

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 9

9

Gianandrea
Noseda



National Symphony Orchestra
The Kennedy Center



National Symphony Orchestra

Gianandrea Noseda conductor

Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 “Choral”

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| 1. Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso | 14'58” |
| 2. Molto vivace | 13'18” |
| 3. Adagio molto e cantabile | 13'16” |
| 4. Finale | 22'42” |
- Camilla Tilling, soprano | Kelley O'Connor, mezzo-soprano
Issachah Savage, tenor | Ryan McKinny, bass-baritone
The Washington Chorus - Eugene Rogers, Artistic Director

Symphony No. 9 was recorded live on June 1, 2, and 3, 2023 in the Concert Hall of The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.

Recording producer Blanton Alspaugh, *Soundmirror*.

Recording engineer Mark Donahue, *Soundmirror*. **Mastering engineer** Mark Donahue, *Soundmirror*.

Executive Producers Nigel Boon and Genevieve Twomey, *National Symphony Orchestra*.

BEETHOVEN Symphonies Abstracted Art, © 2019 Mo Willems, **Cover design** Scott Sosebee.

Orchestra photos Scott Suchman. **Gianandrea Noseda photo** Stefano Pasqualetti. **Mo Willems photo** Trix Willems.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 “Choral” (1824)

With the Ninth, Beethoven created more than a symphony. Almost as soon as it was written, the Ninth became an icon of Western culture. Its message affirms the triumph of joy over adversity like no other piece of music has ever done. And its revolutionary form, its unprecedented size and complexity and, above all, the introduction of the human voice in the last movement, changed the history of music forever. The work's import and the means by which it is expressed are both unique: each explains and justifies the other.

Everything in Beethoven's career seems to have prepared the way for this exceptional composition. It is the culmination of the so-called “heroic style,” known from Symphonies Nos. 3 and 5, among others. But it is also the endpoint of a series of choral works with all-embracing, cathartic, and solemn endings. The series began in 1790 with two cantatas on the death of Emperor Joseph II and the inauguration of Leopold II, respectively; the concluding chorus of the latter begins with the words *Stürzt nieder, Millionen* (“Fall to your knees, ye millions”)—a close paraphrase of Schiller's “Ode to Joy,” the text Beethoven used in the final movement of the Ninth. The most direct precursor of the “Choral” Symphony is certainly the *Choral Fantasy* (1808), but let it also be remembered that Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, contains another quote from Schiller's poem in its final scene: *Wer ein holdes Weib errungen...* (“A man who has found a gracious wife...”)

The poem had preoccupied Beethoven since 1792: in that year, an acquaintance of the composer's informed Schiller's sister that:

“A young man...whose talents are universally praised...proposes... to compose Schiller's *Freude*, and indeed strophe by strophe. I expect something perfect for as far as I know him he is wholly devoted to the great and the sublime.”

In a way, then, Beethoven was getting ready to write this work all his life. The actual compositional work took about a year and a half, from the summer of 1822 through February 1824.

Beethoven's plans to set Schiller's “Ode to Joy” began to take a new shape in 1816–1817, around the time he received a commission for a symphony from the Philharmonic Society of London. At this point, he had two distinct compositions in mind—a new pair of symphonies similar to Nos. 5–6 (1807–1808) or 7–8 (1811–1812), which had also been conceived in pairs. But the Tenth Symphony never progressed beyond a few sketches. The Ninth remained Beethoven's last work for orchestra.

Even though Beethoven had long planned to set the “Ode to Joy” to music, he long hesitated over whether or not the last movement of a symphony was the proper place for such a setting. After sketching the choral finale, he appears to have had second thoughts and jotted down ideas for a purely instrumental last movement, ideas he later used in his string quartet in A minor, Op. 132. He felt that the introduction of voices needed special justification; the difficulties he experienced in crossing this particular line can be seen from the many stages the introduction

went through in the sketches. At one point, for instance, the rejection of the themes from the first three movements was entrusted to a singer (not the cellos and basses as in the final version). The singer, after dismissing the scherzo as *Possen* (“farce”) and the Adagio as “too tender,” exclaimed: “Let us sing the song of the immortal Schiller!”

In the end, Beethoven set only about half of the “song of the immortal Schiller,” freely repeating and rearranging the lines. He used the revised version of the poem, which Schiller had published in 1803.

