

Leonard Slatkin, conductor
Garrick Ohlsson, piano

Friday, October 6, 2017 at 8:00PM
Saturday, October 7, 2017 at 8:00PM

CHRISTOPHER ROUSE

(b. 1949)

Bump (1986)

CHOPIN

(1810–1849)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, op. 11 (1830)

Allegro maestoso

Romanze: Larghetto —

Rondo: Vivace

Garrick Ohlsson, piano

INTERMISSION

RACHMANINOFF

(1873–1943)

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, op. 27 (1908)

Largo; Allegro moderato

Allegro molto

Adagio

Allegro vivace

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The concert of Friday, October 6 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Ann S. Lux**.

The concert of Saturday, October 7 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Lawrence and Cheryl Katzenstein**.

The concert of Saturday, October 7 is underwritten in part by a generous gift from **Mr. and Mrs. Michael F. Neidorff**.

Leonard Slatkin is the **Edna W. Sternberg Guest Conductor**.

Garrick Ohlsson is the **Ann and Paul Lux Guest Artist**.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by **Washington University Physicians**.

MUSICAL SUBLIME

BY RENÉ SPENCER SALLER

TIMELINKS

1830 Joseph Smith publishes *The Book of Mormon*.

1908 Henry Ford's company produces the first Model T automobile.

1986 Michael Jordan sets the record for points in a playoff game, with 63 against the Boston Celtics.

Translating music into words is tricky. We struggle to describe the sounds we hear, and all we have are adjectives, metaphors, technical terms, cliché. If Walter Pater was right when he argued “all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music,” how do we talk about music? Listening, in its purest, most deeply rewarding state, bypasses the language region of the brain to trigger something deeper, more instinctive and primal. Call it the Id, the heart, the soul, the self. The music we love will always transcend our attempts to describe it.

Metaphors and analogies might not be enough, but sometimes they help us hear in new ways. The following are three examples, all describing works on this program:

1. The composer Christopher Rouse, regarding *Bump*, his anti-“light classical” orchestral piece: “if I had a corresponding visual image for *Bump*, it would be akin to a gala Boston Pops performance in Hell.”
2. The Argentine-born pianist Martha Argerich once likened Frédéric Chopin’s music to “a very beautiful poisoned flower.”
3. A contemporary reviewer of Rachmaninoff’s Second Symphony resorted to the exclamation point: “After listening with unflagging attention to its four movements, one notes with surprise that the hands of the watch have moved 65 minutes forward. This may be slightly overlong for the general audience, but how fresh, how beautiful it is!”

Suspension in time: the musical sublime.



CHRISTOPHER ROUSE

Born March 15, 1949, Baltimore, Maryland

Bump

Born in Baltimore in 1949, Christopher Rouse has composed a wide-ranging body of work for ensembles and full orchestra. His many professional distinctions include the Kennedy Center Friedheim Award, the Pulitzer Prize for Music, a Grammy Award for best classical contemporary composition, a Guggenheim fellowship, and election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His music has been played by every major orchestra in the United States and several international ensembles. In 2011 David Robertson led the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of his Symphony No. 3.

Although he's sometimes described as a "neo-Romantic" because of his music's expressive intensity, he isn't a rigid tonalist. Like much of his catalog, *Bump* suggests an eclectic array of influences, ranging from Maurice Ravel to Led Zeppelin. One constant, though, is a visceral, driving energy grounded in Rouse's training as a percussionist.

Bump, which Rouse completed in 1985, was commissioned by the SLSO through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Originally intended as the final movement of his hallucinatory orchestral triptych *Phantasmata*, it also works as an independent concert piece.



Leonard Slatkin premiered *Bump* with the SLSO in 1986

First Performance and Most Recent SLSO Performance October 25, 1986, Leonard Slatkin conducting the SLSO

Scoring 3 flutes (1st, 2nd, and 3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, 2 clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet (doubling baritone saxophone), 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion (claves, antique cymbals, Chinese cymbals, thunder sheet, guiro, 2 bongos, tambourine, xylophone, bass drum, congas, wood block, 2 timbales, field drum, chimes, suspended cymbal, sizzle, maracas, tenor drum, snare drum, vibraphone, 4 tom toms, 2 cowbells, hammer), harp, celesta, piano, and strings

