



CHATTANOOGA  
SYMPHONY  
& OPERA  
1933 - 2023



## Sibelius Symphony No. 5

November 16, 2023 | 7:30 PM

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### Program

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Barnett & Company Masterworks Series  
**SIBELIUS SYMPHONY NO. 5**

November 16, 2023 | 7:30 PM  
*Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Auditorium*

ILYA RAM | conductor & Music Director Candidate

Video/audio recording of this concert is prohibited.

The first half of the program will be performed without pause.  
Hold applause until after Wagner's *Entry of the Gods into  
Valhalla*.

**Felix Mendelssohn** (1809-1847) Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 21 (12")

**Grace-Evangeline Mason** (b.1994) *The Imagined Forest* (11")

**Richard Wagner** (1813-1883) *Entry of the Gods into Valhalla (Einzug der Götter)*, from *Das Rheingold* (9")

INTERMISSION  
(20')



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## Sibelius Symphony No. 5

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**Jean Sibelius** (1865-1957) Symphony No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 82 (30")

- I. Tempo molto moderato; Allegro moderato (ma poco a poco stretto)*
- II. Andante mosso, quasi allegretto*
- III. Allegro molto*

The CSO Masterworks Series is sponsored by:



This performance is funded in part by:



*This project is being supported, in whole or in part, by a federal award number SLFRP5534 awarded to the State of Tennessee by the U.S. Department of Treasury.*

**Artist Biography**



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**Ilya Ram**

conductor & Music Director Candidate

Finalist for the position of Music Director of the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, the young German-based Israeli-American conductor Ilya Ram is on the look-out for creative new ways to approach classical music. Praised for his charismatic and energetic performance (Crescendo-Magazine) and his “expressive spontaneity” (Diapason), he has been noted for breaking formal boundaries on the podium – “Although Ram [...] presents himself as deliberately casual in his shiny silver sneakers, his conducting is the opposite: energetic, spontaneous, yet clear, precise, and attentive to detail.”

Ilya currently serves as Music Director of the Leipziger Univesitätsorchester and Akademische Philharmonie Heidelberg. Some of his 2023/24 season highlights include international conducting debuts in the U.S., Poland and Portugal, as well as returning to the Gewandhaus Leipzig. He is a prize winner of the 5th Evgeny Svetlanov Competition and a scholarship holder of the Akademie-Musiktheater-Heute supported by the Deutsche Bank Stiftung. He is also a recipient of several other prestigious scholarships such as the “Yotzrim” Scholarship for independent artists, AICF “ShareT” Scholarships and the DAAD Scholarship.

Always looking to deepen his understanding of the current trends in art and creative processes, Ilya is one of the few candidates to have successfully completed the Music.Multimedia.Management Project led by the Szczecin Philharmonic in collaboration with Fjord Cadenza Festival and TRAF0 Center for Contemporary Art, where he was mentored and assisted artistic director Rune Bergmann on a number of projects.

Some of his more notable recent engagements included Guest Resident Conductor at the Theater Chemnitz, conducting a premiere of a contemporary opera at the Semperoper Dresden, and spotlighted by the IMPULS Festival for contemporary music in which he debuted with both the Magdeburg Philharmoniker and Ensemble Tempus Konnex. He had the



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pleasure of working with soloists such as Kristine Balanas, Pekka Kuusisto, Amandine Savary, Ilian Garnetz, Ildiko Szabo, and Charlotte Thiele, to name a few.

Ilya was amongst the four young conductors to be selected to participate in the first-ever Bayreuther Festspiele masterclass for conductors and has also participated in several other international masterclasses and festivals. He has studied amongst others with Christian Thielemann, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo, Neeme Järvi, Marek Janowski, Hartmut Hänchen, Robert Trevino, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Tim Redmond, Nicolas Pasquet, Johannes Schlaefli, and Jorma Panula.

