

boston festival orchestra



SEASON 6 SUMMER STAGE
ALYSSA WANG CONDUCTOR



JULY 11 & 26, 2026

OUR VALUES

Our values are the foundation of the **Boston Festival Orchestra**. They define what we believe, shape how we work, and guide the way we engage with artists, audiences, and the world around us. Together, they create the culture, character, and vision that shape the BFO's identity.



SERVICE

Service is the way we use our artistry to meet the needs of our community.

We believe that music is not only an art form, but a responsibility to care for the people and places around us.

APPROACHABILITY

Approachability means meeting people where they are.

We create musical experiences that invite audiences to listen, learn, enjoy, and connect in ways that feel meaningful to them.

COMMUNITY

Community is how music connects us to one another.

We build spaces that reflect and respond to the people we serve through collaboration, partnership, and self-expression.

APPRECIATION

Appreciation gives music its vitality.

We transform music into shared understanding that feels relevant, vibrant, and alive.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship shapes the future of the art form.

We strengthen the artistic community by sustaining the artists, audiences, and institutions that help to shape its future.





Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Boston Festival Orchestra's Sixth Season! Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning as part of our growing community, thank you for being here.

At the heart of the BFO is the simple truth that music is for everyone. Since our founding in 2019, we have centered our work on listening closely and responding to the people and communities around us. Again and again, we are reminded that live music has the power to bring people together, and that understanding shapes the experiences we create.

Carrying that spirit forward, this season reflects the BFO's commitment to our artists, our audiences, and our community, and your presence and support make this work possible now and in the years ahead.

These performances are an invitation to experience the power of live music. We hope they allow you to discover something new, to connect more deeply, and to find moments where you see yourself, your story, or your community reflected. However you found your way to the BFO, we are thrilled to share this season with you.

Gratefully,

Nicholas Brown
Executive Director

BOSTON FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

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Jae Cosmos Lee ♦

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Sponsored by Nick Chau

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Grant Houston
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Theo Ramsey
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Matthew Vera
Jiuri Yu

VIOLA

Sharon Bielik
Corley Friesen-Johnson
Sofia Nikas
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Melanie Dyball

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ALYSSA WANG is a passionate and versatile conductor, violinist, and composer. A recipient of the 2024 New Music USA Creator Fund, the 2023 Solti Foundation Career Assistance Award, and the 2022 St. Botolph Emerging Artist Award, Alyssa has enjoyed exploring diverse creative paths with a focus on audience inclusivity and engagement. She is the Co-Founder, Artistic Director, and Principal Conductor of the Boston Festival Orchestra, which presents an annual summer festival, chamber music series, and music education program. After serving as Assistant Conductor for Boston Ballet for four years, she has started the 25/26 season in her new role as Music Director of the Cincinnati Ballet. Alyssa is also thrilled to be the Cape Symphony's next Music Director after a two-year search. Additionally, Alyssa has served as guest conductor with the San Jose Chamber Orchestra, West Virginia Symphony, Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, and more.

As a violinist, Alyssa has soloed with ensembles across the country and is the newest member musician of the Boston Chamber Music Society. She has been featured in numerous contemporary recording projects, such as Carlos Simon's Grammy-nominated album, *Requiem for the Enslaved* (Decca), Nancy Galbraith's *Violin Concerto* with Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and David Post's *Violin Sonata* (Centaur).

As a composer, she premiered her own violin concerto, *Swept Away*, and has been commissioned by the Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh, the Palo Alto Philharmonic, and the Boston Chamber Music Society.

Alyssa earned her Bachelor's Degree from Carnegie Mellon University under the tutelage of Andrés Cárdenes, and a Master's Degree at the New England Conservatory where she studied with Malcolm Lowe. She is a recipient of the Pittsburgh Female College Association Prize, the Carnegie Mellon Women's Award, the Senior Leadership Award, and the Presser Undergraduate Scholar Award. Alyssa is also an Andrew Carnegie Scholar.

Learn more about Alyssa at alyssa-wang.com.

