



26/27

S E A S O N

ENRICHING ALL LIVES THROUGH MUSIC FOR 76 YEARS



Dear Friends of the Billings Symphony,

As we announce our 76th Season, I find myself filled with genuine excitement for what lies ahead. This season is more than a collection of concerts — it is a defining chapter in the history of the Billings Symphony, and one that we are honored to share with you.

A monumental moment for our organization is at the heart of this season: the search for our next Music Director. We are inviting our community directly into this journey. Throughout the season, you will experience six extraordinary candidates, each bringing a distinct artistic voice, a unique vision, and a deep passion for symphonic music.

Through their concerts, you won't just hear performances — you'll experience six different possibilities for the future of the Billings Symphony. Your presence, your energy, and your response are a vital part of this process, and we cannot wait to share it with you.

This historic search is paired with an exceptional lineup of music and artists. Our season features world-class soloists alongside some of the most powerful and beloved works in the orchestral repertoire. From the warmth of Brahms' Symphony No. 2 to the unstoppable force of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, to the emotional depth of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2, this season is designed to inspire, challenge, and move us all.

Our Sukin Series continues to bring must-see performances to Billings, including the 2025 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Gold Medalist, Aristo Sham, and the 2025 Banff International String Quartet Competition winners, Poiesis Quartet.

This season represents momentum, possibility, and the power of music to bring us together. Whether you've been with us for decades or are discovering the Symphony for the first time, I invite you to be part of this extraordinary year. Attend the concerts. Engage in the journey. Help us make history together.

With excitement and appreciation,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mario Lopez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

—MARIO LOPEZ

JOHN W. & CAROL L. H. GREEN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

About the Billings Symphony

Founded as the Billings Symphony Society in May 1951, the organization's mission is to enrich all lives through music.

The Billings Symphony is composed of the Billings Symphony Orchestra, Billings Symphony Chorale, and the Billings Symphony Youth Orchestra, presenting an annual season from September through June featuring a Classic Series, Sukin Series, and a free Family Series that includes the annual tradition of Symphony in the Park.

Each year, the Billings Symphony helps introduce thousands of people throughout south-central and eastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming to music through Beyond the Stage Programs, sharing music everywhere for everyone, provided to participants at no cost.

We believe that music is a cultural universal, first appearing with the rise of the earliest human societies in prehistory. Access to music is, therefore, a human right, and we carry that belief forward within the communities where we live and work. We live our mission through inviting environments that are accessible to all, and by representing our diverse community on our stages, and in our programming, audiences, and activities.



The Billings Symphony Orchestra and
BSYO Repertory Orchestra side-by-side Performance



ERIC GARCIA
SEPTEMBER 26, 2026



WILBUR LIN
OCTOBER 24, 2026



TRISTAN RAIS-SHERMAN
DECEMBER 19, 2026



DEANNA THAM
JANUARY 23, 2027



JACOB JOYCE
FEBRUARY 20, 2027



CONNER GRAY COVINGTON
MARCH 20, 2027

THE SEARCH

SIX VOICES, ONE VISION

Be part of this exciting chapter in Billings Symphony history. We invite our community to attend each finalist concert, experience the artistry of these exceptional candidates, and share in the energy of this important search process. Your presence and support help shape the future of music in Billings. Join us throughout the season and witness the moment when our next Music Director takes the stage.

SPONSORED BY



Timeline



Process

The Billings Symphony is proud to have organized a robust search committee comprised of board members, orchestra musicians, and community members. Together, this committee reviewed a total of 188 applicants for the Music Director position. After 30 hours of meetings and interviews—not counting all the hours committee members invested in reviewing applicants before each meeting—the search committee narrowed the applicant pool to 6 finalists!

We cannot wait for our community to experience the amazing talents of our 6 music director finalists. Each candidate, well suited for this role, will spend a busy week in Billings—rehearsing with our wonderful orchestra, attending various interviews, meeting community members, and conducting a subscription concert—amongst other commitments. After all candidates have their chance to perform with us, they will be evaluated. We will announce our new music director during the final Classic Series concert of the season on April 24, 2027.

Our new music director will officially take the podium at our 55th Annual Symphony in the Park Concert on June 27, 2027. We can't wait for you to join us in this significant moment in Billings Symphony history.

Committee Members

Margit Thorndal President
Bob Merchant Vice President
Liz Fulton Secretary

Julie Johnson Musician Representative:
Section Violin & Orchestra
Committee Chair

John Dutton Musician Representative:
Principal Horn

Laurel Linde Musician Representative:
Principal Clarinet

John W. Green Community
Representative: Major Donor

Amy Schendel Community Representative:
SD2 Fine Arts Coordinator

Corby Skinner Community Representative:
Alberta Bair Theater Program Director

Mario Lopez John W. & Carol L.H. Green
Chief Executive Officer

Dvorak No. 8

Classic 1

September 26 • 7:30PM | Concert Cues at 6:40PM

ALBERTA BAIR THEATER

Eric Garcia, *music director candidate*

Timothy Chooi, *violin*

COLEMAN (b. 1970)

Umoja (Anthem of Unity) [11']

TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

Violin Concerto [33']

Timothy Chooi, *violin*

DVORAK (1841–1904)

Symphony No. 8 [34']

Classic
S E R I E S

Prepare for a monumental 76th season with the Billings Symphony as we open our Music Director Search season with our first finalist, Eric Garcia. Praised for his “elegant and expressive” conducting, Eric Garcia will lead the orchestra in Valerie Coleman’s *Umoja*, the Swahili word for Unity. This piece reflects exactly that with its attentiveness to collective energy and how it highlights

the individuality of performers within a shared musical structure. Guest Artist Timothy Chooi is set to join the orchestra for Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto, a Billings Symphony favorite and the evening closes with the idyllic sounds of the Bohemian countryside through Dvorak’s Symphony No. 8. The first of many fantastic concerts this season, join us for The Search.



“To have a wonderful idea is nothing special. The idea comes of its own accord and, if it’s fine and great, man cannot take the credit for it. But to take a fine idea and make something great of it, that is the hardest thing to do; that is what real art is!”

—Antonin Dvorak

Dvorak

No. 8

Directed by
Eric Garcia



About Eric

Praised for his “elegant and expressive” conducting, Eric Garcia serves as Music Director of the Boise Philharmonic and Artistic Director and Conductor of the McCall MusicFest in Idaho. He previously held the role of Assistant Conductor of the Seattle Symphony and served as producer for several Seattle Symphony Naxos recordings.

