

FAMILY CONCERT



How To Train Your Dragon Orchestra

JAN. 31, 2026



MISSOULA SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA & CHORALE

JULIA TAI, MUSIC DIRECTOR

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The Missoula Symphony Association Presents

How to Train Your Dragon Orchestra

JULIA TAI, Music Director

BARBARA BERG, Theatre Director

2026 Family Concert
71st Season, 2025–2026

John Powell	<i>How to Train Your Dragon</i>
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky	<i>Romeo & Juliet Fantasy Overture</i>
Igor Stravinsky	<i>The Rite of Spring</i>
Edward Elgar	<i>Introduction and Allegro for Strings, Op. 47</i>
Paul Dukas.....	<i>Fanfare pour précéder La Péri</i>
Igor Stravinsky	<i>The Firebird Suite</i>
Charles Fernandez.....	<i>La Marche from Quatuor Parisienne</i>

In memory of
Curtis Stephens

loving father of Bonnie & Holly and devoted partner
to Alethea Taylor, whom he met when they were
seated together at the symphony.



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Welcome to our Family Concert

Hello, families!

Welcome to the Missoula Symphony Orchestra's Family Concert, presented especially for YOU! You will hear music from the exciting movie, "How to Train Your Dragon," as well as very famous music written by Stravinsky and Tchaikovsky. You will see and hear instruments of the woodwind, string, brass, and percussion families, conducted by Alpha Dragon Conductor, Julia Tai.



But, be warned! You will also face a troupe of deviant dragons whose only goal is to cause conflict in the orchestra by turning the sections against each other! They may appear where you least expect them!

Before we face these dragons, let's take a closer look at the composer and their music featured in this concert.



The Composers

A composer is someone who writes (composes) music. Some composers work by writing music down on paper; this is called 'written notation'. Classical music writers work this way. Writers for TV and movie music also usually write this way, so that an orchestra or other players can read the music and play it.



– “Firebird” and “Rite of Spring” –

Igor Stravinsky was born in St. Petersburg, which was the capital of Russia at the time. His father was a famous opera singer, so as a kid, Igor got to hang out at the opera house, where he met all the famous musicians of the day. At one performance, he even caught sight of Tchaikovsky.

Igor began taking piano lessons at age 9. When he grew up, he started studying law. One of these fellow

law students was the son of the composer, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who agreed to give Stravinsky composition lessons. Law fell by the wayside completely after Stravinsky had a big success with the *Firebird*, which he composed for the head of the Russian Ballet.

Stravinsky went on to write more ballets, one of which was *The Rite of Spring*, about a pagan ritual in ancient Russia. The opening night audience found the music and choreography so shocking that there was actually a riot in the theater.

Stravinsky moved around a lot. In Europe he lived in France and Switzerland; during World War II, he came to the United States, where he lived in both California and New York. Stravinsky’s music moved around, too...he never really picked one style. He wrote Russian-sounding music, music that looked back to previous centuries, modern music, opera, and religious music.

You will hear many movements of Stravinsky’s “Firebird” in your concert today and just a small portion of the opening movement of “Rite of Spring.” <https://www.classicsforkids.com/composer/igor-stravinsky>.

– “Romeo & Juliet” –

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in Volkensk, a town in Russia’s Ural Mountains. When he was 8 years old, his family moved to the capital city of St. Petersburg. Even though Tchaikovsky was a good musician as a kid, that wasn’t considered an “acceptable” profession, so his parents made him study law instead.

But even in law school, Tchaikovsky continued to study music. Eventually, he gave up his legal job and went to the St. Petersburg Conservatory. After he graduated, he moved to Moscow to teach at the new conservatory there. It’s now named after him.

Tchaikovsky wrote music that people still love today, like the *Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, which are famous ballets. When the dragons enter for the first time in your show, you will hear a movement from Tchaikovsky’s “Romeo and Juliet,” which is a fantasy overture he wrote for orchestra based on the Shakespeare play. <https://www.classicsforkids.com/composer/piotr-ilyich-tchaikovsky/>



A **Symphony Orchestra** is a group of musicians playing many different instruments. They all work together with the conductor to create beautiful music. When you watch the concert, look for these instruments on stage.



String

The String Instruments are instruments with strings on them!

They are played by either pulling a bow across the strings or using fingers to pluck them. This makes the strings vibrate, and the wooden box of the instrument amplifies the sound. At our concert, look for violins, violas, cellos, and double basses.



