy. The opera ends with Nabucco coming to grips with his own transgressions against the Israelites and adopting the Hebrew god as his own.

Nabucco has a strong sense of darkness turning to light. Appropriate for a man who knew the darkness best.

Richard Strauss

Born June 11, 1864 — Munich, Germany
Died September 8, 1949—Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

Der Rosenkavalier Suite

Like the great Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss was greatly inspired by the 19th-century Beethoven school of romanticism but found himself living in a time that was starting to move on. The modernist era was approaching fast — new harmonies and orchestration techniques that would have seemed

taboo a century earlier were now readily appearing. Composers like Sergei Prokofiev and Maurice Ravel would write for orchestras in ways that would reshape the image of the ensemble in its entirety, a trend that would take hold for the next 40 to 50 years. For some composers, however, new foreign harmonies and odd orchestrations were not necessarily the most effective way to achieve progress. Richard Strauss progressed the symphony orchestra more than almost any other at the time, and he did it his way: Bigger, faster, harder.

Strauss' orchestral music is the most notorious in literature on two fronts. First, it is a shock to the senses — if you're lucky enough to witness an orchestra knock a Strauss performance out of the park it will be a sonic experience you'll never forget. You'll find yourself asking if what you're seeing and hearing is truly possible from a group of 60 to 80 musicians. Second, performers fear Strauss above all other composers. Strauss wrote what he pleased without caring about what is comfortable and/or possible for an instrumentalist, meaning that a tremendous amount of skill and confidence is required simply to play what's on the page. Of course, that's after many hours of individual preparation before the first rehearsal.

The operas of Richard Strauss are the same story. Cherished by the composer just as much as his tone poems, Strauss was no doubt prolific here, writing 16 operas throughout his career. They vary greatly, showcasing the diverse musical palette of the composer with operas dealing with comic plot points and other tragic. They range from 90 minutes long to over 4 hours.

October Program Notes

Completed in 1910, perhaps Strauss' most triumphant opera contribution was *Der Rosenkavalier*, a comedy in three acts with libretto written by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. It is a tale of an engagement gone awry when a spoken-for damsel falls in love with a rose-bearer (rosenkavalier) who was only meant to deliver a token to her. It remains one of Strauss' most popular and largest works with a 4 1/2-hour runtime when accounting for intermissions.

Many years after the work's premiere an orchestral suite arrangement of the opera appeared on the playbill for a 1944 New York Philharmonic Orchestra concert. At that time the suite was completely unknown and unpublished. It was a 23-minute speed run of the full opera's most charming musical moments that represented key points in the plot. As

lovely as the arrangement was, it was discovered after the fact that Strauss himself was not involved at all in its composition. Its creation is now credited to Arthur Rodzinski, the conductor who led the New York concert. Nevertheless, it is confirmed that Strauss gave his blessing on the suite's publication in 1945, giving the world even more astonishing music by the master of orchestral assault.

Nathan Black is the general manager of the El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestras and a section cellist in the El Paso Symphony Orchestra. In addition, he produces and hosts 88.5 FM KTEP's *El Paso Symphony Orchestra Broadcast*, and as of 2022 is the resident lecturer of EPSO's "Opening Notes" series.

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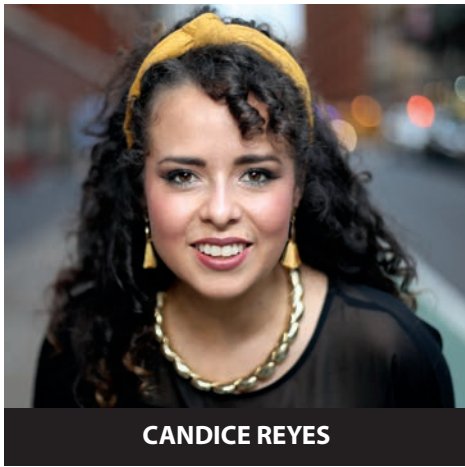
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CANDICE REYES

An acclaimed jazz vocalist and recording artist from El Paso, Candice Reyes has gained a reputation as an active Latina jazz vocalist. While residing in New Jersey with her husband, saxophonist Abel Mireles, and actively involved in the New York City scene, she released two solo albums *Crossing Over* produced by Mack Goldsbury with Shade Records in 2014, and her latest album *Your Way* (2018.) The project *Your Way* includes original compositions and arrangements produced by saxophonist Mireles. Featuring an incredible cast of musicians, including six-time Grammy award winner and renowned jazz bassist Christian McBride and Grammy nominee Nathan Eklund on trumpet, Reyes puts her stamp on reimagined jazz standards with her lyrical skills, featured on two originals "Your Way" and "Live In The Moment." The Candice Reyes Quintet toured in 2018 from the East Coast to the West Coast performing for many local festivals and venues.