Garcia has appeared as guest conductor with the Charlottesville Symphony, Rockford Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestra, Symphony New Hampshire, Oklahoma City Ballet, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, Orchestra Seattle, Philharmonia Northwest, and Greensboro Ballet, among many others, and has served as cover conductor for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

A dedicated advocate for contemporary music, Garcia has collaborated with composers including John Adams, Jimmy López Bellido, George Crumb, Vijay Iyer, David Lang, Lowell Lieberman, and Nico Muhly, among others. He has also been principal conductor at the Cortona Sessions for New Music in Cortona, Italy.

Garcia has served as Associate Conductor of the Eastern Music Festival and faculty of the Eastern Music Festival Conducting Institute. Academic appointments have included Director of Orchestras and Professor of Conducting at the Greenwood School of Music at Oklahoma State University and the Wanda L. Bass School of Music at Oklahoma City University. He has been a clinician for high school orchestras nationwide.

Garcia resides in Seattle, Washington, with his wife, Sarah, and their dogs, Hazel and Wally.

Rachmaninoff

Piano Concerto No. 2

Directed by **Wilbur Lin**



About Wilbur

Wilbur Lin's 2025/26 season marked a series of milestones with debuts at Symphony Nova Scotia, the Louisiana Philharmonic, Lansing Symphony, and his first guest conducting appearance with the Cincinnati Pops. Recent seasons have also featured engagements with the Rochester Philharmonic and the symphonies of Elgin, Acadiana, and Juneau, in addition to frequent return invitations from the Taipei Symphony, Ann Arbor Symphony, and Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. He is currently the Music Director of the Missouri Symphony and Associate Conductor of the Colorado Symphony.

A frequent opera conductor and a student of Riccardo Muti, Lin has led seven full productions in recent seasons with the Missouri Symphony, Winter Harbor Music Festival, and Northern Illinois University Opera Theater.

An equally strong advocate for new music and for neglected composers of the past — particularly American and British women composers — Lin is closely associated with the research and performance of works by Alice Mary Smith and Amy Beach. His recent recordings with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra and the Denver Young Artists Orchestra include music by Chopin, Marion Bauer, and Alice Mary Smith.

Lin describes his artistic vision as “creating a listening community, one (small) town at a time.” Read more about Wilbur and his vision at <https://wilburl.in>

Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 2 — Classic 2

October 24 • 7:30PM | Concert Cues at 6:40PM

ALBERTA BAIR THEATER

Wilbur Lin, *music director candidate*

Michael Stephen Brown, *piano*

CLYNE (b. 1980)

PIVOT [5']

BEACH (1867–1944)

Gaelic Symphony [36']

RACHMANINOFF (1873–1943)

Piano Concerto No. 2 [35']

Michael Stephen Brown, *piano*



Known for his creative programming and inviting stage presence, Music Director Finalist Wilbur Lin kicks off with Anna Clyne's *PIVOT* which shows how a single idea can shift perspective without losing its core. Not to be outdone, Amy Beach's *Gaelic Symphony* has a "simple, rugged, unpretentious beauty," using old Irish melodies to paint her picture of the American national concert music that

composers were trying to find at the time. For the second half of the evening, guest artist Michael Stephen Brown will dazzle on the piano with Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2. Written after the disastrous premiere of his First Symphony, it's a true triumph over tragedy as Rachmaninoff recovered from his depression and found himself inspired again.



"A good conductor ought to be a good chauffeur; the qualities that make the one also make the other"

—Sergei Rachmaninoff

Tchaikovsky No. 4

Classic 4

December 19 • 7:30PM | Concert Cues at 6:40PM

ALBERTA BAIR THEATER

Tristan Rais-Sherman, *music director candidate*

David Kim, *violin*

NABORS (b. 1991)

Pulse [12']

BRUCH (1838–1920)

Violin Concerto No. 1 [24']

David Kim, *violin*

TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

Symphony No. 4 [43']

Classic
S E R I E S

From buzzing metropolis to deep wilderness, everything is connected in Brian Raphael Nabors *Pulse* through the colorful harmonic language of the orchestra. Not to be missed, this inspiring concert features the return of violinist David Kim to perform Bruch's stunning Violin Concerto No. 1. The orchestra will end the evening, led by Music

Director Finalist Tristan Rais-Sherman, with Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4—a dramatic take on Fate's inevitability and how we must still rejoice in the rejoicing of others despite this.



"Inspiration is a guest that does not willingly visit the lazy."

—Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchailkovsky

No. 4

Directed by **Tristan Rais-Sherman**



About Tristan

Tristan Rais-Sherman is rapidly emerging as one of the most exciting musicians of his generation, celebrated for his collaborative spirit, creativity, and joyful music-making. A three-time recipient of The Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award, he is known for his emotional directness and clarity on the podium, and is committed to broadening the appeal of classical music by telling human stories in ways that everyone can immediately grasp.

The 2025–2026 season featured Rais-Sherman's debut with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and multiple returns to the podium of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, where he has cultivated an ongoing artistic relationship since his debut in 2023. These engagements follow a vibrant stretch of international activity, including concerts with the Hohhot Philharmonic Orchestra, a Beethoven piano concerto marathon with the Xiamen Philharmonic

Orchestra, and assisting Maestro James Gaffigan in a production of Massenet's *Manon* at Les Arts Valencia.

"Everybody should feel welcome in the concert hall. Classical music is not a status symbol. It is live storytelling. Meditation. A transfer of energy."- Tristan

Rais-Sherman continues to maintain a close artistic connection with The Philadelphia Orchestra, following his tenure as Assistant Conductor from 2022 to 2024. He remains a trusted collaborator both on and off the podium, having led performances at the Kimmel Center and Mann Center, and contributed significantly to the orchestra's educational and public-facing programs.

