

WINDSOR **SYMPHONY** ORCHESTRA

IN TUNE

2025-2026 • ISSUE 1

REMEMBERING ROBERT FRANZ

A legacy of connecting
people through music.



WINDSOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2025-2026 SEASON



OPENING NIGHT WITH GERSHWIN
September 20 & 21



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HOLIDAY POPS
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FAMILY CONCERT: ROBERT MUNSCH
January 10



A TASTE OF ITALY
January 15 & 16



BEAUTY AND THE BEAT
January 24 & 25



THE MUSIC OF LED ZEPPELIN & THE WHO
January 30



FAMILY CONCERT: BROADWAY FOR KIDS
February 7



LEE SIEGEL SINGS BROADWAY
February 14 & 15



MENDELSSOHN'S ELIJAH
March 7 & 8



LILLIAN PLAYS BOCCHERINI
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April 18 & 19



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April 23 & 24



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May 2 & 3

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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that our concert is taking place on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe. Many nations have cared for this land since its earliest days: the Wendat, the Haudanousaunee Nations and through the Three Fires Confederacy - the Ojibwa, the Odawa and the Potawatomi Nations. We are honoured to be hosted on Wawiatanong, what is now known as the Windsor-Essex region along the straits of Detroit, and acknowledge their enduring presence on this land. The Windsor Symphony Orchestra is committed to honouring Indigenous history and culture while moving forward towards mutual respect, reciprocity and responsibility. We know that reconciliation is not a single act or a moment in time — it is a journey that begins with listening, acknowledging, and honoring the truth.

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Chair endowed by the Morris & Beverly Baker Foundation

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*Chair endowed in memory of
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GEOFFREY LARSON

RESIDENT CONDUCTOR

Geoffrey Larson serves as WSO Resident Conductor and Music Director of the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra. He previously served as Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master of Berkshire Opera Festival for eight seasons of

productions in Massachusetts and New York City.

Geoffrey was awarded second prize in the 2021 International Orchestral Conducting Competition “UAL” in Spain, and has conducted orchestras such as the Spokane Symphony, South Bend Symphony, Bainbridge Symphony, Northwest Mahler Festival, Karlovy Vary Symphony Orchestra (Czech Republic), and Pleven Philharmonic (Bulgaria). Passionate about the music of our time, Geoffrey has collaborated with composers such as Gabriel Prokofiev, Anthony Davis, Anna Clyne, and Reza Vali.

Geoffrey is a doctoral candidate at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he served as Assistant Conductor of IU Opera and Ballet Theatre. He counts Arthur Fagen, Walter Huff, David Neely, Thomas Wilkins, Robert Page, and George Hurst among his teachers in conducting.



DR. BRUCE J.G. KOTOWICH

CHORUS MASTER

Dr. Bruce J. G. Kotowich, DMA, is the Interim Director of School of Creative Arts (SoCA) and an Associate Professor of Music-Director of Choral Activities at the University of Windsor. He directs the University of Windsor Chamber Choir and USingers

and teaches courses in choral techniques. He currently serves as the Chorus Master for the Windsor Symphony Orchestra Chorus and the Artistic Director of the Windsor Classic Chorale.

Dr. Kotowich completed his Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting and Masters of Music in Conducting at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He received his Associateship of Music in Vocal Performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto.

His choirs have performed throughout North America, Europe, and China, including a group of Windsor Essex choristers at Carnegie Hall, New York.



Windsor Symphony Orchestra

AGM

**ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING**

LUNCHEON 2025

Featuring Keynote Speaker, Katherine Carleton
CEO of Orchestras Canada

"Why Do We Need an Orchestra in Windsor?"

Monday, October 27, 2025

11:15am – 1:30pm

Willistead Manor (1899 Niagara St, Windsor)

TICKETS: \$50

Table of 8 available.

WINDSORSYMPHONY.COM

IN MEMORIAM: MAESTRO ROBERT FRANZ

A LEGACY BEYOND THE MUSIC

Maestro Robert Franz

March 10, 1968 —
September 2, 2025



Maestro Robert Franz, Artistic Director of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra from 2013-2025.

As a fifth grader in his hometown of Kingston, NY, a music teacher grabbed a young Robert Franz's hands and looking at them admiringly said, "You have the hands of a cellist!" Robert Franz had other plans. Sure, he played cello for a few years, but when the family moved to North Carolina when he was eleven, he switched to oboe. But his musical metamorphosis was not yet complete. It was during his undergraduate studies as an oboist at the North Carolina School for the Arts that Robert had the opportunity to conduct Beethoven's *Symphony No. 1*. It was then that he knew what he wanted to do. That boy with the hands of a cellist, from a small town in the Hudson Valley, went on to make his mark on an orchestra a

thousand kilometres away in Windsor, ON, leaving a lasting legacy in a city he grew to know as home.

