

Presented at Carnegie Hall by



Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 8 PM  
Isaac Stern Auditorium / Ronald O. Perelman Stage

# Weber & Berlioz: Der Freischütz Reimagined

Leon Botstein, Conductor

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CARL MARIA  
VON WEBER (1786–1826) /  
HECTOR BERLIOZ  
(1803–1869)

*Le Freyschütz* (adapt. Hector Berlioz)

Act I

Act II

INTERMISSION

Act III

**Nicole Chevalier**, Agathe (Daughter of Kouno)  
**Freddie Ballentine**, Max (A young gamekeeper)  
**Alfred Walker**, Gaspard (Another gamekeeper)  
**Cadie Bryan**, Annette (Cousin of Agathe)  
**Joo Won Kang**, Prince Ottokar (Prince of Bohemia)  
**Philip Cokorinos**, Kouno (Head Gamekeeper)  
**Adam Partridge**, Kilian (A young peasant)  
**Jason Zacher**, L'Ermite (The Hermit)  
**Jonathan Guss**, Samiel (The Huntsman)

**Bard Festival Chorale**  
**James Bagwell**, Director

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## Conductor's Notes Q&A with Leon Botstein at 7 PM

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# From the Music Director

The first performance of Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz* in Berlin, on June 18, 1821, was one of the most memorable first performances in the history of music in the 19th and 20th centuries; it can be properly compared to the Paris premiere of Stravinsky's ballet, *The Rite of Spring*, in 1913. In Berlin, the opera made a profound and lasting impression on the 12-year-old Felix Mendelssohn. *Der Freischütz* went on to be performed in every major city in Europe. It was a smashing success everywhere, but especially in Vienna. It won the admiration of the young Schubert and earned the grudging respect of the venerable and revered Beethoven, with whom Weber had an ambivalent and shifting relationship that ranged from Weber's initial disapproval to later admiration.

As Beethoven knew, from his own experience, success as a composer usually required writing operas that captured the imagination of the public. Even composers who failed in this genre—like Robert Schumann—or only fantasized about writing an opera—like Chopin—knew that opera, and spectacle and tunes, represented the shortest distance to fame and fortune for a composer. Many names now forgotten from the early 19th century, including Étienne-Nicolas Méhul (1763–1817), Gaspare Spontini (1774–1851), Louis Spohr (1784–1859), and Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864), were international celebrities, alongside Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868), as a result of their operas. Rossini's popularity became so intense that it annoyed Beethoven during the last years of his life. The pattern was set by Gluck and Mozart. Haydn turned out to be an exception, but he, too, excelled at dramatic music, and wrote a good number of operas filled with spectacular music, but without the exceptional instinct for drama he knew Mozart had.

We think of Weber as a significant figure in the history of German Romanticism, which he was, even though he died just months short of his 40th birthday in 1826, a year before Beethoven, and two years before Schubert. We need, however, to remember that Romanticism had made its appearance already in literature and the theater in the 1770s, with its turn away from Classicism towards forms of prose realism and poetic fantasy.

The expressive range of the melodies, the pacing of the drama, the use of chorus, and the narrative vibrancy and tension of the score all made *Der Freischütz* a landmark of a new aesthetic freedom that privileged, in the form of opera, subjectivity and ordinary human domestic and Romantic predicaments in an old feudal context, and not history dominated by myths and heroic, if not saintly, figures set in predictable formal structures. When it was first performed, *Der Freischütz* sounded new and original. It heralded the flowering of a German musical Romanticism that dominated in the 19th century and that retained an allegiance to the classical procedures in the composition of music.

Its story has many of the key elements of the German literary and philosophical reaction against the conceits of the so-called “Age of Reason.” This was inherited from the 18th century, whose optimism about the role of rationality as the governing force in human behavior and politics was shattered by the history of the French Revolution, notably the Reign of Terror, and the rise to power of Napoleon and his conquest of Europe. The defeat of Prussia at the Battle of Jena in 1806 by the French sparked German national sentiment and a solidarity that would dominate German-speaking Europe well into the 20th century.

But the nascent nationalism of the first half of the 19th century did not wreck the perception of music as an international art form that defied linguistic and political boundaries, even though the story and libretto of *Der Freischütz* (in contrast to Weber’s less successful but magisterial *Euryanthe*) had many characteristics shared by German Romantic literature and painting. It possesses a fascination with the supernatural, magic, the forest, darkness, fairy tales, and pre-modern mores dating to the early 17th century but rooted in medieval and feudal times. The distinctly Germanic character did not prevent the opera from delighting non-German audiences, including the French in Paris in the 1820s (much as Wagner would later, after 1870, despite France’s defeat at the hands of the Germans, led by Prussia, in 1871).