Elgar's Enigma Variations

Classic 5

January 23 • 7:30PM | Concert Cues at 6:40PM

ALBERTA BAIR THEATER

Deanna Tham, *music director candidate*

Sara Duchovnay, *soprano*

STILL (1895–1978)
Darker America [12']

BARBER (1910–1981)
Knoxville Summer of 1915 [16']
Sara Duchovnay, *soprano*

ELGAR (1887–1934)
Enigma Variations [30']

Classic
SERIES

A centuries-old puzzle, Elgar's *Enigma Variations* is said to have a "dark saying that must be left unguessed." Music Director Finalist, Deanna Tham, will lead the orchestra in this mysterious yet transformative piece and you can take a guess at the cryptic message yourself. We'll

also travel to Tennessee with the dynamic soprano Sara Duchovnay to be immersed in the richly textured *Knoxville Summer of 1915*. To round off the program, the Billings Symphony will play their first performance of any of William Grant Still's work: *Darker America*.



"I believe in the power of music to bring people together, to heal, and to inspire."

—Edward Elgar

Elgar's Enigma Variations

Directed by **Deanna Tham**

About Deanna

Powerfully compelling, Deanna Tham is known for her captivating and tenacious spirit on and off the podium. She is currently the Music Director of the Union Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of the Portland Chamber Orchestra, and most recently the Associate Conductor of the Oregon Symphony. Previously, Tham was the Assistant Conductor of the Omaha Symphony, following her tenure as Assistant Conductor of the Jacksonville Symphony and Principal Conductor of the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestras. In 2024 she appeared in the prestigious La Maestra Conducting Competition in Paris, France where she was a semi-finalist and La Maestro Academian. She has performed at the Proms in Royal Albert Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and Seiji Ozawa Hall at the Tanglewood Music Center working with Maestro Sir Antonio Pappano, and renowned artists Isobel Leonard and Joyce DiDonato. Tham has also worked with Esa-Pekka Salonen,

Leonard Slatkin, Marin Alsop, Nathalie Stutzmann, Dame Jane Glover, and more. She is additionally a cover conductor for the San Francisco Symphony and has appeared with the Oregon Symphony, Victoria Symphony, Fort Worth Symphony, Spokane Symphony, Ballet Idaho, Opera Idaho, Orpheus PDX, 45th Parallel, the Redlands Symphony, and Present Music Milwaukee.

Tham holds a Professional Studies Certificate from the Cleveland Institute of Music in Orchestral Conducting. She received her Master of Music in conducting from Northwestern University and her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in horn performance at Carnegie Mellon University.



Brahms

No. 2

Directed by **Jacob Joyce**



About Jacob

Currently serving as the Associate Conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Jacob Joyce, age 32, is quickly gaining recognition as a dynamic and innovative presence on the podium. Joyce also serves as the Music Director of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra and previously served as the Resident Conductor of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and the Assistant Conductor of the Fort Worth Symphony. He has made his debut with several American orchestras in past seasons, including the Detroit, St. Louis, Houston, Colorado, Kansas City, Nashville, Baltimore, and Florida symphonies. For his work with orchestras across the United States, he was awarded a Solti Career Assistance Award in 2020. Joyce also has an active European career, conducting the London Symphony Orchestra, the NDR-Sinfonieorchester, the hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt, the Orchestra Philharmonique Royal de Liège, and the Frankfurt Museumsorchester in recent seasons.

Joyce studied Orchestral Conducting with Hugh Wolff at the New England Conservatory, with additional study at Tanglewood and the Aspen Music Festival. In recognition of his work, Joyce was awarded the Robert Spano Conducting Prize at Aspen, and was a semifinalist in the LSO Donatella Flick Conducting Competition and the Solti International Conducting Competition. Joyce graduated from Yale College in 2014, with a B.A. in Music and Economics. He is also an accomplished violinist, having performed with several orchestras across the United States, and is the host and creator of the podcast *Attention to Detail: The Classical Music Listening Guide*, which provides people of all backgrounds with basic techniques for listening to classical music.

Brahms No. 2

Classic 6

February 20 • 7:30PM | Concert Cues at 6:40PM

ALBERTA BAIR THEATER

Jacob Joyce, *music director candidate*

Fabiola Kim, *violin*

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875–1912)

Ballade in A Minor [11']

MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Violin Concerto [27']

Fabiola Kim, *violin*

BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Symphony No. 2 [42']

Classic
SERIES

A beautiful Ballade, conducted by Music Director Finalist, Jacob Joyce, sets the opening notes of the evening with passion that evokes a tale of romance and heroics that will keep you glued to your seat. The evening continues with extraordinary soloist Fabiola Kim who mesmerizes

with Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto and its youthfulness balanced with depth of expression. Lose yourself in the peace and contentment of Brahms' Symphony No. 2 as the music tells tales of babbling brooks and blue skies.



"The idea comes to me from outside of me - and is like a gift. I then take the idea and make it my own - that is where the skill lies."

—Johannes Brahms

Sibelius No. 2

Classic 7

March 20 • 7:30PM | Concert Cues at 6:40PM

ALBERTA BAIR THEATER

Conner Gray Covington, *music director candidate*

William Hagen, *violin*

COOLEY (b. 1990)

Argo [9']

MOZART (1756–1791)

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A Major, “Turkish” [29']

William Hagen, *violin*

SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

Symphony No. 2 in D Major [46']

Classic
S E R I E S

“A confession of the soul,” Sibelius’ Symphony No. 2 balances its two themes of death and resurrection between its triumphant beginning and confident conclusion, a fitting piece for our last—but certainly not least—Music Director Finalist, Conner Gray Covington. Not to be missed, William Hagen returns to our

stage to perform the striking Mozart Violin Concerto No. 5, an audacious piece that isn’t afraid to break rules or conventions when demanded to. The concert will round out with *Argo*, a piece written by current composer Emily Cooley, premiered by the Curtis Symphony Orchestra in 2016. Join us as we bring our search to an end!



“Music is, for me, like a beautiful mosaic which God has put together. He takes all the pieces in his hand, throws them into the world, and we have to recreate the picture from the pieces.”

—Jean Sibelius

Sibelius

Directed by
Conner Gray Covington

No. 2



About Conner

Described by Yannick Nézet-Séguin as “a musician who lives the music,” American conductor Conner Gray Covington performs an unusually broad repertoire of symphonic, opera, and film repertoire ranging from Classical to the present day. In the 2025—2026 season, Covington debuted with the Boston Pops, Chicago Symphony, Houston Symphony, Las Vegas Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony, and Phoenix Symphony. He also makes return visits to the North Carolina Symphony, Portland Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Sarasota Orchestra, and Tucson Symphony, while maintaining his close relationship with the Utah Symphony following his successful four-year tenure as Associate Conductor and Principal Conductor of the Deer Valley Music Festival.

