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in Music

Oct. 24 & 25, 2026

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JULIA TAI, *Music Director*

TIEN-HSIN CINDY WU, *violin*

PICTURES IN MUSIC

October 24, 7:30 PM & October 25, 3:00 PM

72nd Season, 2026–2027

Carlos Simon..... *The Block*

Erich Wolfgang Korngold..... *Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35*

- I. Moderato nobile
- II. Romance: Andante
- III. Allegro assai vivace

Tien-Hsin Cindy Wu, *violin*

Intermission

Modest Mussorgsky..... *Pictures at an Exhibition* (orch. Maurice Ravel)

Promenade—

- I. The Gnome

Promenade—

- II. The Old Castle

Promenade—

- III. Tuileries (Children's Quarrel after Games)

- IV. Bydło (Cattle)

Promenade—

- V. Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

- VI. "Samuel" Goldenberg and Schmuyle

- VII. Limoges at the Market

- VIII. Catacombs (Roman Tomb)

Promenade: With the Dead in a Dead Language

- IX. The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga)

- X. The Great Gate of Kiev

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President's Message

Bill Johnston

Dear Missoula Symphony Friends,

As we continue this remarkable season, we are reminded how deeply our music is connected to you. Opening our performance year with Symphony in the Park followed by Symphony on the River demonstrated our commitment to Missoula and our supporters beyond our wonderful Dennison Theatre attendees. Our recent Masterworks 1 and our collaboration with Opera Montana with A River Runs Through It ensured an impressive continuation of our season.

More broadly, each performance is shaped not only by Music Director Julia Tai, Chorale Director Dean Peterson, and our musicians' passion, but also by the energy, curiosity, and commitment you bring to the concerts. Your support helps us explore new horizons, honor beloved traditions, and share moments of inspiration that linger long after the final note fades.

We are delighted to welcome you to this performance and grateful to have you with us as the season unfolds. Thank you for being part of our symphony family and for ensuring this wonderful journey continues.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Johnston".

Bill Johnston
MSA Board President

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Julia Tai

Music Director

Praised by the Seattle Times as “poised yet passionate,” Julia Tai is one of today’s most dynamic and engaging conductors on the international stage. In November 2020, she became the first female music director in the Missoula Symphony Orchestra’s history. Her career has led to acclaimed performances and rehearsals with the American Youth Symphony, Bakersfield Symphony, Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic (Czech Republic), Boise Philharmonic, Brandenburger Symphoniker (Germany), Estonian National Youth Symphony (Estonia), Idaho Falls Symphony, Jackson Symphony, Lake Washington Symphony, Lexington Philharmonic, New Symphony Orchestra (Bulgaria), Orquesta Filarmónica de la UNAM (Mexico), Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil Carlos Chávez (Mexico), Philharmonia Northwest, and the Seattle Symphony.



As the Music Director of MSO, Ms. Tai has established a reputation for her creative programming and dedication to educational outreach and community partnerships. She has premiered new works by Peter Boyer, Anna Clyne, Tim Fain, Vivian Fung, Donald O. Johnston, and Pascal Le Boeuf. She has also initiated the *Symphony Kids* concert series at the Missoula Public Library, Missoula Youth Symphony side-by-side performances, *Student Night at Dress Rehearsals*, and *Symphony in the Schools*, sending symphony musicians to local high schools to perform and coach music students. She has developed partnerships with organizations such as Five Valley’s Land Trust, Missoula Public Library, Montana Natural History Center, and Logjam Presents to further deepen MSO’s relationships with its community.

Born in Taipei, Taiwan, Ms. Tai began her violin studies at age four and piano at eight. She received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music, where she was awarded “Outstanding Graduate” in 2004. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in orchestral conducting from the University of Washington. She lives with her daughter Natalie, who plays the piano, and their dog Humphrey Bear.

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Tien-Hsin Cindy Wu

violin

Praised by the *Seattle Times* as “Simply marvelous” and Taiwan’s *Liberty Times* for “astonishingly capturing the spirit of the music,” violinist Tien-Hsin Cindy Wu enjoys a versatile career as a soloist, chamber musician, and educator throughout North and South America, Europe and Asia.