Performance Time approximately 8 minutes

The Composer Speaks

My original concept of *Bump* was akin to “*La Valse* meets Studio 54,” but as it was ultimately to possess neither waltz nor disco elements, I chose to fashion it as a “nightmare konga.” Accurately speaking, it is not a konga at all, in that the konga’s characteristic accent on the third beat’s fourth sixteenth is here displaced squarely to the fourth beat. Each fourth beat throughout the music is played by the bass drum (the climactic coda is in double time), and this serves not only to furnish the work’s title (which refers to dance floor bumping with the hips or buttocks) but also to lend the music a sense of oppressive obsessiveness. Though the score abounds with jazzy syncopations and “big band” brass writing, its harsher harmony and sinister mood act to keep the piece within the larger context of *Phantasmata*. *Bump* is dedicated with sincere admiration and friendship to Leonard Slatkin.

— Christopher Rouse (notes reprinted by kind permission of the composer)



FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

Born March 1, 1810, Żelazowa Wola, Poland

Died October 17, 1849, Paris

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, op. 11

Frédéric François Chopin (or in Polish, Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin) was born in Żelazowa Wola, Poland, on March 1, 1810, to a French father and a Polish mother. A keyboard prodigy, he made his concert debut at 8 years of age. At age 20 he performed a pair of farewell concerts in Warsaw, then left for Vienna. In 1831 he moved to Paris, where he died 18 years later, at age 39, after a long struggle with tuberculosis. He was buried, at his request, with a silver urn filled with Polish dirt, which he’d brought with him everywhere since leaving Warsaw.

Everything Chopin ever wrote features the piano, either as a solo instrument or in combination with other instruments, and most of his works are short and deceptively simple. Although his style often seems effortlessly lyrical, almost improvisational, he sweated over every measure. Whether he was composing nocturnes, mazurkas, sonatas, impromptus, or ballades (a genre he invented), Chopin sounded like no one else. In an age of florid virtuosos, dripping with Lisztian excess, he mastered a fleeting interiority. Sometimes his music seems to blur the boundaries between thought and action, as if it’s willing itself into existence before our very ears.

Turn and Face the Strange For a talent so unique, Chopin had conservative tastes. He didn't think much of Beethoven, much less Berlioz, Liszt, and Schumann. The only composers he truly loved were J.S. Bach and Mozart (whose Requiem was sung at Chopin's funeral, by his request). He also resisted his own inner weirdo. When the E-minor Concerto was in rehearsal, Chopin wrote to a friend, "I feel like a novice, just as I felt before I knew anything of the keyboard. It is far too original and I shall end by being unable to learn it myself."

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11, is actually the second of the two that Chopin composed, but the first to be published. It was completed in 1830, when he was 20, in time for his farewell concert in Warsaw.

A Closer Listen Right away, Chopin's strangeness seeps in: the harmonies are elusive, and the key wanders into unexpected tonal terrain. The opening movement, in the home key of E minor, is the longest of the three, with at least three distinct themes. Modulating from the tonic to the parallel major, the Allegro maestoso juggles blinding piano dazzle with subtle interplay among the winds and strings.

With its muted, silvery violins, the central Romanze, a nocturne in E major, has the kind of chamber-music intimacy that made Chopin such a hit in the aristocratic salons of 19th-century Paris. Chopin described this movement as "not meant to give a powerful effect; it is rather a Romance, calm and melancholy, giving the impression of someone looking gently toward a spot that calls to mind a thousand happy memories. It is a kind of reverie in the moonlight on a beautiful spring evening."

From the performer's perspective, the Rondo is a spectacle of terrors: anyone who ever doubted the composer's pianistic chops should try playing a few measures. Chopin incorporated a syncopated, double-time national dance, the Krakowiak, as a nod to his native Poland, then trembling on the edge of revolution. Three years after the premiere, the 14-year-old Clara Wieck (the future Clara Schumann) performed this finale to great acclaim.

First Performance October 11, 1830, Warsaw, with Frédéric Chopin as soloist and Carlo Evasio Soliva conducting

First SLSO Performance February 18, 1909, Ossiip Gabrilowitsch as soloist with Max Zach conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance October 23, 2011, Olga Kern as soloist with Vasily Petrenko conducting

Scoring solo piano, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, timpani, and strings

Performance Time approximately 39 minutes



SERGE RACHMANINOFF

Born April 1, 1873, Semyonovo, near Novgorod, Russia

Died March 28, 1943, Beverly Hills, California

Symphony No. 2 in E minor, op. 27

After two successful seasons leading the Imperial Opera at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, Sergei Rachmaninoff felt ready to perform less and compose more. He took his wife and baby daughter to Dresden, hoping that the milder climate would improve the ailing infant's health. He also needed to get out of Moscow, where his growing fame as a triple-threat piano virtuoso, composer, and conductor meant increased responsibilities and stress.