The success of Weber’s most famous opera lay, therefore, in the music and not the text. Weber’s music makes one ignore the pedestrian writing in the libretto by framing the story as a drama that would be defined, from the very first arresting notes of the overture, by music. Weber retained the German tradition of spoken dialogue, a feature of the *Singspiel* (consider Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, and Beethoven’s *Fidelio*). Weber’s engaging use of harmony and key themes, his sense of pacing and dramatic contrast, his masterful deployment of the sonorities of the orchestra, and use of the chorus, consistently foreground music as the key element of the theatrical experience. The brilliance and immediate appeal of the music, and its capacity to convey the visual and emotional dimensions of the story, were startling and did not suffer when the opera was translated from the original German.

Weber has remained an underappreciated composer, particularly outside of German-speaking Europe. Too little of his instrumental music is played—piano music, concertos (apart from the two clarinet concertos), and symphonies. His place in music history rests on his operas (including Gustav Mahler’s completion of *Die drei Pintos* from fragments left behind at Weber’s death). *Der Freischütz*, as Richard Wagner freely admitted, was a milestone in the development of his vision of the music drama and the “total work of art.” *The Flying Dutchman*, *Lohengrin*, and *Tannhäuser* all stem from the example set by Weber’s masterpiece.

*Der Freischütz* was a staple in the repertoire of the Metropolitan Opera during the late 19th century through to the early 20th. It was especially popular within the large German-American community of New York City. Excerpts for chorus and solo voices, as well as the overture, were extremely familiar to music lovers throughout America in the 19th century. The massive immigration from German-speaking Europe to America after 1848 led to the dominance of the German musical tradition in the evolution of an American classical music culture at the end of the century. That remained the case until 1917, when the US entered World War I. However, *Der Freischütz* has retained its popularity in German-speaking Europe, between 1918 and 1933, especially during the years of Nazi rule, and after 1945, both in West and East Germany. It has functioned as a work of musical theater through which competing and often critical ideas about German cultural and national identity could be articulated.

Two world wars, however, took their toll, not, ironically, on the popularity of Wagner, but certainly on Weber in America. In the case of *Der Freischütz*, the problem was its distinctly German non-heroic domestic context and storyline. Even translating the title poses a problem. The ritual alluded to is obscure and hard to translate. And none of the characters, even Agathe and Ännchen [Annette in the version presented this evening], the lead female characters, are particularly personalities with whom it is hard to identify. The mystery of the magic bullets and the Wolf's Glen are rooted in rural traditions and superstitions that have few, if any, persuasive modern equivalents.

This makes the greatness of the music even more impressive. It is unforgettably beautiful, arrestingly dramatic, and easy to absorb. It never descends into kitsch and yet is consistently alluring. Furthermore, the supernatural aspects and the mix of emotional realism, including residues of pagan beliefs, magic, and Christian concepts of salvation, redemption, and forgiveness, lend the opera qualities that have been exploited in recent decades in popular feature films and series. Perhaps *Der Freischütz* will get a new lease on life courtesy of *Game of Thrones* and all the Netflix-type series that draw on pre-modern history, such as the Vikings and the early history of England.

As Samuel Nemeth, in his fine notes for this performance has eloquently pointed out, Hector Berlioz, the brilliant, iconoclastic innovator—and perhaps the finest prose writer who was at the same time a great musician—was captivated by Weber's score and its originality. A formidable newspaper critic who helped propel the music of Beethoven into the consciousness of the French public, Berlioz was outraged by the many popular bowdlerizations and disfigurements of the operas of the great masters on the Parisian stage. The 1824 French version of *Der Freischütz* particularly offended him.

It is well to remember that before 1848, nationalist sentiments had not become so strident as to shatter a long international appreciation of the instrumental and operatic repertoire that flourished throughout Europe. Berlioz's reputation as a composer was made as much in German-speaking Europe as in France. He triumphed also in Russia and England. Operas originally in one language were routinely performed in the language of the audiences for which they were being performed. Mozart's Italian operas, for example, for German audiences were produced in German. Berlioz's admiration for Weber's opera led him to make a French version that respected Weber's music and drama and would draw an audience. He succeeded.

Berlioz, however, did not resist the temptation to update Weber's opera, 20 years after its premiere. He replaced the spoken dialogue with recitatives he himself composed, giving the opera a continuous musical fabric. And he inserted his own orchestration of Weber's *Invitation to the Dance*, a work for piano Weber had written in 1819. The creation of this separate dance episode catapulted Weber's piano work into the standard repertoire of orchestras, owing to Berlioz's superlative orchestration. When one compares Weber's 1821 *Der Freischütz* with Berlioz's 1830 "Fantastic" Symphony, one can appreciate Berlioz's enthusiasm for Weber.

