

Knoxville Symphony Orchestra

## Mozart Piano Concerto No. 25

Feb. 17-18



### Mozart Piano Concerto No. 25

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Knoxville Symphony Orchestra  
Moxley Carmichael Masterworks Series  
Feb. 17-18, 2022  
Tennessee Theatre

*Sponsored by*

**Jarrold Blue and John Law**

**Sameer Patel**, *conductor*

**Weiyin Chen**, *violin*

**JENNIFER HIGDON**

*blue cathedral*

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

**Piano Concerto No. 25**

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Andante in F Major
- III. Allegretto

**Weiyin Chen**, *piano*

**- INTERMISSION -**

**JEAN SIBELIUS**

**Symphony No. 1 in E minor, Op. 39**

- I. Andante, ma non troppo - Allegro energico
- II. Andante (ma non troppo lento)
- III. Scherzo: Allegro
- IV. Finale: Andante - Allegro molto (Quasi una fantasia)

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***This concert will be broadcast on WUOT 91.9 FM on Tuesday, March 8, at 8 p.m.***

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***Latecomers will be seated during the first convenient pause in the performance.  
The use of recording devices and/or cameras is strictly forbidden. Please remember to silence all electronic devices and refrain from text messaging during the concert. Mobile devices may be used to***

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*read program notes during the concert.  
Programs and artists subject to change.*

### Conductor: Sameer Patel

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#### Sameer Patel

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conductor

Internationally recognized for his deep musicianship and passionate communication, **Sameer Patel** is one of America's most exciting young conductors.

Sameer serves as Associate Conductor of the Sun Valley Music Festival and recently concluded an acclaimed tenure as Associate Conductor of the San Diego Symphony, where he reinvigorated the orchestra's programming and connection with its community. This season, Sameer makes debuts with the Grand Rapids Symphony, Sarasota Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic, and the Florida Orchestra, as well as return engagements with the Knoxville Symphony and La Jolla Symphony. Recent performances include Puccini's *Tosca* with Houston's Opera in the Heights, as well as concerts with the orchestras of Toronto, St. Louis, Detroit, New Jersey, Phoenix, Sacramento, Toledo, New Hampshire, Bozeman, Savannah, Fresno, Knoxville, Alabama, Naples, Reading, and Jacksonville, as well as the National Symphony in Washington, D.C., the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Pacific Symphony, and the Chicago Sinfonietta. Abroad, he has conducted acclaimed performances with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Sanremo, the Orchestra Giovanile Italiana, the Leipziger Sinfonieorchester. With an unending enthusiasm for the music of our time, Sameer has championed music by living composers such as Adam Schoenberg, Anna Clyne, Mason Bates, Ellen Reid, Hannah Lash, Tan Dun, and many others. As a proud product of public school music education, Sameer dedicates time in his schedule each season to working with youth orchestras and All-State orchestras around the country.

Sameer's impressive work spans three continents and has led to recognition from the Solti Foundation U.S., which granted him three consecutive Career Assistance Awards and an Elizabeth Buccheri Opera Residency with North Carolina Opera. In 2016 he was recognized by Daniele Gatti as a top conductor at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, Italy, which led to his acclaimed debut with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Sanremo. In 2013, Kurt Masur, the late Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, recognized Sameer's talents with a prize from the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Foundation, which allowed him to study with and assist Maestro Masur in his appearances with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. That same year, Sameer was one of only six conductors selected by the League of American Orchestras for the Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, which led to subsequent, multiple engagements with that orchestra. In the early stages of his career he held conducting positions with the Chicago Sinfonietta and the Fort Wayne Philharmonic.

Sameer studied at the University of Michigan and furthered his training across Europe with some of the greatest conductors of our time, including Gianandrea Noseda, Daniele Gatti, the late Kurt Masur, Bernard Haitink, David Zinman, and Paavo Järvi. His experiences were further developed through assisting Gustavo Dudamel, Charles Dutoit, Edo de Waart, Robert Spano, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, and Jaap van Zweden, among many others.

