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## Program

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Front Row Series

# Second to None: The Second Symphonies of Beethoven & Farrenc

November 16, 2025 | 3 PM

*Hotel Chalet - The Beverly Ballroom*

Ilya Ram | *conductor*

**Flash photography and video/audio recording of this  
concert are strictly prohibited.**

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
(1770 - 1827)

**Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op.  
36 (32")**

*I. Adagio Molto - Allegro con  
brio*


*II. Larghetto*

*III. Scherzo: Allegro*

*IV. Allegro Molto*

**Carlos Simon**  
(b. 1986)

***Fate Now Conquers (5")***



**Second to None: The  
Second Symphonies of  
Beethoven & Farrenc**

November 16 | 7:30 PM

**Louise Farrenc**  
(1804 - 1875)


**Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op.  
35 (41")**

*I. Allegro*

*II. Andante*

*III. Scherzo: Vivace*

*IV. Allegro*



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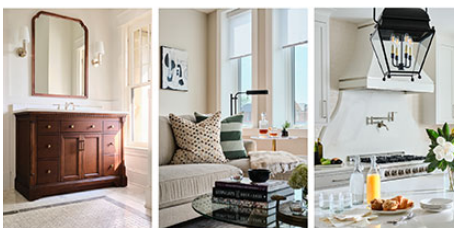
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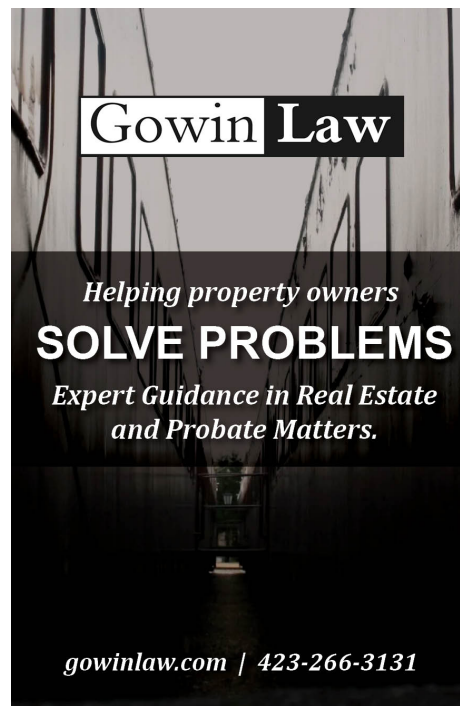


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November 16 | 7:30 PM



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### Artist Biographies

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**Ilya Ram**

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Kayoko Dan Fund Music Director

“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.” - Leipziger Volkszeitung

Israeli-American conductor Ilya Ram, praised for his “charismatic and energetic performances” (Crescendo Magazine) and “expressive spontaneity” (Diapason), is internationally recognized for his creative and engaging approach to classical music.



## Second to None: The Second Symphonies of Beethoven & Farrenc

November 16 | 7:30 PM

A prizewinner of the 5th Evgeny Svetlanov Competition in Monte Carlo, Ram is the Music Director of the Chattanooga Symphony & Opera, where he has launched an ambitious three-year artistic arc that explores Reflection, Moments, and Destiny - a journey connecting the past, present, and future of orchestral storytelling. His tenure is marked by innovative programming, cross-genre collaborations, and partnerships with local artists and community organizations that expand the orchestra's cultural reach.

Recent and upcoming highlights include performances with the Szczecin Filharmonia, Orquestra do Algarve, Orchestra Indiana, Deutsche Philharmonie Merck, Magdeburg Philharmoniker, Ensemble Tempus Konnex, Elbland Philharmonie Sachsen, Israel Chamber Orchestra, Ra'anana Sinfonietta, and the Robert-Schumann Philharmonic. He returns for the third time to the IMPULS Festival for Contemporary Music. Among the many soloists he has collaborated with are Pekka Kuusisto, Kristine Balanas, Amandine Savary, Ilian Garnetz, Ildikó Szabó, Liv Redpath, Ying Li, and Charlotte Thiele.