When Robert Franz died on September 2, 2025, at the age of 57 from Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, word of his death spread quickly. A larger-than-life personality who was as apt to appear on-stage in a superhero costume as he was a bow tie; a voracious student of classical and orchestral music who loved living in the urban core and stopping to talk to friends and neighbors on his daily walk to work, Robert Franz arrived in Windsor when the Windsor Symphony Orchestra (WSO) needed him the most, and became the kind of civic leader every city needs. And now, all too suddenly, Windsor had lost its maestro.

Robert had been very public about his cancer journey after being first diagnosed in October 2021. He had been in remission for two and a half years when the cancer recurred in January 2025. Robert's husband, Brandon Atkins, said a stem cell transplant was discussed and Robert opted to pursue that treatment, using his own harvested stem cells. Complications during this second battle with cancer, however, were more severe than anticipated. Through additional treatment options following the unsuccessful stem cell transplant and failing health, Robert continued to work and plan for the WSO 2026-2027 season right up until August 31, when it became clear that the efforts to address the widespread issues in his body caused by cancer were not going to be successful. He died two days later.

"It was a very courageous battle," Brandon said of his husband's passing. "He said, 'I'm ready, I have no regrets, I've lived an amazing life...'"

AN AMAZING LIFE

He knew at the age of eight that he wanted to be a musician," Brandon said of Robert's early passion for music, nurtured by that Kingston, NY, music teacher, Willa Loescher, who reached out to Atkins in the days following Robert's death. A staunch proponent not just of music education, but the role of music in learning, Robert told the story of Loescher's influence on his career to countless students over the years — in university lecture halls, conductor's workshops, and in gymnasiums packed with children, many of them experiencing live orchestral music for the first time at a WSO school concert.

Robert was the first student to earn a master's degree in conducting from the North Carolina School of the Arts (now the University of North Carolina School for the Arts) where he eventually served as music director concurrently with his duties at the WSO and as artistic director of Boise Baroque Orchestra.

Other stops along the young maestro's path included the founding of the Carolina Chamber Orchestra, Mansfield Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Boise Philharmonic, along with numerous guest-conducting appearances with Detroit



Robert at age 8, practicing his cello



Robert Franz, age 10, with his music teacher Willa Loescher.

Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestra da Camera Fiorentina in Italy, among many others.

Serendipitously, it was while serving as music director at Boise Philharmonic that Robert met Brandon, the love of his life. An epidemiologist, Brandon had been working in public health and coaching gymnastics in Las Vegas but relocated to Boise to be closer to family in 2011. Robert came into the sushi restaurant where Brandon was working part-time and they became friends. A few years later, sitting under a tree while Brandon's daughters played at a waterpark, it was Robert who first knew that they had a future together. Two years later, in November 2014, they were one of the first gay couples to be legally married in the State of Idaho.

"We really had an exceptional love and life together and we were both grateful for that," Atkins said of his life with Robert, with whom he shared three daughters: Caitlyn, 23, Taylor, 22, and

Paige, 20. "We didn't regret any of the things we had been able to do together. We really lived our lives together. [In the end] he just wanted to make sure I would be okay. He was worried about me. He was at peace with the idea that his expiration date had arrived, but he felt that need to make sure I would be okay. And I had to assure him, 'Of course, I'm going to do everything I can to make sure I'm okay. I'm going to be sad; it's going to be hard — but, thank you, for the love of my life. Thank you for sharing that.'"

"He was," Brandon said, "my rockstar."

THE ROCKSTAR AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST

It was that larger-than-life personality tempered with a genuine humility — an ability to bring people into the world of symphonic music, making them feel included, accepted, important to the experience — that brought Robert Franz to Windsor. It was 2013: the WSO had fallen on hard financial



Robert with his husband Brandon and their three daughters.

times, and the search was on for a new music director. Over 150 conductors from around the world had applied for the job. Barb Kuker was WSO board president at the time and recalls the field of candidates had been narrowed down to 10, but the search committee was concerned. She called former WSO music director John Morris Russell and said, "This is not looking too good." She read the list of remaining candidates over the phone. Hearing them, Russell said, "Well, just you wait until you hear that last one." The last candidate on the list was Robert Franz.

