



**AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMS RICHARD STRAUSS' FIRST OPERA *GUNTRAM*
AT CARNEGIE HALL ON JUNE 6, 2025**

First NYC Performance of the Work Heard this Century

**Cast Includes Soprano Angela Meade, Tenor John Matthew Myers,
Baritone Alexander Birch Elliott, and Bass-Baritones Christopher Job and Kevin Short**



New York, NY, May 1, 2025 – Music Director **Leon Botstein** conducts the American Symphony Orchestra (ASO) in a rare performance of Strauss' first opera, *Guntram*, at Carnegie Hall on Friday, June 6 at 8 pm. For the ASO's final concert this season, the cast showcases Metropolitan Opera star soprano **Angela Meade**, "...the most talked about soprano of her generation" (*Opera News*); acclaimed tenor **John Matthew Myers**, hailed for his "remarkable emotional depth and range" (*Opera Magazine*); baritone **Alexander Birch Elliott**, praised for his "beguiling timbre of mahogany" (*New York Times*); and bass-baritones **Christopher Job**, who performed in multiple roles this season at the Met, and Met Opera veteran **Kevin Short**.

The first of Strauss' 14 operas, *Guntram* is notable as both his only opera to center on a male character, and to include a role (Freihild) composed for his wife, a renowned singer of the day. Although the Wagner-like opera remains a work of great musical beauty, it was panned in Strauss' hometown of Munich at its 1895 premiere, and all future performances of *Guntram* were subsequently canceled, a development that underscores the rarity of this Carnegie Hall performance. The 1983 U.S. premiere of *Guntram* took place in New York City, and the opera has not been performed there since then.

[Strauss' *Guntram*](#)

Friday, June 6, 2025, at 8 pm, Carnegie Hall, Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage

Pre-concert Talk at 7 pm

American Symphony Orchestra

Leon Botstein, Conductor

[Angela Meade](#), Freihild

[John Matthew Myers](#), Guntram, a singer

[Kevin Short](#), The Old Duke

[Alexander Birch Elliott](#), Duke Robert

[Christopher Job](#), Friedhold, a singer

[Rodell Rosel](#), The Duke's Jester

[Katharine Goeldner](#), Old Woman

[Bernard Holcomb](#), Old Man

Bard Festival Chorale

[James Bagwell](#), Music Director of the Bard Festival Chorale

Richard Strauss: *Guntram* (Opera in Three Acts), Op. 25 (1887-93, rev.1939)

Completed in 1893, Richard Strauss' first opera, *Guntram*, is a story of love, guilt, and renunciation, revealing a young Strauss positioning himself as a successor to Wagner. Strauss' mastery of orchestral and vocal-writing techniques, and the melodic arcs that anticipate such later, more famous operas such as *Salome*, *Elektra*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*, make a strong argument in *Guntram*'s favor for a prime position in Strauss' compositional output, instead of the footnote it has received. The story follows Guntram, a German poet and singer who wants to save the suicidal Friedhold from her malicious husband, Duke Robert. In an Act II swordfight, Robert is killed by Guntram, who is imprisoned and sentenced to death. Guntram and Friedhold then confess their love for each other, and she offers to free him from prison so they can go off together. But in the end, Guntram seeks a solitary path of redemption for falling in love with another man's wife, breaks his lute, and vows never to sing again. The opera's early unpopularity was such a piercing setback for the composer, he mounted a grave marker in his backyard that read:

*Here lies the venerable, virtuous young Guntram—
Minnesinger, who was gruesomely slain by the symphony orchestra of his own father
May he rest in peace!*

Tickets, priced at \$25–\$65, are available at carnegiehall.org, by calling CarnegieCharge at 212.247.7800, or by visiting the box office at 57th St. & 7th Ave.

American Symphony Orchestra

The American Symphony Orchestra (ASO) was founded in 1962 by Leopold Stokowski with the mission of providing great music for everyone. Leon Botstein expanded that focus when he joined the ASO as Music Director in 1992 by creating concerts that explore music through the lens of the visual arts, literature, religion, and history, as well as by reviving rarely performed works that audiences would otherwise never hear performed live.

The ASO's signature programming includes its *Vanguard Series*, which features concerts of seldom-performed orchestral repertoire presented at Carnegie Hall, Bryant Park, and other historic venues, and its *Chamber Series*—curated by ASO's musicians—offering concert programs dedicated to reflecting the diverse perspectives of American culture. During the summer, the ASO is the orchestra-in-residence at Bard's SummerScape and performs at the Bard Music Festival. All of the ASO presentations comprise a year-round series of vital and innovative programming for audiences of all backgrounds.

As part of its commitment to expanding the standard orchestral repertoire and ensuring accessibility to musical masterpieces, the ASO offers free streaming of exclusive live recordings on its digital platform, *ASO Online*. Content includes SummerScape operas, chamber performances, and short films. In many cases, these are the only existing recordings of some of the forgotten works that have been restored through ASO performances.

For more information, please visit americansymphony.org.

Leon Botstein

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 and principal guest conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, where he served as music director from 2003–11. In 2018, he assumed artistic directorship of Campus Grafenegg and the Grafenegg Academy in Austria. Mr. Botstein also has an active career as a guest conductor with orchestras around the globe and has made numerous recordings. He is a prolific author and music historian and the recipient of numerous honors for his contributions to the music industry. In 2019, *The New York Times* named Leon Botstein a “champion of overlooked works...who has tirelessly worked to bring to light worthy scores by neglected composers.” More info online at LeonBotstein.com.

The ASO's Vanguard Series is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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Images (left to right): Angela Meade, credit Faye Fox; John Matthew Myers, credit Caitlin Oldham; Alexander Birch Elliott, credit Matt Madison; Christopher Job, credit Daniel Welch; and Kevin Short, credit Susan Beard.

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