



**AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES 2025-26 SEASON  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2025 – APRIL 16, 2026**

**Four Symphonic Concerts, Including a Free Season-Opening Program  
Presented at Bryant Park and the Kupferberg Center for the Arts,  
Featuring Music by American Composers Living in New York in the '40s and '50s**

**250th Anniversary of Declaration of Independence Celebrated with Bristow's Symphony No. 5,  
U.S. Premiere of Peter Cornelius' Stabat Mater Coupled with Cherubini's Requiem,  
200 Years Since Weber's Death Commemorated with Berlioz's Arrangement of *Der Freischütz***

**New York, NY, July 21, 2025** — The American Symphony Orchestra (ASO) announced its 64th season of five full-orchestra concerts led by Music Director Leon Botstein at Carnegie Hall, Bryant Park, the Kupferberg Center for the Arts, and St. Bartholomew's Church. In what has become a popular tradition, the ASO will launch its 2025-26 season on September 12, as part of the Picnic Performances series at Bryant Park. The free performance, titled *New York Profiles*, spotlights American composers who worked in New York during the 1940s and '50s. The program will be repeated and also free at the Kupferberg Center for the Arts in Queens on September 14.

**Season highlights** also include a program of sacred works by Cornelius and Cherubini (St. Bartholomew's Church, November 13); an evening marking the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence with the first performance since 1898 of George Bristow's massive Fifth Symphony, alongside a selection of Harry Burleigh's African-American spirituals and works by Richard Wagner and Dudley Buck (Carnegie Hall, January 30); and a seldom-heard presentation of Hector Berlioz's 1841 version of Weber's opera *Der Freischütz* (Carnegie Hall, April 16).

"In 2026, America observes the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. American Symphony Orchestra joins that celebration in the 2025-26 season with the presentation of works by both eminent and lesser-known American composers, as well as by those who lived in New York City and left a lasting influence on the Golden Age of American Classical music with their works," said Music Director and Principal Conductor Leon Botstein. "I am also delighted to start our season with a free concert in Bryant Park for the fourth consecutive year, in what has become a cherished tradition."

**New York Profiles**

**Friday, September 12, 2025 at 7 PM, Bryant Park**

**Sunday, September 14, 2025 at 3 PM, Kupferberg Center**

**American Symphony Orchestra**

**Leon Botstein, Conductor**

**Ulysses Kay:** "Joy and Fears" from the soundtrack to *The Quiet One*

**Henry Cowell:** Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 10

**Julia Perry:** A Short Piece for Small Orchestra

**Aaron Copland:** *Appalachian Spring* Suite

**Norman Dello Joio:** *New York Profiles*

*New York Profiles* showcases five American composers whose works reflect the diverse musical styles of mid-20th-century America, and their lasting influence on both the city and American music. These composers, living and working in New York during the 1940s and '50s, contributed to what is known as the "Golden Age" of American Classical music. Aaron Copland, a defining voice of American music, made New York his home while composing *Appalachian Spring*, an homage to American pioneer life. Henry Cowell shaped New York's early experimental music scene, as heard in his *Hymn and Fuquing Tune No. 10*. Julia Perry was closely connected to such New York musical institutions as Lincoln Center, where her *A Short Piece for Small Orchestra* was performed and recorded. Ulysses Kay, whose "Joy and Fears" is drawn from his soundtrack to *The Quiet One*, was also a key figure in New York's cultural world, while Norman Dello Joio's *New York Profiles* is a vivid musical portrait composed as a tribute to his native New York.

**Attendance for both performances is free, no RSVP required.** Bryant Park staff lends out hundreds of free picnic blankets, provides bistro chairs, and offers a curated selection of food and drink to purchase from local vendors. Seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