One of the things Robert had said during the interview process was that he loved to renovate and fix up old homes — something Robert and Brandon continued to do throughout their marriage.

"We weren't in awful shape," Kuker said of the WSO's status in 2013, "but we certainly needed a spark. I said, 'If that's your hobby and you like to fix things up, then you're the guy for us.' And he was. Robert was so proud of these musicians. He always said, 'I can take them anywhere in the world.'"

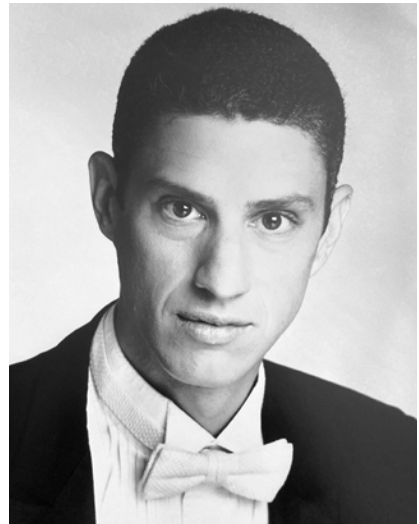
Sheila Wisdom came on board as executive director of the WSO shortly after Robert was hired and was struck by his deft ability to lead a team, especially under the unique dynamics of symphony orchestra management, where there are two people responsible for the successful running of the organization.

"What was wonderful about Robert is that we shared a sensibility about the WSO and what we wanted the organization to offer the community, and how we wanted it to engage the community," Wisdom said of their nine-year

working relationship that grew to be a genuine friendship. "So, any differences we had we were able to work through, and that is a very important piece, and a big part of the reason we were able to do that was because of what Robert brought to the table."

COVID CONDUCTOR

In March 2020, Covid-19 brought the world to a sudden halt. The WSO had a



Robert's first professional headshot as a conductor, age 28.



Robert (age 26) plays oboe as a Musician-in-Residence at the Winston-Salem Children's Center, North Carolina.



Robert at the Windsor waterfront, recording for one of the WSO's digital concerts.

concert scheduled for that first Saturday night of the pandemic. Rather than cancel the performance, the WSO pivoted to live-streaming the concert online — the first orchestra in Canada to do this. It was Robert Franz, working with and leveraging the talents of the orchestra and the WSO and Capitol Theatre staff, who made it happen. The WSO reached a nation-wide audience and continued to pay its musicians when so many other arts organizations were shutting down.

"It was an amazing way to foster creativity," Wisdom said of the innovation. "I'm not sure where the WSO would be today if not for that."

That orchestra Robert Franz was so proud of, boasting that he could take them anywhere in the world? They loved him in equal measure. WSO Concertmaster, violinist Lillian Scheirich, has been with the orchestra since 1989, through three primary music directors and countless interim and guest con-

ductors. None, she said, have been quite like Robert.

"He knew the best way to work with people was to get them to be their best selves," said Scheirich, pointing out how Robert was the antithesis of the temperamental, iconoclastic, rigid, and stuffy personality that is often ascribed to conductors. "He expected a lot of us as musicians, but no matter how rough it got, he would never get angry. He wanted to make sure no one was left behind."

'EMOTIONAL LABOUR'

For Faith Scholfield, who aside from playing oboe and English horn is also the WSO's operations manager, it was this willingness to be at the level of everyone around him that made Robert so effective as a music director. "There's a lot of emotional labour that goes into being the music director," said Scholfield, who became close friends with Robert and Brandon during their years in Windsor. "Dealing with 50 or 60 musicians... Robert was able to find balance between his role, the needs of the WSO, and the needs of the individual, so they could perform at their best."

Post-cancer diagnosis in 2021, Robert did not step back from his duties. He cared too much about the WSO — its mission and its people — to not be at the conductor's podium, and in the weekly marketing and staff meetings. A few days before his death he attended an online meeting with WSO staff from his hospital bed, to make sure they had everything they needed for opening weekend, which he was already scheduled to miss.

"I think that says a lot about a person," said Scheirich, "when their last thoughts, their last wishes are about other people... He knew he was so sick, but he still made

time for others. That's just unbelievable to me. It just makes my heart break."

Upon news of his death tributes poured forth from orchestras, schools, festivals, classical music radio stations, magazines, websites, the media and blogs across North America. All of them mentioning the same qualities: Robert's exuberance, his infectious energy, the joy he brought to the music, the stage, the audience, his willingness to dress up in a costume if it's what the performance required.

