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MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES PROGRAMMING FOR 2026 SUMMER AT ORCHESTRA HALL, July 16-Aug 8

Four disparate weeks of programming explore broad spectrum of musical styles

Chris Thile makes Minnesota Orchestra debut bringing his autobiographical mandolin concerto to Orchestra Hall, along with an evening of indie music

Countertenor John Holiday sings Carlos Simon's *Songs of Separation*, as well as gems from the American songbook with Jearlyn and Jevetta Steele

Stephanie Childress conducts works by Britten, Beethoven and Schumann; Sarah Hicks leads a tribute to John Williams and "A Night in the Tropics" with trumpeter Charles Lazarus

Grammy Award-winning musician **Chris Thile** and acclaimed countertenor **John Holiday** will each headline a week of concerts—and curate multiple programs that highlight disparate sides of their musical personalities—as part of the Minnesota Orchestra's 2026 Summer at Orchestra Hall. Running from July 16 to August 8, 2026, this summer's programming spans a vibrant spectrum of musical styles and artists that also includes Beethoven's Triple Concerto, "A Night in the Tropics" with Orchestra trumpeter Charles Lazarus, and an original program celebrating John Williams' film scores, led by Principal Conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall Sarah Hicks.

"Each week of our summer concerts this season has a distinctly different flavor ranging from classical repertoire, film music and jazz tunes to an exploration of the American songbook," said Minnesota Orchestra Director of Productions and Engagement Grant Meachum. "We're particularly excited to showcase the singular talents of remarkable artists Chris Thile and John Holiday, each of whom we've asked to curate two different programs that speak to their varied musical interests and talents. A common thread among all the programs is the beautiful backdrop of Orchestra Hall in the summer."

Summer concerts kick off July 16-18 with Franco-British conductor **Stephanie Childress** leading Benjamin Britten's *Simple Symphony* and Robert Schumann's five-movement masterpiece, the Symphony No. 3, *Rhenish*. At the center of the program is Beethoven's expansive Triple Concerto featuring Minnesota Orchestra violinist **Sarah Grimes**, Associate Principal Cello **Silver Ainomäe** and Italian pianist **Alessio Bax**.

The second week of programming brings conductor **Sarah Hicks** to the podium for three concerts, July 23-25, that spotlight the **film music of composer John Williams**, whom she describes as “arguably the most important, impactful film composer of any generation.” Compiled by Hicks, the original program will weave together stories about Williams and the mark his music has left on the film industry, while showcasing film scores including *Schindler’s List*, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, *Superman* and *E.T.*, among others. Hicks returns on Sunday, July 26, to conduct Orchestra trumpeter **Charles Lazarus** and the Orchestra in “**A Night in the Tropics**,” an ode to the bossa nova, Cuban jazz and 1960s tiki lounge music.

Grammy Award-winning singer and songwriter **Chris Thile** is well-known to Minnesota audiences from his tenure as host of public radio’s *Live from Here*. For his Minnesota Orchestra debut, Thile will perform his own work **ATTENTION!**, a “narrative song cycle for extroverted mandolinist and orchestra” in a pair of concerts on July 31 and August 1. Led by Daniela Candillari, the genre-defying work was premiered in 2023 at the Tanglewood Music Festival and features what Thile calls a “crazy” combination of mandolin concerto and song cycle, in which he serves as singer, instrumentalist and narrator who relates the story of his meeting with *Star Wars* actress Carrie Fisher when he was a young musician.

The following evening, Sunday, August 2, Thile showcases a different corner of his musicianship, taking the stage—this time without the Orchestra—with a **crew of musical friends** for a night celebrating styles from bluegrass to indie pop.

Like Thile, countertenor **John Holiday** travels through multiple musical styles with ease, deftly bridging genres from opera to jazz and classical to gospel music. The final weekend of Summer at Orchestra Hall spotlights him in two programs: the first, on Friday, August 7, features him singing American composer Carlos Simon’s orchestral song cycle **Songs of Separation**, a meditation on longing and loss based on text by the 13th-century Persian poet Rūmī, as well as two exquisite works by French-Venezuelan composer Reynaldo Hahn, *À Chloris* and *L’Énamourée*. Led by Jonathan Taylor Rush, the program also features Jessie Montgomery’s *Coincident Dances* and Bizet’s Symphony No. 1.

Holiday’s second program on Saturday, August 8, also led by Jonathan Taylor Rush, is an exuberant celebration of the **American songbook**, in which he will share the stage with celebrated Twin Cities artists **Jearlyn Steele** and **Jevetta Steele** to sing music by Duke Ellington, George Gershwin and Billie Holiday and many others.

About Summer at Orchestra Hall

Summer at Orchestra Hall celebrates the Orchestra’s home in the city. Running this summer from July 16 to August 8, the 2026 festival explores a broad spectrum of musical styles from classical and film music to jazz tunes and the American songbook, headlined by pioneering artists Chris Thile and John Holiday. Audiences are invited to come early to enjoy pre-concert entertainment from a variety of local performers in the Target Atrium, as well as special dining and cocktail options.

Minnesota Orchestra

The Grammy Award-winning Minnesota Orchestra is known for acclaimed performances in its home state and around the world; award-winning educational programs; and a commitment to building the orchestral repertoire of tomorrow, all based on the belief that music is for everyone. Each year, Minnesota Orchestra concerts and recordings are seen and heard by more than 2.5 million people via television, radio, digital streaming and on-demand platforms. The current season marks Music Director Thomas Søndergård's third with the Orchestra and features collaborations with some of America's great mezzos, the return of the acclaimed Nordic Soundscapes Festival and performances of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*.