Proud to be born and raised in Michigan, Sameer currently makes his home in San Diego with his wife, Shannon, their three-year-old son, Devan, and their infant daughter, Veda. In his spare time, Sameer pursues his passions for

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**Artist: Weiyin Chen**

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**Weiyin Chen**

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Piano

In a time of promising young virtuosos from all over the world, the Taiwanese-American pianist Weiyin Chen stands out not just for her dazzling technique, but above all for the sheer musicality and maturity of her playing, qualities rare in an artist of her young years. Her gift for getting to the musical “heart” of the scores she plays has drawn the attention and praise of such master musicians as the renowned conductor-pianist Leon Fleisher and pianists Richard Goode and Claude Frank, all of whom she studied with extensively, among a legion of other notable figures. Ms. Chen is a “thinking pianist” who has a rare ability to look beyond the notes on the page to divine a score’s musical essence.

In New York City, Ms. Chen was heard in a stunning three-part concert series with distinguished guests. The first concert, she was joined by Camerata RCO (ensemble of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam) for a performance of Mozart and Mendelssohn Concerti. In the second concert, Ms.

Chen collaborated with the exceptional Miró Quartet in an all Brahms program. The series concluded with a solo piano recital, featuring the world premiere of American composer Marc Neikrug’s work Sun Moon Lake.

Ms. Chen released 2 albums in USA and Europe respectively. Her debut solo CD *Diary in G*, which includes Schubert’s Sonata No. 18 in G major and Schumann’s Piano Sonata No. 2 in G minor, is a testament to her superb talents as an interpreter. The longtime critic Jerry Dubins of *Fanfare* wrote in his glowing review, “ I can honestly say that no other performance and recording of this Sonata I’ve heard has won me over as this one has....” Her other recording with the Camerata RCO features Mozart Piano Concerto in A major K.414 and Mendelssohn Concerto in D minor for Piano, Violin and Strings. Critic James Forrest praised her playing in the disc review “...the amount of insight she brings to this music, so early in her career, speaks volumes for the inherent gifts with which she has endowed...Chen’s youth can entirely equal the playing of Argerich recorded with an additional quarter-century of years and experience behind her. Gutman Records has a winner here.”

Ms. Chen’s upcoming season includes engagements in Europe with Musicians of the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and debut in Palermo Sicily, in USA with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, in Asia with the National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra. Recent highlights include debut with the Taipei Symphony Orchestra under the direction of maestro Eliahu Inbal, in Milan with I Solisti di Milano Classica with her debut interview and an all Schubert recording for the *Amadeus* magazine in Italy followed by her first recital tour in the Netherlands, performances at Carnegie Hall in New York, solo piano recitals in Italy and concerto engagement at the New Year Music Festival in Gstaad Switzerland, under the artistic direction of Princess Caroline Murat and the patronage of H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco. She has performed as soloist with most of the major orchestras in Asia, including the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, with whom she made her debut under Maestro Edo de Waart, Brahms First Piano Concerto with the National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Leon Fleisher, the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra in a Royal Celebration Concert honoring the 86th Birthday of His Majesty the King of Thailand, the China National Symphony Orchestra, Taiwan Philharmonic NSO; Orquesta Sinfonica Ciudad de Gijon in Spain, Adrian Symphony Orchestra and Kalamazoo Philharmonia in USA, concert tour with Camerata RCO—members of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in the Netherlands.

Recitals have taken her to France, Holland, Italy, Denmark, Peru, Panama, India, Taipei, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Utah and Chicago.

Ms. Chen has performed in such festivals as La Jolla Summerfest, Verbier Festival & Academy, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Festival Paesaggi Musicali Toscani, Shanghai International Music Festival, Chelsea

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Music Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, and the Banff Center, collaborating with such instrumentalists as violinists Cho-Liang Lin, Ilya Gringolts, Chee-Yun Kim, David Chan, Alina Pogostkina, violists Paul Neubauer, David Aaron Carpenter and Cynthia Phelps, and cellist Gary Hoffman.