During 1906 and 1907, mostly during summers at his family estate, Ivanovka, Rachmaninoff wrote his Symphony No. 2, in E minor, op. 27. Some nine years after the nightmare of his First Symphony's 1897 premiere, a crisis that led him to seek help from a physician-hypnotherapist years later, he needed his Second Symphony to be perfect. He agonized over it for months. In August of 1907, he wrote to a friend, "For two weeks now I have been busy with the orchestration of the Symphony. The work proceeds very laboriously and sluggishly. It's slow not only because of the instrumentation, which ordinarily comes to me with difficulty, but also because I left it in draft, and some movements are yet to be worked out."

But he persisted, and on February 8, 1908, Rachmaninoff conducted the premiere in St. Petersburg. On the same program, he performed as soloist in his Piano Concerto No. 2. The rapturous applause and positive reviews helped him feel more secure as a symphonist. One Russian critic, Yuli Engel, effused openly: "Despite his 34 years he is one of the most significant figures in the contemporary music world, a worthy successor to Tchaikovsky, if not in the dimensions of his talent (of which it is too early to speak), then certainly in its concentration, sincerity, and subjective delicacy." That year the symphony won the Glinka Prize, along with a hefty cash award. Before long, all the major orchestras of the world were performing Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony.

In its uncut form, as presented here, Symphony No. 2 lasts about an hour. Despite his own emphatic preference for the original version, Rachmaninoff supposedly sanctioned some edits (by others) over the years. The composer would be relieved to learn that these days his original score is usually preferred. He reportedly told the conductor Eugene Ormandy, "You don't know what cuts do to me; it is like cutting out a piece of my heart."

Rach Solid The symphony is cast in four movements. The brief and brooding Largo occupies the first few moments of the expansive opening movement. A poignant English horn solo announces the Allegro moderato, all singing strings and yearning horns. The coda pumps up the volume to *fortissimo* again, with blaring horns and thundering timpani.



Rachmaninoff at the piano, c. 1910.

The second movement, which begins in A minor, is about half as long as the opener, and it lives up to its tempo marking of *Allegro molto*. Careful listeners might notice, however, that the horns are crooning the *Dies irae* plainchant (the celebrated Day of Wrath, the spookiest, most black-metal part of the Mass for the Dead). But before two minutes have elapsed, Rachmaninoff switches things up again for maximum contrast, with a gorgeous tune sung by the strings and understated counterpoint from the horns, and a new idea emerges, scampering and playful. Functionally, this movement is a scherzo, but it's also a marvel of counterpoint, which Rachmaninoff studied with Sergei Taneyev, an older Russian composer and the symphony's dedicatee.

The third movement, the *Adagio*, is instantly recognizable by its sighing violin theme. The rhapsodic clarinet solo near the beginning is among the most lustrous in the repertory, and when the strings and horn join in, bliss ensues. It's pretty enough to rankle those who hate the easily-hummed, but most of those listeners could never reconcile themselves to Rachmaninoff and his bottomless

reservoir of tunes in the first place. (It's not his fault that Eric Carmen swiped his best hooks and turned them into A.M.-radio earworms.) The last moments are hushed and reverent.

The Allegro vivace finale is jovial and slightly hectic, all crashing cymbals, blaring fanfares, and timpani rumble. A whimsical march transpires, with tinkling touches from the triangle. After another loud outburst, the lyricism of the preceding movement returns. For the euphoric conclusion, Rachmaninoff chose a slight variation on the same rhythmic signoff that he used in his Cello Sonata and second and third piano concertos.

René Spencer Saller is a writer and music critic living in St. Louis. She has also written for the Dallas Symphony, *Illinois Times*, *Riverfront Times*, and *Boston Phoenix*.