Percussion

Percussion instruments are played by either striking (with hands, sticks or mallets), shaking, or scraping. Some percussion instruments, like the triangle, are non-pitched and are used for rhythms. Some percussion instruments, like the xylophone, are pitched and are used for melodies. The timpani is a pitched drum that uses a pedal to change pitches.

Brass

The Brass instruments

at our concert will be trumpets, French horns, trombones and tubas. They are played by buzzing the lips into a cup-shaped mouthpiece attached to long pipes. To change pitches, the player uses their fingers to press valves that look like buttons—except for the trombone! This instrument uses a long slide to change pitches.



Woodwind

The Woodwind instruments include flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and saxophones. Woodwind players blow into or across their instrument's mouthpiece while opening or closing its holes with their fingers. Some woodwinds use a wooden reed on the mouthpiece.

PRO TIP: Listen for the special note "A" that the oboe plays before the concert begins and you will see all the players tune their instruments.

A Word from our Theatre Director

Barbara Berg

For the 2026 Family Concert, the Missoula Symphony Orchestra musicians will be transformed into fiery dragons. Here's the story: Our musicians worked in harmony, combining their voices to create a beautiful palette of sound....UNTIL, a troupe of deviant dragons appeared and convinced them that each section of the orchestra is better than the others and should stand alone. The instruments proudly introduced themselves and presented musical selections by Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Elgar, Dukas, Fernandez, and Powell in an aggressive attempt to prove that argument! It is as if the woodwind, string, brass, and percussion families no longer realized the value of working together to create amazing musical performances!



Not only did the deviant dragons sow discord among the musicians, but they stole Alpha Dragon Conductor Julia Tai's baton, crippling her ability to unleash the power and energy of the music. If only the dragon musicians would ignore the voices that seek to divide them and realize the strength they have when they celebrate their diversity and work together!

It is our hope that our guests will learn from the dragons the important lesson of valuing those around us and recognize the life-long benefit of working together as a team. We challenge you to watch for musical terms and ideas you recognize in the music. And, finally, we invite you all to find your place in the world of music-making, whether it be as a performer or a supportive audience member.

Actor Bios

Rosie Seitz Ayers earned her BFA in Theater and her MA in Integrated Arts in Education at the University of Montana in Missoula where she has been raising her children with her partner, Michael, for the last 25 years. She teaches Theatre at Sussex and has an abundance of experience, acting, directing, producing and teaching with Montana Repertory Theatre/ MRM, Missoula Community Theatre, Montana Actors Theatre, Grandstreet Theatre, Montana Shakespeare Company, both University of Montana and Carroll College theater departments, and several other regional arts organizations. She's taught for SPARK! Arts in MCPS for more than 10 years and performs with her comedy partner, Teresa Waldorf, as well as teaches at their annual summer camp. She is passionate about arts advocacy and was named Arts Educator of the year by Arts Missoula.



Mason T. is a 4th grader and a proud student of the amazing Ms. Parker. He has been part of MCT since kindergarten, beginning as a Busy Bee in Rumpelstiltskin. When he's not learning or performing, Mason enjoys training jujitsu, snowboarding, spending time with his little brother, traveling to see his aunts, and dancing with friends.



Nora B. is a first-grade student at Jeanette Rankin Elementary School in Missoula, MT. She loves singing, ice skating, reading and playing the piano. She especially enjoys singing "How it's Done" from K-Pop Demon Hunters at the top of her lungs. She is excited to be a purple dragon!



Rosalie B. is a first-grade student at Jeanette Rankin Elementary School in Missoula, MT. She loves singing, swimming, arts and crafts, reading and playing music. In her spare time, she enjoys teaching her dog Butters to "roll over!" She is excited to be a grey dragon!



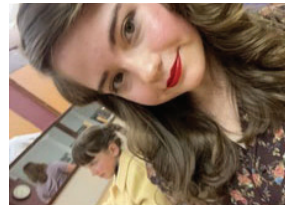
June G. is a born creative. Most recently, she expanded into the imaginative world of animation with her own channel on YouTube. She has performed in an original community production at Free Cycles, as well as featured in 11 performances with the Missoula Children's Theatre – including a television commercial for Cosmic Crisp apples. June enjoys playing piano, skiing, caring for her flock of 30 chickens, and creating a series of comic books that include "My Mean Fairy" and "What Joey Thinks."



This is **Jet M.'s** 3rd performance with the Missoula symphony, and he's so glad to be back. Jet, a high school freshman, loves theater and music and has done many shows at MCT. He has played the saxophone since fifth grade and has continued to polish his craft. Jet hopes you have a great time at the show!