Born into a medical family, Ms. Chen advocates charity work combining the healing power of music and medicine. She has led global humanitarian campaigns, most recently in India and Peru with her father, a world-renowned surgeon Dr. Hung-Chi Chen. In India, she taught and performed under the auspices of the Mehli Mehta Foundation in Mumbai, where the ticket sale of the concert was donated to the surgical mission conducted by Dr. Chen. He and his team has since performed more than 100 surgeries free of cost to the underprivileged and children in need who would not otherwise have access to such treatment. In Peru, her charity concert at the Gran Teatro Nacional marked their first campaign in Lima, benefiting the Hospital Nacional Arzobispo Loayza. The collaboration of their joined forces continue to create beautiful stories worldwide.

Ms. Chen's musical education has included The Juilliard School and studies with Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, and private study with Richard Goode and Claude Frank. She holds a certificate degree in fashion design from Parsons School of Design, she is a couture designer for her concert attire.

## Program: blue cathedral

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### blue cathedral (1999)

**Jennifer Higdon was born in Brooklyn, New York, on December 31, 1962. The first performance of *blue cathedral* took place at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on May 1, 2000, with Robert Spano conducting the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. *blue cathedral* is scored for piccolo, two flutes, oboe, English horn, two clarinets, four bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, crotales, marimba, tam-tam, vibraphone, orchestra bells, bell tree, sizzle cymbal, suspended cymbal, chimes, small triangle, large triangle, bass drum, large tom-tom, tam-tam, harp, piano/celesta, and strings. Approximate performance time is twelve minutes.**

Blue...like the sky. Where all possibilities soar. Cathedrals...a place of thought, growth, spiritual expression...serving as a symbolic doorway in to and out of this world. Blue represents all potential and the progression of journeys. Cathedrals represent a place of beginnings, endings, solitude, fellowship, contemplation, knowledge and growth. As I was writing this piece, I found myself imagining a journey through a glass cathedral in the sky. Because the walls would be transparent, I saw the image of clouds and blueness permeating from the outside of this church. In my mind's eye, the listener would enter from the back of the sanctuary, floating along the corridor amongst giant crystal pillars, moving in a contemplative stance. The stained glass windows' figures would start moving with song, singing a heavenly music. The listener would float down the aisle, slowly moving upward at first and then progressing at a quicker pace, rising towards an immense ceiling which would open to the sky...as this journey progressed, the speed of the traveler would increase, rushing forward and upward. I wanted to create the sensation of contemplation and quiet peace at the beginning, moving towards the feeling of celebration and ecstatic expansion of the soul, all the while singing along with that heavenly music.

These were my thoughts when The Curtis Institute of Music commissioned me to write a work to commemorate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Curtis is a house of knowledge—a place to reach towards that beautiful expression of the soul which comes through music. I began writing this piece at a unique juncture in my life and found myself pondering the question of what makes a life. The recent loss of my younger brother, Andrew Blue, made me reflect on the amazing journeys that we all make in our lives, crossing paths with so many individuals singularly and collectively, learning and growing each step of the way. This piece represents the expression of the individual and the group...our inner travels and the places our souls carry us, the lessons we learn, and the growth we experience. In tribute to my brother, I feature solos for the clarinet (the instrument he played) and the flute (the instrument I play). Because I am the older sibling, it is the flute that appears first in this dialog. At the end of the work, the two instruments continue their dialogue, but it is the flute that drops out and the clarinet that continues on in the upward progressing journey.

This is a story that commemorates living and passing through places of knowledge and of sharing and of that song called life.

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This work was commissioned and premiered in 2000 by the Curtis Institute of Music.

