



Boston Symphony
Orchestra

2024-25 Season



For immediate release
Thursday, Dec. 12, 12 p.m.

**Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons
Present *Beethoven & Romanticism* in January 2025**

Nelsons leads all nine of Beethoven's iconic symphonies in order, grouped into four concert programs, at Symphony Hall

Additional free events offer new perspectives on the seminal composer, highlighting his chamber and solo works

***Für Elise* Reimagined: Open call to submit interpretations of the piece on any instrument, in any style, on video for social media**

High school students may apply for a master class on Beethoven's piano sonatas

[Click here](#) for a press kit with details about the new festival events



This January, the **Boston Symphony Orchestra** and Music Director **Andris Nelsons** present a special monthlong festival, *Beethoven & Romanticism*. The centerpiece is the complete cycle of the nine symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven, performed in order on consecutive programs at Symphony Hall for the first time since BSO Music Director Serge Koussevitzky did so in March 1927. The cycle will take place over a three-week period (Jan. 9–25), culminating with Symphonies Nos. 8 and 9 (“Ode to Joy”), the latter featuring a roster of acclaimed soloists—soprano **Amanda Majeski**, mezzo-soprano **Tamara Mumford**, tenor **Pavel Černoch**, and baritone **Andrè Schuen**—and the **Tanglewood Festival Chorus** under the direction of BSO Choral Director **James Burton** in the finale. The festival marks the first time that Nelsons conducts the First, Second and Sixth (*Pastoral*) symphonies with the BSO. A ticketed [open rehearsal](#) of the Fourth and Fifth Symphony program is offered on the morning of January 16 and includes a pre-rehearsal talk. Details of each concert may be found in the program listings below.

Each of the four symphonic concert programs is complemented by a free interdisciplinary event designed by the BSO Humanities Institute, illuminating new facets of the composer’s life and work and its enduring relevance. The Humanities Institute, announced earlier this year, is also planning events related to the BSO’s April-May concerts on the theme *Decoding Shostakovich*. Building on the foundational work of the Tanglewood Learning Institute, the BSO is committed to deepening its community connections through humanities programs and partnerships that foster dialogue. The humanities events, for which free tickets may be reserved online, are described in more detail below.

Beethoven and the BSO: The History

One of the most revered composers in Western classical music, Beethoven holds a special place in the hearts of the BSO community. His is the only composer's name to be found in Symphony Hall, inscribed in the central position of the stage's proscenium arch, symbolically overseeing all performances. The BSO's first season (1881–82) included performances of all nine symphonies, and the inaugural BSO concert performed in Symphony Hall in October 1900 included Beethoven's grand and complex *Missa solemnis*. Music Director Serge Koussevitzky, whose 150th birthday the BSO celebrated throughout 2024, organized several festivals highlighting the composer's works between 1927 and 1947. In 1970, the BSO marked the bicentennial of the composer's birth with a festival with concerts conducted by Leonard Bernstein and Max Rudolf that featured all five piano concertos, the violin concerto, the choral fantasy, and three symphonies. Even so, cycles of all nine Beethoven symphonies in close proximity remain a rare and incredibly special opportunity. To read more about the history of Beethoven festivals at the BSO, [visit our website](#).

Beethoven & Romanticism: Free Events to Complement the Concerts

The first event (Jan. 8), *Beethoven and Deafness*, is an exclusive Q&A with **DJ Kurs**, the Artistic Director behind Deaf West Theatre, which was a driving force behind last summer's groundbreaking European tour of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, adapted into sign language in collaboration with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Exploring Beethoven's experience with hearing loss, this innovative production redefined opera through a fusion of music, sign language, and visual storytelling, bringing the timeless themes of freedom and justice to life in an inclusive and transformative way. The captivating discussion will touch upon the creative process, the impact of the tour, and the future of accessibility in the performing arts.

Beethoven and the Piano (Jan. 15) contextualizes the composer's late piano works within the history of the instrument's evolution in size and sonority. Noted author and composer **Jan Swafford** and Van Cliburn International Piano Competition finalist **Clayton Stephenson** discuss and demonstrate Beethoven's extraordinary late piano music and the development of his piano writing over his lifetime. Parallel to the evolution of his pianistic voice was the evolution of the piano itself—from the smaller, delicate instruments of his youth (in Mozart's era), through his acquisition of a more robust French Érard, to the far more powerful British and Austrian pianos that sparked his epochal final works including the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, *Diabelli* Variations, and the final sonatas opp. 109-111. A continuing theme will be the individuality of each major work for the keyboard. With each piece Beethoven in effect remade the piano, the sonority of each as significant as the notes on the page.

Unrequited Love is the theme of the third program (Jan. 18). Beethoven's song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* ("To the distant beloved"), composed a few years after his Symphony No. 7, is the subject of a lecture by author **Matthew Guerrieri** (*The First Four Notes: Beethoven's Fifth and the Human Imagination*), a Tanglewood Music Center alumnus. The event also includes a performance by baritone **Randall Scarlata** and pianist **Tanya Blaich**. In the song cycle—one of the first of its kind—the composer seems to state his own thwarted hopes and longings, his memories of his famous "Immortal Beloved," with poignant honesty. The program will consider the extent to which, over two centuries later, we can hear the composer's psychology in his works, an idea that was brand-new in Beethoven's time. The program takes place at the Goethe-Institut at 6 p.m.

