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BEETHOVEN PROJECT WRAPS WITH STUTZMANN CONDUCTING FIRST PIANO CONCERTO AND CHORAL NINTH SYMPHONY

NOV 6/8: Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus Joins the Orchestra for "Ode to Joy"

NOV 13/15/16: Swiss virtuoso Francesco Piermontesi performs Beethoven's First Piano Concerto

ATLANTA – The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's two-season endeavor, [The Beethoven Project](#), concludes when Music Director Natalie Stutzmann leads two programs of his works: his spirited First Piano Concerto and the monumental "Choral" Ninth Symphony at Symphony Hall in November.

NOV 6/8 – Swiss pianist Francesco Pietmontesi joins the orchestra for a program featuring a contrasting brilliance between Beethoven's spirited First Piano Concerto and Shostakovich's heartrending Symphony No. 8 on Thursday and Saturday, November 6 and 8, at 8 pm at Atlanta Symphony Hall.

Pietmontesi joins frequent collaborator Stutzmann in Beethoven's first published piano concerto of genial wit and virtuosity. Pietmontesi is making his Symphony Hall debut and has been described by the Chicago Classical Review as having "a probing yet playful touch."

The orchestra also performs Shostakovich's massive Eighth Symphony. Written in 1943 as part of his "War Symphonies," the Eighth reflects suffering on a cosmic scale with a glimmer of hope. The composer wrote, "The philosophical conception of my new work can be summed up in these words: life is beautiful. All that is dark and evil rots away, and beauty triumphs."

NOV 13/15/16 – Music Director Nathalie Stutzmann leads the symphony and ASO Chorus in Beethoven's revolutionary Ninth Symphony, which culminates in its famous choral finale celebrating universal brotherhood and hope on Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday, Nov 13, 15, and 16.

Before the evening turns to Beethoven, Stutzmann presents two Bach gems – his Concerto for Two Violins, BWV 1043, and Cantata, BWV 56. Concertmaster David Coucheron and Acting

Associate/Assistant Concertmaster Lauren Roth shine in Bach's only Double Violin Concerto, showcasing mastery of late-Baroque composition and expressive melodies exemplary of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's celebrated sound.

Croatian baritone Leon Košavić, whose voice is described as "powerful, supple and rich" (*Lapresse.ca*) joins the ASO Chorus as the featured soloist for Bach's Cantata BWV56 and later joins soloists Christina Nilsson, Rhianna Cockrell and Siyabonga Maqungo in Beethoven's Ninth.

Tickets for these concerts are now on sale at aso.org. Learn about the ASO's Beethoven Project at aso.org/beethoven-project

CALENDAR LISTING

THU/SAT, NOV. 6/8, 8pm

Nathalie Stutzmann, conductor

Francesco Piemontesi, piano

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 1

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 8

Music Director Nathalie Stutzmann welcomes Swiss pianist Francesco Piemontesi who brings "a probing yet playful touch" (*Chicago Classical Review*) to a Beethoven concerto packed with brilliance, geniality, and wit. On the flip side, Nathalie Stutzmann summons the feverish virtuosity of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for Shostakovich's biting protest against tyranny—the heartrending Symphony No. 8.

THU/SAT NOV. 13/15, 8pm

SUN NOV. 16, 3pm

Nathalie Stutzmann, conductor

David Coucheron, violin

Lauren Roth, violin

Christina Nilsson, soprano

Rhianna Cockrell, mezzo-soprano

Siyabonga Maqungo, tenor*

Leon Košavić, baritone

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus

Bach Concerto for Two Violins in D minor, BWV 1043

BACH Cantata BWV 56

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 9, "Choral"

Beethoven's watershed Ninth Symphony is the culmination of a year-long exploration of works by this greatest of musical revolutionaries. Hear this colossal choral wonder with a lineup of must-see singers

with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. Nathalie Stutzmann opens with Bach's piquant Concerto for Two Violins, featuring the stunning artistry of our own musicians, David Coucheron and Lauren Roth. The world-renowned Atlanta Symphony Chorus sings Bach's exquisite Cantata BWV 56.

