

UBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Jonathan Girard, Director of Orchestras

Felix Mendelssohn

The Hebrides Overture, Op. 26

Sarah Wong Graduate assistant conductor

Richard Wagner

Siegfried Idyll, WWV 103

Chengyu Zhang Graduate assistant conductor

Franz Schubert

Symphony No. 9 in C Major, "The Great"

Jonathan Girard conductor

7:30 PM | Friday, November 6, 2026

Chan Centre for the Performing Arts



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
School of Music

UBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Jonathan Girard, Director of Orchestras

**Chan Shun Concert Hall, Chan Centre for the Performing Arts
Friday, November 6th, 2026 • 7:30 p.m.**

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809 - 1847)

Die Hebriden, op. 26; MWV P7

Sarah X. Y. Wong - Graduate assistant conductor

Richard Wagner
(1813 - 1883)

Siegfried-Idyll, WWV 103

Chengyu Zhang - Graduate assistant conductor

◆ Intermission ◆

Franz Schubert
(1797 - 1828)

Symphony No. 9 in C major - *Great*, D.944

- I. Andante — Allegro, ma non troppo
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Scherzo. Allegro vivace
- IV. Allegro vivace

Jonathan Girard, conductor

*We would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather
is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam People.*

University of British Columbia Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

Hilary Chan*

Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Yuika Ravindran

Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '27

Yu-Jen Hsin

Surrey, BC, Canada; MMus '27

Marina Hoffman

Oakland, CA, USA; BSc '26

Christie Watts

Winnipeg, MB, Canada; BMus '27

Maximilian Yip

Toronto, ON, Canada; BMus '30

Alesha Chan

Richmond, BC, Canada; BMus '29

Andrew Lin

BC, Canada; BMus '30

Nina Huang

Surrey, BC, Canada; BA '29

Risako Tonegawa

Tokyo, Japan; MSC '27

Eric Hu

Ottawa, ON, Canada; BMus & BSc '29

Prima Pu

Vancouver, BC, Canada; BSc '30

Paul Sandberg

Brainerd, MN, USA; BMus '30

Kate Chamberlin

Kamloops, BC, Canada; BMus '30

Galland Chan

Burnaby, BC, Canada; BA '28

Vickie Wang

Vancouver, BC, Canada; BSc '28

Violin II

Amy Chen*

Surrey, BC, Canada; BMus '27

Amanda Chin

Coquitlam, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Matteya Lee

Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '27

Adrianne V. Marcano

Mejias

Caracas, Venezuela; BMus '27

Ryan Howland

Victoria, BC, Canada; BSc '27

Elly Wang

South Surrey, BC, Canada; BSc '28

Adron Tam

North Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Betty He

Beijing, China; BMus, '28

Sam Daniel

Ottawa, ON, Canada; BMus '29

Horace Yuen

Richmond, BC, Canada; BMus '29 & MM '29

Adrina Khakdoost

Vancouver, BC, Canada BMus '29

Kevin Xin

Maple Ridge, BC, Canada; Bmus '30

Yu-Chi Amber Chen

New Taipei City, Taiwan; BMus '27

Rowan Beiser-Hunt

Toronto, ON, Canada; BMus '29

Brandon Chan

Richmond, BC, Canada; BMus '30

Viola

Andrew Llamas*

The Woodlands, TX, USA; BMus '28

Cat DeMello

Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '27

Pin Yi Hu

Coquitlam, BC, Canada; BMus '29

Sophie Sun

Langley, BC, Canada; BMus '27

Ellie Hu

Taipei, Taiwan; BSc '27

Cassandra Feltrin

Port Coquitlam, BC, Canada; BPSc '28

Alyx Triebel

Olympia, WA, USA; BMus '29

Marcus Poon

Richmond, BC, Canada; BMus '30

Jonah Cheung

Burnaby, BC, Canada; BSc '29

Ethan Owen Chan

Hong Kong; BMus '30

Bass

Elias Veloso*

Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Vivian Xu

Nanjing, Jiangsu, China; BMus '27 & BEd '28

Thomas Tas

Cochrane, AB, Canada; BMus '30

Xander Delisle

Vancouver, BC, Canada; BSc '27

Noah Alejandro Ferrera-

Palchinski

Vancouver, BC, Canada; MMus '27

Heidryl Buena

Port Coquitlam, BC, Canada; BMus '30

Andreas Tsang

Toronto, ON, Canada; BMus '30

Rachel Comer

Carmel, IN, USA; BSC '30

Violoncello (Schubert)