During his tenure with the Utah Symphony, Conner conducted nearly 300 performances of classical subscription, education, film, pops, family concerts, and tours throughout the state and has returned

several times each season as a guest conductor since 2021. Other recent guest conducting includes appearances with the Hawai'i Symphony, Knoxville Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Tallahassee Symphony, and Vancouver Symphony as well as the Bellingham Festival of Music and the Grand Teton Music Festival. Conner's operatic work includes engagements with the New England Conservatory of Music, Curtis Opera Theatre, and Utah Opera.

Covington studied conducting at the Curtis Institute of Music, Eastman School of Music, and the Aspen Music Festival where his primary teachers included Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Neil Varon, and Robert Spano.

The Nutcracker Ballet

Classic 3

Saturday, November 28 • 2PM & 7PM

Sunday, November 29 • 2PM

ALBERTA BAIR THEATER

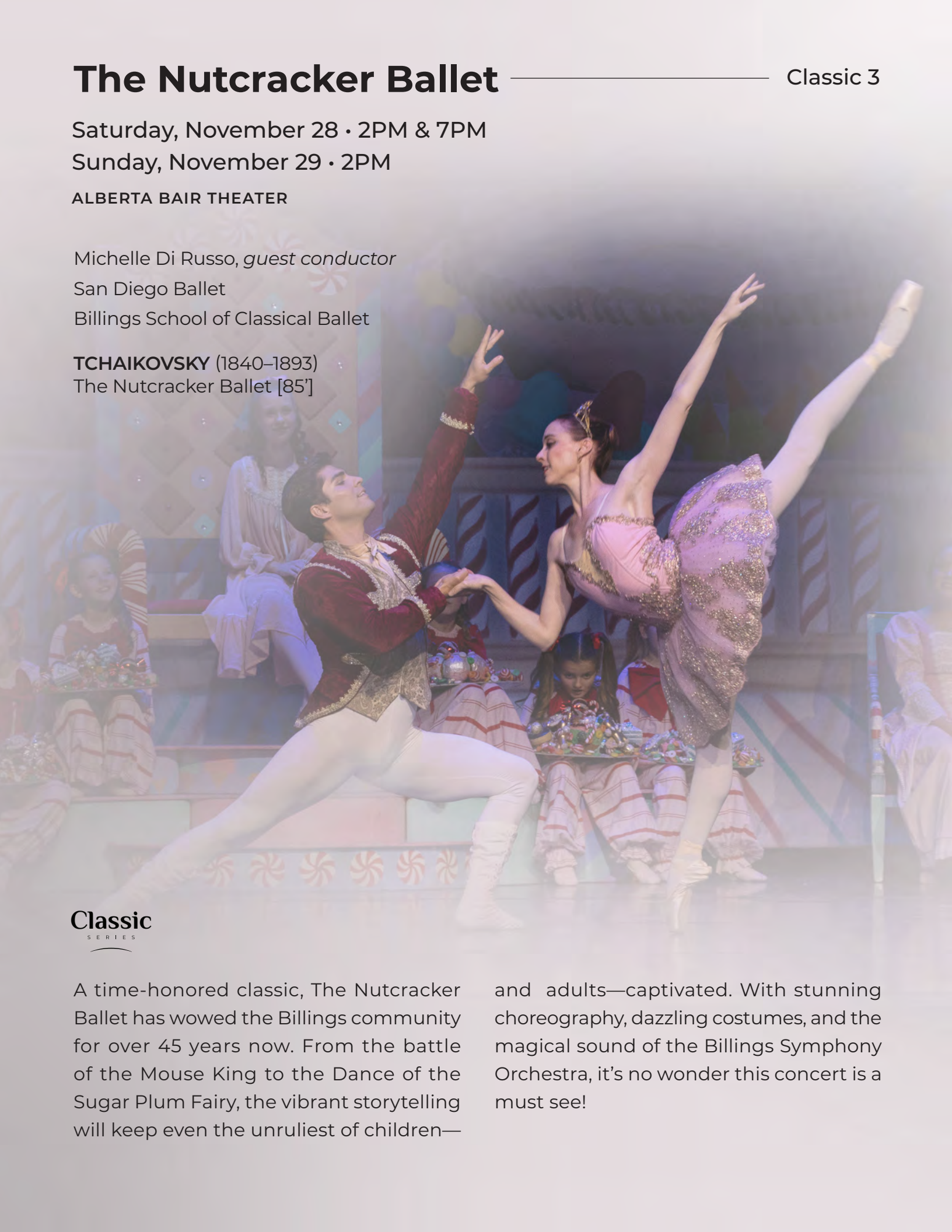
Michelle Di Russo, *guest conductor*

San Diego Ballet

Billings School of Classical Ballet

TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

The Nutcracker Ballet [85']



Classic
SERIES

A time-honored classic, The Nutcracker Ballet has wowed the Billings community for over 45 years now. From the battle of the Mouse King to the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, the vibrant storytelling will keep even the unruliest of children—

and adults—captivated. With stunning choreography, dazzling costumes, and the magical sound of the Billings Symphony Orchestra, it's no wonder this concert is a must see!

The Cycle of Beginnings

Classic 8

April 24 • 7:30PM | Concert Cues at 6:40PM

ALBERTA BAIR THEATER

Robert Moody, *guest conductor*

Billings Symphony Chorale

Zuri, *spinto soprano*

Jonathan Pierce Rhodes, *tenor*

SMETANA (1824–1884)

The Moldau [14']

ELGAR (1857–1934)

Nimrod from Enigma Variations [5']

In Memory of Billings Symphony friends we have recently lost

MUSIC DIRECTOR ANNOUNCEMENT

INTERMISSION

TIN (b. 1976)

The Drop that Contained the Sea [65']

Classic
SERIES

The monumental Search Season comes to an end in a brilliant evening of looking back and moving forward as we embrace this new chapter in the Billings Symphony's story. In this concert, led by Guest Conductor Robert Moody, we travel again to the Bohemian countryside with Bedrich Smetana's *The Moldau* as the symphony evokes the course of a flowing river through sound. The night continues as we present the Montana

premiere of Christopher Tin's *The Drop That Contained the Sea*, a work structured around the water cycle as each movement follows the journey and changes that something even as simple as water must take.

