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## **BPO announces 90th anniversary Classics series**

**2024-25 concerts tell stories of classical music, Buffalo history, BPO legacy**



Since 1935, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra has upheld a tradition of bringing enriching musical experiences to Western NY. Classical masterpieces and world-class talent have graced the stage of Kleinhans Music Hall with the BPO, bolstering Buffalo's position as a cultural hub – both nationally and internationally – through live performances and recordings. This year, JoAnn Falletta and the BPO are delighted to share the Classics concerts of their 90th anniversary season, which tell stories and histories of classical music, the city of Buffalo, and the orchestra itself.

The Classics series begins on September 28 with a performance by one of the most revered virtuosos today: Grammy Award-winning violinist **Joshua Bell**. This Opening Night program also includes the world premiere of a work by contemporary composer and frequent BPO collaborator, **Daron Hagen**. Titled ***City of Light***, the piece was commissioned by JoAnn Falletta and the BPO, contributing another composition to the orchestral repertoire through a gift from West Herr's Scott Bieler in honor of Falletta's 25th anniversary with the BPO. The work is celebratory, illuminating Buffalo's role in electrification at the turn of the 20th century.

On November 9-10 in honor of the orchestra's 90th anniversary, Falletta has programmed the same pieces performed in the **BPO's debut concert on November 7, 1935**, including works

by Beethoven, Brahms, and Debussy. The **Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus**, founded in 1937 as the Buffalo Schola Cantorum, will join the orchestra to further celebrate decades of stellar performances together and their joint legacy of classical music in Buffalo.

Other choral collaborations throughout the season include **Mozart's Requiem** on January 17-18, 2025, widely considered Mozart's best and most famous work, featuring the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus and esteemed Western NY-native vocalists including **Lynne McMurtry** and **Valerian Ruminski**. On March 1-2, 2025, the **SUNY Fredonia Hillman Opera Program** will make a welcome return for performances of Verdi's *La Traviata*, backed by Falletta and the orchestra.

February 2025 holds a two-weekend festival celebrating the beloved compositions of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The **Tchaikovsky Festival** will be conducted by Falletta with renowned guest artists **Sheng Cai** (piano) and **Marcin Zdunik** (cello). The two concert programs offer Tchaikovsky's greatest works, and stories told through music such as *Sleeping Beauty* and Stravinsky's *Fairy's Kiss* ballet, inspired by Tchaikovsky. Following the season's storytelling theme, works akin to fairy tales also appear in **Stravinsky & Ravel** on March 14-15, featuring *Pulcinella* and *Shéhérazade*.

Special guest appearances from stars near and far are spread throughout the series. BPO Concertmaster **Nikki Chooi** will take center stage not only in **JoAnn's Classical Christmas** for "Winter" from Vivaldi's and Piazzolla's *Four Seasons* (December 13-14), but also on April 11-12, 2025 for a violin concerto written by his own Juilliard teacher, Behzad Ranjbaran. **Keith Lockhart**, conductor of the famed Boston Pops Orchestra, will lead a program of *The Grand Canyon Suite*, works by Les Six female composer Germaine Tailleferre, and Ravel's Piano Concerto in G performed by **Clayton Stephenson**, who rose to prominence as the first Black finalist at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2022.

BPO Assistant Conductor **Fernanda Lastra** will make her Classics conducting debut on May 10-11 with a program she curated featuring 22-year-old pianist **Avery Gagliano**, the First Prize and Best Concerto winner of the 2020 National Chopin Piano Competition. On March 29-30, Grand Island native and New York Philharmonic Chorus Director **Malcolm Merriweather** will conduct **Sanctuary Road**, for which he was Grammy-nominated, written by Buffalo-born composer **Paul Moravec**. Highlighting Buffalo's role as the last stop of the Underground Railroad, this important work will be complemented by Margaret Bonds' *Montgomery Variations*, one of Merriweather's inspirations.

Near the series conclusion on May 30-31, critically-acclaimed classical saxophonist **Tim McAllister** will premiere a concerto for saxophone by **Adolphus Hailstork**, a Buffalo favorite contemporary composer. The 2024-25 season finale on June 7-8 spotlights Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* and Beethoven's third piano concerto, performed by 2021 American Pianist Award-winner **Kenneth Broberg**.

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View the full list of next season's Classics series performances below:

- **Opening Night with Joshua Bell**, September 28
- **Gershwin & Respighi**, October 11 & 13
- **Schubert Symphony No. 9, "The Great"**, October 25-26
- **BPO's 90th Anniversary Celebration**, November 9-10
- **Beethoven Symphony No. 3, "Eroica"**, November 22-23
- **JoAnn's Classical Christmas**, December 13-14
- **Mozart's Requiem**, January 17-18, 2025
- **Lockhart Conducts Grand Canyon Suite**, January 25-26, 2025
- **Tchaikovsky Festival: Piano Concerto No. 2**, February 7-8, 2025
- **Tchaikovsky Festival: "Pathétique"**, February 21-22, 2025
- **La Traviata**, March 1-2, 2025
- **Stravinsky & Ravel**, March 14-15, 2025
- **Sanctuary Road**, March 29-30, 2025
- **Sibelius Symphony No. 1**, April 11-12, 2025
- **Dvořák Symphony No. 6**, April 25-26, 2025
- **Mendelssohn's "Italian"**, May 10-11, 2025
- **Bernstein & Copland**, May 30-31, 2025
- **Beethoven & Strauss**, June 7-8, 2025



Subscription packages will be available for purchase online at [bpo.org](http://bpo.org), in-person at the Box Office in Kleinhans Music Hall, or by calling (716) 885-5000 **beginning January 27**.

Find images [here](#). For additional information or interviews, contact Simone Viola at [sviola@bpo.org](mailto:sviola@bpo.org) or (716) 242-7814.

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*About Us: To learn more about our storied history, distinguished conductors and world-class musicians, and commitment to IDEA, visit the [Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra](#).*





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