SATURDAY, JULY 11 AT 7:30 PM
JORDAN HALL, NEC

THE DROP THAT CONTAINED THE SEA

Samuel A. Ward, arr. Paul Bateman
America the Beautiful

Christopher Tin
The Drop That Contained the Sea

- I. Water Prelude
- II. Haktan Gelen Şerbeti (The Drink from God)
- III. Temen Oblak (Dark Clouds)
- IV. Iza Ngomso (Come Tomorrow)
- V. Tsas Narand Uyarna (The Heart of Snow)
- VI. Passou o Verão (Summer Has Gone)
- VII. Devipravaha (Goddess River)
- VIII. Seirenes (Sirens)
- IX. Haf Gengr Hriðum (The Storm-Driven Sea)
- X. Waloyo Yamoni (We Overcome the Wind)

Ezgi Kurt • Emin Ismayilov • Christon Carney •
Narantsetseg Ren • Catarina Avelar •
Harshitha Krishnan • Morgan Beckford •
Chorus pro Musica

*This evening's guest artists are generously
sponsored by Doris Wong.*

MEET THE ARTISTS



EZGI KURT
Vocalist

Born in Istanbul, Ezgi Kurt is a singer specializing in the musical traditions of Anatolia and Asia Minor. She began her formal training at

Turkish Radio and Television and Bogazici University Folk Music and Dance Club, and deepened her studies in voice development, mugham improvisation, and poetry with Cavit Murtezaoglu. After moving to the United States, she expanded her musical language through Western classical and Hindustani music ensembles at UC Davis, embracing lifelong learning and continuing to deepen her artistic practice across traditions. As a performer and cultural worker, Ezgi has collaborated on global musical projects across the San Francisco and Boston areas, blending diverse world traditions through a genre-crossing approach rooted in cultural and spiritual depth.



EMIN ISMAYILOV
Vocalist

Emin Ismayilov is an Azerbaijani tenor pursuing a G.P.D in Voice at Longy School of Music, where he studies with Cailin Marcel Manson.

He began his musical studies as a guitarist at age 13 before discovering his passion for classical voice. After initial studies at Azerbaijan State Economic University, he earned his Bachelor's degree at Baku Music Academy, where he performed leading roles in operas by Giuseppe Verdi and Fikrat Amirov. As an Invited Soloist with the Azerbaijan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, he appeared in major productions before performing at the Immling International Opera Festival, where he participated in Nabucco, Aida, and Roméo et Juliette.



CHRISTON CARNEY
Vocalist

Tenor Christon E. Carney is a versatile performer based in Worcester, Massachusetts. A native of Nashville, Tennessee, he has

appeared as a soloist with the Nashville Symphony, Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, Rhode Island Civic Chorale & Orchestra, and Mount Holyoke

College, among others. He has also performed a principal role with Boston Lyric Opera and recently toured with the American Spiritual Ensemble.

A frequent collaborator with the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra, Carney has appeared as a featured soloist with the ensemble for four consecutive seasons. His performances have been presented throughout New England at venues including College of the Holy Cross and Mechanics Hall.

In addition to his performing career, Carney is active in music education and community engagement. He serves as Education and Outreach Manager at Mechanics Hall and Managing Director of the Many Voices: Mechanics Hall Youth Singers, and teaches voice at JMS School of Singing and Pakachoag Music School. He holds degrees from New England Conservatory and Lipscomb University.



NARANTSETSEG REN
Vocalist

Mezzo-soprano Narantsetseg Ren is acclaimed for her distinctive cross-cultural classical music initiatives and intellectually driven

artistry. First Prize winner of the Concorso Internazionale Città di Torgiano – Premio Ciro Scarponi, she has gained international recognition for performances that bridge oratorio, opera, and art song repertoire with a rare sense of narrative depth. Among her honors, Ren is the sole recipient of the 2025 Diversity Performance Award from the American Bach Society and the Hampsong Fellowship Award from the Song Society of America, reflecting both artistic excellence and visionary leadership. She is currently engaged in international concert tours presented at major halls and cultural institutions in America and Europe. Equally compelling on operatic and chamber music stages, Ren is known for combining rigorous historical and linguistic insight with a deeply personal interpretive voice. Holding a Ph.D. from Brown University alongside advanced conservatory training, she continues to expand the global presence of Mongolian, Eurasian and Nordic art song through innovative projects.