Spotlighted as the cover story of Monterey County Weekly in September of 2023 and Marie Claire Taiwan’s 2004 September issue “Young Power”, Cindy has been featured as a soloist with orchestras such as the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, the Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Russian State Symphony Orchestra. Renowned artists with whom she has collaborated in concerts include Yefim Bronfman, James Ehnes, Gary Graffman, Lynn Harrell, Leila Josefowicz, Kim Kashkashian, Ani and Ida Kavafian, Cho-Liang Lin, Anthony Marwood, Midori, Thomas Quasthoff, Yuja Wang, and members of the Alban Berg, Brentano, Cleveland, Emerson, Guarneri, Miró, and Tokyo string quartets. She frequently performs at the world’s most prominent venues such as the Kennedy Center, Library of Congress, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Deutsches Theater München, the National Concert Hall of Taiwan, and festivals such as Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, La Jolla Summerfest, Mainly Mozart, the Marlboro Music Festival, Music@Menlo, and Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. She has also collaborated as a guest violist with Dover, Formosa, Johannes, Orion, and Shanghai quartets.



Cindy is a recipient of many awards including the Milka Violin Artist Prize from the Curtis Institute of Music, and third prize at the International Violin Competition of David Oistrakh. She taught violin, chamber music, and string pedagogy at the Thornton School of Music of the University of Southern California, and has been on faculty at the Encore School for Strings, the Curtis Institute of Music’s Young Artist Summer Program and Yale School of Music’s Norfolk Chamber Music Festival. Passionate about programming, Cindy is the Music Director of New Asia Chamber Music Society, Director of Chamber Music at the Hidden Valley Music Seminars, founder of Sunkiss’d Mozart, and she has curated programs for the Da Camera Society in Los Angeles as the Artistic Partner and Artist in Residence.

Outside of the classical style, Cindy also explores collaborations with artists of other genres and innovative visions. Some of which include album, “Bach in Los Angeles” with German electric bassist Jacques Bono, performance with actor Alan Alda, contemporary American musicians Jeremy Kittel and singer Aoife O’Donovan, and multiple recording projects for Spanish film composer Arturo Cardelús.

Cindy’s teachers include Dorothy DeLay, Victor Danchenko, Midori Goto, Hyo Kang, Ida Kavafian, and Steven Tenenbom. She plays on a 1734 Domenico Montagnana violin, 1918 Stefano Scarampella violin, 2021 Samuel Zygmuntowicz violin, and a 2015 Stanley Kiernoziak viola.

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Program Notes

James Randall

Carlos Simon (b. 1986) *The Block* (2018)

Born in Washington, D.C., and raised in Atlanta as a preacher's son, Carlos Simon grew up in a household where he wasn't allowed to listen to music outside the church. While that constraint didn't hold for long, Simon still credits his musical upbringing in the Black church as a major influence. The improvisatory nature of gospel music continues to inform his work, and, as he once reminded his father, who wanted him to become a preacher: "Music is my pulpit. That's where I preach."

Those words resonate in Simon's many compositions that engage with themes of social justice. For example, his *Requiem for the Enslaved* commemorates the 272 men, women, and children sold in 1838 by Jesuits who operated Georgetown University. Simon, now a Professor of Composition at Georgetown, draws in the work from diverse musical influences, including African American spirituals and plainchant from the Catholic liturgy.

The work we hear today, *The Block*, was inspired by the art of the multidisciplinary artist Romare Howard Bearden (1911–1988). Bearden's six-panel collage of the same name portrays a city block in Harlem, revealing both public and private life in such neighborhood spaces as a church, barbershop, nightclub, and corner store. Simon writes that the piece aims to highlight the "rich energy and joyous sceneries" of Harlem, which he describes as a hotbed of African American culture. Similar to the way Bearden juxtaposes a variety of media in his collage—colored and metallic papers, photostats, watercolor, and graphite—Simon creates a richly textured musical composition by layering instrumental colors and musical styles, including references to blues, jazz, gospel, and classical music.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897–1957) *Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35* (1945)

Korngold is best remembered today for his influence as a film-score composer. In the 1930s and 40s, during the early decades of Hollywood, he composed music for numerous movies and contributed scores to two Academy Award-winning productions: *Anthony Adverse* (1936) and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938). His lush, late-Romantic orchestral sound helped forge the characteristic Hollywood style that audiences now associate with big-budget cinema. Fans of John Williams might have a listen to Korngold's main theme for *Kings Row* (1942). The resemblance to *Star Wars* is striking, and Williams cited Korngold as a major influence.