The final event of the series, *Between Two Worlds* with moderator **Scott Burnham**, explores the special qualities of Beethoven's late style through a discussion and performance of his final string quartet, Op. 135, with the renowned Boston-based **Lydian String Quartet** (Jan. 22). Beethoven's last five string quartets hold a special place in Western music history. Though Beethoven is quite fittingly imagined to be the composer who bridged the Classical and Romantic periods, these works seem to operate from some different cultural geography altogether. Timeless, enigmatic, existential, deadly serious and bluntly humorous, full of extreme contrasts, the late quartets are quite unlike anything that came before or after. This group of works is often held up as the quintessential expression of artistic "lateness," of that which happens to artistic expression toward the end of an artist's life. This program takes place at the BYSO Youth Center for Music across from Symphony Hall at 6 p.m.

Other festival events include a master class on the Symphony Hall stage with four high school students on an individual movement of a Beethoven Sonata. Piano students are invited to submit a prescreening recording of a single movement of a Beethoven Sonata of their choice for consideration. The master class, which is open to the public to observe, is planned for Saturday, January 25 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. [Please visit the festival webpage](#) for more information.

And, further extending the festival's reach, musicians at all levels worldwide are invited to participate in the *Für Elise* Reimagined project by uploading a video of themselves interpreting Beethoven's romantic piece on any instrument in any genre or style. Selected videos will be compiled into reels shared on the BSO's social media channels. For more details, [visit the festival webpage](#).

Free Community Chamber Concert Series Continues

The BSO's series of free [Community Chamber Concerts](#) continues in 2025 with a performance at First Church in Cambridge, on January 26 at 3 p.m. The program

includes Beethoven's String Quartet No. 7 in F. The program repeats with the same four BSO musicians at the Fenway Center in Boston on January 31 at 1:30 p.m.

Statement from BSO President and CEO Chad Smith:

"The BSO's new Humanities Institute aims to transform how we connect audiences with the music on our stages, offering new ways to explore our art form's social, cultural, and historical context. This January, the Institute launches with a monthlong celebration of Beethoven, pairing each of his symphonies with special events that deepen our understanding of his work. By engaging musicians, scholars, and students in these conversations, we hope to enrich the concert experience and demonstrate how the humanities can reveal new dimensions of Beethoven's music and its relevance to our world today."

Statement from BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons:

"Performing the music of Beethoven with the Boston Symphony Orchestra has been a joyful experience since my very first season as Music Director. As we continue to celebrate our tenth anniversary season together, I am excited to conduct all nine of his symphonies consecutively over the course of just three weeks, including Symphonies nos. 1, 2, and 6 for the first time with this wonderful orchestra. For centuries, the music of Beethoven has brought us together by expressing our common humanity, and I can think of no better way to start off the new calendar year and welcome our beloved audiences to Symphony Hall."

[Click here for a Spring 2025 BSO Concert Listing](#)

[Click here for a season press kit](#)

**Concert and Event Listing, *Beethoven & Romanticism*, Jan.
8–25, 2025**

Wednesday, January 8, 6:00 p.m.
Goethe-Institut, 170 Beacon St., Boston
Beethoven and Deafness
DJ Kurs, speaker

Thursday, January 9, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, January 10, 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 11, 8 p.m.

Symphony Hall

Andris Nelsons, conductor

Symphony No. 1

Symphony No. 2

Symphony No. 3, *Eroica*

Wednesday, January 15, 6 p.m.

Goethe-Institut, 170 Beacon St., Boston

Beethoven and the Piano

Jan Swafford, lecturer

Clayton Stephenson, piano

Piano Sonata No. 30 in E, Op. 109

Thursday, January 16, 10:30 a.m. (Open Rehearsal)

Thursday, January 16, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, January 17, 1:30 p.m.

Symphony Hall

Andris Nelsons, conductor

Symphony No. 4

Symphony No. 5

Saturday, January 18, 6 p.m.

Goethe-Institut, 170 Beacon St., Boston

Unrequited Love

Matthew Guerrieri, lecturer

Randall Scarlata, baritone

Tanya Blaich, piano

An die ferne Geliebte, Op. 98

Saturday, January 18, 8 p.m.

Tuesday, January 21, 7:30 p.m.

Symphony Hall

Andris Nelsons, conductor

Symphony No. 6, *Pastoral*

Symphony No. 7

Wednesday, January 22, 6 p.m.

BYSO Youth Center for Music, 235 Huntington Ave., Boston

Between Two Worlds

Scott Burnham, moderator

Lydian String Quartet

String Quartet No. 16 in F, Op. 135

Saturday, January 25, 4 p.m.
Symphony Hall
Beethoven Sonata Master Class with High School Students

Thursday, January 23, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, January 24, 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 25, 8 p.m.

Symphony Hall

Andris Nelsons, conductor

Amanda Majeski, soprano

Tamara Mumford, mezzo-soprano

Pavel Černoch, tenor

Andrè Schuen, baritone

Tanglewood Festival Chorus,

James Burton, conductor

Symphony No. 8

Symphony No. 9

How to Purchase Tickets

Tickets to the 2024–25 BSO season are available to purchase by calling 888-266-1200 or visiting [bso.org](https://www.bso.org). To obtain tickets for the free humanities events, [visit the festival webpage](#).

Discounts and Special Ticket Opportunities

- BSO's highly successful [\\$25 tickets for people under 40 program](#)
- [College Card](#) and [High School Card](#) available throughout the season
- **\$10 Rush Tickets program**, offering significantly discounted tickets to concertgoers on the day of concert, continues for select performances throughout the year
- We offer discounts to groups of 15 or more people through our [Group Sales](#) office
- Discounts for health care professionals, members of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, military personnel and veterans, and EBT, WIC, and ConnectorCare Card holders

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Press Contacts

Jan Devereux, Senior Director of Public Relations & Communications
(jdevereux@bso.org)

Matthew Erikson, Senior Publicist and Media Relations Lead
(merikson@bso.org)

Rena Cohen, Publicist (rcohen@bso.org)

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