SUMMER AT ORCHESTRA HALL 2026

Summer at Orchestra Hall BEETHOVEN TRIPLE CONCERTO

Thursday, July 16, 2026, 11 a.m. / Orchestra Hall

Friday, July 17, 2026, 8 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Saturday, July 18, 2026, 7 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Minnesota Orchestra
Stephanie Childress, conductor
Sarah Grimes, violin
Silver Ainomäe, cello
Alessio Bax, piano

BRITTEN	<i>Simple Symphony</i>
BEETHOVEN	Triple Concerto for Violin, Cello and Piano
SCHUMANN	Symphony No. 3, <i>Rhenish</i>

Summer at Orchestra Hall LEGEND OF CINEMA: JOHN WILLIAMS' GREATEST SCORES with the Minnesota Orchestra

Thursday, July 23, 2026, 7 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Friday, July 24, 2026, 7 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Saturday, July 25, 2026, 7 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Minnesota Orchestra
Sarah Hicks, conductor

Principal Conductor of Live at Orchestra Hall Sarah Hicks leads the Orchestra in a salute to composer John Williams, living legend of Hollywood. The program features some of Williams' most unforgettable music of the silver screen, including *E.T.*, *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and more.

Summer at Orchestra Hall
A NIGHT IN THE TROPICS
with the Minnesota Orchestra

Sunday, July 26, 2026, 2 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Minnesota Orchestra
Sarah Hicks, conductor
Charles Lazarus, trumpet

Steeped in the sun-soaked sounds of 1960s tiki lounge music and the gently hypnotic pulse of bossa nova, “A Night in the Tropics” unfolds in waves of rhythm and color, transporting audiences to tropical climes with sultry melodies and evocative rhythms. Featuring melodies inspired by and from Brazil, Cuba, Hawaii and other sun-drenched locales, the concert spotlights original music by Orchestra trumpeter Charles Lazarus, music made famous by the Buena Vista Social Club and a tribute to bossa nova icon Antônio Carlos Jobim.

Summer at Orchestra Hall
CHRIS THILE
with the Minnesota Orchestra

Friday, July 31, 2026, 8 p.m. / Orchestra Hall
Saturday, August 1, 2026, 7 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Minnesota Orchestra
Daniela Candillari, conductor
Chris Thile, mandolin

Grammy Award-winning mandolinist, singer, songwriter and composer Chris Thile makes his Minnesota Orchestra debut with *ATTENTION!*, his inventive autobiographical work for mandolinist and orchestra. Part narrative song cycle, part musical self-portrait, *ATTENTION!* blends virtuosity and storytelling and showcases Thile’s singular artistry.

Summer at Orchestra Hall
AN EVENING WITH CHRIS THILE AND FRIENDS

Sunday, August 2, 2026, 7 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Chris Thile, mandolin

At home in genres from Baroque to bluegrass, indie pop to jazz, Chris Thile has won multiple Grammys, a MacArthur “Genius” grant and produced dozens of albums as a solo artist. In this program, Thile and a crew of his closest musical compatriots and collaborators take the Orchestra Hall stage for a one-night-only performance. [Note: the Minnesota Orchestra does not perform on this program.]

Summer at Orchestra Hall
COUNTERTENOR JOHN HOLIDAY
with the Minnesota Orchestra

Friday, August 7, 2026, 8 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Minnesota Orchestra
Jonathan Taylor Rush, conductor
John Holiday, countertenor

MONTGOMERY	<i>Coincident Dances</i>
SIMON	<i>Songs of Separation</i>
HAHN	<i>À Chlois</i> for Voice, Oboe and Orchestra
HAHN	<i>L'Énamourée</i> for Voice and Chamber Orchestra
BIZET	Symphony No. 1

Countertenor John Holiday returns to Orchestra Hall to perform Carlos Simon's orchestral song cycle *Songs of Separation*, a setting of texts by the 13th-century Persian Sufi mystic and poet Rūmī that meditates on loss, longing and the human experience of separation. Tracing a deeply expressive emotional arc—from grief and sorrow toward hope and affirmation—the work is brought to life by Holiday, whose extraordinary, genre-defying voice has been praised for its power, nuance and unmistakable individuality.

Summer at Orchestra Hall
AN AMERICAN SONGBOOK WITH JOHN HOLIDAY

Saturday, August 8, 2026, 7 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Minnesota Orchestra
Jonathan Taylor Rush, conductor
John Holiday, countertenor
Jearlyn Steele, vocalist
Jevetta Steele, vocalist

Few artists move as fluently between opera, classical, gospel, jazz and popular music as countertenor John Holiday. Joined by celebrated Twin Cities singers Jearlyn and Jevetta Steele, Holiday and the Minnesota Orchestra bring the summer festival to a close with a vibrant program drawn from the American Songbook, featuring music by Duke Ellington, George Gershwin, Billie Holiday and more.

TICKET PURCHASING INFORMATION

Tickets for Summer at Orchestra Hall can be purchased beginning April 14 at minnesotaorchestra.org or by calling 612-371-5656. For groups of 10 or more, call 612-371-5662.

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All programs, artists, dates, times and prices subject to change.

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