The opening of the symphony, with its open fifths played in mysterious string tremolos (rapid repeated notes), has been described as representing the creation of the world, as the theme emerges from what seems an amorphous, primordial state. There is an atmosphere of intense expectancy; the tension continually grows until the main theme is presented, *fortissimo*, by the entire orchestra. It is significant that the mysterious opening is immediately repeated, as it will be two more times in the course of the movement, significantly prolonging the sensation of suspense. The main theme is moved into a new key the second time, and into an unexpected one at that. The first movement of a D-minor symphony normally gravitates *upward* toward F major. Beethoven chose a *descent* to B-flat instead (incidentally, B-flat will also be the key of the symphony’s slow movement). The Allegro follows the outlines of sonata form, but the individual stages of that form do not quite function the usual way. In traditional sonata form (Mozart, for instance), the tensions that build up in the development section are resolved in the recapitulation. In the Ninth Symphony, a tendency present in several works from Beethoven’s middle period becomes stronger than ever: the tensions keep increasing to the end. The movement’s lengthy coda contains some material of a highly dramatic character; it ends on a climactic point, without a feeling of resolution.

The first movement is followed by a scherzo; this order is unusual in symphonies, though not uncommon in chamber music. Beethoven refrained from using the word “Scherzo” here, however, because the mood is dramatic rather than playful. It is based on a motif of only three notes, played in turn by the strings, the timpani (specially tuned at an octave instead of the usual fourth), and the winds. The motif is developed in a fugal fashion, with subsequent imitative entrances—this fugal theme appeared in Beethoven’s sketchbook as early as 1815. Through the addition of a second theme, contrasting with the first, the scherzo is expanded into a sonata-like structure of considerable proportions. The Trio, or middle section, switches from triple to duple meter, and from D minor to D major, anticipating not only the key of the finale but the outline of the “Ode to Joy” theme as well. For the first time, we reach a haven of peace and happiness that foreshadows the finale. But for the moment, the Trio is brushed aside by the repeat of the dramatic “Molto vivace.” At the end, Beethoven leads into the trio a second time, but breaks it off abruptly, to end the movement with two measures of octave leaps in unison. According to one commentator, this ending suggests an “open-ended” form that could “move back and forth between scherzo and trio endlessly.” In other words, we cannot at this point tell for sure whether the final outcome will be tragic or joyful.

First, there is one more stage to complete: the sublime third-movement Adagio, one of Beethoven’s most transcendent utterances. It has two alternating melodies: one majestic, the other tender. Each recurrence of the first theme is more ornate than the preceding one while the second theme does not change. The movement culminates in a powerful brass fanfare, followed by a wistful epilogue.

We are jolted out of this idyll by what, in 1824, must have counted as the most jarring dissonance ever written. Wagner referred to

this sonority as the *Schreckensfanfare* (“fanfare of horror”), and, at the opening of the finale, it forcefully suggests that we have arrived at a point where all previous rules break down. We can no longer predict the future on the basis of the past; what follows has no precedent in the history of music.

In his book on the Ninth Symphony (published by Schirmer in 1995), David Benjamin Levy interprets the finale as a four-movement symphony in its own right that mirrors the four movements of the Ninth Symphony itself (opening, scherzo, slow movement, finale).

After the fanfare, Beethoven begins the first of these sections by evoking the past: the themes of the first three movements appear, only to be emphatically rejected by the dramatic recitative of the cellos and basses. The first two-measure fragment of the “Ode to Joy” theme, however, is greeted by a recitative in a completely different, enthusiastic tone as the tonality changes to a bright D major.

The “Ode to Joy” theme is first played by the cellos and basses without any accompaniment. It is subsequently joined by several countermelodies (including a particularly striking one in the bassoon) and finally repeated triumphantly by the entire orchestra. Then the music suddenly stops and the *Schreckensfanfare* unexpectedly returns, followed by the entrance of the baritone soloist who takes up the last phrase of the earlier instrumental recitative to lead into the vocal presentation of the “Ode to Joy.” As before, during the instrumental variations, the melody grows and grows in volume and excitement until (at the words *Und der Cherub steht vor Gott*) there is a new interruption.

The second major section of the movement starts here, with the scherzo-like “Turkish march” for tenor solo and a battery of

percussion instruments. It has been dubbed the “Turkish march” because of a musical style influenced by the Turkish janissary bands popular in Vienna at the time (the same influence can be found in several works by Mozart, including the opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*). The theme of the “Turkish march,” with its extra percussion parts, is, of course, a variation on the “Ode to Joy” melody. This episode is followed by an orchestral interlude in the form of a fugue, also based on the “Ode to Joy.” The melody is recapitulated in its original form by the orchestra and chorus, and then the music stops again.

