



**AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES 2023-24 SEASON
SEPTEMBER 7, 2023 – MARCH 22, 2024**

Four Orchestral Programs Include Free Opening Concerts at Bryant Park and the Kupferberg Center for the Arts and Performances at Carnegie Hall and Riverside Church

Schoenberg's Massive *Gurre-Lieder*, Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*, and Dvořák's Requiem

Free Chamber Concerts in Bryant Park Featuring a New Work by Javier Diaz

New York, NY, June 6, 2023 — The American Symphony Orchestra (ASO) announced its 62nd season featuring four full-orchestra programs at Carnegie Hall, Manhattan's Riverside Church, and a **free opening picnic concert** titled *American Expressions* in Bryant Park on September 7, repeated and also free at the Kupferberg Center for the Arts in Queens on September 10. The program focuses on music inspired by jazz, theater, and dance that was created in response to World War I, with works by composers including George Antheil, Aaron Copland, and Florence Price.

Season Highlights

The season continues by uncovering a rich selection of seldom heard jewels from history's choral catalogue. One of **Handel's** lesser-known oratorios, *Judas Maccabaeus*, is presented in Morningside Heights at Manhattan's Riverside Church, modeled after the 13th Century Gothic cathedral in Chartres, France (December 14), followed by a rare performance of **Dvořák's Requiem** (January 25, Carnegie Hall). The season concludes with **Schoenberg's massive cantata, *Gurre-Lieder***, infrequently performed due to the unusually large number of musicians required. The performance celebrates the centennial of the work's premiere in 1913 (March 22, Carnegie Hall).

"As we prepare for our 62nd season, I am energized by our ongoing ability to renew live orchestral music as a vital force in contemporary American culture," said Music Director Leon Botstein. "Now that we have emerged from the major restrictions of the pandemic, the ASO continues that mission in 2023-24 by presenting large choral works that highlight the power of the human voice."

Chamber Music at Bryant Park

The ASO also offers *America UNBOUND*, with two additional **free performances** at Bryant Park, as part of its chamber concert series, presenting percussionist and composer **Javier Diaz's** new work *Suns and Moons of a New World* (September 18 & 25). The composition, commissioned by the ASO, premiered at Bryant Park on May 22 and 23, 2023.

Digital Premiere of *Ficciones*

The ASO offers the digital premiere of *Ficciones*, an immersive concert film experience featuring Roberto Sierra's Concerto for Electric Violin and Orchestra, which combines a mixture of Sierra's Latin-influenced ideas with modern compositional techniques through the voice of the electric violin, performed by renowned

soloist **Tracy Silverman**. The Puerto Rican composer based his four-movement concerto on short stories by the late Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges. The ASO co-commissioned the work and performed its world premiere on June 5, 2022 at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater, conducted by Leon Botstein. The short film is available to watch for free by clicking [here](#) through September 1, 2023.

Details of the ASO's 2023-24 season are available at americansymphony.org.

Opening Program: American Expressions

Thursday September 7, 2023 at 7 pm, part of the Picnic Performances Series at Bryant Park
Sunday September 10, 2023 at 3 pm, Kupferberg Center for the Arts, 6530 Kissena Blvd, Flushing, NY

American Symphony Orchestra

Leon Botstein, conductor

George Antheil: *A Jazz Symphony*

Ruth Crawford Seeger: *Music for Small Orchestra*

Aaron Copland: *Music for the Theatre*

Florence Price: *Andante moderato* (for string orchestra)

John Alden Carpenter: *Krazy Kat*

In the years immediately following World War I, the American artistic scene experienced an extraordinary burst of creativity. Responding to the horror and brutality of the war, artists, writers, and composers rejected the ideals of the previous century, focusing instead on creating a means of expression that would reflect the realities this new age required. With jazz, many American composers found a source of distinctly American inspiration that was modern and exciting. Some of the works offered in this program reflect a fascination with the language of the Roaring Twenties and its rhythmic energy and catchy melodies. Other composers sought to push the boundaries of musical expression with 'ultra-modern' language such as jagged counterpoint or atonality. The experimental impulses of this generation are presented here with works by some of its key proponents.

Tickets and Seating: Free performance. For Bryant Park on Sept. 7, no tickets or RSVP required, staff lends out free picnic blankets, provides bistro chairs, and offers a curated selection of food and drink to purchase from local vendors. For Sept. 10 at Kupferberg Center for the Arts, attendance is free with online RSVP at americansymphony.org (starting on August 10, 2023).