This concert also marks the season's biggest announcement, celebrating the results of this outstanding Music Director search!

Classic Series Packages

OPTION 1:

FULL SEASON CLASSIC

(8 Classic Concerts)

Tier 1.....	\$600
Tier 2.....	\$536
Tier 3.....	\$464
Tier 4.....	\$368

Under 30

Tier 2.....	\$296
Tier 3.....	\$256
Tier 4.....	\$176

OPTION 2:

MASTERWORKS

(7 Classic Concerts excluding
The Nutcracker Ballet)

Tier 1.....	\$525
Tier 2.....	\$469
Tier 3.....	\$406
Tier 4.....	\$322

Under 30

Tier 2.....	\$266
Tier 3.....	\$231
Tier 4.....	\$161

OPTION 3:

PICK 5 CLASSIC

(5 Classic Concerts)

Tier 1.....	\$375
Tier 2.....	\$335
Tier 3.....	\$290
Tier 4.....	\$230

Under 30

Tier 2.....	\$195
Tier 3.....	\$170
Tier 4.....	\$120

OPTION 4:

PICK 3 CLASSIC

(3 Classic Concerts)

Tier 1.....	\$225
Tier 2.....	\$201
Tier 3.....	\$174
Tier 4.....	\$138

Under 30

Tier 2.....	\$120
Tier 3.....	\$105
Tier 4.....	\$75

STANDARD SINGLE CONCERT TICKET

(Any 1 Classic Concert)

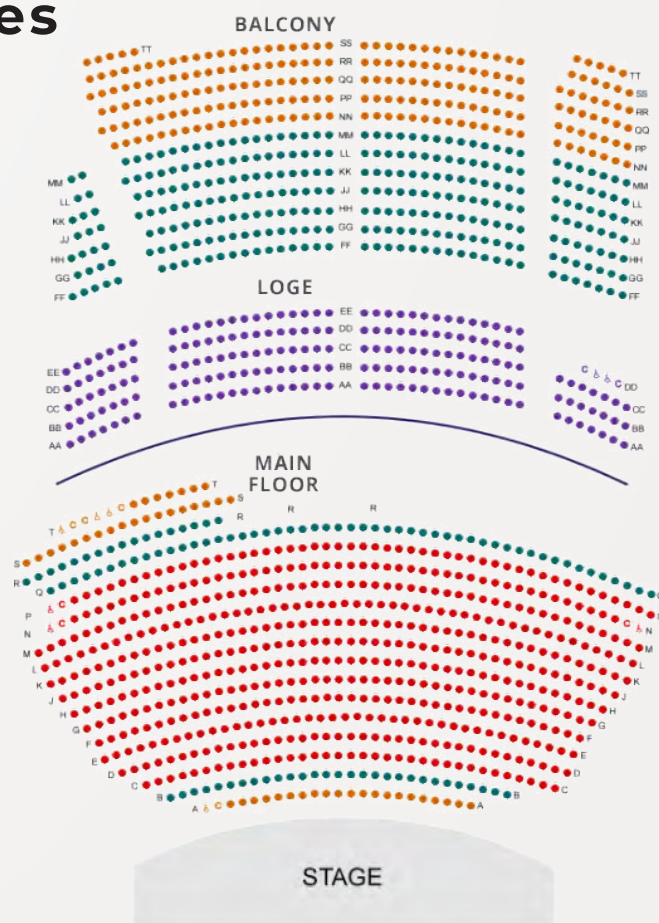
Tier 1.....	\$80
Tier 2.....	\$73
Tier 3.....	\$64
Tier 4.....	\$48

Under 30

Tier 2.....	\$42
Tier 3.....	\$37
Tier 4.....	\$27

College/Graduate Student

Tier 2/3/4 \$10



● TIER 1 ● TIER 2 ● TIER 3 ● TIER 4

ADP ALBERTA
BAIR
THEATER

*Standard Single ticket prices do not reflect
box office fees

The Billings Symphony Orchestra

Introducing the Young Friends Program:

It is important to the Billings Symphony that music is accessible to everyone, no matter the age. This season, we are excited to announce a new program designed to eliminate barriers for our younger audience members—introducing the *Young Friends Program*. This program offers the following options:

- **STUDENTS K-12:** FREE ADMISSION
- **COLLEGE/GRADUATE STUDENTS:** \$10 ADMISSION
- **UNDER 30:** DEEPLY REDUCED TICKET PRICE, AVERAGING A 40% DISCOUNT
- **PRELUDE SOCIETY:** MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION PACKAGE FOR PEOPLE UNDER 40

Rafael Aguirre: Grande Musica

Thursday, September 10 • 7PM

Venue TBD

Rafael Aguirre, *guitar*



Returning to Billings, Rafael Aguirre comes to dazzle once again and show just how versatile the guitar can be. One of the most sought-after guitarists at an international level, Aguirre's talents lie in expanding the repertoire of his instrument. Employing influence from both classical and flamenco guitar, his music is sure to connect deeply and inspire all who listen.

Rocky Mountain Jazz Collective's Big Band Machine

Saturday, October 10 • 7PM

Quentin Staton Performing Arts Center

Rocky Mountain Jazz Collective

Scott Jeppesen, *director*



Few names loom larger in Big Band history than Buddy Rich. This October, the Rocky Mountain Jazz Collective honors his explosive legacy with a high-octane tribute featuring not one, but four powerhouse drummers—Roxanne Jeppesen, Matt Devitt, Mark McGibbony, and Zach Paris. Trading, teaming up, and occasionally unleashing controlled chaos, this is Big Band Jazz turned up to eleven.

Cerus Quartet: Past Lives, Present Voices

Thursday, November 5 • 7PM

Billings Depot

Cerus Quartet

Roberto Campa, *saxophone*

Laura Ramsay, *saxophone*

Kyle Kato, *saxophone*

Samuel Dishon, *saxophone*



From the vibrant energy of Iturralde's *Pequena Czarda* to Mendelssohn's impassioned requiem for his sister, this concert bridges the familiar and the unexpected, reimagining beloved classics and showcasing the saxophone's extraordinary versatility. Discover how the quartet transforms these timeless works into a sonic tapestry, crafting a soundscape that is both intimate and expansive. Whether you're drawn to the finely crafted melodies of Chaminade or the bold modernism of Emma O'Halloran, this program invites you to experience the saxophone in a whole new light.