First Performance February 8, 1908, Saint Petersburg, Rachmaninoff conducting

First SLSO Performance December 3, 1915, Max Zach conducting

Most Recent SLSO Performance March 13, 2011, Jaap van Zweden conducting

Scoring 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn) 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, glockenspiel), and strings

Performance Time approximately 1 hour



MARK MCBETH

Garrick Ohlsson most recently appeared with the SLSO on March 1, 2009.

GARRICK OHLSSON

Ann and Paul Lux Guest Artist

Since his triumph as winner of the 1970 Chopin International Piano Competition, pianist Garrick Ohlsson has established himself worldwide as a musician of magisterial interpretive and technical prowess. Although long regarded as one of the world's leading exponents of the music of Chopin, Ohlsson commands an enormous repertoire, which ranges over the entire piano literature. A student of the late Claudio Arrau, Ohlsson has come to be noted for his masterly performances of the works of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, as well as the Romantic repertoire. To date he has at his command more than 80 concertos, ranging from Haydn and Mozart to works of the 21st century, many commissioned for him.

This season that vast repertoire can be sampled in concerti ranging from Rachmaninoff's popular No. 3 and rarely-performed No. 4, to Brahms No. 1 and No. 2, Beethoven, Mozart, Grieg, and Copland in cities including Philadelphia, Atlanta, Detroit, Dallas, Miami, Toronto, Vancouver, San Francisco, Liverpool, and Madrid, ending with a spring West Coast tour with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic conducted by Yuri Temirkanov. In recital he can be heard in Los Angeles's Walt Disney Concert Hall, New York, New Orleans, Hawaii, and Prague.

An avid chamber musician, Ohlsson has collaborated with the Takács, Cleveland, Emerson, and Tokyo string quartets, among other ensembles. Together with violinist Jorja Fleezanis and cellist Michael Grebanier, he is a founding member of the San Francisco-based FOG Trio.



CYBELLE CODISH

Leonard Slatkin most recently appeared with the SLSO in November 2016.

LEONARD SLATKIN

Edna W. Sternberg Guest Conductor

This season, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra Conductor Laureate Leonard Slatkin celebrates his tenth and final season as music director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and his first season as Directeur Musical Honoraire with the Orchestre National de Lyon. He also welcomes the publication of his second book, *Leading Tones: Reflections on Music, Musicians, and the Music Industry*, and serves as jury chairman of the Besançon International Competition for Young Conductors. His guest conducting schedule includes engagements with the National Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Polish National Radio Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, and Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Recent career highlights include a three-week tour of Asia with the DSO; tours of the U.S. and Europe with the ONL; a winter Mozart Festival in Detroit; and engagements with the WDR Symphony Orchestra in Cologne, Verdi Orchestra in Milan, and San Carlo Theatre Orchestra in Naples. Moreover, he served as chairman of the jury and conductor of the 2017 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

Slatkin's more than 100 recordings have garnered seven Grammy awards and 64 nominations. His recent Naxos recordings include works by Saint-Saëns, Ravel, and Berlioz with the ONL and music by Copland, Rachmaninov, Borzova, McTee, and John Williams with the DSO. In addition, he has recorded the complete Brahms, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky symphonies with the DSO.

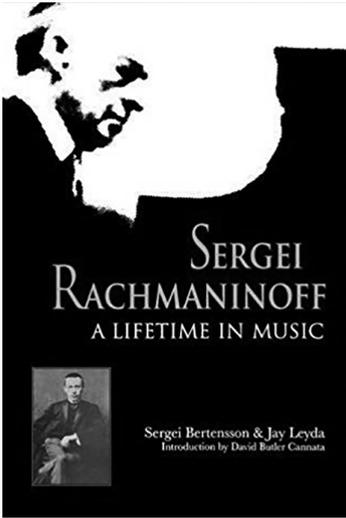
A recipient of the prestigious National Medal of Arts, Slatkin also holds the rank of Chevalier in the French Legion of Honor. He has received Austria's Decoration of Honor in Silver, the League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton Award, and the 2013 ASCAP Deems Taylor Special Recognition Award for his debut book, *Conducting Business*.

Slatkin has conducted virtually all the leading orchestras in the world. As music director, he has held posts in New Orleans; St. Louis; Washington, DC; London; and Lyon. He has also served as principal guest conductor in Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Cleveland.

YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE

For listeners who are curious about Christopher Rouse, whose *Bump* opens the program, Glenn Watkins's interview with the composer at the Naxos website is illuminating and entertaining: <http://tinyurl.com/ycu7zdm9>

For listeners interested in learning more about Sergei Rachmaninoff, these two books are a good place to start:



***Sergei Rachmaninoff: A Lifetime in Music*
by Sergei Bertensson and Jay Leyda
Indiana University Press, 2009**

Originally published in 1957 and widely regarded as the definitive biography of Rachmaninoff, this comprehensive volume reflects research from a wealth of primary sources, including interviews with Rachmaninoff's associates and correspondents. The authors also unearthed many privately held (and never before published) letters written by the composer.

***Rachmaninoff: Life, Work, Recordings*
by Max Harrison
Bloomsbury, 1995**

Carefully researched and considered, this overview presents thoughtful musical and biographical analysis in an engaging, accessible way.

For more on Frédéric Chopin, check out the following sources:

***Chopin: Prince of the Romantics*
by Adam Zamoyski
Harper Press, 2011**

This astute biography discusses Chopin's life in its proper sociopolitical context, stripping away two centuries' worth of myths and misconceptions about the Polish composer.

***Chopin in Paris*
by Ted Szulc
Da Capo Press, 1998**

Less exhaustive than Zamoyski's bio, *Chopin in Paris* examines the human Chopin, including the less appealing aspects of his personality and his complex and turbulent nine-year relationship with the French novelist-intellectual George Sand.

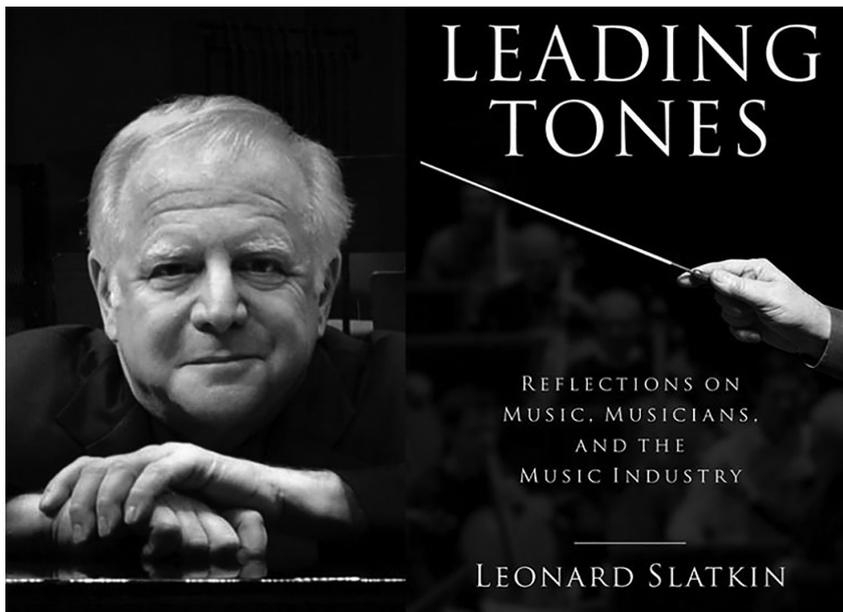
***Chopin's Letters*
Translated by E.L. Voynich
Dover, 1988**

Gossipy, witty, and frequently hilarious, Chopin's letters reveal a side of the composer that we don't often associate with his music.

LEADING TONES

By Leonard Slatkin

Amadeus Press, 2017



Leonard Slatkin's new book, *Leading Tones*, is a glimpse into several aspects of the musical world. There are portions devoted to Slatkin's life as a musician and conductor, portraits of some of the outstanding artists with whom he has worked, as well as anecdotes and stories both personal and professional. Much of the book discusses elements of the industry that are troubling and difficult during this first part of the 21st century, and this book provides helpful suggested solutions. *Leading Tones* is intended not only for musicians, but also for the music lover who wishes to know more about what goes into being a conductor.

"Slatkin, a charming conversationalist, writes like he talks... almost as if he had invited you over to his house, settled down in front of the fireplace, opened a bottle of port and launched into some late-night musings."

—David Lyman, *Detroit Free Press*

If You Liked This...

