



**AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA DEBUTS AT LINCOLN CENTER'S DAVID GEFFEN HALL
WITH *TAPPING INTO THE TWENTIES*, ON MARCH 23**

Guest Soloist is Pianist Orion Weiss



New York, NY, February 11, 2025 – Music Director **Leon Botstein** leads the American Symphony Orchestra (ASO) in its debut performance at Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall, the 3rd of four full orchestral concerts in New York City during the ensemble's 63rd season, on Sunday, March 23 at 3 pm. The afternoon program offers works from the 1920s by John Alden Carpenter, Erwin Schulhoff, and William Grant Still, that demonstrate the influence of jazz on the music of that time period; and a symphonic poem by Edgard Varèse exploring the mysterious and powerful nature of the constellations above. Award-winning pianist and recording artist **Orion Weiss**, hailed as a "brilliant pianist" by *The New York Times*, also makes his David Geffen Hall debut at this concert as the featured soloist in Schulhoff's seldom-heard Concerto for Piano and Small Orchestra.

The ASO's next concert will be a rare performance of Richard Strauss' first opera, *Guntram*, with the Bard Festival Chorale on June 6 at Carnegie Hall.

[Tapping into the Twenties](#)

Sunday, March 23, 2025, at 3 pm, David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center

Pre-concert Talk at 2 pm

American Symphony Orchestra

Leon Botstein, conductor

[Orion Weiss](#), piano

John Alden Carpenter: *Skyscrapers* (1924)

Erwin Schulhoff: Concerto for Piano and Small Orchestra, Op. 43 (1923)

William Grant Still: Symphony No. 1, *Afro-American Symphony* (1929-30)

Edgard Varèse: *Arcana* (1925-27)

The ASO's first concert at David Geffen Hall focuses on composers who came of age in the 1920s. Chief among these in the U.S. was Edgar Varèse, whose symphonic poem *Arcana* was inspired by the topics of alchemy and astrology, and particularly by the writings of 16th-century physician and astrologer Paracelsus. Varèse dedicated *Arcana* to Leopold Stokowski, who founded the American Symphony Orchestra and conducted the work's premiere in 1927. Varèse's pupil, William Grant Still, found inspiration in the blues and spirituals of Black Americans. In his best-known work, the *Afro-American Symphony*, Still represents the experiences of the African diaspora, from the sorrows of the past to hope in the future.

Among the first composers to recognize the expressive potential of jazz in the 1920s was Austro-Czech composer Erwin Schulhoff. Blending improvisational passages with Neoclassical elements, his 1924 *Concerto for Piano and Small Orchestra* shows the compositional range and versatility of this unjustifiably neglected composer, a leading figure in the "Lost Generation" of Jewish composers who were suppressed and (as was the case with Schulhoff) lost their lives during the Holocaust. The soloist, **Orion Weiss**, has performed with dozens of orchestras in North America, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and New York Philharmonic. Another composer who sought to create a distinctly American sound was John Alden Carpenter. His *Skycrapers*, with its language of jazz and popular tunes, blends seamlessly with the idiom of dissonance and asymmetric rhythms modernized in his time. Like Varèse, Carpenter imaginatively portrays "the many movements and sounds of modern American life."

Tickets, priced at \$25–\$65, are available at lincolncenter.org, by calling CarnegieCharge at 212.721.6500, or by visiting the box office at 10 Lincoln Center Plaza.

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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Image: Orion Weiss, credit: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

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