Born in Austria, Korngold was a musical prodigy hailed in his youth as a talent comparable to Mozart. At age 11, he composed his ballet-pantomime *Der Schneemann* (*The Snowman*), which was staged at the Vienna Court Opera two years later. By his late teens, he had already composed operas, and by the 1920s, his compositions were heard on concert stages throughout Europe. He counted Richard Strauss and Giacomo Puccini among his admirers.

His music also attracted the attention of Max Reinhardt, a prominent Austrian theater and film director. Reinhardt, who was Jewish, left Germany after the Nazis came to power and continued his career in the United States. In 1934, at Reinhardt's invitation, Korngold—who was also Jewish—came to Los Angeles to try his hand at film music. Reinhardt was directing a cinematic version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Korngold was tasked with adapting Felix Mendelssohn's stage music for the movie.

Korngold subsequently found steady work in Hollywood. When Nazi Germany annexed Austria in 1938, Korngold and his family were able to remain safely in the United States. That same year, his score for *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, starring Errol Flynn, won the Academy Award for Best Original Score.

Korngold's film scores became known for their colorful orchestrations and extensive use of leitmotifs: musical motives and melodies associated with characters, ideas, or narrative themes. This approach, borrowed from Richard Wagner's operas, became central to the classic Hollywood symphonic style and remains familiar in the modern film scores of John Williams, Hans Zimmer,

and Howard Shore. It's hard to imagine the cinematic worlds of *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings* without this close association of music, character, and narrative.

In each of the three movements of the Violin Concerto, Korngold draws on musical themes from his earlier film scores. He dedicated the composition to Alma Mahler-Werfel, the widow of Gustav Mahler, who had been an important early supporter of Korngold. Alma was herself a composer, and, like Korngold and Reinhardt, found Los Angeles to be a refuge, joining an incredible artistic community of European émigrés that included Arnold Schoenberg, Hedy Lamarr, and Peter Lorre. One wonders what Alma thought of the Violin Concerto, but we don't have a record. Her daughter Anna Mahler, who became a noted sculptor, later completed a bronze bust of Korngold.

The concerto was premiered on February 15, 1947, by superstar violinist Jascha Heifetz and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Heifetz championed the work and helped establish it in the repertory. Korngold offered the following tribute to his performance: "In spite of the demand for virtuosity in the finale, the work with its many melodic and lyric episodes was contemplated more for a Caruso than for a Paganini. It is needless to say how delighted I am to have my concerto performed by Caruso and Paganini in one person: Jascha Heifetz."

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–1881) *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874), orchestrated by Maurice Ravel (1922)

Mussorgsky would likely have been delighted that his music continues to ignite audiences' imaginations of Russia. A member of the so-called "Mighty Five," a group of late nineteenth-century composers who sought to establish a distinctly Russian musical style, Mussorgsky resisted the prevailing Western European tastes that dominated Russian concerts. The Mighty Five sought instead to cultivate music rooted in Russian history, folklore, language, and musical traditions. Alongside Mussorgsky, the Five included Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and Alexander Borodin.

Pictures at an Exhibition is often presented as a prime example of Russian nationalism in music. At the same time, it is also an intimate musical memorial to a close friend of Mussorgsky's, Viktor Hartmann. Hartmann was a Russian architect, artist, and designer who shared the composer's interest in creating art that represented his country and its people. Hartmann's sudden death at age 39 was difficult for Mussorgsky to process. He had been a dear friend, and although his life was short, Hartmann had already become a prolific figure in Russian artistic circles.