In the third section (the “slow movement”), the men from the chorus introduce a new theme (*Seid umschlungen, Millionen*). If the “Ode” celebrated the divine nature of Joy, this melody represents the Deity in its awe-inspiring, cosmic aspect. Whereas the first theme proceeded entirely in small steps, the second one is characterized by wide leaps; this sudden expansion in the dimensions of the melody conjures up a sense of the infinite and God’s throne above the starry skies.

The last section begins with the two themes heard simultaneously in what David Levy calls a “symbolic contrapuntal union of the sacred and the profane.” The solo quartet returns to the first strophe of Schiller’s poem; once more, the music starts anew to rise to new heights of joyful energy. Three slow sections intervene to delay this final ascent; the second of these (an Adagio cadenza for the four solo singers) momentarily brings back memories of the symphony’s slow movement. But finally, nothing can stop the music from reaching a state of ecstasy. After the last unison D in measure 940, the journey is completed and there is nothing left to say.

- Notes by Peter Laki

An die Freude

Friedrich Schiller

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!
Deine Zauber binden wieder
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Wem der grosse Wurf gelungen
Eines Freundes Freund zu sein;
Wer ein holdes Weib errungen
Mische seinen Jubel ein!
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele
Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle
Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!

Freude trinken alle Wesen
An den Brüsten der Natur;
Alle Guten, alle Bösen
Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,
Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben
und der Cherub steht vor Gott.

Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen
Durch des Himmels prächt'gen
Plan
Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen.

Seid umschlungen, Millionen!
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.
Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!
Über Sternen muss er wohnen.

Ode: to Joy

Friedrich Schiller

Joy, beautiful spark of Divinity,
Daughter of Elysium,
We enter, drunk with fire,
Heavenly One, thy Holiness!
Thy magic binds again
What custom strictly divided;
All humans become brothers,
Where thy gentle wing abides.

Whoever has succeeded in the
great attempt,
To be a friend's friend,
Whoever has won a lovely wife,
Add his to the jubilation!
Yes, whoever also has just one
other's Soul
To call his own on this Earth's
round!
And he who never managed it
should slink
Weeping from this union!

All creatures drink of joy
At nature's breasts.
All the Good, all the Evil
Follow her trail of roses.

Kisses she gave us and grapevines,
A friend, proven in death.
Lust was given to the serpent
And the cherub stands before
God.

Gladly, as His suns fly
through the heavens' grand plan
Journey, brothers, on your way,
Joyful, like a hero to victory.

Be embraced, Millions!
This kiss to all the world!
Brothers, above the starry canopy
There must dwell a loving Father.
Are you collapsing, millions?
Do you sense the Creator, world?
Seek him above the starry canopy!
Above stars must He reside.



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About the Cover Art

“Beethoven’s symphonies have moved millions of people. One evening, at a concert almost 250 years after his birth, Beethoven’s work moved me to paint them. The idea of creating art specifically to view while listening to Beethoven’s symphonies, compelled me to spend a year researching, listening, and painting. The result is nine abstractions, a visual art piece for each symphony, rendered in panels, whose sizes represent the lengths of each movement.

Through this project, I got to know Beethoven in a new way. When you listen to a symphony you are invited to a dialogue with its creator. I had the opportunity to see his technique change over his career and to feel the journey of his musical notes.

I hope these abstractions will spark something in you, as a listener and a viewer. Maybe you’ll even respond to Beethoven with your own art!”

- Mo Willems

Gianandrea Noseda

Conductor

Gianandrea Noseda is one of the world's most sought-after conductors, equally recognized for his artistry in both the concert hall and opera house. The 2023–2024 season marks his seventh as Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra.

Noseda's leadership has inspired and reinvigorated the National Symphony Orchestra which makes its home at the Kennedy Center. The renewed artistic recognition and critical acclaim has led to invitations to Carnegie Hall, international concert halls, as well as digital streaming and a record label distributed by LSO Live for which Noseda also records as principal guest conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra. The label's most recent and upcoming releases are dedicated to the complete *Sinfonias* by Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington, D.C. native George Walker and a Beethoven Cycle.

The label launched in 2020 with Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 and Copland's Suite from *Billy the Kid*. Noseda has made over 70 recordings for various labels, including Deutsche Grammophon and Chandos on which he recorded many works including those by neglected Italian composers through his *Musica Italiana* series.