CATARINA AVELAR

Vocalist

Born in Massachusetts to a family of Portuguese immigrants, Catarina Avelar is one of the most noted fadistas of her generation.

Having performed throughout the United States and internationally, she is widely known as the “angelic voice of Fado.” Catarina connects deeply with her audiences, merging old world Fado with the new, while always attempting to preserve the essence that defines it. Fado is an intrinsic part of Portuguese culture and a profound expression of its people and their experiences. Rooted in the joys and sorrows of the heart of the Portuguese soul, it is both beautiful and haunting and has become one of the most recognized symbols of Portugal.

Catarina sings from her soul, recounting stories of love & loss and life’s experiences; stories that you can “feel”, regardless of whether or not you understand the language. She is passionate and proud about bringing Fado to places where it is less well known and ensuring that she plays a role in preserving such a beautiful part of her heritage.



HARSHITHA KRISHNAN

Vocalist

Harshitha Krishnan is a Grammy® nominated performing and recording artist, educator and social justice activist of Indian origin

from Lagos, Nigeria, with over 15 years of professional experience and a far-from-typical life journey that informs her unique musicianship. With influences ranging from Baroque to R&B and Afro-Jazz to Carnatic, Harshitha is a one-of-a-kind artist with a powerful and versatile sound. Some of the artists she’s collaborated with include A.R.Rahman, Vijay Prakash, Michael McDonald, Shankar Mahadevan, Shreya Ghoshal, Jacob Collier, Bill Whelan, Alejandro Sanz, Clinton Cerejo, Javed Ali and Javier Limone.

She currently serves on the Faculty at Berklee College of Music, teaching Harmony, Voice & Ensembles, including the South Asian Ensemble. She is the co-Executive Director of CAREspaces, a safe space for survivors/victims of identity-based violence & discrimination in the Indian Arts and on the Board of the Bloom Arts Foundation who bring

interactive music & dance experiences to students where arts programs are limited.



MORGAN BECKFORD

Vocalist

As a soloist, Morgan Beckford has appeared as a featured artist with Boston’s New Gallery Concert Series, the Andover Choral Society,

the Cape Cod Chorale and the Choral Art Society of the South Shore, the Cambridge Public Library’s Sacred Songs and Rituals series, Opera on Tap Boston, the Community Music Center of Boston, Grace-St. Luke’s Episcopal Church (Memphis, TN), and as an artist-in-residence at St. Mary’s Episcopal School (Memphis, TN). Morgan is also a featured soloist on the recently released album “The Great Glad Tidings Tell” with the Trinity Church Choirs.

When she’s not onstage, Morgan supports Boston Lyric Opera as the Director of Learning, ensuring that her audiences and partners experience equitable, relevant, and excellent programming. In her spare time, Morgan enjoys spending time with her family and friends, working with young singers, volunteering, cooking, and jamming on her ukulele.



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Bear Cub Mandarin Immersion Preschool, Infant & Toddler Center in Arlington, MA is a boutique program offering a Mandarin immersion environment in all our classrooms through a Reggio Emilia-inspired, play-based, child-centered education. Bear Cub Mandarin offers excellent career opportunities in early education. Find out more about our programs and professional opportunities at www.bearcubmandarin.org.



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Faye Kalmbach
Carolyn Kelley
Isabel Kim
Christina Lindberg
Trudi Olivetti
Clotilde Raemy-Gardner
Jeeun Song
Nora Sporn
Tanya Tupper
Sarah Vandewalle
Elizabeth Wharff
Mary Wolf
Victoria Wu
Ilana Zablow

ALTO

Lynne Abensohn
Amelia Baran
Jean Croll
Janice Darling
Deborah Dill
Ariane Frank
Anuththari Gamage
Janice Hegeman
Mariah Henderson
Ashley Jakubczyk
Judy Leamy
Linda Luke
Claire Mezzina
Isabel Mezzina
Natalie Mezzina
Elyse Nelson Winger
Kathleen O'Donnell
Patricia Pepper
Amanda Simeone
Hannah Torp

