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THE ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PERFORMS RACHMANINOFF'S FIRST SYMPHONY

With GRAMMY® Award-Winning Violinist Jennifer Koh performing Philip Glass' Violin Concerto No. 1

ATLANTA – The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra welcomes back Jerry Hou, the ASO's former Resident Conductor, and violinist Jennifer Koh in a program of late Romantic to contemporary works, including a world premiere from composer Nicky Sohn, on Thursday and Friday, April 9 and 10, at 8 pm at Atlanta Symphony Hall.

Jerry Hou, a celebrated interpreter of contemporary music, kicks off the program with the world premiere of *A Tale of the Bunny and the Turtle* from Nicky Sohn, winner of the 2024 Rapido!® Take Seven Contest. Sohn, acclaimed for her "colorful orchestration" (*NewsBrite*), reimagines a popular Korean folktale of a turtle's quest to heal an ailing Dragon King and a rabbit's wit through a jazz-inspired, rhythmic backdrop.

Joining the orchestra for the next work is violinist Jennifer Koh, described as, "a risk-taking, high-octane player...who grabs the listener by the ears and refuses to let go," (*The Strad*) and "one of the most important violinists..." (*The New York Times*). She interprets Philip Glass' virtuosic and lyrical Violin Concerto No. 1. A frequent collaborator with the composer, Koh told *Strings Magazine* that when performing this concerto, "You really have to think about how to shape every single note, and how to create a whole world in one phrase."

The Orchestra ends on a high with Rachmaninoff's heroically intense First Symphony. Rachmaninoff, "the last of the Romantics," takes the Orchestra and audience on a four-movement journey through "Dies Irae" plainchant, lyrical yearning, Russian dance, and more.

Tickets for these concerts are now on sale at aso.org.

CALENDAR LISTING

Rachmaninoff's First Symphony

Thursday, April 9, 2026, 8pm

Friday, April 10, 2026, 8pm

Jerry Hou, conductor

Jennifer Koh, violin

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

NICKY SOHN: *A Tale of the Bunny and the Turtle* (world premiere)

PHILIP GLASS: Violin Concerto No. 1

RACHMANINOFF: Symphony No. 1

After a career spanning 60 years, Philip Glass still sits at the cutting edge of music. He's influenced generations of classical composers, as well as David Bowie and The Talking Heads. He's worked with Martin Scorsese, Mick Jagger, and Leonard Cohen. Grammy® award-winning violinist Jennifer Koh returns to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra to play what's been called the "best concerto of the last 50 years" (ClassicFM.com), Philip Glass' Violin Concerto No. 1. The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra welcomes the return of local favorite Jerry Hou, a rising star on the contemporary music scene, to conduct a world-premiere composition by the jazz-inspired composer Nicky Sohn. The evening goes out with a bang in Rachmaninoff's galloping Symphony No. 1.

About Jerry Hou

Taiwanese-American conductor Jerry Hou is building community and revitalizing the music field via collaboration with some of today's most important musical voices.

Born in Taiwan and raised in a small town in Arkansas, Hou had a late start in music. Beginning on trombone in middle school band, he went on to work professionally in American and European orchestras before his playing career was ended by injury. Turning to conducting studies with Jorma Panula in Finland, he is now recognized for his dynamic presence, insightful interpretations, musical versatility, and commanding technique on the podium. Hou is the newly appointed Music Director of the Wyoming Symphony, beginning in the fall of 2025. This past season, he made successful debuts with the Oregon Symphony Orchestra, Evergreen Symphony Orchestra, and Civic Orchestra of Chicago. In addition, he had return engagements with the New York Philharmonic and ProMusica Orchestra Columbus.

In 2021, Hou began a close association with the New York Philharmonic and former music director Jaap van Zweden, assisting him and guest conductors. Hou first conducted the orchestra in the tuning of the newly renovated David Geffen Hall and made his successful debut in the spring of 2023. Hou returned in 2024 to conduct seven concerts in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the New York Philharmonic Young People's Concerts.

Hou recently concluded his celebrated tenure as Resident Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the first person to hold the position in the orchestra's history, and Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra. He conducted the ASO in classical, family, and educational concerts, and made his subscription debut in a program of music by Joan Tower, Jessie Montgomery, and Bela Bartok. Committed to developing the Atlanta music community, Hou created the *Second Atlanta School of Composers*, featuring Atlanta natives Joel Thompson, Carlos Simon, Viet Cuong, Sarah Gibson, TJ Cole, and Elise Arancio. Hou also served as Resident Conductor of the Grand Teton Music Festival for seven summers, leading the festival orchestra in subscription, family, and educational concerts.