America UNBOUND: Free Chamber Concerts in Bryant Park

Monday September 18 and Monday September 25, 2023 at 5:30 pm

Bryant Park Upper Terrace

Toyin Spellman-Diaz, oboe, English horn, voice

Shari Hoffman, clarinet

John Sheppard, trumpet

Javier Diaz, percussion

Shiqi Zhong, percussion

Pauline Kim Harris, violin

Pete Donovan, double bass

Javier Diaz: *Suns and Moons of a New World*

I. *Preludio de la Gran Sabana (Prelude of the Great Plains)*

II. *Mis Muertos Cantan (All My Dead Sing)*

- III. Concierto Barroco (Baroque Concerto)
- IV. Domingos Álvares, *A Priest of Sakpatá in Eighteenth-Century Brazil*
- V. Sinfonía de Cámara (Chamber Symphony)

The ASO continues its series of free concerts in Bryant Park with ***America UNBOUND***. The program underlines the importance of multicultural influences in the music of the Americas and presents the new chamber work *Suns and Moons of a New World*, by percussionist and composer [Javier Diaz](#). Offering a compositional look at the American continent unbound through musical histories that emphasize the universality of sound, word, and song, the piece incorporates musical and cultural elements from across the Americas, including the use of a J.S. Bach chorale in Venezuelan merengue. It is performed by a chamber ensemble of ASO musicians and features GRAMMY-nominated Imani Winds' oboist Toyin Spellman-Diaz. Commissioned by the ASO, the work received its world premiere at Bryant Park in May 2023.

Tickets and Seating: Free, no tickets required. Music lovers will find a limited number of first-come, first-served chairs set up near Bryant Park's Upper Terrace to enjoy an after-work respite with live music.

[Judas Maccabaeus](#)

Thursday December 14, 2023, 7 pm at Riverside Church Nave, 490 Riverside Drive, New York, NY

American Symphony Orchestra

Leon Botstein, conductor

Members of Bard Festival Chorale and Riverside Choir

George Frideric Handel: *Judas Maccabaeus*, HWV 63

The ASO offers an alternative to Handel's *Messiah* with another oratorio, *Judas Maccabaeus*. Set amidst the story of Hanukkah, the oratorio is a dramatization of the Jews' resistance to their oppressors during the Maccabean Revolt. Handel's depiction of a peoples' triumph over tyranny is brought to life through exultant choruses, sung by the members of Bard Festival Chorale and Riverside Choir and soloists. Soloists will be announced at a later date.

Tickets: Priced at \$25–\$35, and \$15 for students and seniors, are available on September 1 at americansymphony.org.

[Dvořák: Requiem](#)

Thursday January 25, 2024, 8 pm at Carnegie Hall, Isaac Stern Auditorium

Conductor's Notes Q&A at 7 pm

American Symphony Orchestra

Leon Botstein, conductor

Antonín Dvořák: Requiem, Op. 89

Antonin Dvořák's Requiem (1890) is nowhere nearly as well known or performed as the composer's late symphonies, chamber pieces, or other choral works, such as his Stabat Mater. Dvořák's Requiem is close to Fauré's or Cherubini's contributions to the genre in its often introspective mood, its gentle melodies and overall lyricism. The use of a four-note chromatic motif in almost all sections of the piece gives the work a feel of thematic unity. While rich in invention and expressivity, its melancholic examination of the mysteries of life and death make the Requiem more deserving of further exploration in the public sphere.

Tickets: Priced at \$25–\$65, tickets are available on September 1 at carnegiehall.org, by calling CarnegieCharge at 212.247.7800, or visiting the box office at 57th St. & 7th Ave.

Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder*

Friday, March 22, 2024, 8 pm at Carnegie Hall, Isaac Stern Auditorium

Conductor's Notes Q&A 7 pm

American Symphony Orchestra

Leon Botstein, conductor

Bard Festival Chorale

James Bagwell, choral director

Arnold Schoenberg: *Gurre-Lieder*

To mark the centennial of its 1913 world premiere in Vienna, and more than 90 years since its 1932 American premiere by American Symphony Orchestra founder Leopold Stokowski with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the ASO presents Arnold Schoenberg's massive and rarely performed *Gurre-Lieder*. Wagnerian in conception, this cantata represents the ideal of late Romanticism, with its lush, colorful orchestration of more than 150 musicians, endless melodies, and a highly chromatic harmonic language. The work is seldom performed due to the sheer number of artists involved and the logistical challenges it poses. The cantata springs from a sonnet in an 1868 novella titled *A Cactus Blooms* by the young Danish poet Jens Peter Jacobsen, who based his prose on a 14th-century Gurre legend about King Valdemar, his passion for the maiden Tove Lille, and their love tryst at Gurre Castle. Soloists will be announced at a later date.

Tickets: Priced at \$25–\$65, tickets are available on September 1 at carnegiehall.org, by calling CarnegieCharge at 212.247.7800, or visiting the box office at 57th St. & 7th Ave.

American Symphony Orchestra

The American Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1962 by Leopold Stokowski with the mission of providing 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, and various other 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, performs at the Bard Music Festival, and offers chamber music performances throughout the New York City area.

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 streaming](#). 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 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, as well as being a prolific author and music historian. He is 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.

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