We have been accustomed to claims of authenticity and faithfulness to the text and a composer's intentions. Consequently, we frown on alterations, cuts, re-orchestrations, and the use of modern performance practices. Yet there are several notable examples when revisions and adaptations may improve on the "original." Or, if not, they compete with the original, as in the case of Ravel's orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. It is reasonable to speculate that Berlioz's decision to replace dialogue with recitative and insert Weber's *Invitation*, and create a version in French, may improve Weber's opera and soften its association with a particular nationalism, lending this great work the humanity and universalism that its music communicates, and deepening its appeal.

—Leon Botstein

# The Program

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**CARL MARIA VON WEBER** (1786–1826)

## *Le Freyschütz*

Carl Maria von Weber composed *Der Freischütz* in 1817–1821; the version performed tonight was arranged by Hector Berlioz in 1841.

The libretto by Johann Friedrich Kind (1768–1843) was based on a story by Johann August Apel and Friedrich Laun. The version of the opera as presented this evening is sung in French with lyrics translated by Émilien Pacini and Hector Berlioz, and with recitatives composed by Berlioz replacing the original work’s spoken dialogue.

**Premiere:** The original Singspiel was premiered on June 18, 1821, in Berlin at the Königliches Schauspielhaus, conducted by Weber. Berlioz’s version was premiered on June 7, 1841, at the Opéra de Paris, conducted by Pantaléon Battu.

**Instrumentation for this Performance:** 2 flutes, 2 piccolos, 2 oboes, 3 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 5 French horns, 2 trumpets, 2 cornets, 2 trombones, 1 bass trombone, timpani, percussion (chime), 2 harps, strings, vocal soloists, chorus

**Performance Time:** approximately two hours and 40 minutes including one 20-minute intermission

## Der Freischütz Reimagined

“Oh! If great creative artists could only divine the grand passions their works inspire! If it were only given to them to perceive the enthusiasm of a hundred thousand hearts concentrated in a single heart ...” So wrote composer Hector Berlioz in his *Mémoires*, recalling the groundbreaking impact that the music of German composer Carl Maria von Weber had on him. As Berlioz recounts, his inability to meet Weber during the latter’s stop through Paris on his way to London in February 1826 was tragic, but did not diminish the enthusiasm with which Berlioz received the musical sounds that flowed from Weber’s pen. Unfortunately, Berlioz did not get another chance to meet his newest compositional idol. Weber died only a few months later, but the way that he had inspired Berlioz lived on.

Weber’s influence on Berlioz began two years prior to that episode, though the circumstances under which Weber earned his place among Berlioz’s personal pantheon of composers—which already included Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787) and would soon include Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)—are worth examining. *Der Freischütz* had received its premiere in Berlin in 1821, though when the opera arrived in Paris a few years later, it took on a different guise. In December 1824, at the Théâtre de l’Odéon, critic Henri Castil-Blaze (1784–1857) presented an “adapted” version of *Der Freischütz*, complete with cuts, changes to vocal lines, and reordering of material, under the title *Robin des bois*. The

young Berlioz attended multiple performances of *Robin* and soon became enamored with Weber's musical writing, though, much later, he criticized Castil-Blaze's actions in putting the work on stage at the Odéon.

In Chapter 16 of his *Mémoires* (which Berlioz began to write in earnest early in 1848) while describing his early musical education in Paris in the 1820s, Berlioz writes that Weber "appeared" amidst "the fever of my passion for Gluck and Spontini and of my aversion for the Rossinians and all their works." Berlioz noted that Castil-Blaze's adaptation of *Freischütz* was "an insulting travesty, hacked and mutilated," far below the later standard that Berlioz held for how performances should steward a composer's intentions. Berlioz found some aspects of the performance deplorable, but others piqued his interest. He admitted his surprise at how the work enraptured him, noting that "in my exclusive worship of classical opera, I had been intolerantly prepared to reject the new style; but to my surprise it delighted me, garbled though it was by incomplete or crude performance. Even in this ravaged form there was a wild fragrance, a delicious freshness in the score that intoxicated me ... I never missed a performance, and soon knew *Freischütz*, or all of it that was given there [at the Odéon], by heart."

Weber's music, even if not performed entirely as the composer intended, opened a new realm to Berlioz. Similarly, as Kern Holoman writes in his biography of Berlioz, the young Hector "reveled in the first genuinely Romantic music to reach his ear." Similarly, David Cairns describes Berlioz's witness to *Robin des bois* as his "introduction to German musical Romanticism."