Natalie Chin*
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '27

Violet Wood
Langley, BC, Canada; BMus '29

Sophia Ner
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BASc '29

Chloe Pan
Beijing, China; BMus '29

Wei-An Wang
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Hailey Kim
Coquitlam, BC, Canada; BMus '29

Begonia Lam
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '26

Rae Huang
Surrey, BC, Canada; BMus '30

Violoncello (Mendelssohn & Wagner)

Julian Lee De Vita*
Vancouver, BC, Canada; MMus '27

Gavin Wang
Richmond, BC, Canada; BMus '27

Fay Wang
Toronto, ON, Canada; BA '29

Nathan Sam
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BSc & BMus '31

Carl Lemer
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BSc & BMus '28

Alex Tuppurainen
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus & MM '29

Shiyi Wang
Wuxi, Jiangsu, China; BGem '29

Maliha Mann
Lockeport, NS, Canada; BMus '30

Flute & Piccolo

Smile Chow*
Burnaby, BC, Canada; BMus '27

Lauren Debeljak
Calgary, AB, Canada; BMus '27

Lucy Zuo
Coquitlam, BC, Canada; MMus '27

Oboe

Iulia Jauca*
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Rheanne Kuo
Richmond, BC, Canada; BMus & BSc '30

Clarinet

Melina Matos*
Santo Domingo, Dominica Republic; BMus '27

Carrie Li
Beijing, China; BMus '29

Matty Angus
Victoria, BC, Canada; TBD

Zoe Keller
Duvall, WA, USA; BMus '30

Leonardo Jung
Langley, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Bassoon

Connor Smith*
Littleton, CO, USA; BMus '27

Avril Hau Chin Chan
Burnaby, BC, Canada; BMus '30

Horn

Jeremy Solomon*
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '27

Riley Evans
Port Alberni, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Otis M. Peake
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Mark Edward Buco
Surrey, BC, Canada; BMus & BEd '28

Trumpet

Benjamin Li*
Coquitlam, BC, Canada; MMus '28

Lucas Jung
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Trombone

Joel Kim*
Surrey, BC, Canada; BMus '28

Elijah Nickel
Abbotsford, BC, Canada; GSSM & BEd '28

William Li
Coquitlam, BC, Canada; BMus & BEd '26

Timpani

William Huang*
Calgary, AB, Canada; BMus '27

Liam Tupling
Vancouver, BC, Canada; BMus '27 & BEd '28

UBCSO Staff

Chengyu Zhang
*Assistant conductor
Shanghai, China; MMus '27*

Sarah Y. X. Wong
*Assistant conductor
Vancouver, BC, Canada; MMus '28*

Logan Lambert *librarian*

Matteya Lee, *librarian*

Jeremy Solomon, *librarian*

Connor Smith, *stage manager*

Paul Sandberg, *stage manager*

* denotes principal player



Jonathan Girard is a visionary conductor known for his generous, sophisticated musicianship and boundless enthusiasm on and off the podium.

Based in Vancouver, Canada, Girard holds prestigious international positions: Director of Orchestras at the University of British Columbia School of Music, Artistic Director of the Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Athens Philharmonic (Greece), and Music Director of the Tokyo Opera Studio.

Recent international engagements include multiple projects with the Orquestra Sinfônica de Porto Alegre (Brazil), his debut with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and engagements and residencies in Asia, Europe, and Australia. Recent Canadian projects include those with the Okanagan Symphony, Vancouver Island Symphony, Vancouver Intercultural Orchestra, and others.