Noseda became General Music Director of the Zurich Opera House in September 2021. In 2022, his initial four-year contract was extended through the 2027–2028 season. An important milestone will be two complete *Ring* Cycles in May 2024 in a new production by Andreas Homoki. Since April 2022, his performances of the *Ring* operas have been praised by critics and in February 2023 he was recognized as “Best Conductor” by the jury of the German OPER! AWARDS, specifically for his Wagner interpretations.



From 2007–2018, Nosedà served as music director of the Teatro Regio Torino, where his leadership marked the opera house’s golden era.

Nosedà has conducted the most important international orchestras, opera houses and festivals and had significant roles at the BBC Philharmonic (Chief Conductor), Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (Principal Guest Conductor), Mariinsky Theatre (Principal Guest Conductor), Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI (Principal Guest Conductor), Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (Victor de Sabata Chair), Rotterdam Philharmonic (Principal Guest Conductor), and Stresa Festival (Artistic Director).

Nosedà has a strong commitment to working with the next generation of musicians and in 2019 was appointed the founding Music Director of the Tsinandali Festival and Pan-Caucasian Youth Orchestra in the village of Tsinandali, Georgia.

A native of Milan, Nosedà is Commendatore al Merito della Repubblica Italiana, marking his contribution to the artistic life of Italy. He has been honored as Musical America’s Conductor of the Year (2015) and International Opera Awards Conductor of the Year (2016). In 2023, he received the Puccini Award whose past recipients include legendary opera stars Maria Callas, Birgit Nilsson and Luciano Pavarotti.

The NSO Music Director Chair is generously endowed by
The Sant Family.

Funding for NSO recordings is provided by generous Nosedà Era Fund supporters.



National Symphony Orchestra

The 2023–2024 season is the National Symphony Orchestra's 93rd season. Gianandrea Noseda serves as the Orchestra's seventh Music Director, joining the NSO's legacy of distinguished leaders: Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard

Slatkin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Antal Doráti, Howard Mitchell, and Hans Kindler. Its artistic leadership also includes Principal Pops Conductor Steven Reineke and Artistic Advisor Ben Folds.



Since its founding in 1931, the NSO has been committed to performances that enrich the lives of its audience and community members. In 1986, the National Symphony became an artistic affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where it has performed since the Center opened in 1971. The 96-member NSO participates in events of national and international importance, including the annual nationally televised concerts on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, live-streamed performances from the Kennedy Center Concert Hall on medici.tv, and local radio broadcasts on Classical WETA 90.9 FM.

The NSO builds on its recording legacy with its eponymous label that launched in 2020. Since launching, the National Symphony Orchestra has garnered praise for its ambitious recording projects including the orchestra's first complete Beethoven Symphony cycle and the release of the first-ever cycle of George Walker's Sinfonias, both led by Music Director Gianandrea Noseda.

Additionally, the NSO's community engagement and education projects are nationally recognized, including NSO *In Your Neighborhood*, an annual week of performances in schools, churches, community centers, and other unexpected venues; *Notes of Honor*, which offers free performances for active, veteran, prior service, and retired members of the military and their families; and *Sound Health*, a collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and its affiliated organizations. Career development opportunities for young musicians include the NSO Youth Fellowship Program and its acclaimed, tuition-free Summer Music Institute.



For more information, visit nationalsymphony.org

Camilla Tilling

Soprano



Praised for her “beguiling tone and unfailing musicality” (*Gramophone*), Swedish-native Camilla Tilling has been performing on the world’s leading opera, concert, and recital stages for over two decades while building an impressive discography that includes *Die Schöpfung* with Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks under Bernard Haitink, and a portrait album of Gluck & Mozart arias and numerous recitals on the BIS label dedicated to the Lieder of Schubert and Strauss, among others.

Early operatic roles such as Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*),

Ilia (*Idomeneo*), Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) gave Tilling debuts at Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, San Francisco Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, Opéra national de Paris, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro alla Scala, and the Metropolitan Opera. Later highlights include the Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*) at Glyndebourne Festival, Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) at Salzburg Mozartwoche, Donna Clara (*Der Zwerg*) at Bayerische Staatsoper, Gretel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) at Covent Garden, l’Ange (*Saint François d’Assise*) for Dutch National Opera, both Blanche de la Force (*Dialogues des Carmélites*) and Contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at Royal Swedish Opera, and Mélisande (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) at Teatro Real Madrid, Semperoper Dresden, Finnish National Opera, and with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

A prolific concert performer, recent highlights include Mahler Symphony No. 4 with Het Concertgebouw Orkest and the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Schoenberg’s *Gurrelieder*

with Esa-Pekka Salonen and London Philharmonia; Dutilleux’s *Correspondances* with Orchestre National de France and Omer Meir Wellber; and Berg’s *Sieben frühe Lieder* with the London Symphony Orchestra and François-Xavier Roth.