In 2015 Ilya graduated Cum Laude from the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music in Tel-Aviv with a B.A. in Orchestral Conducting and Musicology. He completed his Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting at the Hochschule für Musik "Carl Maria von Weber" in Dresden, in the class of Prof. Ekkehard Klemm and has recently completed the Advanced Professional Training for Conductors Program at the UdK Berlin, studying with Maestros Steven Sloane and Harry Curtis.

A firm believer in the humanities, Ilya spent a year volunteering in underprivileged communities in Israel prior to beginning his formal studies, working with children both in and outside the education system. During his studies in Tel-Aviv, he continued volunteering at the Israeli branch of Physicians for Human Rights.

### Program Notes

#### Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream, Op. 21

## *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream, Op. 21*

Felix Mendelssohn

(b. February 3, 1809 in Hamburg; d. November 4, 1847 in Leipzig)

Felix Mendelssohn was more than just a composer. He had a talent for drawing and a profound love for classical literature. His translation of Terence's "Andria" was published in 1825.



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The overture's opus number 21 bespeaks his substantial catalog of compositions already finished. Thus, his finely-crafted Overture Op. 21, is less a miraculous creation of a seventeen year-old than it is a composition of an already mature composer in full command of his powers.

Four gossamer, unhurried wind chords—a fairy fanfare—precede the scampering fairies set loose on the world. Regal music suitable for the Athenian court wedding that is the backdrop of the play leads to a second theme that is the lovers bewitched by the fairies. The character Bottom brays like a jackass in Mendelssohn's interpretation. Scampering fairies dominate the development section that comes to a pensive standstill before the fairy fanfare returns—the beginning of the recapitulation. In the coda the fairies scamper back home. The opening fanfare is also the closing. Fairy mischief ends with the dawn.

Felix's name derives from Latin, happy or fortunate, and fits Mendelssohn perfectly. He lived most of his life with joy and excitement until the death of his beloved sister Fanny at age 41 in May 1847. His own death soon followed in November of the same year.

Mendelssohn's overture fits the story of Shakespeare's play but was written first and foremost as a concert piece. Near the end of his life Mendelssohn wrote incidental music for a performance of the play and reused the overture to begin it. The incidental music includes Mendelssohn's ubiquitous "Wedding March."

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### The Imagined Forest

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## *The Imagined Forest*

Grace-Evangeline Mason  
(b. October 1994 in Hamburg)

Grace-Evangeline Mason's *The Imagined Forest* guides us through a world created by sonic textures and musical narrative. The Composer's Notes on the first page of her score make clear her inspiration and intentions. "*The Imagined Forest* [...] is a fantastical journey through a space that appears to be a familiar impression of nature, but simultaneously somewhere entirely unknown. The forest, a place rooted in fairy tales, fantasy and folklore, often represents areas of refuge, danger,



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transformation, and adventure. Recognising the forest as an ethereal and intangible entity, the piece seeks to momentarily transport the listener somewhere intimate and yet, surreal.

“The piece is inspired by the work of Clare Celeste Börsch, a Berlin-based artist who uses collage techniques to build imagined worlds filled with foliage and fauna. Bringing together thousands of delicate hand cut paper images, she creates intricate and immersive spaces to transform ordinary rooms into magical forests. *The Imagined Forest* travels through the musical space by interweaving atmospheric textures and fragmentary melodic lines as a collage of fleeting images[.]”

A musical fragment, turned every which way, but starting consistently with a fast triplet followed by a few notes with longer values, Mason describes as the central theme that “wanders through the piece towards enclosed glades where it pauses, as if it is interspersed with shimmering light from the canopies above and the dreamlike dances from the elements of nature[.]”

She offers an experience that may be different for every listener: “Both music and art are fascinating in that countless people can all be experiencing the same work at once and yet, through the lens of their own influence, encounter a completely different artwork. This piece is therefore not a prescriptive experience but is instead a fictional journey; whether it is blooming with flora, captivated by colour, or an airy garden darkened by storm, it is the forest of your own imagination.”