In early 1874, a memorial exhibition of more than 400 of Hartmann's works—watercolors, sketches, architectural drawings, and designs—was mounted at the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg. The exhibition even included two works from Mussorgsky's own collection. After visiting it, Mussorgsky was inspired to compose a piano suite depicting both the artworks and his experience of walking through the exhibition while remembering his friend. Each of the ten movements was inspired by one or more of Hartmann's artworks or designs. Variations of the recurring "Promenade" theme represent the composer himself as he wanders through the exhibition. The individual movements also offer a journey through Hartmann's artistic world, including recollections of his travels in Europe as well as his professional work as a designer and architect.

While it is now among Mussorgsky's most popular works, *Pictures at an Exhibition* was never published during his lifetime. It did not appear in print until 1886, five years after his death, in an edition prepared by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. The work's subsequent popularity inspired numerous composers to prepare orchestral arrangements of the piano suite. The most famous of these, Maurice Ravel's 1922 orchestration, is the version we hear today. As you listen, the following descriptions introduce each movement and the Hartmann artworks that inspired Mussorgsky.

Promenade

The famous Promenade melody, which recurs throughout the work, represents the composer as he walks from artwork to artwork in the exhibition. Its changing character suggests his shifting emotions as he views Hartmann's works and remembers his close friend.

I. The Gnome

This movement was inspired by Hartmann's odd design for a nutcracker in the form of a grotesque, limping gnome. The music strikes a sinister tone, plodding one moment and scurrying the next.

II. The Old Castle

Hartmann's original image is lost, but contemporary descriptions identify it as an architectural scene featuring an old medieval castle and a troubadour, a traveling poet, songwriter, and musician. Mussorgsky evokes an Italian atmosphere with a lilting *siciliano* rhythm. In Ravel's orchestration, the troubadour-like melody is famously performed by the alto saxophone.

III. Tuileries (Children's Quarrel after Games)

This movement was inspired by a now-lost crayon drawing of the Tuileries Garden in Paris. Hartmann depicted children playing there with their nurse, and Mussorgsky responds with a playful, childlike musical scene filled with teasing gestures and quick exchanges.

IV. Bydło (Cattle)

Inspired by an artwork depicting Hartmann's travels in Poland, the movement depicts a huge cart drawn by a team of oxen. Ravel's orchestration features a tuba solo, with the music suggesting the movement of the cart as it lumbers along, at first approaching from a distance, moving closer by, and then disappearing in the distance.

V. Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

This movement was inspired by Hartmann's costume designs for the ballet *Trilby*. The dancers appear as young chicks still partly in their shells, and Mussorgsky's quick, lively music captures their frenetic pecking and chirps.

VI. "Samuel" Goldenberg and Schmuyle

This movement was inspired by two portrait studies of Polish Jewish men that Hartmann had gifted to Mussorgsky. Traditionally described as *Two Jews, Rich and Poor*, they portray contrasting figures: the wealthy, imposing Goldenberg and the poorer, more anxious Schmuyle. Mussorgsky places the two men in musical conversation, giving each a contrasting theme before bringing the two together.

VII. Limoges at the Market

Although Hartmann's original image of the market at Limoges, France, is lost, Mussorgsky's music vividly captures the noisy social atmosphere of a crowded marketplace. Rapid musical exchanges suggest arguments, gossip, and bargaining among vendors and shoppers.

VIII. Catacombs (Roman Tomb)

Hartmann's surviving image sets an eerie tone, depicting the artist and friends exploring the Paris catacombs by lantern amidst the walls of skeletal remains. Ravel's orchestration features loud, dissonant brass chords, creating a foreboding atmosphere.

Promenade: With the Dead in a Dead Language

The Promenade theme returns in a quiet and somber variation. Following *Catacombs*, the music seems to shift our frame of reference from Mussorgsky observing Hartmann's artwork to the composer becoming a part of it. Mussorgsky included a note on his manuscript saying: "the creative spirit of the dead Hartmann leads me to the skulls and invokes them; the skulls begin to glow faintly"

IX. The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga)

The inspiration for this movement was Hartmann's design for an elaborate clock in the shape of the hut of Baba Yaga, a wicked witch of Russian folklore. Baba Yaga lives in a hut that stands on giant chicken legs. Mussorgsky's music is violent, wild, and percussive, communicating both the supernatural power of Baba Yaga and the terror she inspires.

