

 HANCHER AUDITORIUM

**JOSHUA BELL**  
AND THE **ACADEMY**  
**OF ST MARTIN**  
**IN THE FIELDS**

**JOSHUA BELL**, MUSIC DIRECTOR & VIOLIN

Wednesday, March 11, 2025  
7:30 p.m.

**IOWA**

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# JOSHUA BELL AND THE ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS

JOSHUA BELL, music director & violin

Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.  
Hancher Auditorium, the University of Iowa

## PROGRAM

Charles IVES  
arr. Iain FARRINGTON

*Variations on "America"*

Camille SAINT-SAËNS

Violin Concerto No. 3 in B Minor, op. 61

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Andantino quasi allegretto

III. Molto moderato e maestoso;  
Allegro non troppo

**Joshua Bell, violin**

INTERMISSION

Antonín DVOŘÁK

Symphony No. 8 in G Major, op. 88

I. Allegro con brio

II. Adagio

III. Allegretto grazioso; Molto vivace

IV. Allegro ma non troppo

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*The position of Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields is generously supported by the Berry Charitable Foundation.*

*ASMF's work in the USA is kindly supported by the American Friends of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields (President, Maria Cardamone).*

*Find out more about the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and keep in touch at: [asmf.org](http://asmf.org)*

*Joshua Bell appears by arrangement with Park Avenue Artists ([parkavenueartists.com](http://parkavenueartists.com)) and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Mr. Bell records exclusively for Sony Classical – a MASTERWORKS label.*

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Matthew Ward  
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# PROGRAM NOTES

## CHARLES IVES

BORN: October 20, 1874, Danbury, CT

DIED: May 19, 1954, New York, NY

### *Variations on "America"* (arr. Iain Farrington)

WORK COMPOSED: 1891–1892

It feels especially fitting, in a year marking the 250th anniversary of the United States, to open with music by Charles Ives—the composer who has come to embody the “maverick” streak in American musical history. Yet Ives’s *Variations on “America”* comes not from the iconoclast of legend but from the astonishingly gifted teenager who already showed signs of the independence and irreverence that would define his mature voice.

Ives wrote the piece in 1891, when he was seventeen. By then he was already a seasoned church organist—he had held his first post at fourteen in Danbury—and he later performed the *Variations* as a Fourth of July offertory at the Methodist church in Brewster, New York, where he soon took up a new organ position. The premise is straightforward: a set of variations on “America” (also known as “My Country, ’Tis of Thee”), the patriotic hymn that generations of schoolchildren grew up singing.

The tune itself has an older life: it first took shape as the 18th-century British anthem “God Save the King,” whose composer is unknown—and which remains the United

Kingdom’s national anthem today. Americans adopted it with new words in 1831, when Samuel Francis Smith fashioned the patriotic hymn “America” from the familiar melody. For decades, it served as the young nation’s unofficial anthem, lodged deep in public memory.

The young Ives approaches this familiar melody with gleeful freedom. His variations twist, refract, parody, and celebrate the tune all at once—with surprise key changes, rhythmic disruptions, and sly harmonic jokes that would not become fashionable for decades. Even as a teenager, he was quietly remaking the rules.

The piece later entered the orchestral world through the American composer William Schuman’s well-known arrangement from the early 1960s. Tonight, however, we hear a new version by the British organist, composer, and arranger Iain Farrington, whose vivid, stylistically alert orchestrations have made him a favorite of ensembles across the UK. There’s a certain irresistible irony in hearing this most American of youthful provocations through the bright, clear sonorities of a

quintessentially British chamber orchestra, yet the match proves ideal: Farrington's scoring preserves

the sparkle and mischief of Ives's original while giving the music a fresh, modern sheen.

## CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

BORN: October 9, 1835, Paris, France

DIED: December 16, 1921, Algiers, Algeria

### **Concerto No. 3 in B Minor, op. 61**

WORK COMPOSED: 1880

WORLD PREMIERE: October 1880, Hamburg

Camille Saint-Saëns's long life (1835–1921) stretched from the high Romantic generation through the upheavals of the First World War and the uneasy beginnings of Modernism. He championed the revolutionary advances of Liszt and Wagner, yet recoiled from the later innovations of Debussy and Stravinsky. Though he composed prolifically across every major genre—even writing early film scores—only a handful of works have stayed firmly in the repertory. Many of these date from the 1870s and 1880s, his peak decades: *Danse macabre*, *Samson and Delilah*, *The Carnival of the Animals*, *the Organ Symphony*, and the Third Violin Concerto.

Saint-Saëns understood the concerto form from the inside out—a fluency that performers like Joshua Bell respond to instinctively. His writing gives the soloist room to shape a line with freedom, yet always within a firm architectural frame.

A virtuoso pianist from childhood, Saint-Saëns introduced Beethoven's piano concertos to skeptical Parisian audiences and wrote five

for himself—after giving a debut at age ten in which he offered, as an encore, to play any Beethoven sonata the public might name, from memory. He found the concerto, with its inherently public, theatrical character, to be a form where elegance, clarity, and a refined sense of drama could coexist.

No wonder, then, that the Violin Concerto No. 3—composed in 1880 and written expressly for the great Spanish virtuoso Pablo de Sarasate—feels so poised and natural. The last of Saint-Saëns's three violin concertos, it is also the one most perfectly matched to Sarasate's artistry. Saint-Saëns had already indulged his taste for bravura display in the First Concerto, also written for Sarasate; here he offers something richer and more integrated, shaped by the violinist's lyricism rather than sheer athleticism.