### *Requiem and Revelation*

**Thursday, November 13, 2025 at St. Bartholomew's Church**

**Pre-concert Talk at 7PM**

**Concert at 8PM**

**American Symphony Orchestra**

**Leon Botstein, Conductor**

**Bard Festival Chorale**

**James Bagwell, Music Director of the Bard Festival Chorale**

*Soloists to be announced at a later date*

**Peter Cornelius:** Stabat Mater (**U.S. Premiere**)

**Luigi Cherubini:** Requiem in C minor

Known primarily for songs and stage works – particularly his comic opera *Der Barber von Bagdad* – German composer Peter Cornelius devoted his early career almost entirely to writing sacred and chamber music. Chief among the works of that period is his 1849 setting of the *Stabat Mater*, a piece of remarkable originality, with bold harmonic language, unusual formal design, and a dramatic flair that anticipates his later, operatic explorations. Luigi Cherubini, another composer long associated with opera, created an impressive catalogue of religious music as well. Written in 1816 to commemorate the 24th anniversary of the execution of King Louis XVI, Cherubini's *Requiem* blends a somber tone with surprising orchestral effects, moments of reflective beauty, and expressivity. His innovative setting of the Requiem was highly regarded among some of Classical music's most influential composers, including Beethoven, Berlioz, Schumann, and Brahms.

**Tickets**, priced at \$25-\$65, are available on September 8 at [americansymphony.org](https://americansymphony.org).

### *Forging an American Musical Identity*

**Friday, January 30, 2026 at Carnegie Hall, Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage**

**Pre-concert Talk at 7PM**

**Concert at 8PM**

**American Symphony Orchestra**

**Leon Botstein, Conductor**

**Bard Festival Chorale**

**James Bagwell**, Music Director of the Bard Festival Chorale

*Soloists to be announced at a later date*

**Dudley Buck**: Festival Overture on the American National Air

**Harry Burleigh**: *Go Down Moses*

*Behold That Star*

*Swing Low, Swing Chariot*

**Richard Wagner**: Grosser Festmarsch (American Centennial March)

**George Bristow**: Symphony No. 5 ("Niagara")

The ASO celebrates America's 250th anniversary with a program exploring what it means to express American identity through music. The evening's centerpiece is George Bristow's massive Fifth Symphony – known as the "Niagara Symphony" – in its **first performance since the work's 1898 premiere**. The concert begins with two works of celebration: the Festival Overture on the American National Air by Dudley Buck and Richard Wagner's rarely performed American Centennial March, written for the opening centennial celebration of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. Also featured on the program are three African American spirituals – Go Down Moses, Behold That Star, and Swing Low, Swing Chariot – orchestrated by America's first prominent Black composer Harry Burleigh, whose legacy is honored here for its major, influential contributions to American concert music and the history of American art song.

**Tickets**, priced at \$25–\$65, are available on September 8 at [carnegiehall.org](https://carnegiehall.org), by calling CarnegieCharge at 212.247.7800, or by visiting the box office at 57th St. & 7th Ave.

### **Weber & Berlioz: Der Freischütz Reimagined**

**Thursday, April 16, 2026 at Carnegie Hall, Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage**

**Pre-concert Talk at 7PM**

**Concert at 8PM**

**American Symphony Orchestra**

**Leon Botstein**, Conductor

**Bard Festival Chorale**

**James Bagwell**, Music Director of the Bard Festival Chorale

*Soloists to be announced at a later date*

**Carl Maria von Weber (arr. Hector Berlioz)**: *Der Freischütz*

2026 commemorates 200 years following the death of Carl Maria von Weber, a decisive figure in the development of German opera in the Romantic era. The American Symphony Orchestra performs the composer's 1821 opera Der Freischütz with a twist: Hector Berlioz's 1841 version (*Le Freischütz*) of Weber's seminal opera will be performed, sung in French, with Berlioz's original recitatives replacing the work's original spoken dialogue. Included is his orchestration of Weber's famous Invitation to the Dance, which Berlioz inserted as an obligatory ballet sequence for the Paris Opera production, and which subsequently took on a life of its own as a standout concert piece. Complex and richly orchestrated, with a compelling exploration of the dichotomy of good versus evil, *Der Freischütz* remains an endless source of fascination to the modern listener, much as it did to the young Frenchman Berlioz when he first heard it at the opera's Parisian premiere at the Odéon in 1824.

**Tickets**, priced at \$25–\$65, are available September 8 at [carnegiehall.org](https://carnegiehall.org), by calling CarnegieCharge at 212.247.7800, or by visiting the box office at 57th St. & 7th Ave.

Details of the ASO's 2025-26 season are available at [americansymphony.org](https://americansymphony.org).

## **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 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](http://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](http://LeonBotstein.com).

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