Tilling was a soloist in Bernard Haitink’s final concert with Radio Filharmonisch Orkest at Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw after a long collaboration which included her first performances at Teatro alla Scala and she has toured extensively in Peter Sellars’ staging of Bach’s *St Matthew Passion* and *St John Passion* with Berliner Philharmoniker and Sir Simon Rattle.

Kelley O'Connor

Mezzo-soprano



Possessing a voice of uncommon allure, the Grammy Award®-winning mezzo-soprano Kelley O'Connor is one of the most compelling performers of her generation. She is internationally acclaimed equally in the pillars of the classical music canon—from Beethoven and Mahler to Brahms and Ravel—as she is in new works of modern masters—from Adams and Dessner to Lieberson and Talbot.

John Adams wrote the title role of *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* for Kelley O'Connor and she has performed the work, both in concert and in the Peter Sellars fully

staged production, under the batons of John Adams, Gustavo Dudamel, Grant Gershon, Gianandrea Noseda, Sir Simon Rattle, and David Robertson. She has sung the composer's *El Niño* with Vladimir Jurowski and the London Philharmonic Orchestra and continues to be the eminent living interpreter of Peter Lieberson's *Neruda Songs* having given this moving set of songs with Christoph Eschenbach and the National Symphony Orchestra, with Bernard Haitink and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, with Robert Spano and the Minnesota Orchestra, among many others.

Sought after by many of the most heralded composers today, O'Connor has given the world premieres of works by John Adams, Jody Talbot, Bryce Dessner, Osvaldo Golijov, Peter Lieberson, and Kareem Roustom, among others. O'Connor has received unanimous international, critical acclaim for her performances as Federico García Lorca in Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar*. O'Connor created the role for the world premiere at

Tanglewood, under the baton of Robert Spano, and subsequently joined Miguel Harth-Bedoya for performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and in the world-premiere of the revised edition of *Ainadamar* at the Santa Fe Opera in a new staging by Peter Sellars.

Her discography includes a Grammy® Award-winning Deutsche Grammophon recording of Golijov's *Ainadamar*; Lieberson's *Neruda Songs* and Michael Kurth's *Everything Lasts Forever* with Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Mahler's Third Symphony with Jaap van Zweden and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Adams' *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Issachah Savage

Tenor



The profile of American tenor Issachah Savage was dramatically raised when he swept the boards at Seattle’s International Wagner Competition in 2014, taking first prize, audience prize, and orchestra favorite awards. Formerly a member of San Francisco’s prestigious Merola Opera Program, Savage performed a varied repertoire including scenes from *Samson et Dalila*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Walküre*, and *Parsifal*. His performance of the last act of Verdi’s *Otello*, inspired the San Francisco Chronicle to write, “From his opening notes—impeccably shaded and coiled with repressed fury—to the opera’s final explosion of grief and shame, Savage sang

with a combination of power and finesse that is rare to observe.”

Operatic milestones of Savage’s recent seasons include his debut as Bacchus in Strauss’ *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Seattle Opera under Lawrence Renes; his Metropolitan Opera debut as Don Riccardo in Verdi’s *Ernani* conducted by James Levine; his Los Angeles Opera debut as Narraboth in *Salome*, and his recent return as Tannhäuser, both conducted by James Conlon; as well as his first Siegmund in *Die Walküre* at the Canadian Opera Company under Music Director Johannes Debus. At Austin Lyric Opera, Savage has appeared in two of Verdi’s most demanding roles: as Otello, and as Radames in *Aida*. The latter role marked his debut at Houston Grand Opera under the baton of Antonino Fogliani. In semi-staged opera performance, Savage has appeared with Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as the Messenger in *Aida*. Equally at home on the concert platform, Savage has a wide repertoire that includes mainstay

works such as Beethoven Symphony No. 9, Verdi *Messa da Requiem*, Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde*, and Schoenberg *Gurrelieder*; alongside less frequently performed pieces like Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella*, Weill’s *Lost in the Stars*, and Gershwin’s *Blue Monday*.