--Jennifer Higdon

### Composer: Jennifer Higdon

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#### Jennifer Higdon

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Composer

Jennifer Higdon is one of America's most acclaimed figures in contemporary classical music, receiving the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her *Violin Concerto*, a 2010 Grammy for her *Percussion Concerto*, a 2018 Grammy for her *Viola Concerto*, and, most recently, a 2020 Grammy for her *Harp Concerto*. In 2018, Higdon received the prestigious Nemmers Prize from Northwestern University, which is awarded to contemporary classical composers of exceptional achievement who have significantly influenced the field of composition. Higdon enjoys several hundred performances a year of her works, and *blue cathedral* is today's most performed contemporary orchestral work, with more than 650 performances worldwide. Her works have been recorded on more than 60 CDs. Higdon's first opera, *Cold Mountain*, won the International Opera Award for Best World Premiere, and the opera recording was nominated for 2 Grammy awards.

### Program: Piano Concerto No. 25

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#### Piano Concerto No. 25 in C Major, K. 503 (1786)

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria, on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna, Austria, on December 5, 1791. In addition to the solo piano, the Concerto in C, K. 503, is scored for flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings. Approximate performance time is thirty minutes.**

1786 was remarkably incredibly productive for Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, even by his lofty standards. During that year, Mozart completed his *opera buffa*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, the singspiel *The Impresario*, and a revision of his earlier *opera seria*, *Idomeneo*. Mozart also composed several chamber pieces, solo vocal works, his Fourth Horn Concerto, K. 495, and three Piano Concertos—No. 23 in A Major, K. 488, No. 24 in C minor, K. 491, and No. 25 in C Major, K. 503.

Mozart completed his C-Major Concerto on December 4, 1786. Two days later, Mozart placed the finishing touches on his "Prague" Symphony, No. 38 in D, K. 504. These two magnificent works represent the culmination of one of the greatest years in Mozart's composing life. But the C-Major Piano Concerto also represents the conclusion of yet another triumphant period for Mozart. During the height of Mozart's popularity in Vienna, he sponsored a series of concerts known as "academies." At these academies, Mozart, a virtuoso keyboard artist, premiered several piano concertos that he composed specifically for these events. During the years 1784-1786, Mozart completed no fewer than twelve piano concertos.

The Concerto No. 25 is the last in that magnificent series. In the following years, Mozart witnessed a precipitate decline in the demands for his services in Vienna as a composer, pianist, and teacher. This incomparable musical genius soon lost the financial ability to sponsor his once-successful academies. As a result, the opportunities to compose piano concertos became all too rare. After the completion of his Piano Concerto in C, K. 503, Mozart composed only two more works in that genre—the 1788 Concerto No. 26 in D, K. 537 ("Coronation"), and the B-flat Major Concerto, No. 27, K. 595, completed and premiered in 1791.

There is no specific documentation as to the premiere of the C-Major Concerto. The first performance may have taken place during a series of December 1786 academies at the Vienna Trattner Casino, with Mozart as soloist.

The Concerto opens in grand style (*Allegro maestoso*) with orchestral fanfares and a series of ascending and

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descending chords. At the conclusion of the orchestral exposition, the soloist enters with a gentle, introductory passage that leads to a reprise of the Concerto's opening sequence. The soloist then presents virtuoso elaborations of the principal thematic material. The traditional development of the principal themes, their recapitulation, a solo cadenza, and a brief coda round out the opening movement. The orchestra's introduction of the slow-tempo movement's (*Andante*) principal material features evocative writing for the winds. The soloist enters with an accompanied restatement. After a brief contrasting section, the soloist and orchestra offer a varied reprise of the main themes, capped by a final ascending passage. The finale (*Allegretto*) begins with the orchestra's statement of the principal rondo melody. Many of the soloist's passages are tinged with melancholy. The closing pages, however, offer a refreshing exuberance, a satisfying conclusion to this rich and multidimensional work.