If you love the music you hear today, come back for these concerts featuring leading pianists and more music by Rachmaninoff:



Orli Shaham

RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI

Saturday, Oct 21 at 8:00PM

Sunday, Oct 22 at 3:00PM

David Robertson, conductor

Orli Shaham, piano

MACKEY *Mnemosyne's Pool*

TCHAIKOVSKY *Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy*

RACHMANINOFF *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*

Music, like true love, has no boundaries and can transcend time. Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* will transport you through the spiritual and physical aspects of love in his masterpiece, both beautiful and frightening, as it is with true love. Then be mesmerized as Orli Shaham performs one of the world's most irresistible melodies and Rachmaninoff's most admired works in *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*.



Simon Trpčeski

RACHMANINOFF PIANO CONCERT NO. 2

Saturday, April 14 at 8:00PM

Sunday, April 15 at 3:00PM

David Robertson, conductor

Simon Trpčeski, piano

COPLAND *Fanfare for the Common Man*

RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No. 2

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FROM THE STAGE

SUSAN GORDON

viola

“Leonard Slatkin’s direction of Rachmaninoff 2 is unmatched and audiences literally go crazy for it! The orchestra has a close personal relationship with Leonard, something one can clearly notice while listening. And, it’s always fun to welcome back our Conductor Laureate!”

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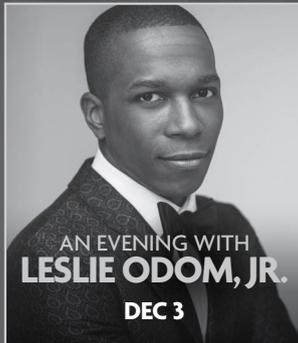
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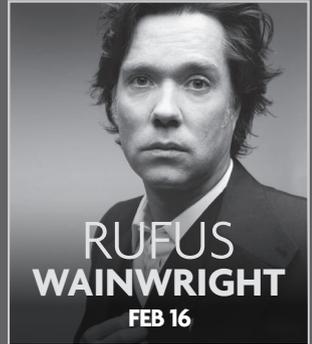
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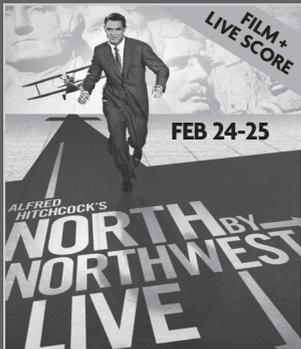
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The Music Man

AT THE SYMPHONY

MAY 12-13

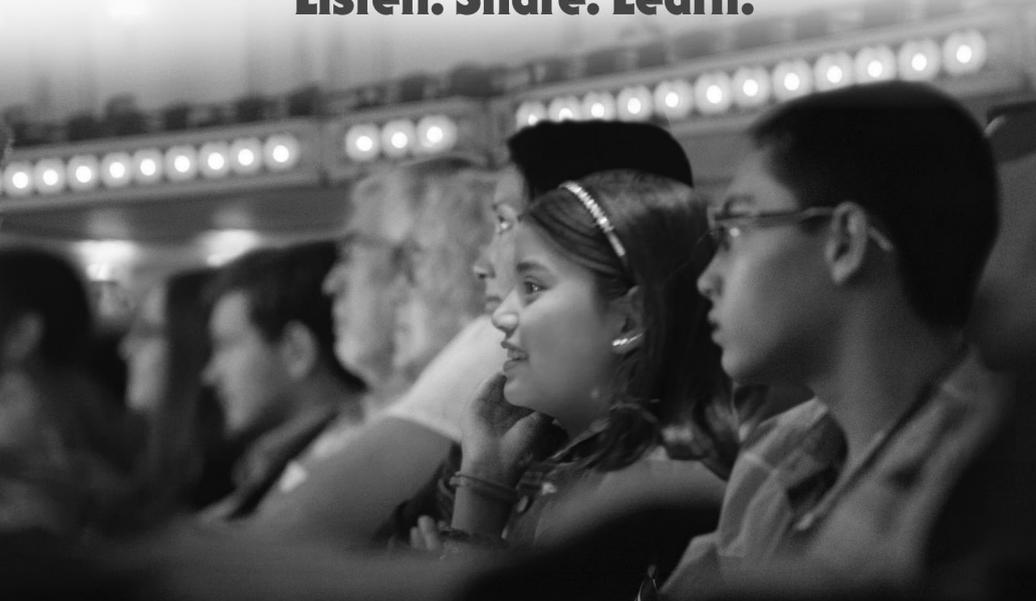
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STL SYMPHONY

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