But at the same time, *Robin des bois* exposed Berlioz to the darker side of commercial success and to the prevailing belief that composers' music could be freely adapted by others seeking to profit off of a composer's creativity and innovation. As Berlioz notes in the *Mémoires*, perhaps with a touch of retrospective malice, Castil-Blaze raked in handsome sums from the great number of performances and from publication of the adaptation's orchestral and vocal scores. In contrast, Weber, much maligned, saw none of the proceeds, and the score for the original *Freischütz* remained unpublished. This episode, both as it occurred in 1824 and as Berlioz described it much later, influenced his priorities when preparing for a French-language production of *Der Freischütz*—as *Le Freyschütz*—at the Paris Opéra in 1841.

When Léon Pillet, director of the Opéra, approached Berlioz about his interest in the project, Berlioz knew that the task of mounting *Le Freyschütz* posed a logistical, cultural, and musical challenge. In its original format, *Freischütz* juxtaposed its solo arias, group numbers, and choruses with unaccompanied spoken dialogue, which was forbidden on stage at the Opéra. Productions needed to utilize the operatic mainstay of recitative, with its "speech-singing" texture, to advance the plot. Berlioz's task, therefore, was to compose more than a dozen recitatives

for the production, a job he was hesitant to take on because it meant that music composed by someone other than Weber would be included in the production. Ultimately, Berlioz's desire to steward the intentions of one of his compositional idols won out. Rather than risk yet another mutilation of the score by another composer who, in his words in the *Mémoires*, would "certainly [be] less dedicated to the glorification of [Weber's] masterpiece," Berlioz agreed to the task on the condition that the opera would be presented in full, without the cuts of a *Castilblazade*.

That same impulse guided Berlioz as he sought a solution for the obligatory second-act ballet in the production. Rather than acquiesce to Pillet's suggestion that Berlioz import his own music, specifically the "Ball" from the *Symphonie fantastique* (1830) and the music from the Capulets's ball in *Roméo et Juliette* (1839), Berlioz deftly worked out a way to ensure that more of Weber's music would be heard. He orchestrated Weber's existing piano composition, *Aufforderung zum Tanz* (*Invitation to the Dance*), renaming it, in French, *Invitation à la valse*. The piece became a successful standalone work, with Berlioz conducting it several times in the remaining two-plus decades of his life. Additionally, Berlioz incorporated dance tunes from Weber's operas *Oberon* and *Preciosa* to ensure not only that the music for the ballet fit the required length, but also that, apart from the new recitatives (for which Berlioz attempted to remain anonymous as the composer), all of the music for the production was composed by Weber himself. Despite Berlioz's initial hesitations, *Le Freyschütz* was a success, going on to receive more than 60 performances in its initial run.

In this evening's performance, swirling strings, peaceful and triumphant horns, and skillfully-deployed woodwind and brass instruments, which frequently venture into the extreme upper and lower ends of their ranges, all contribute to the duality of the rustic and supernatural soundscapes of *Le Freyschütz*. Music from the overture often prefigures other moments from later in the opera. For example, the stormy Allegro section of the overture, followed by the eruption of the cascading string melody, is heard prominently in Act I, while Max is contemplating his misfortune ("Ah! trop longtemps de mes souffrances") and is first being stalked in the shadows by the "Black Huntsman," Samiel.

In Max's aria, we do not hear the burst of the cascading string melody from the overture, though Max does sing the snippets of the overture's Allegro melody that is first played by the clarinets. Later, in the Act II finale, the "Wolf's Glen" scene—in French beginning with "L'herbe tombe en pâlissant"—at the moment when Kaspar (in the French, Gaspard) successfully casts the sixth magic bullet, the eruption of the string cascade that one expected in Max's earlier aria is finally heard, as if all of the music between his aria in Act I and the Act II finale was slowly building toward that sonic explosion.

As John Warrack writes in *The Cambridge Berlioz Encyclopedia*, Berlioz's admiration for Weber's music was built on Weber's "revolutionary mastery

of the orchestra. Its appeal to Berlioz was the essentially Romantic example of making orchestral colour a vital aspect of the means of expression.” Berlioz recognized in Weber someone who knew how to utilize the sonic resources of the orchestra in a novel way, one that enhanced the on-stage drama and Weber’s musical depictions of characters.