Savage has received a number of prestigious awards, recognition, and career grants from institutions including the Wagner Societies of New York, Washington, D.C., and Northern California; the Licia Albanese International Puccini Foundation; and the Olga Forrai and Gerda Lissner Foundations. He was honored in the early stages of his career development as the first ever scholar artist of the Marian Anderson Society of Philadelphia.

Ryan McKinny

Bass-baritone



Recognized by *Opera News* as “one of the finest singers of his generation,” American bass-baritone Ryan McKinny has earned his reputation as an artist with something to say. His relentless curiosity informs riveting character portrayals and beautifully crafted performances, reminding audiences of their shared humanity with the characters on stage.

McKinny recently opened the Metropolitan Opera’s season as Joseph De Rocher in a new Ivo van Hove production of *Dead Man Walking*. His portrayal was acclaimed by *The Washington Post* for its “figurative and literal

muscular force... a richly human performance [and] revelatory singing.” He has also recently appeared as the title character in *Don Giovanni* (Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera), Escamillo in *Carmen* (Semperoper Dresden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Hamburg, Houston Grand Opera), and Mozart’s *Figaro* (Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Washington National Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Houston Grand Opera). McKinny is a frequent guest artist at Los Angeles Opera, where he sang Stanley Kowalski in Previn’s *A Streetcar Named Desire* opposite Renée Fleming as Blanche DuBois, and at Santa Fe Opera, where he has appeared as Jochanaan in *Salome* and Oppenheimer in *Doctor Atomic*.

McKinny made a critically acclaimed Bayreuth Festival debut as Amfortas in *Parsifal*, a role he has performed around the world, including appearances at Argentina’s Teatro Cólón, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, and Dutch National Opera. Other Wagnerian roles include Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*

(Deutsche Oper Berlin, Houston Grand Opera, Canadian Opera Company), Biterolf in *Tannhäuser* and Kothner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, both at the Metropolitan Opera, Wotan in Opéra de Montréal’s *Das Rheingold*, Donner/Gunther in Wagner’s *Ring* cycle (Washington National Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Houston Grand Opera), and the titular Dutchman in *Der fliegende Holländer* (Staatsoper Hamburg, Milwaukee Symphony, Glimmerglass Festival, Hawaii Opera Theater).

The Washington Chorus

Eugene Rogers, Artistic Director

The Washington Chorus (TWC) is one of the foremost symphonic choruses in Washington, D.C. A three-time nominated and two-time Grammy Award®-winner, the 160-voice chorus presents an annual series at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, regularly performs at the invitation of the National Symphony Orchestra, and appears annually at the Music Center at Strathmore in Maryland and Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts in Virginia.

TWC was founded in 1961 by Hugh Hayward, a medical doctor and classically trained musician, who founded the Oratorio Society of Montgomery County, which became known as the Oratorio Society of Washington and, subsequently, The Washington Chorus. In 1971, Robert Shafer succeeded Hayward as music director, leading the chorus for more than three decades with great distinction. From 2008–2017 Julian Wachner led the organization with education and innovation at the forefront of his programs. Christopher Bell brought unparalleled attention to precision and clarity to the ensemble with his trademark flair during his tenure as Artistic Director from 2017–2020. The

Chorus' fifth Artistic Director, Eugene Rogers, is widely regarded as one of the most acclaimed next-generation conductors and musical thought leaders today working at the intersection of classical music and social change.

Chorus America, the national association for choruses, has honored The Washington Chorus with the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence and the ASCAP Alice Parker Award, which recognizes a chorus programming significant, recently composed music that expands the mission of the chorus and challenges audiences in new ways. Other awards include the 2000 Grammy Award® for Best Choral Performance for the live-performance recording of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* and a 1996 Grammy Award® for John Corigliano's *Of Rage and Remembrance* with the National Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Leonard Slatkin. TWC is proud to have sung with the National Symphony Orchestra in more than 300 performances, under the direction of many of the world's greatest conductors, including Gianandrea Noseda, Christoph Eschenbach, Leonard Slatkin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Seiji Ozawa, Sir Neville

Marriner, Kent Nagano, Marin Alsop, Gustavo Dudamel, Sir Andrew Davis, and many others. TWC has sung for numerous prestigious events throughout its history including inaugurations and papal visits.