Poiesis Quartet: BISQC 2025 Winners

Thursday, February 4 • 7PM

Billings First Congregational Church

Poiesis Quartet

Sarah Ying Ma, *violin*

Max Ball, *violin*

Jasperde Boor, *viola*

Drew Dansby, *cello*



Widely recognized as one of the most prestigious global platforms for emerging quartets, Banff International String Quartet Competition (BISQC) offers one of the largest prizes in chamber music, with the potential to shape a quartet's artistic journey in profound and transformative ways. We are excited to have the 2025 winners, the Poiesis Quartet, perform for us this season. Derived from ancient Greek, the word "Poiesis" means "to make;" specifically, to create something that has never existed before. With a focus on expanding the string quartet repertoire with vibrant new works by emerging composers, the Poiesis Quartet infuses each performance with unique moments of synchronicity and verve.



Aristo Sham: A Night of Fantasy

Thursday, April 1 • 7PM

Cisel Hall MSU-B

Aristo Sham, *piano*

The 2025 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition gold medalist, the *New York Times* credits Aristo Sham as an artist “whose playing combines clarity, elegance and abundant technique.” Sham has a penchant to take on the great monuments of the piano repertoire and a natural, infectious spontaneity, which he wholly embraces with his programming. From Chopin’s 4 *Impromptus* to Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas No. 13 & 14, it will be a night of varying themes and delightful musical landscapes for you to enjoy.

Cantus: Simple Gifts

Thursday, May 6 • 7PM

St. Patrick Co-Cathedral

Cantus



What are you grateful for? It’s a deeply personal question, yet there are undoubtedly overarching themes, like the joy of breathing in fresh air on a hike, savoring a recipe passed down through generations, and cherishing moments spent with those we love.

In Simple Gifts, Cantus weaves together personal stories of gratitude along with beloved tunes including “How Can I Keep From Singing” and “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” timeless classics from Jean Sibelius and Jennifer Higdon, and contemporary gems by Bobby McFerrin and Sydney Guillaume.

The result is a poignant and heartfelt program filled with energy and beauty that uplifts, inspires, and reminds us of what we hold most dear.



Rocky Mountain Jazz Collective: Homage to Thelonious Monk

Saturday, June 12 • 7PM
Quentin Staton Performing Arts Center

Rocky Mountain Jazz Collective
 Scott Jeppesen, *director*

The Rocky Mountain Jazz Collective turns its focus to Thelonious Monk, one of Jazz's most original and influential voices. In this special June program, Monk's unmistakable music—by turns playful, angular, and deeply swinging—is reimagined through all-new arrangements written specifically for the ensemble. Drawing on Monk's wit, surprise, and bold sense of form, this concert offers a fresh big band perspective on a composer who forever changed the sound of Jazz.

Sukin Series Packages

OPTION 1:

FULL SEASON SUKIN

(7 Sukin Concerts)

General Admission \$287

Under 30 \$147

OPTION 2:

PICK 3 SUKIN

(3 Sukin Concerts)

General Admission \$168

Under 30 \$92

SUKIN SINGLE CONCERT

(Any 1 Sukin Concert)

General Admission \$45

Under 30 \$25

Coll./Grad. Student \$10

Sukin
 SERIES

Rocky Mountain Jazz Collective



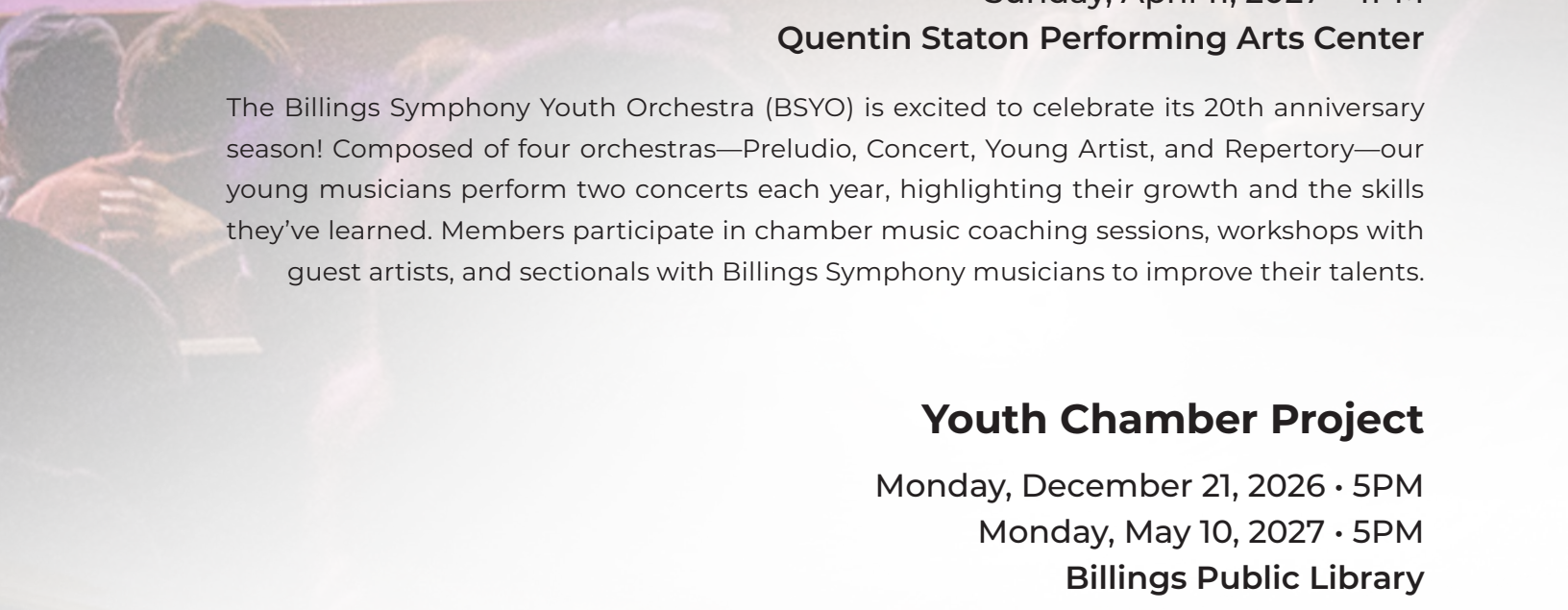
Billings Symphony Youth Orchestra: Fall & Spring

Sunday, November 22, 2026 • 4PM

Sunday, April 11, 2027 • 4PM

Quentin Staton Performing Arts Center

The Billings Symphony Youth Orchestra (BSYO) is excited to celebrate its 20th anniversary season! Composed of four orchestras—Preludio, Concert, Young Artist, and Repertory—our young musicians perform two concerts each year, highlighting their growth and the skills they've learned. Members participate in chamber music coaching sessions, workshops with guest artists, and sectionals with Billings Symphony musicians to improve their talents.