WSO board president Deborah Severs, who worked with Robert for four years, says one of the most important costumes he wore was a simple, humble one: that of a volunteer at the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre between his own cancer battles, greeting patients, delivering files, and spending time with people who, like him, were going through the trials of cancer treatment.

"Robert didn't need to wear a cape or a costume to be a superhero," Severs said. "He was our superhero, and he was a superhero to so many."

A CONDUCTOR'S LEGACY

Just three weeks after his death the City of Windsor and WSO held a concert in the Pelissier Street parking garage to celebrate the grand opening of the Park In Perfect Harmony initiative that was Robert's brainchild. Each of the garage's floors were renamed after classical composers (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky), and snippets of their famous symphonies were recorded by the WSO to play when people step out of the elevators. At the opening, Windsor Mayor Drew Dilks announced that an additional floor — the top floor, exposed to bright sunlight, with sweeping views of downtown Windsor, neighbouring Detroit, and the two bridges that connect the two cities — had been renamed in memory of Robert Franz. Maybe not every music director would like having the floor of a parking garage named after them. Those who knew Robert, know that he would have loved it because he loved Windsor, he loved downtown, and he



Robert with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra on the Capitol Theatre stage.

was driven to have music and the WSO play a bigger role in the city.

“Windsor had everything Robert needed to grow a lively, successful, professional orchestra,” said WSO executive director Patti Lauzon. “Other music directors came before him and laid the foundation, but Robert was ready to renovate it and bring it to the level we are at now.”

During Robert’s tenure as music director, the WSO’s endowment grew from under \$750,000 to \$5 million. Bigger audiences and increased patronage are always a welcome sign of good health for any orchestra, but Robert’s impact is much more difficult to quantify simply because of the breadth of the communities and the lives he touched.

“It’s so important that the WSO continues to be a strong voice in the community,” Lauzon said. “This was Robert’s vision, and it is all of our responsibility

now — to make sure we keep engaging with donors, audience members, volunteers, our community. To make sure we are fulfilling what he put in place.”

On his husband’s legacy, Brandon sees it extending out from Windsor to everywhere Robert worked, taught, and lived: “I would venture to guess that he will be remembered as one of the most pivotal, influential conductors ever to work in Windsor for the passion he brought to his work and the connections he made.”

That legacy will also live on, Brandon said, in the young people he loved and inspired, especially their three daughters, and Robert’s niece, Stella. “They all loved him and cared for him, and they will carry his memory, which is really magical for him because he never thought he was going to have a family,” Brandon said. “Robert, as a young man, never thought that would be part of his life. He will live on in future generations. Robert’s hope, always, was that he could help make music and the arts more intrinsic in people’s culture and lives. And that goes back to his roots of music education, and making sure that he could create meaningful, impactful experiences with music.”

Robert also gained a family with the Windsor community. How gratifying — how reassuring — to know that Robert Franz came from elsewhere and was happy, creative, committed, and engaged with Windsor. The loss of his brilliant light will be felt deeply and the impact of his humanity on our hearts and imaginations leaves us unequivocally changed for the better.

Rest easy, Maestro.



Robert conducting music of John Williams in one of his many costumes.

This story was written September 2025.



Robert never missed an opportunity to conduct in costume.



Robert with his husband Brandon and their three daughters.



Robert with his parents Robert Sr. and Joan, his brother Kevin, and niece Stella.



Robert and Brandon.



Above: Robert, age one.
Below: Robert and Kevin, 1979.



Robert sporting one of his many bowties.

STRONG LEADERSHIP: THE CORNERSTONE OF WSO BOARD

A new season of music is underway at the WSO and in the spirit of rotation and service to the community the WSO's board of directors is undergoing a season of change of its own: after five years serving as board president, Deborah Severs' term is coming to a close and Kyle Kootstra's tenure as president is beginning.

Deborah first joined the board in Oct. 2016, becoming board president in 2021. The chair position usually carries with it a two-year term, but Deborah's term was extended to cover two pivotal events: the Covid-19 pandemic, and to help the WSO navigate the hiring process for new executive director Patti Lauzon following the retirement of long-time executive director Sheila Wisdom.

A board member when the pandemic began, Deborah says the way the WSO persevered at a time when everything was shutting down is a personal highlight. "The fact that we didn't close our doors, we stayed open, we paid our musicians and staff, we used technology and pivoted to online concerts and series... Even though I wasn't chair at the time, that was one of the symphony's proudest moments. That was truly historic."

Celebrating the WSO's 75th anniversary, the Capitol Theatre's 100th anniversary, and the way the entire WSO family and community at large has rallied around Music Director Robert



Deborah Severs, outgoing Board President.