National Symphony Orchestra

Violins

Nurit Bar-Josef

Concertmaster

Ying Fu

*Associate Concertmaster, The
Jeanne Weaver Ruesch Chair*

Ricardo Cyncynates

Assistant Concertmaster

Jane Bowyer Stewart

Teri Hopkins Lee

Pavel Pekarsky

Heather LeDoux Green

Joel Fuller

Lisa-Beth Lambert

Jing Qiao

Angelia Cho

Marissa Regni *Principal*

Dayna Hepler

Assistant Principal

Desimont Alston

Cynthia R. Finks

Deanna Lee Bien

Glenn Donnellan

Natasha Bogachek

Carole Tafoya Evans

Jae-Yeon Kim

Wanzhen Li

Hanna Lee

Benjamin Scott

Malorie Blake Shin

Marina Aikawa

Peiming Lin

Derek Powell

Meredith Riley **

Violas

Daniel Foster *Principal*

Abigail Evans Kreuzer

Assistant Principal

Lynne Edelson Levine

Denise Wilkinson

James Francis Deighan

Nancy Thomas

Jennifer Mondie

Tsuna Sakamoto

Ruth Wicker

Mahoko Eguchi

Rebecca Epperson

Cellos

David Hardy *Principal, The*

Hans Kindler Chair, the

Strong Family, and the Hattie

M. Strong Foundation Chair

Glenn Garlick

Assistant Principal

Steven Honigberg

David Teie

James Lee

Rachel Young

Mark Evans

Eugena Chang Riley

Loewi Lin

Britton Riley

Basses

Robert Oppelt *Principal*

Richard Barber

Assistant Principal

Jeffrey Weisner

Ira Gold

Paul DeNola

Charles Nilles

Alexander Jacobsen

Michael Marks



Harp

Adriana Horne *Principal*

Flutes

Aaron Goldman *Principal*

Leah Arsenault Barrick

Assistant Principal

Alyce Johnson **

Carole Bean *Piccolo*

Oboes

Nicholas Stovall *Principal*

Jamie Roberts

Assistant Principal

Harrison Linsey

Kathryn Meany Wilson

English Horn

Clarinets

Lin Ma *Principal*

Eugene Mondie

Assistant Principal

Paul Cigan

Peter Cain *Bass Clarinet*

Bassoons

Sue Heineman *Principal*

David Young

Acting Assistant Principal

Steven Wilson

Samuel Blair ** *Contrabassoon*

Horns

Abel Pereira *Principal*

James Nickel

Acting Associate Principal

Markus Osterlund

Robert Rearden

Scott Fearing

Geoffrey Pilkington **

Trumpets

William Gerlach *Principal,*

The Howard Mitchell Chair,

the Strong Family, and the

Hattie M. Strong Foundation

Michael Harper

Assistant Principal

Thomas Cupples

Timothy McCarthy **

Trombones

Craig Mulcahy *Principal*

Evelyn Carlson

Assistant Principal

David Murray

Matthew Guilford

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Stephen Dumaine *Principal,*

The James V. Kimsey Chair

Timpani

Jauvon Gilliam *Principal,*

The Marion E. Glover Chair

Scott Christian

Assistant Principal

Percussion

Eric Shin *Principal*

Scott Christian

Greg Akagi

Joseph Connell *

Keyboards

Lambert Orkis *Principal*

Lisa Emenheiser *

Organ

William Neil *

Librarians

Elizabeth Cusato Schnobrick

Principal

Zen Stokdyk *Associate*

Karen Lee *Assistant*

* Regularly engaged extra

** Temporary position



Mo Willems

BEETHOVEN Symphonies Abstracted



Mo Willems is an author, illustrator, animator, playwright. He was the inaugural Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence (2019–2022), and he continues to collaborate in creating new fun stuff involving classical music, opera, comedy concerts, dance, painting, and digital works with the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington National Opera, Ben Folds, Yo-Yo Ma, and others.

