



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 17, 2026**

**CONTACTS:**

Ashley Mirakian, [ashley.mirakian@atlantasymphony.org](mailto:ashley.mirakian@atlantasymphony.org)

Camille McClain, [camille.mcclain@atlantasymphony.org](mailto:camille.mcclain@atlantasymphony.org)

**VIOLINIST JOSHUA BELL PERFORMS WITH THE ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**Tickets on sale today for this one-night-only performance**

**ATLANTA** – Superstar violinist Joshua Bell, one of the most celebrated violinists of his generation, returns to perform with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for one night only on Wednesday, September 16, at Atlanta Symphony Hall.

Conductor Michael Stern opens the concert with Prokofiev's Symphony No. 1, "Classical." Amid the bleakness of Modern Russia during World War I, Prokofiev summons classical-era composers to create a sunny sonic dichotomy, considered the best-known of his seven symphonies.

The most anticipated work of the evening follows, as Joshua Bell performs Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*. Bell, praised as the "most perfect interpreter of this generation," (*Houston Chronicle*) brings expressive virtuosity to this vibrant work infused with Spanish flair. With a career spanning four decades and celebrated performances with the world's leading orchestras, Joshua Bell's interpretation of *Symphonie espagnole* promises to be memorable.

The evening ends with the full Orchestra performing Rachmaninoff's Prokofiev-inspired rhythmic romp, *Symphonic Dances*, known for its full showcase of a virtuosic orchestra.

Tickets for this concert are on sale today at [aso.org](http://aso.org).

**CALENDAR LISTING**

Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 8pm

Michael Stern, conductor

Joshua Bell, violin

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

PROKOFIEV: Symphony No. 1, "Classical"

LALO: *Symphonie espagnole*

RACHMANINOFF: *Symphonic Dances*

Violin superstar Joshua Bell returns to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for one night only in an evening of swaggering, non-stop fun. Conductor Michael Stern presents Prokofiev's snappy and impish "Classical" Symphony. Joshua Bell adds the smoky, violinistic fireworks to Lalo's zesty paean to Spanish dance, *Symphonie espagnole*. And the crack musicians of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra shimmer in Rachmaninoff's swashbuckling orchestral showcase, the *Symphonic Dances*.

### **About Joshua Bell**

With a career spanning almost four decades, Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell CBE is one of the most celebrated artists of our time. He has performed with virtually every major orchestra in the world, and regularly appears as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, conductor, and as the Music Director of London's Academy of St Martin in the Fields (ASMF). In 2025, he was awarded an honorary Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for services to Music.

Bell continues to champion the rediscovered Violin Concerto by Thomas de Hartmann in the 2025-26 season, following his world premiere recording of the work. He gives its UK premiere at London's BBC Proms, its North American premiere with the New York Philharmonic, and its Canadian premiere during his season-long tenure as a Toronto Symphony Spotlight Artist. With ASMF, he leads extensive tours, including returns to Vienna Konzerthaus and Carnegie Hall. Other highlights include his first appearances as Principal Guest Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony; an Asian tour with Hamburg's NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra; trio programs with Steven Isserlis and Evgeny Kissin in the U.S. and Europe; and duo recitals with Jeremy Denk at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Ravinia Festival.

In 2011, Bell succeeded founder Sir Neville Marriner as Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. He is also the Founder and Music Director of Chamber Orchestra of America (COA), which aims to empower the next generation of artists.

Bell has commissioned and premiered works by John Corigliano, Edgar Meyer, and Nicholas Maw. His recording of Maw's Violin Concerto won a Grammy Award, and his work on the film soundtrack for *The Red Violin* helped secure Corigliano's Academy Award.

Bell's collaborators include Emanuel Ax, Chris Botti, Chick Corea, Renée Fleming, Josh Groban, Lang Lang, Dave Matthews, Anoushka Shankar, Regina Spektor, Sting, and Daniil Trifonov. He has made three guest-star appearances on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson and numerous appearances on the Amazon series *Mozart in the Jungle*.

His extensive discography has been recognized with Grammy, Mercury, Gramophone, and Opus Klassik awards.

Born in Bloomington, Indiana, Bell began playing the violin at age four, starting studies with his mentor, Josef Gingold, eight years later. At 14, Bell debuted with Riccardo Muti and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and at 17 he made his Carnegie Hall debut with the St. Louis Symphony. He signed with his first label, London Decca, at 18, when he also received the Avery Fisher Career Grant. Since then, Bell has been nominated for six Grammy Awards, named “Instrumentalist of the Year” by *Musical America*, selected as a “Young Global Leader” by the World Economic Forum, and recognized with the Avery Fisher Prize. He received the 2003 Indiana Governor’s Arts Award

and, in 2000, was honored as an “Indiana Living Legend.” Bell has performed for three American presidents and the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. After participating in former president Barack Obama’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities’ first cultural mission to Cuba, he headlined the subsequent Emmy-nominated PBS *Live from Lincoln Center* special.