Franz through his cancer diagnoses underscores for Deborah the important role the WSO plays in Windsor Essex.

Deborah said she will miss the camaraderie and collaborative energy that came with being the WSO board president and is looking forward to her continued role serving the WSO board executive as past-president. Away from the WSO she will continue in her full-time family law practice, and in her positions on the boards of the Delta Chi Child Care Centre, and with the Circle of Seven philanthropic

group where she is the first female board member. With two young grandchildren in Houston, she is also planning some well-earned family time in Texas.

‘A SYMPHONY MUSICIANS LOVE TO PLAY FOR’

Kyle Kootstra, a portfolio manager at BMO Nesbitt Burns, was recruited to the WSO board in 2021 after establishing a habit of sponsoring WSO performances and inviting his clients to attend.

Raised on dairy farms in British Columbia and Alberta, Kyle had no exposure to symphonic music but fell in love with it while studying piano at the University of Windsor, where he earned a degree in political science and also met his wife, Kara, with whom he has two children, Nate, 16, and Claire, 14.

Fostering the relationship between the musicians and the board and making sure the WSO remains a symphony that musicians want to play for will be a focus of Kyle’s tenure as board president. “We are competing against Hamilton, Kitchener, Toronto, the ballet, the National Opera, to attract musicians to play in Windsor,” Kyle said. “I want musicians to love playing here.”

One of the ways to achieve that, Kyle said, is through long-term financial sustainability: growing the WSO endowment and engaging with new donors at a time of high unemployment and the shift away from legacy manufacturing support.

“We want to make sure the Windsor Symphony Orchestra cele-



Kyle Kootstra, incoming Board President.

brates more milestone anniversaries in the years to come,” Kyle said of the WSO’s post-Covid recovery. “Our recovery had been good, but we’re not back to where we were. Our target market was disproportionately impacted by Covid and we’re having to build a new audience and new donors.”

New faces on the executive and some role shuffling amongst the board members means there will be a steep learning curve, one that Kyle says can only be helped by increased contact with the musicians, as seeing things from the musicians’ perspective helps the board have a more informed understanding.

To that, Kyle regularly attends WSO performances with his family and loves exposing his children to live symphonic music. “It’s a good escape, it’s not on a screen, it’s not A.I. nonsense, it’s real people who have worked really hard to achieve something.” It’s always gratifying, he said, to see young people “blown away when they see the feat of what a human can do.”

**Peter
Wiebe**
CELLO



Your WSO

PETER WIEBE

CELLO

How did you get started on your instrument?

My parents started me on the violin. I was a difficult student, but at age 9, I got excited when I saw a family friend play the cello. And I heard the beautiful cello tune in the second movement of Beethoven's *5th Symphony*. My parents said I could switch to cello!

What is something significant about your instrument?

My instrument is about 20 years old, and was crafted by a maker in Ontario.

What is your favourite WSO moment?

Conducting the WSO playing *American in Paris* by Gershwin.

What is your pre-concert and/or post-concert routine?

I sometimes reward myself with a Wendy's Frosty after a major concert!

An interesting fact about yourself!

I am the lead pastor at Windsor Vineyard Church.

Peter was appointed as the WSO's first Assistant Conductor in 2005, leading the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra. Peter is also the founder of the WSO Family Concert Series (previously called the "Peanut Butter 'n Jam Series"). He is the composer of the Family Concert theme song, "Make a Little Music."