Equally at home in the pit and on the concert stage, Ram made his Semperoper Dresden debut with the world premiere of Zad Moutaka's *Drei Miese, fiese Kerle* and previously served as Guest Resident Conductor at Theater Chemnitz, leading productions including Zimmermann's *Weißer Rose* and Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. As a scholarship holder of the Akademie Musiktheater Heute (Deutsche Bank Stiftung), he premiered three new operas with Ensemble Modern during the 2024/25 season.

A strong believer that the highest artistic results are achieved through joy, curiosity, and creative rehearsal strategies, Ram has worked extensively with young ensembles, including the German National Youth Ballet, Youth North German Philharmonic, and the Dresden Special Music High School.

Committed to artistic innovation, Ram is among the few conductors to have completed the Music.Multimedia.Management project led by the Szczecin Philharmonic in collaboration with Fjord Cadenza Festival and TRAFÖ Center for Contemporary Art. He has participated in numerous international masterclasses, including the first-ever conducting masterclass at the Bayreuth Festival, and has studied with Christian Thielemann, Klaus Mäkelä, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo, Neeme Järvi, Marek Janowski, Hartmut Haenchen, Robert Treviño, Steven Sloane, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Timothy Redmond, Nicolás Pasquet, Johannes Schlaefli, and Jorma Panula.

Ram graduated cum laude from the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music in Tel Aviv and earned his master's degree in



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Second Symphonies of  
Beethoven & Farrenc**

November 16 | 7:30 PM

(October 2025)

orchestral conducting from the Hochschule für Musik “Carl Maria von Weber” Dresden, later completing the Advanced Professional Training for Conductors at the UdK Berlin. His studies were supported by scholarships from the Yotzrim Foundation, America-Israel Cultural Foundation, and the DAAD.

Before beginning his formal studies, Ram volunteered for a year in underprivileged communities in Israel, working with children both in and outside the education system. He later continued his social engagement through the Israeli branch of Physicians for Human Rights.



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## Program Notes

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### Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36

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Ludwig van Beethoven

### Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 36

Ludwig van Beethoven


*(b. December 17, 1770 in Bonn, Germany; d. March 26, 1827 in Vienna, Austria)*

There is an unfortunate, if unspoken, perception in the concert hall that Beethoven's even-numbered symphonies are somehow lesser—not up to the standard of the others in inspiration, excitement, or musical attractiveness.. We save our serious appreciation for the odd-numbered titans: the revolutionary Third, the fateful Fifth, the Seventh that danced its way into our hearts, and the Ninth that added a chorus and spoke for all humankind. So when Beethoven's Second Symphony appears on a program, a quiet grumble, "Who programs that?"

The symphony itself refutes that prejudice. Far from being a "second-tier" work, it is a powder keg. This is the piece where Beethoven, in the white heat of a personal hell, forged the very weapons he would later deploy in his "heroic" style. It is not merely a stepping stone to the mighty Eroica Symphony; it is the foundry where the steel was hammered out.

Its reputation as a "loser" began almost immediately. The symphony premiered on April 5, 1803, at a mega-concert in Vienna's Theater an der Wien. It was an over-stuffed, composer-produced benefit evening where Beethoven himself conducted and premiered not only this symphony but also his Third Piano Concerto (as soloist) and the oratorio Christ on the Mount of Olives. His patron, Prince Lichnowsky, had to bring lunch baskets to the orchestra during the grueling rehearsal. The critics, exhausted and baffled, were merciless. One Parisian reviewer dismissed it as "barbaric," sounding "as if doves and crocodiles were locked up together." A Viennese critic for the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* famously called it "a hideously writhing, wounded dragon that refuses to die, but writhing in its last agonies and, in the fourth movement, bleeding to death."

What on earth were they hearing? They were hearing the future, and it terrified them.



### Second to None: The Second Symphonies of Beethoven & Farrenc

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November 16 | 7:30 PM



## Second to None: The Second Symphonies of Beethoven & Farrenc

November 16 | 7:30 PM

This "wounded dragon" was, in fact, an act of sheer, defiant will. Beethoven composed the bulk of the symphony in the summer and fall of 1802 in the village of Heiligenstadt. This was the exact time and place he wrote the "Heiligenstadt Testament," his agonizing, unsent letter to his brothers. In it, he confessed his encroaching deafness ("I was compelled to isolate myself, to live life alone"), his social despair ("what a humiliation for me when someone standing next to me heard a flute in the distance and I heard nothing"), and his contemplation of suicide.