If Mason’s name is unfamiliar it won’t be for long. She burst onto the British musical scene winning the BBC Young Composer competition in 2013 at the age of 18. Since then she has fulfilled high-profile commissions for the BBC including a piece for the 300th anniversary of Handel’s *Water Music*. *The Imagined Forest* is her most prestigious commission to date, written for the confluence of the 150th anniversary of Royal Albert Hall, the beginning of the BBC Proms 2021 season (the most famous musical event on the British musical calendar), and the first Royal Liverpool Philharmonic concert under its new Chief Conductor, Domingo Hindoyan.

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**Entry of the Gods into Valhalla (Einzug der Götter), from Das Rheingold**

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## ***Entry of the Gods into Valhalla (Einzug der Götter), from Das Rheingold***

Richard Wagner

(b. May 22, 1813 in Leipzig; d. February 13, 1883 in Venice)

*Entry of the Gods to Valhalla* is a testament to Wagner's unparalleled ability to create musical landscapes. An unnamed writer for the NY Phil archives sets the scene and tells the story. The stage is "set for tragedy. Valhalla, the new home of the gods, has been completed. From this castle, Wotan, the king of the gods, plans to rule the world. But his power has been bought at a terrible price: the king of the gods himself has stooped to deception and theft. Wotan is filled with fears reflected in the dark storm clouds that conceal the castle from view. But Donner, the god of thunder, clears the air with a tremendous lightning bolt. As the thunder dies away, storm clouds vanish and Valhalla is revealed shimmering in the glow of sunset.

"A rainbow bridge soars across the entire Rhine valley from where the gods stand to the castle gate. The music of the rainbow gleams and glitters in the orchestra and its melodic arch seems to reach higher and higher until it touches the castle walls. With the soft majesty of tubas and trombones the Valhalla theme invites the gods to their new home."

Today it is obvious and timely to acknowledge that Richard Wagner had deep streaks of antisemitism and racism inside him that crept into his music. Some context is essential. The Germany Wagner was born into was a patchwork of hundreds of political entities. Michael Steinberg explains how Wagner taught his audiences "how to feel German." Among cultural and religious faultlines Wagner knew "that to be successful, to create something that would unite Germans, he needed a message that would overcome other forms of cultural division. Unfortunately, that message was xenophobia and anti-Semitism — which he spread not only through his operas but also through books and essays." Steinberg is a Jew and his parents fled Hitler, so I give him the stage to cut the Gordian knot: "Wagner was a genius in music and drama; he made entertainment that really grabs the emotions, and there's enormous pleasure in getting lost in it. It's very moving and very rich, but also very disturbing. Pleasures are complex."

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**Symphony No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 82**

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# Symphony No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 82

Jean Sibelius

(b. Dec. 8, 1865 in Hämeenlinna, Finland; d. September. 20, 1957 at Lake Tuusula, Finland)

Jean Sibelius, more than just a composer, stands as an emblem of Finnish identity, pride, and resilience. His remarkable journey as an artist is closely intertwined with the story of Finland's emergence as a nation.

His participation in the Finnish independence movement was not just political but deeply personal. As a converted patriot, his compositions became soundtracks to the nationalistic fervor sweeping the nation. The power of works such as *Kullervo* and the iconic *Finlandia* resonated deeply with a populace yearning for sovereignty.

Symphony No. 5 was commissioned for his 50th birthday. He began work in 1914 and met his deadline, conducting the premiere on his birthday in 1915.

With this symphony, Sibelius embarked on a sonic journey, aiming to encapsulate the vastness of nature and the quintessence of human emotion. Horns signal a glorious dawn but as the movement continues there are brief ideas rising and falling, in the end all coalescing to bring it to an incisive, abrupt end.

A chorale-like start, then pizzicato strings hint at the rhythmic motif, moving like footsteps, that is taken up and worked in countless variations by all the instruments throughout the second movement. Twice the basses offer up a walking line in half- and whole-notes, tolling bells perhaps, while the strings tiptoe above them. All in all, the effect is like an intermezzo, delivering us without pause into the dramatic finale.