### **Program notes by Ken Meltzer**

## **Program: Symphony No. 1**

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### **Symphony No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 39 (1899)**

**Jean Sibelius was born in Tavastehus, Finland, on December 8, 1865, and died in Järvenpää, Finland, on September 20, 1957. The first performance of the Symphony No. 1 took place in Helsinki, Finland, on April 26, 1899, with the composer conducting the Helsinki Philharmonic. The Symphony No. 1 is scored for two piccolos, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, harp, and strings. Approximate performance time is thirty-eight minutes.**

Finnish composer Jean Sibelius completed his First Symphony in early 1899. The premiere took place in Helsinki on April 26, 1899, with Sibelius leading the Helsinki Philharmonic. That premiere coincided with a particularly tumultuous period in Finland's history. Despite its status as a Grand Duchy under the Russian Czar since 1809, Finland enjoyed relative autonomy for the better part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During that period, Finland maintained its own government, army, currency, and postal service. Finnish and Swedish served as official languages, and the Lutheran religion was maintained. However, in February of 1899, a Russian imperial decree made its State Council responsible for all laws affecting Finland. Russia incorporated the formerly autonomous Finnish postal system. The Finnish army was disbanded, and citizens became liable for conscription into the Russian military.

In 1899, the same year Sibelius completed his First Symphony, he composed *Finlandia*. That orchestral tone poem depicts the Finnish people rebelling against their oppressors. Unlike *Finlandia*, the First Symphony is not based upon a specific program. Still, the work served Finland's patriotic cause. In 1900, Finnish conductor Robert Kajanus and the Helsinki Philharmonic began their first European tour. It encompassed several major cities, including Paris, where the World Exposition was in progress. The artists hoped that by showcasing Finland's rich artistic heritage, they would rally support for their struggle with Russia. The Helsinki Philharmonic concerts featured several works by Sibelius, including *Finlandia* (called "*La Patrie*," in order to avoid the wrath of Russian censorship), and the Symphony No. 1. Sibelius accompanied the performers on the tour and even, on occasion, conducted.

Although a relatively early work, the First Symphony's brooding melancholy, explosive drama, and stark, transparent orchestration already reflect the unique voice of Finland's greatest composer. Six years after the Symphony's premiere, the eminent British music critic Ernest Newman was moved to comment: "I have never listened to any music that took me away so completely from our usual Western life, and transported me into a quite new civilization. Every page of (the First Symphony) breathes another manner of thought, another way of living, even another landscape and seascape than ours."

The Symphony is in four movements. The first opens with a haunting, slow-tempo introduction (*Andante, ma non troppo*), finally resolving to the principal *Allegro energico*. The slow-tempo second movement, marked *Andante (ma no troppo lento)*, features striking juxtapositions of moods. The third-movement *Scherzo (Allegro)* is based upon an insistent, seven-note motif. A slow-tempo interlude precedes the final reprise of the *Scherzo*. The *Finale (Quasi una fantasia)* opens with a reprise of its counterpart in the opening movement. This leads to the principal *Allegro molto*, finally resolving to the triumphant final measures, capped by two pizzicato chords.

### **Program notes by Ken Meltzer**

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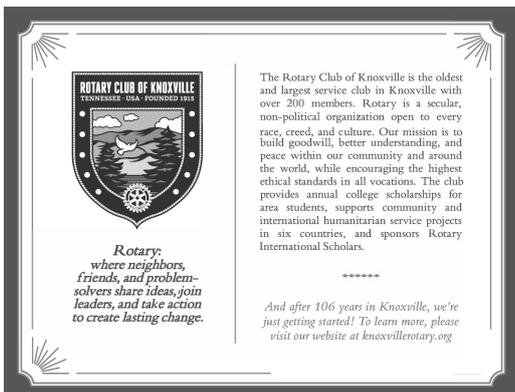
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The Rotary Club of Knoxville is the oldest and largest service club in Knoxville with over 200 members. Rotary is a secular, non-political organization open to every race, creed, and culture. Our mission is to build goodwill, better understanding, and peace within our community and around the world, while encouraging the highest ethical standards in all vocations. The club provides annual college scholarships for area students, supports community and international humanitarian service projects in six countries, and sponsors Rotary International Scholars.

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## Knoxville Symphony Orchestra

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