Perhaps no written reception by Berlioz so clearly epitomizes his admiration for Weber’s orchestration than Berlioz’s entry on the clarinet in his *Grand traité d’instrumentation et d’orchestration modernes (Treatise on Instrumentation and Orchestration)*. Describing the moment in the overture, following the E-flat major horn blasts that will later announce Max’s arrival at the Wolf’s Glen, the floating clarinet part that emerges, high above the active tremolo string texture, perfectly evokes Max’s beloved Agathe. Berlioz rhetorically asks about this “dreamy” phrase: “Is this not the lonely virgin, the huntsman’s fair bride, her eyes upturned to heaven, mingling her passionate plaint with the roar of the storm-wracked forest? ... Oh Weber!!!” To meet the challenge of stewarding Weber’s true compositional intentions at the Opéra in June 1841, Berlioz’s rapture at the purity of the clarinet might help us to understand why Berlioz felt that he alone was the man for the job.

—Dr. Samuel T. Nemeth

Dr. Nemeth teaches courses in music history and culture in the Performing Arts Department at Ohio Wesleyan University.

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# The Artists

Ric Kallisher



## Leon Botstein, Conductor

Leon Botstein has been music director and principal conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra since 1992. He is also music director of The Orchestra Now, an innovative training orchestra composed of top musicians from around the world. He is co-artistic director of Bard SummerScape and the Bard Music Festival, which take place at the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College, where he has been president since 1975. He is also conductor laureate of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, where he served as music

director from 2003–2011. In 2018, he assumed artistic directorship of the Grafenegg Academy in Austria.

Botstein is also active as a guest conductor and can be heard on numerous recordings with the London Symphony (including a Grammy Award-nominated recording of Popov's First Symphony), the London Philharmonic, NDR-Hamburg, and the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. Many of his live performances with the American Symphony Orchestra are available online. His recording with the ASO of Paul Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* was named one of the top recordings of 2015 by several publications, and his recent recording of Gershwin piano music with the Royal Philharmonic was hailed by *The Guardian* and called "something special ... in a crowded field" by *Musicweb International*.

Botstein is the author of numerous articles and books, including *The Compleat Brahms* (Norton), *Jefferson's Children* (Doubleday), *Judentum und Modernität* (Böhlau), and *Von Beethoven zu Berg* (Zsolnay). He is also the editor of *The Musical Quarterly*. For his contributions to music, he has received the award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and Harvard University's prestigious Centennial Award, as well as the Cross of Honor, First Class from the government of Austria. Other recent awards include the Bruckner Society's Julio Kilenyi Medal of Honor for his interpretations of that composer's music and the Leonard Bernstein Award for the Elevation of Music in Society. In 2011, he was inducted into the American Philosophical Society.

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## Freddie Ballentine, Tenor

Hailing from Norfolk, Virginia, Grammy Award-winning tenor Freddie Ballentine was the 2021 recipient of the Kennedy Center's Marian

Anderson Award and is an alumnus of the Cafritz Young Artists of Washington National Opera and LA Opera's Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program. Ballentine's 2025–2026 season includes his Bayerische Staatsoper debut in *Salome*, which he will also record with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería. He returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Sportin' Life in *Porgy and Bess*, and makes his Ruhrtriennale debut, reprising Venables/Huffman's *We Are The Lucky Ones*.



Daniel Welch

Recent highlights include the world premiere of *We Are The Lucky Ones* (Dutch National Opera); Kevin Richardson in *The Central Park Five* with Detroit Opera; Ben Marco in *The Manchurian Candidate* (Austin Opera); The Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel* (Utah Opera); Sam in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); Jack O'Brien and Toby Higgins in Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (Opera Vlaanderen); Loge in Wagner's *The Rhinegold* and Nick in *The Handmaid's Tale* (English National Opera); Sportin' Life (The Metropolitan Opera, English National Opera, Dutch National Opera); Don José in *Carmen* (Seattle Opera); and Monostatos in Barrie Kosky's production of *Die Zauberflöte* and Amon in *Akhnaten* (LA Opera).

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## Cadie Bryan, Soprano

Louisiana-born soprano Cadie J. Bryan recently made a star turn as Milada in Smetana's *Dalibor* at Bard SummerScape, where critics praised her "radiant tone and nuanced singing" and "stage-commanding performance." Bryan's 2025–2026 season includes covering the leading role of Sarah Kavalier in *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* at the Metropolitan Opera; Annette in *Le Freyschütz* with the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall; returns to Des Moines Metro Opera as Curley's Wife in *Of Mice and Men* and the Atlanta Opera as Woglinde in *Götterdämmerung*; her role debut as Nedda in *Pagliacci* with Piedmont Opera; and Laurey in *Oklahoma!* with Pensacola Opera.