TOLDO POPS SERIES

The Music of **STAR WARS**

Saturday, October 18, 2025 | 7:30pm

Sunday, October 19, 2025 | 2:30pm

The Capitol Theatre, Windsor, ON

Daniel Wiley, guest conductor

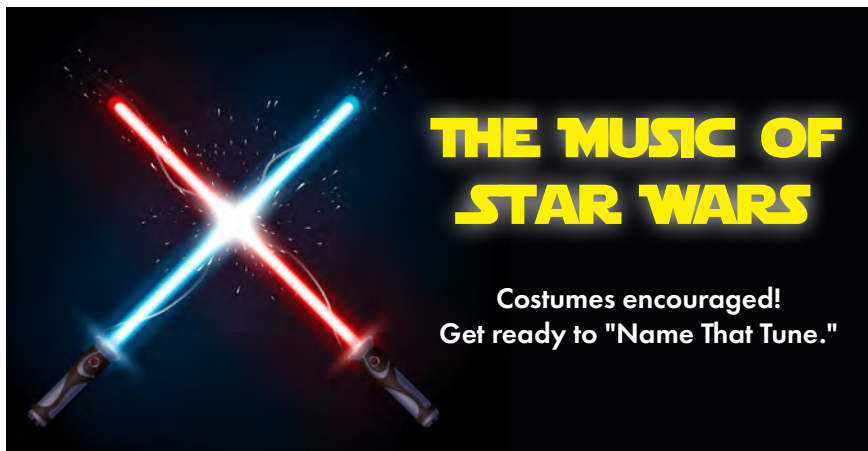
John Williams

Music from *Star Wars*

Series Sponsor

The Toldo Foundation  **TOLDO**
Foundation

Concert Sponsor: **Gail and Don Rodzik**



DANIEL WILEY

GUEST CONDUCTOR



Daniel Wiley has quickly become a notable young conductor on the rise, having made appearances with the Cincinnati Symphony, Cincinnati Ballet, Nashville Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic, Salisbury Symphony, Windsor Symphony Orchestra, Windsor Abridged Opera, London Symphonia, Boise Philharmonic, and more.

Daniel currently holds posts as the Assistant Conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony and Kansas City Symphony, and is the Music Director of the Salisbury Symphony in North Carolina.

In 2024 Daniel stepped in at the last minute to make his conducting debut with the Cincinnati Symphony including works such as, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and Brahms *Violin Concerto* with Agustin Hadelich on the violin. Daniel's performance was described as seamless and intelligent, and "brought out the best in the orchestra's musicians" (*Cincinnati Business Courier*).

Here at the Windsor Symphony Orchestra, Daniel was previously the Associate Conductor, and Music Director of the Youth Orchestras, and Community Orchestra.

During the pandemic, Daniel was instrumental in expanding the Windsor Symphony's educational footprint by creating a digital education concert series, recognized by the Ontario Provincial Parliament as an example of how an orchestras can change lives through music. To date, this program has served more than 200,000 students across North America.

In 2019, Daniel was a prize recipient of both the Smoky Mountain International Conducting Institute and Competition and the Los Angeles International Conducting Competition.

As a former public-school music teacher, Daniel has a unique passion for music education, and frequently donates his time as a guest clinician to support students and teachers in music programs.



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DETAILS AT MUSEUMWINDSOR.CA

WINDSOR SYMPHONY COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

The Lord of the Rings

Saturday, November 8, 2025 | 7:30pm
The Capitol Theatre, Windsor, ON

Geoffrey Larson, conductor
Windsor Symphony Community Orchestra
Windsor Symphony Orchestra Chorus
Dr. Bruce J.G. Kotowich, Chorus Master

Howard Shore arr. Cerulli	Music from <i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i>
Howard Shore arr. Whitney	Symphonic Suite from <i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i>
Richard Wagner	“Wotan’s Farewell” from <i>The Ring Cycle: The Valkyries</i>
Howard Shore arr. Brubaker	Symphonic Suite from <i>The Two Towers</i>
Howard Shore arr. Story	Selections from <i>The Return of the King</i>



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With Maestro Geoffrey Larson and co-host Jan Radford

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The WSO shares the stage with symphonic rock collective Jeans n' Classics for an evening of music by two of rock's most iconic bands: Led Zeppelin and The Who. This concert features hits like The Who's *My Generation* and *Baba O'Riley* and Led Zeppelin's *Dazed & Confused* and *Stairway to Heaven*.

BILL AND ROCHELLE TEPPERMAN MASTERWORKS SERIES

Whimsical Concerto of Fanciful Birds

Saturday, November 15, 2025 | 7:30pm

Sunday, November 16, 2025 | 2:30pm

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Whimsical Concerto of Fanciful Birds

I. Enchanted Migrations

II. Angels and Mockingbirds

III. Urban Birds

INTERMISSION

Malek Jandali

Symphony No. 5 ***WORLD PREMIERE***

Curtain Call Conversations

Experience the music... stay for the conversation

Join the Maestro and saxophonist Timothy McAllister for an exclusive conversation on stage about performance, creative process, where inspiration comes from, music composition, and more! *Curtain Call Conversations* take place directly after the concert. Patron participation is encouraged.

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JERRY HOU

GUEST CONDUCTOR



Taiwanese-American conductor Jerry Hou is building community and revitalizing the music field via collaboration with some of today's most important musical voices.

Born in Taiwan and raised in a small town in Arkansas, Hou had a late start in music. Beginning on trombone in middle school band, he went on to work professionally in American and European orchestras before his playing career was ended by injury. Turning to conducting studies with Jorma Panula in Finland, he is now recognized for his dynamic presence, insightful interpretations, musical versatility, and commanding technique on the podium.