But the symphony he wrote there is not a work of despair. It is a "smiling," "genial," and explosive rebuttal to it. But the symphony he wrote there is not a work of despair. It is a "smiling," "genial," and explosive rebuttal to it. The critics heard a "dragon" because they were hearing a new, revolutionary musical language they couldn't yet comprehend. Beethoven had uncaged a new kind of symphony, incorporating three disruptive innovations destined to become trademarks of his "heroic" style:

- A New Scale: The symphony is far grander and more dramatic than his First. The slow introduction is a brooding majesty, and the finale is capped with a "monster" coda of unprecedented length and fury.

- A New Engine: Beethoven permanently throws out the polite, aristocratic Minuet and replaces it with a fiery, unpredictable Scherzo (Italian for "joke"). This was no mere rebranding; it was a shift from a courtly dance to a vehicle for rhythmic disruption, "unruly offbeat accents," and sudden, ferocious jabs.

- A New Humor: The finale kicks off not with a noble theme, but with a sound one critic called a "high whoop and a low gurgle"—a jagged, eccentric musical hiccup. This was boisterous, even crude, humor.

A brief tour of the work reveals this defiant energy:

**Adagio molto – Allegro con brio:** A long, dramatic slow introduction builds enormous tension before the Allegro bursts forth, full of propulsive, rumbling energy.

**Larghetto:** This "pure smiling grace" is one of Beethoven's longest and most beautiful slow movements, but even here, a restless, fidgety quality keeps it from ever becoming polite background music.

**Scherzo: Allegro:** The revolution in miniature. It's a fast, vigorous, side-slapping Austrian dance, full of displaced accents that keep the listener off-balance.

Allegro molto: The dragon's thrashing tail. It leaps out with its famous "hiccup" and proceeds with a relentless, driving energy that baffled and overwhelmed its first audience.

A man in profound despair produced a symphony filled with bold and energetic music. It seems paradoxical but the Heiligenstadt Testament is the key to understanding. His testament is more than a confession of despair; it is a pivot point. In a lesser-known postscript dated October 10th (four days after the main letter), Beethoven's sadness is palpable as he abandons all hope of a cure: "Thus I say goodbye to you... yes, you beloved hope... I must now entirely abandon, as the autumn leaves fall." Yet, this very despair over his outward "incurable" state seems to have driven him to an "unimagined profundity" and a "higher gear" of composition. After plumbing the depths, he finds his resolve: "It was only my art that held me back," he wrote. "Ah, it seemed to me impossible to leave the world until I had brought forth all that I felt was within me."

The Second Symphony is that art. It is the sound of a man choosing to live, choosing to fight, and choosing to compose not in spite of his suffering, but against it.

History, of course, has been kinder than the early critics. While once overshadowed, the Second is now seen as a "colossal work" and a crucial test for any conductor. A complete Beethoven cycle is the mark of a great orchestra, and a conductor's interpretation of the Second—its "hot potato" *Larghetto* tempo, its volatile *Scherzo*—reveals their understanding of his entire legacy. It is no longer a "lesser" work, but a manifesto.

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## Fate Now Conquers


Carlos Simon

## Fate Now Conquers

Carlos Simon

(b. 1986 in Washington, D.C.)

If Beethoven's Second Symphony is the sound of a man raging against his personal fate, Carlos Simon's *Fate Now Conquers* explores that same struggle as a broader, historical, and social force. The title itself is a direct quote from Beethoven—not from the Heiligenstadt Testament, but from an 1815 journal entry where the composer scribbled a line from Homer's *Iliad*: "But Fate now conquers; I am hers..."