Daniel Welch

Bryan began the 2024–2025 season in a return to Atlanta Opera as Musetta in *La bohème*. She bowed in the Santa Fe Symphony's performances of Handel's *Messiah*, joined Andrea Bocelli for performances in Napa Valley, and debuted with North Carolina Opera, returning to the role of Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*. 2023 brought her New Orleans Opera debut in that role, followed by covering the role of Tovah in *Émigré* with the New York Philharmonic.

Bryan is an alumna of Ravinia's Steans Institute and has appeared in concert with the Dallas Opera for the Hart Institute for Women Conductors.

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Maurice Korbel



### **Nicole Chevalier, Soprano**

American soprano Nicole Chevalier, praised as “extraordinarily powerful—as good an actor as she is a singer” (*The Guardian UK*), is known for her work in wide-ranging repertoire with directors such as Petter Sellars, Laurent Pelly, Evgeny Titov, Dmitri Tcherniakov, Benedikt von Peter, Christoph Marthaler, Calixto Bieito, Vasily Barkhatov, and Peter Konwitschny. This season, she debuts her long-awaited *Salome* at the Komische Oper Berlin, brings her acclaimed *Violetta* (*La Traviata*) to Theater Basel, and debuts with the Volksoper Wien and American Symphony Orchestra.

Chevalier's international breakthrough was as Elettra in *Idomeneo* at the Salzburg Festival under Teodor Currentzis. Other career highlights include performances at Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Staatsoper Berlin, Theater an der Wien, Staatsoper Hamburg, and Opera Vlaanderen, with recent debuts at Teatro Real Madrid (Eva in *Die Meistersinger*), Deutsche Oper am Rhein (*Rusalka*), English National Opera (*Violetta*), and Oper Leipzig (Mary in *Mary, Queen of Scots*).

Chevalier first earned wide attention in the ensemble of the Komische Oper, where she won Germany's Der Faust Award and Opernwelt's Singer of the Year. A graduate of Indiana University and The Juilliard School, she makes her professional New York City debut in this appearance with the ASO.

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Sarah Shatz



### **Philip Cokorinos, Bass**

Hailed by *Opera News* for his “comedic high jinks” and “first-rate singing,” Philip Cokorinos has appeared in more than 400 performances of 40 operas at the Metropolitan Opera, including *Live from the Met* telecasts of *Don Giovanni*, the world premiere of *The Ghosts of Versailles*, and the Met's premieres of *Sly*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Gambler*, and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*.

Last season, Cokorinos returned to the Met to cover Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro*. He also joined Opera Tampa to sing the title role in *Don Pasquale*, El Paso Opera to sing Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette*, and he finished his season with the Bard Music Festival, reprising the role of

Grandfather in Martinů's *Julietta*. This season, he rejoins the Metropolitan Opera to cover Matthieu in *Andrea Chénier*. He also joins Florentine Opera as the Sacristan in *Tosca*. For Vero Beach Opera, he will perform as both Sparafucile and Monterone in their production of *Rigoletto*.

Outside of the Met, recent appearances include Benoît and Alcindoro in *La bohème* with the Atlanta Opera and Pacific Symphony, Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore* with Anchorage Opera and San Francisco Opera (cover), and the Sacristan in *Tosca* at Los Angeles Opera and Opera San Antonio.

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### **Joo Won Kang**, Baritone

Joo Won Kang, South Korean baritone, began this current season with a return to San Francisco Opera, creating two roles in the world premiere of *The Lion King*. He next made his role and company debuts, singing Zurga in *The Pearl Fishers* with Palm Beach Opera. This spring, he returns to the Metropolitan Opera (where he made his debut in 2021 as Marcello in *La bohème*), to again sing Ping in *Turandot*.

He has sung leading roles with such opera companies as Canadian Opera, Minnesota, Arizona, Utah, Detroit, St. Louis, Seattle, Fort Worth, and the Wexford Festival. His roles include Figaro, Eugene Onegin, Sharpless, Papageno, Dandini, Chou En-lai in *Nixon in China*, and his signature role, Germont in *La Traviata*.

Kang has appeared with such leading orchestras as Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, and Minnesota Orchestra. He is a top prize winner in a number of prestigious international vocal competitions.

Joo Won Kang appears courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera.



Kristin Hoebemann

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### **Adam Partridge**, Baritone

Baritone Adam Partridge is an emerging young artist praised for his rich vocal timbre and commanding stage presence. Recent operatic highlights include Prince Tarquinius in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* at Rice University and the title roles in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*.