Youth Chamber Project

Monday, December 21, 2026 • 5PM

Monday, May 10, 2027 • 5PM

Billings Public Library

Youth Chamber Project is an intensive 5-week training offering student musicians of all ages advanced instruction focused on chamber music skills in a nurturing yet challenging environment. The Project's training sessions take place during the period following each of the BSYO season concerts in November and April. Each session culminates with a special chamber performance. BSYO and non-BSYO students are welcome to the program.

Adventures in Music! Day

Saturday, September 19, 2026 • 9AM–12PM

Free Family Show • 11:30AM–12PM

Billings Public Library

Have you ever wondered just how much air it takes to get the trumpet to make a sound? Or have you ever thought that it would be fun to get jiggy with a violin? Or maybe you just really really want to see what it's like to crash cymbals together. Well, now you can! In our biggest instrument petting zoo of the season, you can travel around String Street, Woodwind Way, Brass Boulevard, and Percussion Plaza in the Billings Public Library to try just about every orchestra instrument you could imagine. The free event will close with a performance by the Billings Symphony Brass Quintet at 11:30, so make sure you stick around!

Free Family Concert—A Winter's Tale

Saturday, January 30, 2027 • 12PM

Alberta Bair Theater

Austin Chanu, *guest conductor*

BSYO Repertory Orchestra

The holidays might be over, but winter is just beginning, so grab your coats and a cup of hot chocolate for this year's Free Family Concert. With help from guest conductor Austin Chanu, enjoy the sparkling of the season with classics like *Winter Wonderland*, *Sleigh Ride*, and even some *Frozen* highlights. Designed with families in mind, this concert is under one hour, free, and highly entertaining for both parents and kids!

Symphony in the Park

Sunday, June 27, 2027

Pioneer Park

Conducted by your New Music Director

Are you ready for Billings' biggest summertime musical event? Grab your lawn chairs, blankets, sun hats, and whatever else you may need for an afternoon listening to the melodic sounds of the symphony. And with a slew of family activities like the Kids' Conducting Contest, instrument "petting zoo," face painting, food trucks, and more, there will be plenty to entertain. And this Symphony in the Park is extra special: All season we have been watching the conductor candidates vie for the position and this will be the first official concert of the new Billings Symphony Music Director! Come join us for this musical extravaganza!

For A Better World

Saturday, November 14 • 7:30PM

Sunday, November 15 • 3PM

St. Patrick Co-Cathedral

Dr. Steven Hart



The concert explores the question: What makes for a better world? In the Baroque era, composers often looked beyond this life toward heaven, as in J.S. Bach's *Ruht wohl*, which offers solace and hope in the future. Modern composers such as Elaine

Hagenberg and James Deignan turn our attention to the present and the power of love, gratitude, and action, showing us that building a better world begins with us in the here and now.



CHORALE CONCERT TICKETS

Reserved Front Rows	\$40
General Admission	\$30
Under 30	\$20
College/Graduate Student	\$10



Friday, May 14 • 6PM–9PM • Henry's Garage

Back for a third season, get ready for one of our favorite and most electric events. In partnership with beverage experts, Watkins Distributing, you'll have a sampling of hand selected brews and wines from right here in our region. Whether you are a total newbie or a seasoned champ, this is the tasting event for you. Navigate through the options, meet the brewers, and enjoy tasty, delectable eats from a Billings Symphony favorite Scratch Kitchen! Located at the nostalgic Henry's Garage, this event promises to leave you jazzed.

Special
EVENTS

Special Pricing, Discounts, and Fees

- A 20% discount off the single ticket price is available for groups of 10 or more at any Billings Symphony concert (Tier 3 or 4 only at the Alberta Bair Theater).
- Students and individuals under the age of 40 are offered tickets at a discounted rate. See Young Friends Ticketing Program on page 21.
- Veterans and active-duty military receive 20% off any single ticket purchase to our Classic or Sukin Series concerts.
- Classic Series subscribers can enhance their experience by adding a Full Season Sukin or Pick 4 Sukin subscription for a 10% discount.
- All subscribers receive 10% discount on all single-priced tickets for any Billings Symphony concert (excluding Special Events).

PROCESSING FEE: Purchases made by a credit card for all Billings Symphony events incur a \$3 processing fee per order.

RETURN POLICY: Tickets are non-refundable. However, if you cannot attend a performance, you may return the tickets to the Billings Symphony office 24 hours before the concert for a tax-deductible donation receipt.

Why Subscribe?

Subscriptions are offered at a discounted rate. Subscribers enjoy priority seating for all regular season events and special perks, including pre-sale opportunities and exclusive content.

- **First access, first pick, and discounted rates!** Subscribers can pick seats before the general public at discounted rates from single-ticket pricing.
- **First pick of seats at the Alberta Bair Theater.** Classic Series subscribers are eligible to keep their seats season after season.
- **No additional handling fees.** When you buy a subscription package, you avoid paying extra fees that other venues charge for single-ticket purchases.
- **Our full season includes *The Nutcracker Ballet*.** Classic Series subscribers will enjoy this tradition from the comfort of their subscription seats.
- **Discounted ticket for the annual Billings Symphony Chorale concert.** Subscribers get 10% off a single ticket.
- **Flexibility!** With the Flex Pass, if you are unable to attend a concert in your subscription package, exchange your ticket for an available seat at any remaining concert in your subscription (one-time use only). Flex Pass must be exchanged no later than 3 days in advance of the performance.
- **Experience the symphony behind the scenes.** Classic Series subscribers receive tickets to attend all dress rehearsals for Billings Symphony concerts performed at the Alberta Bair Theater (excludes *The Nutcracker Ballet*), allowing attendees to observe the inner workings of the orchestra.
- **Exclusive content.** Enjoy Insider Notes and Concert Cues, featuring behind-the-scenes conversations with conductors and guest artists, delivered directly to your inbox.
- **Post-concert receptions.** Subscribers are invited to join us after select performances and mingle with musicians and guest artists.