About Francesco Piemontesi

Francesco Piemontesi is a pianist of exceptional refinement of expression, which is allied to a consummate technical skill. Widely renowned for his interpretation of Mozart and the early Romantic repertoire, Piemontesi's pianism and sensibility has a close affinity too with the later 19th century and 20th century repertoire of Brahms, Liszt, Dvořák, Ravel, Debussy, Bartók and beyond. Of one of his great teachers and mentors, Alfred Brendel, Piemontesi says that Brendel taught him "*to love the detail of things*".

He appears alongside the world's leading orchestras from the Berliner Philharmoniker to the New York Philharmonic and from London to NHK Symphony Orchestras and is a regular guest at festivals such as the Salzburg, Lucerne, Schleswig-Holstein Musik festivals, as well as the BBC Proms.

In recital, Piemontesi delivers pure piano poetry to the Musikverein, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Wigmore Hall, Schubertiade, Basel, Siena and Alicante. He also collaborates with Augustin Hadelich in recitals across the United States, weaving the sonatas for violin and piano of Debussy, Poulenc, and Franck with works by de Grigny, Rameau and Kurtág.

His discography with Pentatone includes recent Liszt (2023), Bach (2021) and Schubert (2019) albums. In fall 2025, Piemontesi releases the first of two Brahms discs, featuring the composer's late solo piano works and concertos with Leipzig Gewandhausorchester and Manfred Honeck.

About Nathalie Stutzmann

Nathalie Stutzmann is the Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the second woman in history to lead a major American orchestra. She was Principal Guest Conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra from 2021 to 2024. Nathalie made big news in the opera pit in 2023 with her debut at the Bayreuth Festival with Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. The performances resulted in her being named 'Best Conductor' of the year in the 2024 Oper! Awards. She returned to Bayreuth in 2024 for a revival of *Tannhäuser* and will be back in 2026 to mark the 150th anniversary of the Festival, conducting a new production of *Rienzi*.

Her opera debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 2023 was declared by *The New York Times* as "the coup of the year." With several notable debuts including the Czech Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Tonhalle

Orchestra Zurich and at the Musikverein with Wiener Symphoniker; her current season also includes returns to the New York Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, and Philadelphia Orchestra. In June 2025 she returned to Bruxelles La Monnaie to conduct *Carmen*.

Nathalie Stutzmann has signed an exclusive recording contract with Warner Classics/ Erato and her first symphonic recording for the label of Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 and *American Suite* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra was released in August 2024. Awarded the 2023 Opus Klassik "Concerto Recording of the Year" for her recording of the Glière and Mosolov Harp concertos with Xavier de Maistre and WDR Sinfonieorchester, 2022 also saw the release of complete Beethoven Piano Concertos recorded with Haochen Zhang and The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Nathalie started her studies at a very young age in piano, bassoon, and cello and later studied conducting with the legendary Finnish teacher Jorma Panula. As one of today's most esteemed contraltos, she has made more than 80 recordings and received the most prestigious awards. Nathalie was named "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur", France's highest honor; and "Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres" by the French government.

About David Coucheron

David Coucheron joined the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as Concertmaster in September 2010. At the time, he was the youngest concertmaster in any major U.S. orchestra. He has performed as soloist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Sendai Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra.

Coucheron has given solo recitals at Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Kennedy Center and the Olympic Winter Games (Salt Lake City, Utah), as well as in Beograd, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Serbia, Singapore and Shanghai. His chamber music performances have included appearances at Suntory Hall, Wigmore Hall and Alice Tully Hall. Coucheron serves as the Artistic Director for the Kon Tiki Chamber Music Festival in his hometown of Oslo, Norway. He is on the artist-faculty for the Aspen Music Festival and Brevard Music Festival.

An active recording artist, recordings with sister and pianist Julie Coucheron include "David and Julie" (Naxos/Mudi) and "Debut" (Naxos). He is the featured soloist on the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's recording of Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*, which was released in Fall 2014. Coucheron began playing the violin at age three.