Partridge recently completed two seasons as a studio artist with Wolf Trap Opera, appearing as Benoit and Alcindoro in *La bohème* and covering roles in *Silent Night*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *Semele*, and *Don Giovanni*. In 2025, he joined Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as a Gerdine Young Artist, covering



roles in *Die Fledermaus* and the world premiere of *This House*, and debuting as Starveling in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Most recently, Partridge was a 2025–2026 Herndon Foundation Emerging Artist at Virginia Opera.

On the concert stage, Partridge has appeared as soloist in works including Handel's *Messiah*, Fauré's Requiem, and Mozart's Grand Mass in C Minor. A rising competitor, Partridge was a 2025 Connecticut district winner of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition. Originally from Jacksonville, Florida, he holds degrees from Stetson University and Rice University and will

join the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago as a 2026–2027 emerging artist.



### Alfred Walker, Bass-Baritone

In the 2025–2026 season, Alfred Walker returns to the Lyric Opera of Chicago for Creonte in *Medea* and to the Metropolitan Opera for Porgy in *Porgy and Bess*. He also sings Scarpia in *Tosca* with both Glyndebourne Opera and Florentine Opera, Nourabad in *Les pêcheurs de perles* in a return to Palm Beach Opera, and Jochanaan in *Salome* with Cincinnati Opera. On the concert stage he joins the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall for Gaspard in *Le Freyschütz*, and joins the Cincinnati Symphony and acclaimed soprano Julia Bullock for the *Porgy and Bess Suite*. Recent credits

include: Don Fernando in *Fidelio* (Chicago); Enobarbus in Adams's *Antony and Cleopatra* (the Met Opera, Gran Teatre del Liceu, and San Francisco Opera); High Priest of Dagon in *Samson et Dalila* (New Orleans); the King in Smetena's *Dalibor* and the Man in a Helmet in *Julietta* (Bard SummerScape); Verdi's Requiem (The Philadelphia Orchestra); Porgy in the Suite from *Porgy and Bess* (Cologne Philharmonie); Orest in *Elektra* (Dallas Opera); Frère Laurant in *Roméo et Juliette*, Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, and Rambaldo in *La rondine* (the Met Opera); Vater in *Hänsel und Gretel* (Chicago); Amonasro in *Aida* (Detroit); the title role in Saint-Saëns's *Henry VIII* (Bard SummerScape); Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* (LA Philharmonic under Maestro Gustavo Dudamel); and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (Boston Philharmonic).

### Jason Zacher, Bass-Baritone

Bass-baritone Jason Zacher is quickly gaining national attention as a rising new talent and versatile performer. This season, Zacher will make house

debut with Portland Opera as Colline in *La bohème*, Tulsa Opera as the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and Sarasota Opera as Olin Blitch in *Susannah*. In addition, he will return to The Glimmerglass Festival as Benny in *Happy End*, a co-production with Opera Saratoga. On the concert stage, Zacher joins Chattanooga Symphony and Opera as the bass soloist for Verdi's Requiem and the American Symphony Orchestra as Un ermite in *Le Freyschütz* at Carnegie Hall.



J. Demetrie Photography

Zacher recently completed a two-year tenure as a member of the prestigious Glynn Studio Artist program at the Atlanta Opera, taking the stage in their productions of *Frankenstein*, *Rigoletto*, *La bohème*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Magic Flute*, *Macbeth*, *Siegfried*, and *Semele*. Last season, he also joined Central City Opera as the Wizard in *Once Upon a Mattress*, South Florida Symphony as Pangloss and Voltaire in *Candide*, Resonance Works as Enrico VIII in *Anna Bolena*, as well as Tulsa Opera and Central City Opera for gala concerts.

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## American Symphony Orchestra

Now in its 64th season, the American Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1962 by Leopold Stokowski, with a mission of providing great music within the means of everyone. Music Director Leon Botstein expanded that mission when he joined the ASO in 1992, creating thematic concerts that explore music from the perspective of the visual arts, literature, religion, and history, and reviving rarely performed works that audiences would otherwise never have a chance to hear performed live.

The ASO's signature programming includes its Vanguard Series, which presents concerts of rare orchestral repertoire at Carnegie Hall, Bryant Park, and additional venues; its Chamber Series, which features musical programs curated by ASO musicians and performed at venues throughout New York City's boroughs; and various additional events dedicated to enriching and reflecting the diverse perspectives of American culture. During the summer months, the ASO is the orchestra-in-residence at Bard's SummerScape Festival and performs at the Bard Music Festival.

As part of its commitment to expanding the standard orchestral repertoire, the ASO has released recordings on the Telarc, New World, Bridge, Koch, and Vanguard labels, and live performances are also available for digital download. In many cases, these are the only existing recordings of some of the forgotten works that have been restored through ASO performances.