Ticket Purchase Timeline

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026

- Subscription renewals begin. Renewing subscribers automatically receive the same seats from the previous season upon renewal. Renewing subscribers wishing to change their seats may choose from currently available seats OR be waitlisted until all seat holds expire.
- New subscriptions can be purchased (seats will be assigned after May 11, 2026).
- Single tickets for Sukin Series, Billings Symphony Chorale, and Special Events go on sale to the public.

MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026: All renewal seating holds expire on seats for subscription renewals. New subscribers and existing subscriber renewals continue.

SATURDAY, JULY 11, 2026: Single tickets for **Classic Series Concerts** go on sale to the public, online and at the Alberta Bair Theater box office.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026: Last day to purchase **Full Season Sukin** subscription package.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026: Last day to purchase **Full Season and Masterworks Classic** subscription packages.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2026: Last day to purchase **Pick 5 Classic** subscription package.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2027: Last day to purchase **Pick 3 Classic** subscription package.

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2027: Last day to purchase **Pick 3 Sukin** subscription package.

DRESS REHEARSAL TICKETS

Want to see how your symphony works? Get a dress rehearsal ticket for \$17 (plus venue fees) for any performance held at the Alberta Bair Theater (excludes *The Nutcracker Ballet*). Dress Rehearsals take place the day of the concert at 10:30 AM (except for *The Cycle of Beginnings*, which will take place on Friday, April 23, 2027 at 7:00PM). Tickets can be purchased online, via the Alberta Bair Theater box office, or at the door.

RUSH TICKETS

Have a last-minute itch to see the Symphony? Join us for \$15 (plus venue fees) at Classic Series performances held at the Alberta Bair Theater. Rush tickets are valid for tier 4 seating only and can be purchased 30 minutes prior to the concert (based on availability).



AN EXCLUSIVE MEMBERSHIP FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Sync Up over 5 curated concerts, with pre-concert
social events and post-show receptions!

RACHMANINOFF PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 *Directed By* **WILBUR LIN** (CLASSIC SERIES) _____ **OCT. 24, 2026**

TCHAIKOVSKY NO. 4 *Directed By* **TRISTAN RAIS-SHERMAN** (CLASSIC SERIES) _____ **DEC. 19, 2026**

POIESIS QUARTET: BISQC 2025 WINNERS (SUKIN SERIES) _____ **FEB. 4, 2027**

THE CYCLE OF BEGINNINGS (CLASSIC SERIES) _____ **APR. 24, 2027**

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN JAZZ COLLECTIVE:
HOMAGE TO THELONIOUS MONK** (SUKIN SERIES) _____ **JUN. 12, 2027**

MEMBERSHIP PRICING
\$200/SINGLE \$350/COUPLE

*Must be under the age of 40 at time of commitment.

Terms, conditions, and more details available online at billingssymphony.org

2026/2027 SEASON AT A GLANCE

SEPTEMBER

RAFAEL AGUIRRE: GRANDE MUSICA (SUKIN SERIES) **THU, SEPT. 10, 2026**
ADVENTURES IN MUSIC! DAY (FREE FAMILY SERIES) **SAT, SEPT. 19, 2026**
DVORAK NO. 8 *Directed By* **ERIC GARCIA** (CLASSIC SERIES) **SAT, SEPT. 26, 2026**

OCTOBER

ROCKY MOUNTAIN JAZZ COLLECTIVE'S
BIG BAND MACHINE (SUKIN SERIES) **SAT, OCT. 10, 2026**
RACHMANINOFF PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 *Directed By* **WILBUR LIN** (CLASSIC SERIES) **SAT, OCT. 24, 2026**

NOVEMBER

CERUS QUARTET: PAST LIVES, PRESENT VOICES (SUKIN SERIES) **THU, NOV. 5, 2026**
FOR A BETTER WORLD (CHORALE SERIES) **SAT, NOV. 14 & SUN, NOV. 15, 2026**
FALL CONCERT (BILLINGS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA) **SUN, NOV. 22, 2026**
THE NUTCRACKER BALLET (CLASSIC SERIES) **SAT, NOV. 28 & SUN NOV. 29, 2026**

DECEMBER

TCHAIKOVSKY NO. 4 *Directed By* **TRISTAN RAIS-SHERMAN** (CLASSIC SERIES) **SAT, DEC. 19, 2026**
YOUTH CHAMBER FALL CONCERT (YOUTH PROGRAM) **MON, DEC. 21, 2026**

JANUARY

ELGAR'S ENIGMA VARIATIONS *Directed By* **DEANNA THAM** (CLASSIC SERIES) **SAT, JAN. 23, 2027**
A WINTER'S TALE (FREE FAMILY SERIES) **SAT, JAN. 30, 2027**

FEBRUARY

POIESIS QUARTET: BISQC 2025 WINNERS (SUKIN SERIES) **THU, FEB. 4, 2027**
BRAHMS NO. 2 *Directed By* **JACOB JOYCE** (CLASSIC SERIES) **SAT, FEB. 20, 2027**

MARCH

SIBELIUS NO. 2 *Directed By* **CONNER GRAY COVINGTON** (CLASSIC SERIES) **SAT, MAR. 20, 2027**

APRIL

ARISTO SHAM: A NIGHT OF FANTASY (SUKIN SERIES) **THU, APR. 1, 2027**
SPRING CONCERT (BILLINGS SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA) **SUN, APR. 11, 2027**
THE CYCLE OF BEGINNINGS (CLASSIC SERIES) **SAT, APR. 24, 2027**

MAY

CANTUS: SIMPLE GIFTS (SUKIN SERIES) **THU, MAY 6, 2027**
YOUTH CHAMBER SPRING CONCERT (YOUTH PROGRAM) **MON, MAY 10, 2027**
BACH, BREWS & WINE (SPECIAL EVENT) **FRI, MAY 14, 2027**

JUNE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN JAZZ COLLECTIVE:
HOMAGE TO THELONIOUS MONK (SUKIN SERIES) **SAT, JUN. 12, 2027**
SYMPHONY IN THE PARK (FREE FAMILY SERIES) **SUN, JUN. 27, 2027**

All programming subject to change.

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