He earned his Bachelor of Music degree from The Curtis Institute of Music, his Master of Music from The Juilliard School and his Master of Musical Performance from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, studying with teachers Igor Ozim, Aaron Rosand, Lewis Kaplan and David Takeno. Coucheron plays a 1725 Stradivarius, on kind loan from Anders Sveaas Charitable Trust.

About Lauren Roth

Prior to coming to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Lauren Roth was Concertmaster of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra and served on the faculty of the University of Arizona as an Assistant Professor of Violin for eleven years. Ms. Roth appears regularly as a soloist, Guest Concertmaster, and Associate Concertmaster with orchestras around the world. Highlights include performing the Mendelssohn and Sibelius violin concertos in the Czech Republic, solo engagements with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, and appearances with the Jacksonville Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, and Baltimore Symphony. She enjoys performing with the Mainly Mozart Festival Orchestra, a gathering of concertmasters and principal players from around the country.

A dedicated teacher, Ms. Roth maintained a violin studio at the University of Arizona giving instruction in performance, pedagogy, and orchestral repertoire. She often spends summers as a faculty member of the Prague Summer Nights Festival, the Marrowstone Music Festival, and she has served on the faculties of the National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Camp and Carnegie Hall's New York Orchestra Seminar program. Ms. Roth is Associate Concertmaster of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music each August. In the summer of 2021, she was a member of the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra.

A native of Seattle, Ms. Roth received a Bachelor of Music degree in Violin Performance and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Italian Studies from the University of Washington. She was a student of Professor Ron Patterson. She went on to earn a Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music as a student of William Preucil, and Ms. Roth was accepted into his prestigious Concertmaster Academy.

Outside of music, Ms. Roth enjoys yoga, playing and watching sports, and spending time with her nieces and nephews.

About Christina Nilsson

Swedish soprano **Christina Nilsson** appears regularly with many of the world's leading opera houses and orchestras. This season she makes two important role debuts: Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Liù in *Turandot* at the Royal Swedish Opera. The season opens with *Aida* in Stockholm, a role she will reprise at Deutsche Oper in March. She will also appear as Elisabeth in a new production of *Tannhäuser* at Opernhaus Zürich.

In 2024/25 Christina made her acclaimed Metropolitan Opera debut in the title role of *Aida*, a role she has performed in Frankfurt, Stockholm, Prague, Dresden, Deutsche Oper Berlin and in her debut at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden.

Other recent highlights include Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Bayreuth Festival with Daniele Gatti, *Tosca*, Chrysothemis in *Elektra* and the title role in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Stockholm and Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* at the Bavarian State Opera.

About Rhianna Cockrell

Rhianna Cockrell, whose instrument has been described as “clear and commanding” (*Washington Post*), and having a “natural warmth and unforced delivery” (*EarRelevant*) has captivated audiences with her interpretations of Renaissance and Baroque works as well as her passion for contemporary works. As a frequent and award-winning interpreter of J.S. Bach’s music, Cockrell’s performances have been hailed as “unforced...resolute” (*Oregon ArtsWatch*) and “beautifully controlled...masterful...breath-taking” (*Early Music America*).

Cockrell’s 2025–26 season sees her return to Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as the alto soloist in Beethoven’s *9th Symphony* and Handel’s *Messiah*, Durufle’s *Requiem* with The Thirteen, Bach’s *B Minor Mass* and *Himmelskönig, Sei Willkommen, BWV 182* with Bach in Baltimore, as well as Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* and Durufle’s *Requiem* with the Baltimore Basilica Schola. Other season highlights include performances with Ensemble Aeternum, Washington Bach Consort, Ensemble Altera, Apollo’s Fire, and True Concord Voices & Orchestra.

About Siyabonga Maqungo

South African tenor Siyabonga Maqungo is celebrated for his luminous vocal colour, emotional honesty, and charming stage presence. A member of the ensemble at Staatsoper Unter den Linden since the 2020/21 season, Maqungo has performed a wide range of repertoire, including *Die Zauberflöte*, *Fidelio*, *Das Rheingold*, and most recently *Die schweigsame Frau*.