## Bard Festival Chorale

The Bard Festival Chorale was formed in 2003 as the resident choir of the Bard Music Festival. It consists of the finest ensemble singers from New York City and surrounding areas. Many of its members have distinguished careers as soloists and as performers in a variety of choral groups; all possess a shared enthusiasm for the exploration of new and unfamiliar music.

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### James Bagwell, Director, Bard Festival Chorale

James Bagwell maintains an active international schedule as a conductor of choral, operatic, and orchestral music. He was most recently named associate conductor of The Orchestra Now (TÖN) and in 2009 was appointed principal guest conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra, leading them in concerts at both Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. From 2009–2015 he served as music director of The Collegiate Chorale, with whom he conducted a number of rarely-performed operas-in-concert at Carnegie Hall, including Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda*, Rossini's *Môise et Pharaon*, and Boito's *Mefistofele*. He conducted the New York premiere of Philip Glass's *Toltec Symphony* and Golijov's *Oceana*, both at Carnegie Hall. His performance of Kurt Weill's *Knickerbocker Holiday* at Alice Tully Hall was recorded live for Gaslight Records and is the only complete recording of this musical. Since 2011, he has collaborated with singer and composer Natalie Merchant, conducting a number of major orchestras across the country, including the San Francisco and Seattle Symphonies.

Bagwell has trained choruses for a number of major American and international orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic; Los Angeles Philharmonic; San Francisco, NHK (Japan), and St. Petersburg Symphonies; and the Budapest Festival, Mostly Mozart Festival, American Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Cincinnati Pops, and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestras. Since 2003, he has been director of choruses for the Bard Music Festival, conducting and preparing choral works during the summer festival at the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College.

He conducted some 25 productions as music director of Light Opera Oklahoma. At Bard SummerScape, he has lead various theatrical works, most notably *The Tender Land*, which received glowing praise from *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *Opera News*. From 2005–2010, he was music director of The Dessoff Choirs in New York, who under his leadership made numerous appearances at Carnegie Hall in addition to their regular season.

# American Symphony Orchestra

Leon Botstein, Conductor

## First Violins

Cyrus Beroukhim  
Concertmaster  
Yukie Handa  
Kobi Malkin  
Pauline Kim Harris  
Ashley Horne  
Patricia Davis  
Ragga Petursdottir  
Katherine Livolsi-Landau  
John Connelly  
Akiko Hosoi

## Second Violins

Richard Rood  
Principal  
Wende Namkung  
Naho Parrini  
Bruno Peña  
Diane Bruce  
Alexander Vselensky  
Dorothy Strahl  
Margarita Milkis

## Violas

William Frampton  
Principal  
Sally Shumway  
William Hakim  
Jason Mellow  
Rachel Riggs  
Kristina Giles

## Cellos

Eugene Moyer  
Principal  
Sarah Carter  
Annabelle Hoffman  
Diane Barere  
Emily Brausa  
Eliana Mendoza

## Basses

John Beal  
Principal  
Jordan Frazier  
Jack Wenger  
Louis Bruno  
Richard Ostrovsky

## Flutes

Keith Bonner  
Principal  
Rie Schmidt  
Diva Goodfriend-Koven  
Piccolo  
Jillian Reed  
Piccolo

## Oboes

Alexandra Knoll  
Principal  
Melanie Feld

## Clarinets

Shari Hoffman  
Principal  
Benjamin Baron  
Alec Manasse

## Bassoons

Gina Cuffari  
Principal  
Steven Palacio

## Horns

Zohar Schondorf  
Principal  
David Smith  
Judy Lee  
Kyle Hoyt  
Steven Sherts  
Assistant

## Trumpets

Gareth Flowers  
Principal  
John Dent  
Matthew Gasiorowski  
Cornet  
Andy Kemp  
Cornet

## Trombones

Richard Clark  
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Nicole Abissi  
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# Bard Festival Chorale

James Bagwell, Director

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Kendra Berentsen  
Erin Brittain  
Kate Bullock  
Emily Donato  
Amber Evans  
Amy Goldin  
Rachel Doehring  
Jackson  
Laura Jobin-Acosta  
Berit Johnson  
Hannah Penzner  
Ellen Taylor Sisson

## Altos

Rachel Arky  
Jennifer Borghi  
Donna Breitzer  
Rachel Deatherage  
Perri DiChristina  
Allison Gish

Erica Koehring  
Ema Mitrović  
Margaret O'Connell  
Elizabeth Picker  
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Anna Willson

## Tenors

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Daveed Buzaglo  
Christopher Carter  
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Rashard Deleston  
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