Born on April 18, 1986, into a musical family, the young vocalist has grown to evolve her style and character as a

passionate performer. Reyes established herself in the El Paso jazz scene early in her career. Her parents, David and Dora Reyes, were recognized and active full-time musicians in El Paso. Growing up in a household filled with music, Reyes was introduced to jazz by her parents with her first cassette from 1985, Ella Fitzgerald's "Tisket-A-Tasket." Reyes gained recognition as a rising vocalist performing with local jazz musicians and established musical groups with her parents, as well as being recognized for her talent at Hanks High School, where she sang with the award-winning jazz band. Candice was also part of the local El Paso Youth Jazz Program, under the direction of jazz trumpeter and educator Marty Olivas, as the first female jazz vocalist in her generation to participate in the program. The ensemble featured special guests, such as New York saxophonist and NYU educator Dave Pietro, whom Reyes had the opportunity to sing alongside. Part of her musical experience evolved through her education at the University of Texas at El Paso where she received a bachelor's degree in commercial music in vocal performance.

Reyes currently focuses on The Jazz Exchange, which she founded with her husband. The couple recently returned to El Paso where their passion for performing and working with youth continues. The organization's mission focuses on building communities through music and education.

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The El Paso Symphony Office is located on the northeast side of the Abraham Chavez Theatre.

**One Civic Center Plaza
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Office hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Symphony Office phone number is 532-EPSO (3776).

The Plaza Theatre Box Office phone number is 231-1100. It is active during concert days only.

Conditions of entry. Destination El Paso reserves the right to conduct an inspection on any bags, clothing, or other items at entry point or within any of their venues at any time. Searching for restricted items is a condition of entry to protect the safety of all patrons attending an event at any of the Destination El Paso venues. Use of hand held metal detectors (HHMDs) will be administered after completion of initial bag check. (All items must be removed from pockets and held in hands; with arms spread at shoulder height) Failure to comply with bag checks and HHMD checks will result in denial of entry into any Destination El Paso Venue.

An Elevator is located in the Axelson Lobby of the Plaza Theatre.

Restrooms are located on all three levels in the theater.

Smoking is not permitted in the theater.

Refreshments are available in the theater lobby.

Medical aid is available by contacting any theater usher.

Persons who are hearing impaired may notify the Symphony Office for hook-up to the TDD.

The use of recording devices and cameras is strictly prohibited at all performances. The theater reserves the right to confiscate such equipment to be returned following the performance.

Emergency medical personnel should leave their name and seat number with the theater manager. All beepers, radios, pagers and telephones must be left with

the attendant on duty. This service is provided for emergency medical personnel only! Fire exits are located throughout the theater. In case of an emergency, please use only those doors with a lighted red exit sign for leaving the theater. Do not use elevator in case of an emergency.

Parking is available in the Convention Center parking garage and Mills Plaza parking garage for a fee. Free street parking is available in various locations near the theater. Please allow ample time for parking. Theater doors open an hour-and-a-half prior to the start of the performance.

Lost or stolen property is not the responsibility of the theater or the El Paso Symphony. Should something be lost or stolen, please notify theater security at 534-0626.

As a courtesy to other audience members and the performers, **no children under 4 years of age** will be admitted to Classical Subscription Concerts. Children will not be admitted even if tickets have already been purchased. We thank you for your cooperation.

BEFORE THE DOWNBEAT, PLEASE REMEMBER TO TURN OFF ANYTHING THAT BEEPS, BLINKS OR RINGS – CELL PHONES, PAGERS, WATCHES, AND VIDEO GAME DEVICES. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE AND THE PERFORMERS THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Want to learn more about the program?

Join us 6:30pm in the Philanthropy Theatre prior to each classical concert for

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BJ was an ardent supporter of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra throughout her time in El Paso. Their endowment secures her legacy and their continued support of EPSO. Thank you, Mr. & Mrs. Graham for your endowment!

With a minimum donation you can create your own named fund. Grow your fund through continued personal gifts or invite your family and friends to contribute to your fund. Let us help you get started! Give our office a call at (915) 532-3776.

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For more information about setting up your own family fund, contact the El Paso Symphony office at 915-532-3776.