TENOR

Miguel Montalva Barba
Benjamin Bechand
Fernando Colina
Bradley Dunkin
James George
Ora Gladstone
Aislinn O'Keefe
Willard Peralta
Nur Fahlevi Pratama
Grace Sanko
Nick Urban
Andrew Wright

BASS

Abe Cantwell
Cheney Doane
William Farquhar
Peter Gardner
Roderic Guigo Corominas
Mike Halling
Charles Hitchcock
Joshua Howe
John Lemly
Daniel Malis
Paul Ogilby
David Pogue
Brian Rappaport
Alex Tinguely
Chris Walter

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Music Director

Terry Halco
Chris Walters
Rehearsal Accompanists

Ed Simeone
Executive Director

SUNDAY, JULY 26 AT 3:00 PM
JORDAN HALL, NEC

BRUCKNER 6

In collaboration with Morningside Music Bridge

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Sinfonia Concertante

- I. Allegro maestoso
- II. Andante
- III. Presto

Agata Szymczewska, violin • Teng Li, viola

Anton Bruckner
Symphony No. 6 in A Major

- I. Majestoso
- II. Adagio: Sehr feierlich
- III. Scherzo: Nicht schnell — Trio: Langsam
- IV. Finale: Bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell

MEET THE ARTISTS



AGATA SZYMCEWSKA
Violin

Winner of the 2006 Henryk Wieniawski International Violin Competition in Poznań, Agata Szymczewska was awarded the

Prize of the Audience and most special prizes, including major orchestra and recital engagements.

She also received the London Music Masters Award given for the first time by a committee composed of members of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Wigmore Hall and the Royal College of Music. In October 2009 Agata had her debut at Wigmore Hall, following which she received an invitation to play at the Royal Festival Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Osmo Vanska in autumn 2010.

She has performed in numerous European, Asian countries as well as in North and South America where she has collaborated with outstanding conductors including Seiji Ozawa, Sir Neville Marriner, Krzysztof Penderecki, Andrey Boreyko, Okko Kamu, Maxim Vengerov, Krzysztof Urbanski, Antoni Wit, and Jerzy Maksymiuk.

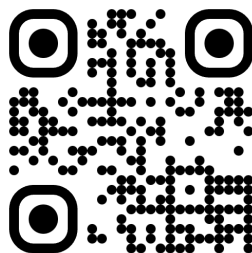
Besides these, Agata is a very active chamber musician. In autumn 2014 she has joined a world

famous Szymanowski String Quartet taking over a position of the primarius. Since 12 years she has taken part in the prestigious International Music Academy Switzerland founded by Maestro Seiji Ozawa. In 2005, she toured Japan and China with Maestro Seiji Ozawa as the youngest member and concertmaster of Ongaku-juku Orchestra. Over last years she has regularly appeared with many outstanding artists including Martha Argerich, Krystian Zimerman, Maxim Vengerov, Gidon Kremer, Yuri Bashmet, Frans Helmerson and Anne-Sophie Mutter with whom she appeared during a concert tour in US in November 2014 (including Agata's Carnegie Hall debut).

She graduated from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hannover where she studied with Prof. Krzysztof Węgrzyn between 2004 and 2014 as well as the Academy of Music in Poznań (class of Prof. Bartosz Bryła). Agata is a former faculty member of the Music Academy in Poznań, and is now on faculty with The Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw.

Agata Szymczewska plays a Nicolo Gagliano (Naples 1755), a private instrument which belongs to Anne-Sophie Mutter.