Known for his flexibility in many styles and genres, Hou has conducted a wide range of repertoire from classical to contemporary. A leading interpreter and conductor of contemporary music, he has collaborated with acclaimed composers such as Kevin Puts, Andrew Norman, Steve Reich, Joel Thompson, Anthony Davis, Peter Eötvös, Melinda Wagner, George Lewis, Alvin Singleton, Gyorgy Kurtag, Unsuk Chin, Brett Dean, Mark-Anthony Turnage, and Carlos Simon. Hou has conducted leading new music ensembles such as Ensemble Modern, Ensemble Signal, Remix Ensemble, Grossman Ensemble, and Alarm Will Sound.

Hou is on the faculty of Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, where he is Artist Teacher of Orchestras and Ensembles. He lives in Houston with his wife Jenny and son Remy and has competed on the game show *Jeopardy!*.

About Jennifer Koh

Grammy® Award-winning violinist Jennifer Koh is recognized for her fierce musical intelligence, dazzling virtuosity, and relentless commitment to innovation in classical music. Renowned for her ability to bridge centuries of repertoire with bold contemporary voices, she has premiered over 100 works and redefined the role of the modern violinist through her commissioning projects, interdisciplinary collaborations, and curatorial leadership.

Koh's 2025–2026 season highlights her dynamic presence both on stage and behind the scenes. Now in her third year as Artistic Director of the Fortas Chamber Music Concerts at the Kennedy Center, she continues to shape the series with a focus on artistic equity, musical evolution, and bold new work. Under her leadership, Fortas has commissioned over 40 new compositions to date. This season, as part of the series, Koh performs *Bridge to Beethoven* with longtime collaborator pianist Thomas Sauer, pairing Beethoven's "Kreutzer" Sonata with Vijay Iyer's *Bridgetower Fantasy*. She has also curated performances by artists including Nicholas Phan and Myra Huang, Brentano Quartet with Hsin-Yun Huang, Takács Quartet with Jordan Bak, Viano Quartet with Anthony McGill, and yMusic.

Koh begins the season in residence at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music in Singapore and performs Brahms's Violin Concerto with the Shreveport Symphony conducted by Michael Buttermann. Additional engagements include a San Francisco Performances recital with Sauer featuring the west coast premiere of Tania León's *Para*, and performances honoring Philip Glass' 90th Birthday Violin with the Vermont Symphony and the Atlanta Symphony, performing his Violin Concerto No. 1.

She returns to her alma mater for an extended residency with Oberlin College's Contemporary Music Ensemble, where she will continue exploring her New American Concerto series, a multi-year initiative reimagining the violin concerto form through collaborations with composers. This year, the programs feature Courtney Bryan's *Syzygy*, a work inspired by artists Alma Thomas, Frida Kahlo, and Maya Ying Lin, with movements corresponding to each artist's work, and Vijay Iyer's *Trouble*. She will also appear with the Boulder Philharmonic performing Barber's Violin Concerto.

Founder of the nonprofit ARCO Collaborative, Koh advocates for works by women and artists of color and remains a powerful voice for inclusion and innovation in classical music. She is also on faculty at the Mannes School of Music and frequently appears in residence at major universities.

For more, visit jenniferkoh.com.

About Nicky Sohn

Selected as one of the “Cool 100” by *Houston CityBook Magazine* alongside icons such as Simone Biles and Megan Thee Stallion, composer Nicky Sohn is a versatile and sought after voice in contemporary classical music. With a distinctive style characterized by jazz inspired, rhythmically driven themes, her work has been praised internationally as “undoubtedly the crowd pleaser of the evening” (*YourObserver*), “dynamic and full of vitality” (*The Korea Defense Daily*), showcasing “colorful orchestration” (*NewsBrite*), and evoking “elegant wonder” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*). In 2026, the American Academy of Arts and Letters selected her to receive the Charles Ives Fellowship, a prestigious honor awarded annually to only two young professional composers of extraordinary gifts.

Recent highlights include the premiere of Sohn’s guitar concerto with the Albany Symphony featuring guitarist Bokyoung Byun, followed by a sinfonietta performance at the Tanglewood Music Festival. She also composed a large scale ballet for Ballet Collective, premiered at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City in collaboration with choreographer Alysa Pires and visual artist Linn Meyers. Additional projects include a cello concerto commissioned by the University of Iowa and recorded by the Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra, and *Galaxy Back to You* for the Balourdet Quartet, commissioned following their Avery Fisher Career Grant win and featured on their debut CD.

Her spring 2026 includes three orchestral premieres with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestra Lumos. She is currently developing a new orchestral work for the Amarillo Symphony for their 2026–27 season.

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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