Hou recently concluded his celebrated tenure as Resident Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the first person to hold that position in the orchestra's history, and Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Known for his flexibility in many styles and genres, Hou has conducted a wide range of repertoire from classical to contemporary. A leading interpreter and conductor of contemporary music, he has collaborated with acclaimed composers such as Kevin Puts, Andrew Norman, Steve Reich, Joel Thompson, Anthony Davis, Peter Eötvös, Melinda Wagner, George Lewis, Alvin Singleton, Gyorgy Kurtag, Unsuk Chin, and Carlos Simon. Hou has conducted leading new music ensembles such as Ensemble Modern, International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Signal, Remix Ensemble, Grossman Ensemble, and Alarm Will Sound.

Hou is on the faculty of Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, where he is Artist Teacher of Orchestras and Ensembles. He lives in Houston with his wife Jenny and son Remy, and has competed on the game show Jeopardy!

© jerryhou.com

TIMOTHY MCALLISTER

ALTO SAXOPHONE



Saxophonist Timothy McAllister is hailed as “one of the foremost saxophonists of his generation” by *The New York Times*. He has premiered over 250 works, and has been presented by major symphonies, concert series, and music festivals worldwide.

Composers who have written concerti dedicated to McAllister include John Adams, John Corigliano, Kenneth Fuchs, Adolphus Hailstork, Jennifer Higdon, Pierre Jalbert, and Tyshawn Sorey, with upcoming commissions by Steven Mackey, Viet Cuong, James Lee III and Errollyn Wallen. He has performed in many of the world’s most prestigious venues including London’s Royal Albert Hall, the Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall and Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw.

This season’s highlights include McAllister’s debut with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Slatkin, performing John Corigliano’s *Triathlon*. McAllister premiered *Triathlon* with the San Francisco Symphony led by Giancarlo Guerrero and can be heard

on the world premiere recording of the work with the Nashville Symphony, to be released by Naxos.

McAllister is a member of the PRISM Quartet. PRISM has commissioned over 300 works. Their recording with *The Crossing* was awarded a Grammy for Best Choral Performance.

McAllister’s interest in expanding the saxophone repertoire led to Project Encore, a collaboration with pianist Liz Ames which commissions miniature works for saxophone and piano. Alongside the duo’s efforts to weave an array of influences into their playing — from modernism to minimalism, or popular idioms including latin, jazz, funk, and musical theater — their upcoming *Project Encore, Vol. 2 (2025)* showcases composers including Wynton Marsalis and Jennifer Higdon.

A dedicated teacher, McAllister is Professor of Saxophone at The University of Michigan and faculty at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

© timothymcallister.com

MALEK JANDALI

COMPOSER



Malek Jandali is “a uniquely gifted composer” (*The Washington Post*) and his music has been hailed as “a major new addition to the 21st century’s symphonic literature” by *Fanfare magazine*. His “deeply enigmatic” music (*Gramophone*) with “heart-rending melodies, lush orchestration, clever transitions and creative textures” (*American Record Guide*) spans a broad body of work that includes eight symphonies, seven concertos, four string quartets, chamber music and his upcoming opera, *The Square*.

Jandali’s works have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by leading orchestras and distinguished soloists around the world, such as the Royal Philharmonic, ORF Vienna Radio Symphony, Russian Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, and the Zagreb Philharmonic. His large-scale orchestral works engage major philosophical themes and integrate Arabic maqams (modes) with persuasive ingenuity and a marked seriousness of purpose that

echo UNESCO’s call to preserve and protect the rich cultural heritage of his homeland Syria.

Jandali has produced ten albums of lauded performances encompassing more than forty of his compositions. He is the first Arab musician to have arranged the oldest example of music notation in the world, which was featured on his album *Echoes from Ugarit*. Jandali is composer-in-residence at both Queens University of Charlotte and at Qatar Museums. He is the founder and CEO of Pianos for Peace, a nonprofit organization dedicated to building peace through music and education. Jandali is the recipient of the 2014 Global Music Humanitarian Award. In 2015 the Carnegie Corporation of New York honored him as a *Great Immigrant, a Pride of America*. Jandali was born in Germany and raised in Syria. He now lives in Atlanta and New York City.