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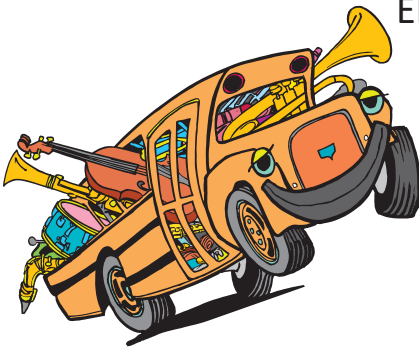
El Paso Electric Young People's Concerts

El Paso Symphony Orchestra

February 4, 5 & 6, 2025

10:30am & 12:30pm

Abraham Chavez Theatre



The Orchestra Rocks

The El Paso Electric **Young People's Concerts**, now in their 84th season, are presented free to all area 5th grade students. Approximately 15,000 students are bused downtown to the Abraham Chavez Theatre by the various school districts where they are treated to concerts performed especially for them.

This year the El Paso Symphony Orchestra is pleased to present, for the 11th year, **CARNEGIE HALL'S LINK UP PROGRAM.**



PARTIALLY FUNDED BY

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Every year the El Paso Symphony Orchestra offers over 40,000 area students the experience of live symphonic music. Every year the El Paso Symphony Orchestra brings the joy of music to over 2,000 senior citizens.

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The El Paso Symphony Orchestra's Outreach and Educational programs are a direct result of the financial support that is contributed by FRIENDS OF EPSO. These annual gifts help the EPSO to present concerts and music education and outreach programs to a broad range of audiences throughout the community.

Become a FRIEND OF EPSO today with a generous contribution. A simple gift can bring the music to life and ensure that EPSO continues its legacy of performing the finest orchestra music. Call (915) 532-3776 to become a **FRIEND OF EPSO**.

The El Paso Symphony Orchestra is a 501 C (3) not-for-profit organization. Contributions to EPSO are tax deductible to the extent authorized by law.

- ◆ The Youth Orchestra Program is the largest component of the EPSO's educational mission. The **El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestra** (EPSYO) serves over 300 students each year. EPSYO students participate in weekly rehearsals and perform concerts in El Paso's finest concert halls. Their relationship with the EPSO allows EPSYO members access to the musicians of the EPSO through coaching, rehearsals, and the annual Side-by-Side concert.
- ◆ EPSO's after-school program, **Tocando Music Project**, is designed to engage disconnected youth through free intensive music instruction, academic tutoring, and nutritional snacks.
- ◆ The **Young People's Concerts** are annual concerts held each year for the past 81 years. Six concerts are presented free of charge to 12,000 5th grade area students.
- ◆ Ensembles in the schools program, **Strings in Schools**, performs on-site concerts annually at over 25 elementary and middle schools throughout the El Paso.
- ◆ Our **Kids for Classics** offers over 400 free tickets to each of the classical subscription concerts to area school districts for students at various schools. Backstage tours and a pre-concert lecture designed specifically for students are provided.
- ◆ Free **Angel tickets** to the El Paso Symphony classical concerts are available for students.
- ◆ Free tickets to the classical concerts are provided to our **Symphony Seniors**, which targets low-income elderly residents.
- ◆ **Opening Notes** are lively and insightful discussions designed to enhance the enjoyment of each classical performance. These talks are presented one hour prior to the classical concerts in the Philanthropy Theatre.
- ◆ **Golden Notes** targets elderly citizens who are unable to attend classical concerts. This outreach program presents on-site concerts by small groups of musicians at area nursing homes, retirement villages and adult day care centers.

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Tocando programming takes place after-school Monday through Thursday at Guillen Middle School in El Segundo Barrio.



Tocando provides opportunities to perform in the community on many stages including the Plaza Theatre.



Tocando is presented in partnership with the PlayUSA initiative of Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute. Lead support for PlayUSA is provided by the Fund II Foundation. The Weill Music Institute's programs are made available to a nationwide audience, in part, by an endowment grant from the Citi Foundation.

www.tocandomusicproject.org



The El Paso Symphony Orchestra's Tocando Music Project is an in-school and after-school program that provides music learning and performing opportunities to elementary, middle and high school students.

Tocando's mission is to empower children in challenging social and economic conditions to improve their sense of community and opportunity. Music is used as a vehicle for children to acquire valuable tools of teamwork, self-confidence, leadership, and academic success.

Tocando began in September 2013 at Hart Elementary School in El Segundo Barrio. Tocando expanded to Guillen Middle School in 17-18, concentrating on schools in the feeder pattern of Bowie High School.

Collaborations with UTEP creates a pathway to college for students beginning in elementary school and continuing throughout their education careers.



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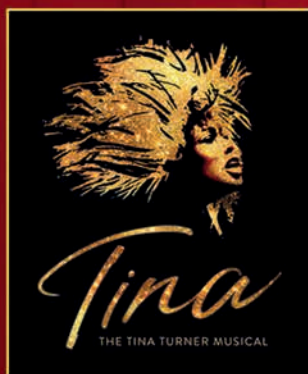
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