A prolific recording artist, Girard's discography has earned continuing critical acclaim. His 2021 album *Soaring Spirits* earned a Juno Award nomination and won the Western Canadian Music Award. His work has been featured on television on *The National* in Canada and broadcast on NPR (US) and the CBC (Canada), as well as on four commercial recordings of works by Canadian premieres by Arvo Pärt, Kaija Saariaho, Ana Sokolović, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Óscar Navarro, Florence Price, and Francis Poulenc. He is also known for designing innovative interdisciplinary projects that blend orchestral improvisation, visual arts, climate data, and groundbreaking technology.

Maestro Girard has become internationally known for his conducting pedagogy and has trained working professional conductors across the US and Canada. He maintains a significant presence at festivals, clinics, masterclasses and summer festivals like the Vancouver Symphony Orchestral Institute and Marrowstone Music Festival. Through residencies at world-class institutions — including the Eastman School of Music and the Melbourne Conservatorium — he continues to influence the global landscape of orchestral performance and education.

He holds a Doctorate in Orchestral Conducting from the Eastman School of Music, where he was awarded the prestigious Walter Hagen Conducting Prize, an M.M. from Boston University and a B.Mus. *summa cum laude* from the Hartt School of Music.

Off the podium, he enjoys traveling the world and is a multi-engine instrument rated pilot. As in music, the detailed mechanics and discipline of flying lead to freedom, adventure, and poetry.

Learn more at www.jonathangirard.com

Currently studying with Dr. Jonathan Girard at UBC School of Music **Chengyu Zhang** is a conductor, a composer, and an organist from Shanghai, China.

He began his professional music training in secondary school and received his high school diploma from Music Middle School Affiliated to Zhejiang Conservatory of Music in 2020, majoring in composition. During high school, he also studied conducting with Dr. Jie Zhou, who was his first mentor in the field. After high school he attended Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, USA. There, his composition teachers include Prof. Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Prof. Riccardo Zohn-Muldoon, Prof. David Liptak, Prof. Robert Morris, and Prof. Daniel Pesca. Additionally, at Eastman, he received conducting lessons with Prof. Neil Varon on a weekly basis. In the summer of 2025, Chengyu Zhang graduated from Eastman with high distinction and entered the UBC School of Music, where he seeks a career as a professional orchestral conductor.



Sarah Y.X. Wong is a Canadian conductor and pianist whose work connects orchestral performance, music education, and community engagement. She is currently pursuing a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting at the University of British Columbia, studying with Maestro Jonathan Girard. During her Bachelor of Music, she received the Faculty of Arts Graduate Award and the H. Colin Slim, Harry and Marjorie Anne Slim Memorial Scholarship in Music. She was also nominated twice for the Premier Undergraduate Scholarship and Wesbrook Scholarship Designation.

Sarah serves as Assistant Conductor of the UBC Symphony Orchestra and has collaborated with ensembles including the UBC Chinese Music Ensemble, Brock House Society Orchestra, and Vancouver Oriental Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra. With the UBC Chinese Music Ensemble, she prepared and directed the premiere of LuoBin Wang's Ma Yi La, arranged by Addison Wong.



Founder of the Melody of Love concert fundraising series, Sarah has directed concerts presented across Metro Vancouver and China for ten consecutive years. These concerts raise funds for healthcare services and charitable causes, benefiting organizations including the Richmond Hospital Foundation, the Hong Kong Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care, and the Canadian Anti-Cancer Rehabilitation Association. More recently, her fundraising initiatives have supported the Richmond Hospital Foundation's Mental Health Unit, Emergency Department, Birth Center, and Medical Imaging services.

Through conducting and community engagement, Sarah aims to bring the same sense of purpose and generosity to the podium, inspiring young musicians to pursue their ambitions with confidence and use their talents to make a meaningful contribution to their communities.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Compiled by Sarah Y. X. Wong and Chengyu Zhang

The Hebrides Overture, Op. 26, Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

During the 1820s and 1830s, Felix Mendelssohn emerged as one of the leading composers of German Romanticism. His style combined Classical formal clarity with Beethovenian energy and a deep love of Baroque counterpoint; in 1829 he led the first performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* since the composer's death. This balance between Classical discipline and Romantic imagination is particularly evident in his concert overtures, independent orchestral works inspired by literature, landscapes, and dramatic subjects.