His growing international career includes a house debut at Teatro alla Scala as Froh in a new staging of *Das Rheingold*, and the title role in *Mitridate, re di Ponto* at Teatro Real.

In the current season, Maqungo continues to shine in Berlin, performing all of Mozart’s principal tenor roles and makes his debut as Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. His concert career includes debuts with Munich Philharmonic and Strasbourg Philharmonic. He joins Freiburg Barockorchester for a major European tour performing *Il Giustino* and returns to La Scala for *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

About Leon Košavić

Baritone Leon Košavić began his musical career in 2011 at the Croatian National Opera. Since then, he has appeared at numerous European opera houses such as the Royal Opera House London, Opernhaus

Zürich, La Monnaie Bruxelles, Theater an der Wien, Stuttgart State Opera, and Liège, among others, and as a member of the ensemble at Theater St. Gallen.

Košavić's intensive concert activity has taken him to Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Liverpool, São Paulo, Bergen, Paris, and London with conductor Nathalie Stutzmann. After debuting at the Opernhaus Zürich, Grand-Théâtre de Genève, Grand-Théâtre de Luxembourg and the Teatro Regio Torino in the last seasons, highlights in the season 25/26 include:

Die Fledermaus at the Theater an der Wien, *Don Giovanni* at the Ravenna Festival and Tokyo Spring Festival, his debut at the Dutch National Opera in *Tristan und Isolde*, and his debut in *Carmen* at the Flamish Opera.

About Norman Mackenzie

Norman Mackenzie's abilities as musical collaborator, conductor and concert organist have brought him international recognition. As Director of Chorus for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) since 2000, he was chosen to help carry forward the creative vision of legendary founding conductor Robert Shaw. During his tenure, the Chorus has made numerous tours and garnered several Grammy® awards, including Best Classical Album and Best Choral Performance. At the ASO, he prepares the Choruses for all concerts and recordings, works closely with Nathalie Stutzmann on the commissioning and realization of new choral-orchestral works and conducts holiday concerts.

In his 14-year association with Mr. Shaw, he was keyboardist for the ASO, principal accompanist for the ASO Choruses and ultimately assistant choral conductor. In addition, he was musical assistant and accompanist for the Robert Shaw Chamber Singers, the Robert Shaw Institute Summer Choral Festivals in France and the United States and the famed Shaw/ Carnegie Hall Choral Workshops. He prepared the ASO Chorus for its acclaimed 2003 debut and successive 2008 and 2009 performances in Berlin with the Berlin Philharmonic, in Britten's *War Requiem*, Berlioz's *Grande Messe des Morts* and Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, respectively.

About the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus, founded in 1970 by former Music Director, Robert Shaw, is an all-volunteer, auditioned ensemble that performs on a regular basis with the Orchestra and is featured on many of its recordings. Led by Director of Choruses, Norman Mackenzie, the chorus is known for its precision and expressive singing quality. Its recordings have garnered 14 GRAMMY® Awards (nine for "Best Choral Performance"; four for "Best Classical Recording" and one for "Best Opera Recording"). In addition, the Chorus has been involved in the creation and shaping of numerous world-premiere commissioned works.

About the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Under the leadership of Music Director Nathalie Stutzmann, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) offers live performances, media initiatives, and learning programs that unite, educate and enrich our community through the engaging and transformative power of orchestral music experiences. The ASO engages the diverse international community of our city, bringing people together in harmony—including our youngest citizens, with extensive opportunities for youth and families to experience the power of live orchestra music.

The Orchestra's range and depth are featured in more than 150 concerts each year, including the flagship Delta Classical Series, Movies in Concert, Family Concerts, Coca-Cola Holiday series, and many community and education concerts. In addition, the ASO presents many vibrant, wide-ranging events and artists through its Delta Atlanta Symphony Hall Live presentations. The ASO also performs regularly with the ASO Chorus, originally founded by Robert Shaw, and currently under the direction of Norman Mackenzie. The Chorus is featured on nine of the ASO's 27 GRAMMY® Award-winning recordings.

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