X. The Great Gate of Kiev

The final movement was inspired by Hartmann's architectural design for a grand gateway to Kyiv, complete with a massive belltower. Mussorgsky transformed the design into something comparably monumental in sound. Ravel's orchestrations make it even more vivid, with rich brass sonorities, crashing percussion, and bell-like figures. It's a truly majestic musical setting, and even more poignant because Hartmann's architectural design was never actually built. It's as if Mussorgsky, with a little help from Ravel, finally completed it for his dear friend.



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Continuing the grand tradition of the Missoula Symphony Guild, the Missoula Symphony Scholarship Fund is dedicated to providing scholarships for outstanding University of Montana music students who play in the Missoula Symphony Orchestra or sing in the Missoula Symphony Chorale.

This year, the Missoula Symphony Association will award more than \$35,000 in scholarships to ten talented young musicians. This important commitment is made possible through the generosity of the individuals listed below, whose support directly funds these scholarships. Our 2026–2027 scholarship recipients are noted on the Orchestra Roster with a “+” sign.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND SUPPORTERS

The MSA is grateful to the following patrons for their generous gifts. Listed below are contributions of \$100 or more within 12 months of September 30, 2026. We apologize for any omissions or errors.

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To be a part of the Missoula Symphony Scholarship Fund, contact the Symphony Office at (406) 721-3194, or mail a check payable to Missoula Symphony Scholarship Fund to PO Box 8301, Missoula 59807. Donations are 100% tax-deductible.

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Cook Family Scholarship

Established in 2020–2021, this scholarship is named for Will and Kay Cook. “We are happy to partner with the University of Montana and The Missoula Symphony Association to support the growth of music education in Montana and the cultural enrichment of our city.” 2026–2027 Recipients: AJ Frisque, string bass, Zoe McLain, violin, Lindsay Abelin, viola, Neveah Killsnight, viola, Riley Fallsdown, cello.

The Florence Reynolds Scholarship

Named for a woman who shared her musical talent, enthusiasm and endless energy with the MSA for many years. Recipient: Makenzie Grotbo, violin.

The Symphony Guild Presidents’ Scholarship

Named in honor of those women who have given their time and energy as Presidents of the Missoula Symphony Guild. Recipient: Garon Jones, string bass.

The Joseph Henry Scholarship

Named in honor of our Music Director Emeritus, who retired in 2007 after 21 years as Music Director of the Missoula Symphony Orchestra. Recipient: Hayley Bouchard, cello.

The Donald Carey Scholarship

Named in honor of our former Chorale Director who retired in 2006, after 18 years at his post. Recipient: Seth Griffith, cello.

The Virginia Vinal Scholarship

Named in honor of the longest-serving member of the orchestra, and her dedication to music and community. Recipient: Moe Kobold, violin.

The Lorraine Andrie Prize

Not a scholarship but a cash award, this prize is presented at the final concert of each season to a U.M. graduating senior who is deemed a truly outstanding and dedicated orchestra member. Named in honor of the founding leader of the Guild. Recipient: William (Danger) Gersh, percussion.

The Steve and Jane Bahls Scholarship

Established by Steve and Jane Bahls in 2023. The Steve and Jane Bahls scholarship recognizes an outstanding music student who performs in the Missoula Symphony Orchestra or in the Missoula Symphony Chorale. Recipient: Maxim Kolberg.



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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 THE 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.

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM AT THE MISSOULA PUBLIC LIBRARY IMAGINARIUM

Saturday, September 19, 2026 | Saturday, October 17, 2026

Saturday, March 6, 2027 | Saturday, April 17, 2027

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.

7:00 PM – 10:00 PM AT THE DENNISON THEATRE

Friday, September 18, 2026 | Friday, October 23, 2026

Friday, March 5, 2027 | Friday, April 16, 2027 | Friday, May 14, 2027

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.

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