The Hebrides Overture, is one of his most celebrated achievements. Its inspiration came from a journey through Scotland in the summer of 1829. With his friend Karl Klingemann, he explored the Highlands and the western coast, recording his impressions in sketches and letters. On August 7th, he sent his family a sketch of the overture's opening bars from "one of the Hebrides." The following day, they sailed to the island of Staffa to see Fingal's Cave, a striking sea cave framed by dramatic basalt columns. The overture's famous theme came before he saw the cave. The work grew from his experience of the islands as a whole, not from a portrait of a single place.

Mendelssohn completed the first version in Rome in December of 1830 and premiered it in London on 14 May 1832 under the title *The Isles of Fingal*. He kept revising the work, striving to capture the wild beauty of Scotland within a coherent musical structure. He was especially unhappy with the middle section of the 1830 version, which he felt sounded too academic, more an exercise in counterpoint than an evocation of the sea. His challenge was clear: the overture needed to be a formally convincing work without losing the distinctive character of its inspiration.

The overture opens with a rocking motif that evokes waves rolling across the sea. Through shifting harmonies, changing orchestral colours, and surging rhythms, Mendelssohn captures both the tranquillity and the unpredictable power of Scotland's coastline. At the close, the opening motif returns quietly in the woodwinds, bringing the journey full circle.

The Hebrides Overture remains an important example of Romantic programme music, in which an external experience becomes the starting point for an independent composition. Its achievement lies not simply in its Scottish associations, but in Mendelssohn's ability to translate the impressions of a landscape into musical form. The overture helped define the concert overture and showed how Romanticism could expand the expressive possibilities of the Classical tradition while retaining its formal coherence.

Also in 1829...

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust, Part One*, published in 1808, continued to influence German Romantic literature and music • Louis Braille shortly developed the tactile reading and writing system bearing his name • The Coca-Cola Company was officially incorporated in Atlanta, Georgia

Siegfried-Idyll, WWV 103, Richard Wagner (1813 - 1883)

In July 1870, after years of scandal, Cosima von Bülow, daughter of Franz Liszt, was finally granted a divorce from her husband, Hans von Bülow. Bülow was the conductor who had done more than anyone to champion Wagner's music. Thirty-eight days later, Cosima married Wagner. Bülow had accepted the situation a year earlier, shortly after Cosima gave birth to Siegfried, her third child by Wagner. "You have preferred to consecrate the treasures of your heart and mind to a higher being," he wrote to her in 1869. "Far from censuring you for this step, I approve of it."

The affair had begun in infidelity on both sides, but the devotion was real. At Tribschen, their lakeside villa outside Lucerne, the couple built a quiet domestic life. Wagner pressed on with his *Ring* cycle, finishing *Siegfried* and beginning *Götterdämmerung*. Cosima ran a household of five children.

Cosima was born on December 24 but always celebrated her birthday on Christmas Day. On the morning of December 25, 1870, her first birthday as Wagner's wife, she woke to music. Wagner had secretly gathered a small ensemble on the staircase outside her bedroom and conducted a piece he had composed for her. When it ended, he came in and handed her the score. It was titled "Tribschen Idyll, with Fidi's birdsong and orange sunrise, as a symphonic birthday greeting. Presented to his Cosima by her Richard." ("Fidi" was the family's nickname for Siegfried.) We know it today as the *Siegfried Idyll*.

Despite its name, the *Idyll* is a family portrait rather than an excerpt from the opera, though the two are closely linked. Wagner wove in themes from the love duet that closes *Siegfried*, which he had composed the year before. He also used the old German lullaby "Schlaf, Kindlein, schlaf" ("Sleep, little child, sleep"), sung by the oboe. For years the piece stayed a private family treasure. In 1878, pressed for money, Wagner sold it to his publisher Schott, much to Cosima's dismay. Since then it has usually been performed with a full string section.

Epilogue

Cosima did not see Bülow again for some eleven years, when they met to discuss their daughters. Bülow never spoke to Wagner again. When Wagner died in Venice in February 1883, Cosima was at his side. She stayed with his body for more than a day and then withdrew into a grief so severe that those close to her feared for her life. During those months a telegram arrived from Bülow: "Soeur, il faut vivre" ("Sister, you must live").