Bell performs on the 1713 Huberman Stradivarius violin.

### **About Michael Stern**

Conductor Michael Stern has long been devoted to building and leading highly acclaimed orchestras known not only for their impeccable musicianship and creative programming, but also for collaborative, sustainable cultures that often include a vision of music as service to the community. He also is passionate about working with young musicians not only in music making, but also to incorporate the idea of “service” into their experiences as they become the artists and advocates of the future who will take classical music into the 21st century and beyond.

Stern is Music Director of Orchestra Lumos (formerly the Stamford Symphony) and the National Repertory Orchestra, a summer music festival in Breckenridge, CO which, for over 60 years, has provided an intensive, unique fellowship program for aspiring young musicians, and whose alumni populate every major orchestra across the United States. He is Music Director Emeritus of the Kansas City Symphony where he just concluded his 19-year tenure at the end of the 2023-2024 season. Following a 22-year tenure as founding Artistic Director of Iris Orchestra in Germantown, Tennessee, he now serves the newly reimagined Iris Collective as Artistic Advisor.

During Stern’s tenure with the Kansas City Symphony, he and the orchestra have been recognized for their remarkable artistic ascent, original programming, organizational development, stability, and extraordinary audience growth. Under Stern’s leadership, the orchestra explored a wide range of repertoire and commissioned a number of new works. Stern and the KC Symphony also partnered with GRAMMY® Award-winning

Reference Recordings for a collection of very well-received CDs that includes commissions by American composer Adam Schoenberg and by Jonathan Leshnoff, whose Symphony No. 3, inspired by World War I soldiers' letters home, was premiered by the KC Symphony at the National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City. The orchestra's Reference Recordings releases also include Gustav Holst's "The Planets"; a pairing of music Elgar and Vaughan Williams; "Miraculous Metamorphoses," with music by Hindemith, Prokofiev and Bartók; and a disc of works by Saint-Saëns. In 2021, Stern and the orchestra put out another widely praised recording, bringing together three one-movement symphonies by Sibelius, Barber, and Scriabin.

Stern co-founded Iris Orchestra in 2000 and was Founding Artistic Director and Principal Conductor until 2021-22, when he had planned to step down from his post. With his departure, staff, community and musicians joined together to reinvent the orchestra as the Iris Collective, devising a new way for a 21st-century organization to offer a spectrum of events, from chamber music and smaller ensemble programs to full orchestral performances, while also prioritizing a variety of community engagement initiatives. This new model of the Iris Collective is built on the strong foundation created during Stern's 22-year tenure, when the orchestra was widely praised for its musical virtuosity; programming that included acclaimed new commissions by American composers; a flexible, non-hierarchical structure; and the active partnership of its musicians. The Iris Collective will team up with a number of creative partners, including Stern, who will also continue his involvement as Artistic Advisor.

As part of his ongoing activities to engage and mentor young musicians, he was asked by Yo-Yo Ma to be the Music Director of YMCG, Youth Music Culture Guangdong, where he and Ma worked with students and young professionals in partnership with the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra. He has also been invited to the National Orchestral Institute, Music Academy of the West, and has been a regular guest at the Aspen Music Festival and School, where he also worked with students at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen.

Stern's illustrious American conducting engagements have included the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood; the Chicago Symphony at Ravinia; the Atlanta Symphony; and the Minnesota Orchestra. He debuted with the New York Philharmonic in 1986 in a program titled, "Leonard Bernstein and Three Young America Conductors." He conducted the New York Philharmonic again in 2001, at several NY Philharmonic Concerts in the Parks and at PNC Bank Performing Arts Center with Audra McDonald; in 2018, he conducted the film score to *The Red Violin* at David Geffen Hall with soloist Joshua Bell. Stern has served as guest conductor with the Philadelphia Orchestra for performances at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, the National Arts Centre in

Ottawa, Ravinia, the Napa Valley Festival del Sole and at the Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition in China.

Internationally, he has led major orchestras in London, Stockholm, Paris, Helsinki, Budapest, Israel, and Moscow, Taiwan, and Tokyo. Stern has been Chief Conductor of Germany's Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra (the first American chief conductor in the orchestra's history), Principal\* Guest Conductor of the Orchestre National de Lyon in France, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestre National de Lille, France.

Stern received his music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where his primary teacher was the noted conductor and scholar Max Rudolf. Stern co-edited the third edition of Rudolf's famous textbook, *The Grammar of Conducting*, and a collection of Rudolf's writing, *A Musical Life: Writings and Letters (Dimension & Diversity)*. Stern is a 1981 graduate of Harvard University, where he earned a degree in American history. In addition to Rudolf, he counts Leonard Bernstein, David Zinman and Charles Bruck among those who have been a major influence on his musical life.

### **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.

###