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## Second to None: The Second Symphonies of Beethoven & Farrenc

November 16 | 7:30 PM



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November 16 | 7:30 PM

Commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra for Beethoven's 250th birthday in 2020, the work is a direct response to that legacy. Simon, who grew up in Atlanta, is one of the most prominent voices of his generation, celebrated for what he calls "musical aural-activism." As a Black composer, his work often explores the "resilience of the human spirit." He does this by infusing the neoclassical orchestra with the syncopated rhythms and harmonies of jazz, gospel, and spirituals—sounds that are themselves a profound testament to a community's long struggle with destiny.

Paying this homage, Simon chooses to draw inspiration from the relentless, obsessive rhythm of the *Allegretto* from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. He takes that iconic rhythm and transforms it, re-imagining it as something more agitated and unpredictable.

In the composer's own words: "I was interested in exploring the uncertainty of fate... This piece depicts the unpredictable ways of fate and the struggle one has with it. Jolting stabs and frenzied arpeggios in the strings show the unsettling nature of fate."

The work is a powerful dialogue across two centuries. It connects the "unimaginable profundity" Beethoven found in his personal crisis to the complex anxieties of our own time. It asks what that "knock of fate"—so famously depicted in Beethoven's Fifth—sounds like today. In Simon's hands, it is less a single, defiant knock and more a persistent, rhythmic, and inescapable *communal* force.

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### Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 35

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Louise Farrenc

## Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 35

Louise Farrenc

(b. May 31, 1804 in Paris, France; d. September 15, 1875 in Paris, France)

In 1850, after a triumphant premiere of her new Nonet—in which the 19-year-old superstar violinist Joseph Joachim gladly participated—Louise Farrenc went to the director of the Paris Conservatory with a demand. She, the sole female professor at the institution, was being paid less than her male colleagues. Backed by the success of her work and her unassailable reputation, she demanded equal pay. And she got it. This story is the key to understanding Farrenc: a formidable, first-rate figure who knew her worth.



## Second to None: The Second Symphonies of Beethoven & Farrenc

November 16 | 7:30 PM

The "Second to None" title of this program is built on this piece: a powerful, brilliant symphony, also in D Major, that stands proudly alongside the Beethoven Second. Written in 1845, it is a muscular, dramatic, and impeccably crafted work. While her French contemporaries were obsessed with opera, Farrenc dedicated herself to the grand Germanic symphonic tradition of Beethoven, Schubert, and Mendelssohn.

The symphony was not kept a secret. It premiered successfully on February 21, 1846, performed by the most prestigious orchestra in France, the Société des concerts du Conservatoire. Critics praised its brilliance. But this success was not enough to overcome the "virulent, virtually unanimous" bias against women composers. Like most works by women of the era, it was not published and vanished after her death. Its disappearance for over a century had nothing to do with its quality and everything to do with gender.

The symphony follows a traditional four-movement structure.

1- Allegro: The symphony opens with a muscular, propulsive first theme, pure Beethovenian drama. This forceful energy is then contrasted with a more lyrical, song-like second theme.

2- Andante: This is an elegant, gentle slow movement in a minor key. It's particularly notable for its beautiful writing for the wind instruments, a skill Farrenc honed in her celebrated chamber music.

3- Scherzo: Vivace: A fast, light, and rhythmically playful "joke" movement, full of quick, scampering energy that brings to mind the elfin scherzos of Felix Mendelssohn.

4- Allegro: The finale is a brilliant, high-energy conclusion that drives forward relentlessly, ending the symphony in a blaze of orchestral color.

Her success was supported by a private life that was utterly atypical for the 19th century. She and her husband, the flutist and music publisher Aristide Farrenc, were a true team. They shared child-raising duties, and he supported her career by publishing her early works.

Farrenc's early composition teacher, Antonín Rejcha (known in Western Europe as Anton Reicha), also taught Liszt and Berlioz. He specialized in chamber music for woodwinds even though he himself didn't play them. He might have declined to take Farrenc as a student but she had a consummate understanding of writing for woodwinds, a conjugal benefit of her marriage to Aristide, a virtuoso on the flute. It was a lucky alignment and, clearly, Reicha helped build her formidable reputation. One might speculate, however, he steered her away from larger forms, as she composed all her symphonies only


after his death.