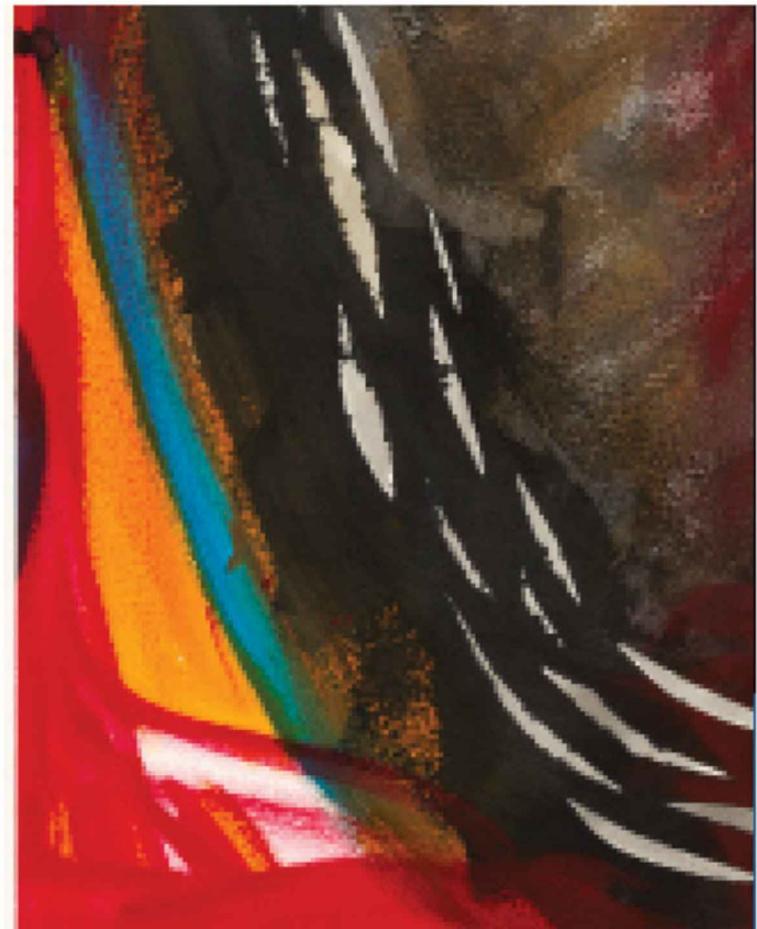
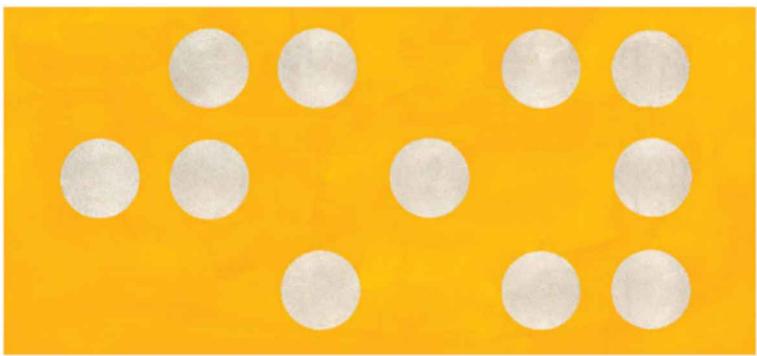
Willems is best known for his #1 *New York Times* bestselling picture books, which have been awarded three Caldecott Honors (*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*, *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*), two Theodor Geisel Medals, and his celebrated *Elephant*

and *Piggie* early reader series, which have been awarded two Theodor Geisel Medals and five Geisel Honors.

Willems' art has been exhibited around the world, including major solo retrospectives at the High Museum (Atlanta) and the New-York Historical Society (NYC). Over the last decade, Willems has become the most produced playwright of theater for young audiences in America, having written or co-written four musicals based on his books.

He began his career as a writer and animator on PBS's *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards (writing). Other television work includes two series on Cartoon Network: *Sheep in the Big City* (creator and head writer) and *Codename: Kids Next Door* (head writer). Willems' recent TV projects include the live-action comedy special *Don't Let the Pigeon Do Storytime!* an animated rock opera based on *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed*, which originally premiered on HBO Max. In April 2023, Willems celebrated the 20th anniversary of *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* with the publication of *Be the Bus: The Lost and Profound Wisdom of The Pigeon* (Union Square Kids, April 4, 2023), a humor book for adults, and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! 20th Anniversary Edition* (Hyperion Books for Children, April 4, 2023) including an exclusive game. His paper resides at Yale University's Beinecke Library.





BEETHOVEN
Symphonies
1 AND 3
Gianandrea Nosedà
National Symphony Orchestra
The Kennedy Center



BEETHOVEN
Symphonies
4 AND 5
Gianandrea Nosedà
National Symphony Orchestra
The Kennedy Center



BEETHOVEN
Symphonies
6 AND 8
Gianandrea Nosedà
National Symphony Orchestra
The Kennedy Center



BEETHOVEN
Symphonies
2 AND 7
Gianandrea Nosedà
National Symphony Orchestra
The Kennedy Center



National Symphony Orchestra
The Kennedy Center