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TENG LI
Viola

Violist Teng Li is an internationally celebrated soloist, chamber musician and recording artist, hailed for her “burnished sound and elegant command of phrasing” (New York Times) and “a musical personality that mesmerizes the ear” (BBC Music). In September 2023, Li was appointed to the Paul Hindemith Principal Viola Chair of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra by Music Director Emeritus for Life Riccardo Muti, a post she assumes at the beginning of the 2024/25 season. Previously, she was principal viola of the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 2018 to 2024 and served for 14 seasons as principal viola of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Recognized as a “dazzlingly virtuosic” soloist (Los Angeles Times), she has appeared with premier ensembles throughout the world, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, National Chamber Orchestra, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Shanghai Opera Symphony Orchestra and Esprit Orchestra. Most recently, she was featured in acclaimed performances of Paganini’s *Sonata per la Grand Viola* with Lina González-Granados and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as in Kancheli’s *Styx* with the Oklahoma City Philharmonic led by Alexander Minkelthwate.

Li is an ardent chamber musician with notable past engagements at the Marlboro, Santa Fe Chamber, Rome Chamber and Moritzburg music festivals; Chamber Music Northwest, La Jolla Music Society SummerFest, ChamberFest Cleveland and the prestigious Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society Two program. She has performed at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall and the 92nd Street “Y” Chamber

Music Society in New York, and collaborated closely with the Guarneri Quartet, joining the ensemble in concerts during the quartet’s final season in 2008/09. She is a founding member of the Rosamunde Quartet, together with violinists Noah Bendix-Balgley and Shanshan Yao and cellist Nathan Vickery, with whom she has given performances and masterclasses throughout the United States and Canada.

Li’s probing interpretations of chamber works can be heard on several critically acclaimed recordings, among them 1939, her solo album for Azica Records with violinist Benjamin Bowman and pianist Meng-Chieh Liu. Her discography also includes recording credits with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Toronto Symphony, most notably on the latter’s Juno Award-winning Vaughan Williams album for Chandos, which features Li in a “ravishing” (CBC Music) performance of *Flos Campi*.

Li has won top prizes at the Johansen International Competition, the Holland-America Music Society Competition, the Primrose International Viola Competition, the Klein International String Competition, and the ARD International Music Competition in Munich, Germany. She was also a winner of the Astral Artistic Services’ 2003 National Auditions.

A committed educator, Li has taught at the Colburn School, University of Toronto, Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and Montreal’s Conservatoire de Musique, and joins the faculty of Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performance Arts in the 2024/25 academic year. In addition, she teaches at the Sarasota Music Festival and Morningside Music Bridge. Li is a graduate of the Central Conservatory in Beijing, China, and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where she studied with Michael Tree, Joseph de Pasquale, and Karen Tuttle.

MORNINGSIDE MUSIC BRIDGE

An international scholarship program for gifted artists 12 – 18 years of age, Morningside Music Bridge brings together the finest emerging artists to work on an international stage and measure themselves against the very best young musicians globally. Participants engage in a month of intensive training and performances. Resident Artist faculty are drawn from the world's leading performing organizations and schools. Morningside Music Bridge typically sees applicants from more than 30 countries and has awarded scholarships to students from every continent. Since our inception in 1997 more than 1,000 young artists have benefited from the barrier-free music making experience offered by Morningside Music Bridge.

Students participate on a full scholarship basis with tuition, travel and room and board costs provided through the generosity of our sponsors. Our alumni have become today's leading classical musicians, performing on stages around the world, holding key positions with the best orchestras, and teaching at the top music schools. Equally important are the cultural bridges and life-long friendships Morningside Music Bridge participants, guest artists, and partner organizations enjoy.

Morningside Music Bridge embodies the highest international standards of excellence. Participants engage in a month of intensive training and performances. The core of our programming is for violin, viola, cello and piano but we also offer scholarship residencies for young creators.

Our young musicians perform in memorable public venues, explore their creativity and expand their artistic abilities with participation in chamber music and interesting workshops, and bond with one another through the exquisite language of music. The program is non-academic.



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Peter Atkinson, Recording Engineer



The Recording Industry's



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Charles River

Watershed Association

Rain falls onto our streets, seeps into our soil, flows into our brooks, and eventually forms our beloved Charles River.

In a watershed, everything is connected. A single drop of water carries the story of our environment, linking our neighborhoods, our ecosystems, and our communities.

Charles River Watershed Association develops science-based strategies to increase resilience, protect public health, and promote environmental equity as we face a changing climate, together.

www.crwa.org



55 Roxbury Street
PO Box 191424
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