Her revival was long delayed because so many of her works were unpublished. In recent decades, publishers have tried to copyright these "newly discovered" 150-year-old works and a battle has ensued. Music lovers have triumphed and virtually all these works are in the public domain. Volunteer efforts around the world have since typeset much of her unpublished music—including all three symphonies—and placed it online for all to access, perform, and cherish.

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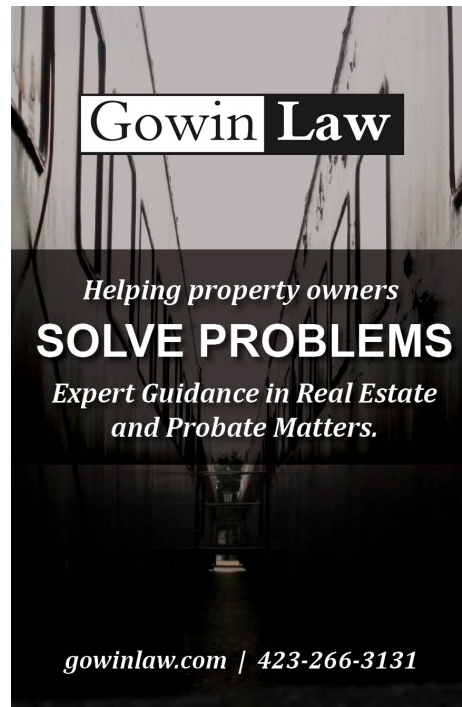


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**Tonight's Orchestra Musicians**

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**Violin 1**

\*Joshua Holritz, Concertmaster  
\*Nicholas Naegele, Associate Concertmaster  
\*David Katz  
\*Emily Drexler  
\*Nick Hoy  
Mayumi Masri  
Leonardo Rosario  
Jeff Brannen

**Violin 2**

\*Sheri Peck, Principal  
\*Rachael McFarlane  
\*Rebecca James  
\*Mary Benno  
Bryony Stroud Watson  
Joanna Pepple

**Viola**

\*Casie Runkle  
\*Metiney Suwanawongse  
\*Katelyn Hoag  
\*Cristina Micci-Barreca  
Rene Reder  
Nichole Pitts



**Second to None: The  
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November 16 | 7:30 PM

**Cello**

\*Annie Camp  
\*Suzanne Sims  
\*Paul Vest  
\*Eric Reed

**Double Bass**

\*Taylor Brown, Principal  
\*Dexter Bell

**Flute**

\*Amelia Dicks, Principal  
*John L. and Norma B. Anderson Principal Flute Chair*  
Blair Carrier

**Oboe**

\*Jessica Smithorn, Principal  
*Norma and Olan Mills II Principal Oboe Chair*  
\*Carey Shinbaum

**Clarinet**

\*Emily Bowland  
Bradley Whitfield

**Bassoon**

Duncan Henry  
\*Eric Anderson

**French Horn**

\*Gordon James, Principal  
\*Joseph Demko

**Trumpet**

\*Christian Pagnard, Principal  
Sarah Fellenbaum

**Timpani**

\*Alex Wadner, Principal

**CSO Contract Musicians**


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**Violin 1**

Joshua Holritz, Concertmaster  
Nicholas Naegele, Assistant Concertmaster  
Nathan Banks  
Jeanne Johnson  
David Katz  
Calvin Lewis  
Jasper Sewell

**Violin 2**

Sheri Peck, Principal Second Violin  
Mary Benno



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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  
Jonathan McWilliams

**Flute**

Amelia Dicks, Principal  
*John L. and Norma B. Anderson Principal Flute Chair*  
Lisa Meyerhofer (Leave of Absence)

**Oboe**

Jessica Smithorn, Principal  
*Norma and Olan Mills II Principal Oboe Chair*  
Teresa Spilko  
Carey Shinbaum, English Horn

**Clarinet**

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

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

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Caroline Brown Hudson, Principal

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Alan Nichols, Principal

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November 16 | 7:30 PM

**BROADWAY**  
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 <p><b>THE WIZ</b></p> <p>April 28 - May 3 (8 performances)</p>	 <p><b>Hellooooo, Chattanooga!</b> <b>Mrs. Doubtfire</b> The New Musical Comedy</p> <p>June 12-14 (5 performances)</p>

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