A fluttering, pulsing start, nervous strings prepare the horns' entrance with a sublime theme representing flying swans, swaying in half note groups of three. When the trumpets bring back the swan theme after a prolonged absence, the end is in sight, reaching, as Sibelius wrote, "... if I may say so, a vital climax to the end. Triumphant." Unlike the first movement's abrupt end, the final six chords, delivered like karate chops, require exquisite patience, about 20 seconds from the first to the last. Count them off and let the ovation begin.

Sibelius was unsatisfied with the first version and revised it twice with the final version from 1919 being the one almost always heard today. His task was complicated by the ravages of World War I, the Finnish Civil War, and his own personal

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travails – from health issues to financial distress. He had debts exacerbated by the loss of his German publishers. He hid from bombardment in a sanitarium where he was uninjured but nearly starved.

He composed the piece from the beginning with a grand vision, writing in late 1914, “I already begin to see dimly the mountain that I shall certainly ascend. . . . God opens His door for a moment and His orchestra plays the Fifth Symphony.” The solace and inspiration he found in nature were also essential. The serenity of his home, Ainola, named after his beloved wife, offered him both a sanctuary and a muse. One cannot underestimate the profound influence of the Finnish landscape on this piece. A diary entry, dated April 21, 1915, bears testimony to what became the unforgettable music in the final movement: “Saw today before eleven o’clock 16 swans. One of the greatest impressions in my life! O God this beauty!”

Finnish independence was a long time coming. Finland was controlled first by Sweden until 1809, then by Russia until Finnish independence in 1917. Russian sovereignty did not mean that Swedes went home. Swedish remained the language of power and Swedish elites stayed on, including Sibelius’ parents. Thus Sibelius grew up speaking Swedish and Finnish was his second language.

The Finnish fervor for independence spoke to Sibelius’ soul. In turn his music gave the people pride and hope. Each fed the other and made independence inevitable. Still it might have been delayed had it not been for the colossal incompetence of Tsar Nicholas II. An autocrat who believed his authority divinely ordained, Nicholas expected to use his empire for his own purposes which further stoked Finnish independence fervor. Nicholas’ troubles with WWI and the Menshevik revolution in 1917 made holding on to that part of his empire impossible. The murder of Nicholas and his family by the Bolsheviks ended the Romanov dynasty forever. Finally Finland was free.

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### Musicians

#### Tonight's Musicians

##### Violin 1

Joshua Holritz



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Nicholas Naegele  
Mark Reneau  
David Katz  
Jasper Sewell  
Nathan Banks  
Nick Hoy  
Sabrina Tabby  
J.P. Brien-Slack  
Sam Miller  
Felix Farrar  
Hunter Wilburn

### Violin 2

Sheri Peck, Principal  
Rachael McFarlane  
Emily Drexler  
Rebecca James  
Lee Smith  
Mary Benno  
Jacob Naggy  
Ashley Poppe  
Mary Margaret Neel  
Elizabeth Lindley

### Viola

Metiney Suwanawongse, Principal  
Cristina Micci-Barreca  
Rene Reder  
Samantha Lester  
Joe Lester  
Theresa Abler  
Nichole Pitts

### Cello

Paul Vest  
Spencer Brewer  
Annie Camp  
Micah Donar  
Holden Bitner  
Alisha Rufty  
Benjamin Van Winkle  
Jenny Wilkes

### Double Bass

Taylor Brown, Principal  
Jonathan McWilliams  
Given Graber  
Benjamin Crofut  
Dexter Bell  
Julia Milrod



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### Flute

Kristen Holritz, Principal  
Norman Gonzales

### Piccolo

Amelia Dicks

### Oboe

Jessica Smithorn, Principal  
Jennifer Ownby

### English Horn

Carey Shinbaum

### Clarinet

Joseph Miller  
Leonel Marulanda  
Nicholas Hartline

### Bassoon

Eric Anderson, Principal  
Shelby Alfredson  
Ann Walton

### French Horn

Gordon James, Principal  
Angela DeBoer  
Matthew Meadows  
Joseph Demko  
Jacob Cambell