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malekkandali.com

WHIMSICAL CONCERTO OF FANCIFUL BIRDS

VINCENT HO

The music of Ottawa-born composer and four-time Juno nominee Vincent Ho has been called “brilliant and compelling” by the New York Times and “thrilling” by the Windsor Star. His Whimsical Concerto of Fanciful Birds was preceded by a series of sketches for alto saxophone and piano that explore the instrument’s ability to create various bird-inspired sounds. According to Mr. Ho: “After writing this collection (with the possibility of more to come), the inevitable next step was to adapt many of these musical ideas into a large-scale concerto. To fully capture the spirit of the avian world

I envisioned, I decided to score it for solo alto saxophone, orchestra, AND spatialized saxophone ensemble – a collective of saxophonists placed in various areas of the concert hall surrounding the audience (eg. loges, balconies, aisles, etc) to serve as the ‘flock of birds’ accompanying the soloist and orchestra while creating an immersive sonic experience.”

This three-movement concerto, first performed in 2023 by Timothy McAllister and the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Robert Franz, represents the culmination of his writing for the wide-ranged instrument.

SYMPHONY NO. 5

WORLD PREMIERE

MALEK JANDALI

Malek Jandali preserves and promotes the rich heritage of Syria by combining its melodies and idioms with Western symphonic forms. Though most of his Symphony No. 5 was completed in the summer of 2020 in New York City, the second movement was composed on a gloomy night in the Great Smoky Mountains during a visit in the fall of that same year. The piece was recorded on March 2, 2021

by the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra led by Marin Alsop at the RadioKulturhaus in Vienna, Austria. It now receives its world premiere in live concert, performed by the Windsor Symphony Orchestra.

The first movement revolves around two contrasting main themes. The first is based on a powerful Syrian samā'i (a form of traditional Arabic instrumental music) and the second, with its air

PROGRAM NOTES

of melancholy, is based on a motive from the Syrian traditional masterpiece “Esqi al etash” (“Quench the thirsty”), a series of celebrated strophic poems set to music. The second movement is a nocturne, where Jandali evokes “the beauty of nature with a sky full of stars and a gentle breeze.” An oboe solo introduces the main theme, which draws on the Samā’i Hosayni by Tatyos Efendi (1858–1913), a famed composer of Turkish classical music. The lively third movement, structured like a traditional symphonic scherzo (literally “joke” in Italian), breathes new life into the old

Syrian Samā’i Muhayyer, introduced by the low brass. A solemn coda provides a dramatic contrast, recalling the theme of the first movement’s introduction. The Finale evokes the great burlesque symphonic movements of Mahler and Shostakovich with tremendous energy and startling contrasts of loud and soft music. A primary theme draws on Samā’l Huzam, more music with its roots in ancient Arabic tradition. Mystery, drama, and power trade musical moments, adorned with beautiful violin and woodwind solos, before the symphony is brought to its final, resounding climax.

Program notes by Geoffrey Larson.



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To help connect our community through music, contact us today.
Visit windsorsymphony.com or call 519-973-1238.





Accessibility at the WSO

ACCESSIBLE SEATING: Wheelchair spaces are accessible in the theatre. The Capitol Theatre main entry is located at ground level and is equipped with ramps and inclined floors. The theatre can accommodate standard-sized manual and electric wheelchairs on the main floor. These spaces are limited, please contact the box office to inquire about availability. Please note: because the Capitol Theatre is a historical building, balcony seating is only accessible by stairs

ACCESSIBLE PARKING

A City of Windsor By-Law permits persons with disabilities to park in areas marked "Commercial" provided an Accessible Parking Permit (APP) is clearly displayed through the windshield and (if times are noted) designated parking times are adhered to.

FREE SUPPORT WORKER TICKETS: Those attending an event as a Support Worker can request a ticket, free of charge. Please call the Box Office.

WASHROOM: An accessible washroom is located in the lobby area.

WALKERS: The ushers will be happy to assist you with removing your walker from your seat, storing it in a designated area, and returning it to you after your event.

THEATRE WHEELCHAIRS: The Capitol Theatre has a manual wheelchair available to assist from the lobby entrance to your seat. Please notify an usher upon arrival to request a wheelchair.

MOBILITY SCOOTERS: The Capitol Theatre is unable to accommodate motorized scooters. Scooters can be parked in a designated spot in the lobby after entering and guests can transfer, with assistance, if necessary, to one of the theatre's manual wheelchairs prior to entering the event.

Support Animals: Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to aid an individual with a disability can accompany a ticket holder. Please notify the Box Office at the point of purchase so that your seat can be selected to ensure adequate space for your support animal.

For accessible accommodations or seating requests, please contact the box office at boxoffice@windsorsymphony.com or call 519-973-1238. More detail on accessibility can be found at capitoltheatrewindsor.ca/accessibility.





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