Also in 1870...

Beginning of the Franco-Prussian War which eventually leads to the establishment of German Empire and the disintegration of Second French Empire • Italian forces capture Rome, symbolising the unification of Italy • Birth of Russian revolutionary and politician Vladimir Lenin • Death of English writer and journalist Charles Dickens

Symphony No. 9 in C major – Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

By the mid-1820s, **Franz Schubert** was cherished in Vienna for his songs, chamber music, and piano works, though his larger instrumental music remained almost entirely unknown to the public. His musical language is distinguished by its melodic richness and subtle harmonic shifts. He inherited the formal traditions of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, but gradually developed a more expansive approach to instrumental composition. His Symphony No. 9 in C major, D. 944, known as the “Great” C-major Symphony, is the culmination of that development and one of the most ambitious symphonic works of the early Romantic period. It is known as the “Great” to distinguish it from his smaller Sixth Symphony in the same key, and some catalogues number it No. 8.

The symphony took shape during the summer of 1825, a period of renewed creative energy. Schubert spent it travelling through Upper Austria and the Salzburg region with his friend, the celebrated baritone Johann Michael Vogl. Visiting Gmunden and Bad Gastein, Schubert wrote that the landscape surpassed anything he could have imagined. The symphony’s opening, a long unaccompanied melody for horns, has often been linked with the spaciousness of that Alpine scenery. The work fulfilled an ambition Schubert had stated the year before: to pave the way toward a “grand symphony.”

Schubert never heard it performed. Late in 1838, Robert Schumann found the manuscript among the papers of Schubert’s brother Ferdinand and arranged for it to reach Felix Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn conducted the premiere in Leipzig on 21 March 1839, and the symphony was published the following year. Schumann, captivated, praised its “heavenly length.”

The first movement opens with that spacious horn melody before the music gathers momentum. Long melodic lines unfold over persistent rhythmic figures, and the exchange of material between the sections of the orchestra drives the music forward. Schubert lets his ideas evolve gradually through a expansive development, which gives the movement its remarkable breadth. The second movement has a restrained, march-like character. Over a steady pulse, a lyrical melody alternates between quiet reflection and more intense orchestral outbursts. The Scherzo bursts with rhythmic energy and bold accents. Its vigorous themes contrast with the more graceful, dance-like Trio, before the return of the Scherzo restores the movement’s driving momentum, set against a broad, graceful Trio before the Scherzo’s driving momentum returns. The thrilling finale surges forward

on lively triplet figures, sweeping melodies, and energetic exchanges across the orchestra. As its rhythmic ideas accumulate and transform, Schubert builds to triumphant, exhilarating close.

The “Great” C-major Symphony holds a pivotal place in nineteenth-century orchestral music; its expansive treatment of musical ideas helped establish new possibilities for the symphonic genre. Schubert paired seemingly inexhaustible melodic invention with a structure strong enough to sustain an argument on a scale few had attempted since Beethoven. In doing so, he showed how the Classical could carry the breadth and imagination of Romantic expression, and he opened a path that Schumann, Bruckner, and others would follow.

Also in 1825...

Ludwig van Beethoven was in the final years of his life, composing some of his late string quartets

- The Erie Canal was completed in New York State, connecting the Great Lakes with the Atlantic trade network through the Hudson River
- The first railway locomotives designed for public passenger service were demonstrated in England, marking a major development in transportation.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

UBC Bands

Friday, November 20th at 7:30 p.m.

Chan Shun Concert Hall, Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

UBC Opera: *The Bartered Bride*

Saturday, November 28th at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 29th at 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 3rd at 7:30 pm.

Friday, December 4th at 7:30 p.m.

Old Auditorium

UBC Symphony Orchestra & Choirs: Coulthard, Poulenc, and Vaughan Williams

Saturday, December 5th at 7:30 p.m.

Chan Shun Concert Hall, Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

Details and tickets can be found on chancentre.com/events, by telephone (604) 822-2697, or in person at the Chan Centre ticket office. Presented by the UBC School of Music and Chan Centre for the Performing Arts.

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School of Music