Tilda S. has loved performing since she was very young, singing, dancing, and acting from the moment she could walk. She has a deep passion for musical theater and has appeared in over 25 MCT camps and community theater productions since age five, where she has made many close friends. Her recent roles include Lina Lamont in *Singin' in the Rain*, Marlin in *Finding Nemo Jr.*, and ensemble in *A Christmas Story*.



Known as unique, funny, and talented, Tilda expresses herself creatively in many ways. In the summer, she volunteers as an assistant director for MCT children's camp productions and enjoys spending time with her three dogs.

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Performances:
Friday, March 27, 2026 @ 7PM
Saturday, March 28, 2026 @ 5 & 7PM

BLUE FISH CAST

Classes:
February 23 - April 4, 2026
Performances:
Friday, April 3, 2026 @ 7PM
Saturday, April 4, 2026 @ 5 & 7PM

REGISTER
TODAY!



MCTinc.org

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For more than 40 years, education and community engagement have been at the heart of the Missoula Symphony Association's mission. That commitment has grown steadily under the stewardship of Music Director, Julia Tai. This season the Missoula Symphony Association is proud to present the following programs throughout the region:

SYMPHONY KIDS AT MISSOULA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Julia Tai presents a series of four mini-concerts that help children explore the elements of music and the instruments of the orchestra. These engaging and hands-on programs feature Symphony musicians and guest artists from our 2025-2026 season.

4:30-5:30 PM AT THE MISSOULA PUBLIC LIBRARY IMAGINARIUM

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 • Wednesday, April 15, 2026

BRANCH LIBRARY CONCERTS

Small ensembles of Symphony members perform mini-concerts in Missoula County's rural communities during the summer months.

STUDENT NIGHT AT DRESS REHEARSAL

Students and families are invited to join the Symphony for the dress rehearsal preceding each Masterworks Concert, enhanced by educational materials and a short talk by Music Director, Julia Tai.

AT THE DENNISON THEATRE

Friday, March 6, 2026, 7-10pm • Friday, April 17, 2026, 7-10pm

DOWNBEAT LOWDOWN

A free pre-concert talk before each of our Masterworks concerts with Music Director, Julia Tai.

SYMPHONY IN THE SCHOOLS

Symphony musicians visit Missoula-area middle schools and high schools to perform and coach music students.

MISSOULA YOUTH SYMPHONY SIDE-BY-SIDE

Music Director, Julia Tai works with the Missoula Youth Symphony during their rehearsals, and members of MYS perform alongside the Missoula Symphony in a Masterworks concert.

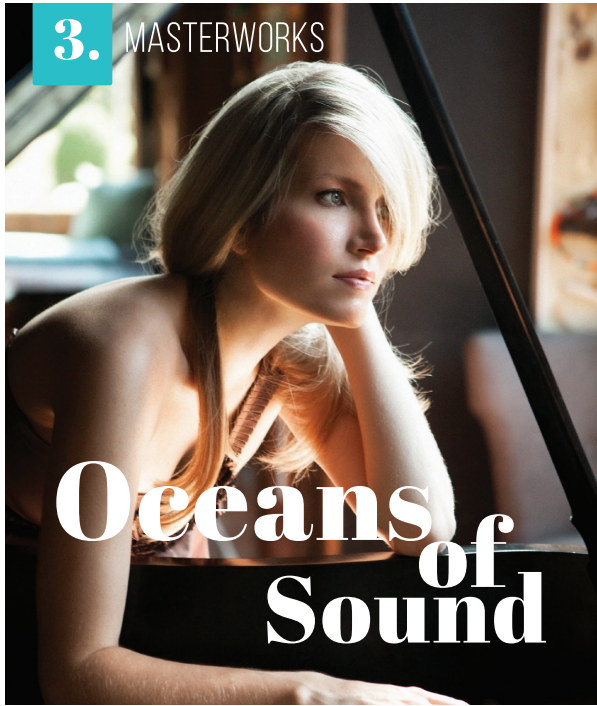
UM/MSA String Camp

July 19-24, 2026.

For more information, visit missoulasympphony.org/education



3. MASTERWORKS



Oceans of Sound

SAVE THE DATE
March 7 & 8

DENNISON THEATRE,
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GUEST ARTIST
GABRIELA MARTINEZ



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Music camp for students entering 1st grade
through recent high school graduates

Beginning to advanced instruction on
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JULY 19-24

Registration starts in March 2026

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