### Trumpet

Christian Pagnard, Principal  
Michael Brown  
Sarah Fellenbaum

### Trombone

Kevin Dombrowski  
Daniel Cloutier  
Ross Sanchez

### Tuba

Bernard Flythe

### Timpani

Alex Wadner, Principal

### Percussion

Matthew West, Principal  
David Pedigo  
Andrew Harnsberger



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### Harp

Caroline Brown Hudson, Principal

### CSO Contract Musicians

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#### Violin 1

Joshua Holritz, Associate Concertmaster  
Nicholas Naegele, Assistant Concertmaster  
Nathan Banks  
Caroline Drexler  
Jeanne Johnson  
David Katz  
Calvin Lewis  
Mark Reneau  
Jasper Sewell

#### Violin 2

Sheri Peck, Principal Second Violin  
Mary Benno  
Emily Drexler  
Nick Hoy  
Rebecca James  
Rachael McFarlane  
Lee Smith  
Jennifer Whittle

#### Viola

Metiney Suwanawongse, Principal  
Katelyn Hoag  
Cristina Micci-Barreca  
Casie Runkle  
Susan Saliny  
Gabriel Schlaffer

#### Cello

Eric Reed, Principal  
Spencer Brewer  
Annie Camp  
Micah Donar  
Suzanne Sims  
Paul Vest

#### Double Bass

Taylor Brown, Principal  
Dexter Bell  
Kaleb Collins  
Jonathan McWilliams

#### Flute

Kristen Holritz, Principal  
Lisa Meyerhofer (Leave of Absence)



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Amelia Dicks, Principal Piccolo

### Oboe

Jessica Smithorn, Principal

Teresa Spilko

Carey Shinbaum, English Horn

### Clarinet

Robert West, Principal (Leave of Absence)

Emily Bowland

Joseph Miller, Bass Clarinet

### Bassoon

Eric Anderson, Principal

Shelby Jones

G. Eddie McCrary, Contrabassoon

### Horn

Gordon James, Principal

Angela DeBoer

Matthew Meadows

Joseph Demko (Leave of Absence)

Mackenzie Newell

### Trumpet

Christian Pagnard, Principal

Michael Brown

### Trombone

Prentiss Hobbs, Principal

Kevin Dombrowski

Christopher Brown (Leave of Absence)

Evan Clifton

### Tuba

Neil Konouchi, Principal

### Timpani

Alex Wadner, Principal

### Percussion

Matthew West, Principal

David Pedigo

### Harp

Caroline Brown Hudson, Principal

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Alan Nichols, Principal

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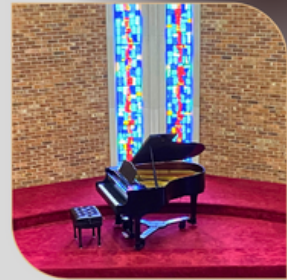


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1933 - 2023



## Sibelius Symphony No. 5

November 16, 2023 | 7:30 PM

**Making you the star  
of your own show!**

**TABLES ★ CHAIRS**  
**LINENS ★ CHINA**  
**TENTS & MORE!**

**EVENT RENTALS  
SHOWTIME**

423.624.2040 ★ 1220 Latta Street ★ Chattanooga, TN 37406 ★ ShowtimeChattanooga.com

**EXPLORE** | RIVER GALLERY  
RIVER GALLERY SCULPTURE GARDEN  
REMBRANDT'S ROASTING COMPANY  
REMBRANDT'S PASTRY KITCHEN

**EAT** | REMBRANDT'S COFFEE HOUSE  
TONY'S PASTA SHOP & TRATTORIA

**STAY** | BLUFF VIEW INN  
Macellan House, circa 1889  
T.C. Thompson House, circa 1908  
C.G. Martin House, circa 1927

*Bluff view*  
ART DISTRICT

411 East 2nd Street *high atop the Tennessee River*  
423.321.0235 | bluffviewartdistrict.com