Sarasate (1844–1908), to whom the concerto is dedicated, was one of the pivotal musicians of his era—in addition to his celebrity as a virtuoso violinist, he was a composer, a champion of new music, and an artist admired by

# PROGRAM NOTES

G.B. Shaw and painted by Whistler. His playing was famed for beauty of tone, purity of intonation, and effortless poise—qualities Saint-Saëns makes central to the expressive profile of this work. As the composer once wrote: “The artist who does not feel completely satisfied by elegant lines, by harmonious colors and by a beautiful succession of chords does not understand the art of music.” The Third Concerto seems built on that creed.

The first movement opens with a gesture reminiscent of Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto, with the soloist entering almost immediately over an agitated orchestral rustle. The violin states a stark, emphatic theme before melting into freer, more expressive phrases. This tension between gruff severity and lyrical release becomes the movement’s governing contrast. A sweet, high-lying melody—one of Saint-Saëns’s most grateful inspirations—softens the mood before the opening idea returns in altered forms.

The slow movement, *Andantino quasi allegretto*, is fluid and gently propelled, calculated to be played at a quicker pace than an *Andante*. Saint-Saëns described it as “a lake between two mountains,” and praised Sarasate’s ability to sound “as calm on the lake as he was agitated on the mountains.” The music’s lilting rhythm gives it a pastoral, almost dreamlike serenity,

with delicate woodwind writing supporting the violin’s purity of line. It is the concerto’s oasis: intimate and perfectly proportioned.

The finale is the most expansive movement, and the most structurally adventurous. Saint-Saëns begins with a surprising flourish: the violin launches what seems like a passionate cadenza spanning its full range, only to be interrupted by an orchestral recitative. Then the tempo quickens, and the movement unfolds through a series of contrasting themes, among them a chorale-like melody that later returns in noble brass sonorities. This chorale helps steer the music toward a bright turn to the major key for the spirited, forward-driving coda.

## ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

BORN: September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Czechia

DIED: May 1, 1904, Prague, Czechia

### *Symphony No. 8 in G Major, op. 88*

WORK COMPOSED: 1889 in Vysoká u Příbramě, Bohemia

WORLD PREMIERE: February 1890 in Prague

Nearly a decade after Saint-Saëns completed his Third Violin Concerto, Antonín Dvořák had settled into life at his country home in Vysoká, about 30 miles south of Prague on land owned by his wealthy brother-in-law. It was a landscape he loved: woods alive with birdsong, quiet ponds, and long forest paths. Dvořák wandered these paths daily, chatting with villagers and letting musical ideas settle into place. He even converted an old sheep barn into a small house where he composed several of his best-known works, including, in 1889, the Eighth Symphony.

The Eighth emerged at a moment of renewed confidence. Dvořák's Seventh Symphony (1885), full of inner turmoil, had won validation the Czech composer long sought in a cultural climate often dominated by German-Austrian attitudes. He approached the new symphony "with individual thoughts worked out in a new way," as he put it—a deliberate contrast to the darker cast of the Seventh. The renowned conductor Hans Richter, reporting on the Vienna premiere of the Eighth Symphony, wrote: "You would have enjoyed this performance

very much. We all felt that it is a great work and so we were all enthusiastic."

Although the Eighth contains the Czech musical fingerprints one expects from Dvořák—buoyant rhythms, modal inflections, dance-like phrasing—its personality is even more deeply bound to the natural world of Vysoká. Some pages suggest a pastoral idyll; others veer into more ambiguous, even volatile territory. That blend of light and shade gives the symphony its unmistakable voice. The work was prompted in part by Dvořák's appointment to the Bohemian Academy of Science, Literature, and Arts, and he led members of Prague's National Theater Orchestra (where he had once played as a violist) in the premiere in February 1890.

The first movement opens in a gently veiled G minor, its melancholy theme emerging in the strings. This idea returns at several structural points, but the mood soon brightens into a radiant G major. This is music that feels like sunlight breaking suddenly through a canopy of leaves. The flute's birdsong, one of the movement's most memorable

# PROGRAM NOTES

gestures, functions not as mere ornamentation but as a true thematic idea. Pastoral calm coexists with brass-driven climaxes, and the movement grows from a handful of simple motifs that Dvořák recombines with a sense of organic growth.

Variation—so fundamental to the natural world Dvořák loved—shapes the Adagio's drama. The strings present the theme at the outset, and Dvořák spins a series of reflections: tender, brooding, and at times turbulent. One variation subtly recalls the birdsong of the first movement; another expands into a stormier, more dramatic scene. Instrumental color is essential to the movement's design, as the melody passes through the orchestra with constantly shifting timbre.

Instead of a scherzo, the third movement offers a melancholy waltz in G minor—elegant but wistful, as if filtered through memory. Its contrasting middle

section brings a gentle innocence, using material from an early one-act comic opera Dvořák had written many years before. The return of the waltz theme has a softened, almost nostalgic glow.

Launched by trumpet fanfares, the finale offers a set of variations on a two-part theme first stated by the cellos. These opening measures contain, in compressed form, yet another echo of the flute idea from the first movement, now transformed into something sturdier and more assertive. Dvořák's methods recall models he admired—Beethoven's *Eroica*, Brahms's transformational craft—but the result is unmistakably his own. The Symphony's final minutes are both magical and slyly humorous, as if the composer suddenly shakes off his reverie and urges the music toward a headlong, giddily exhilarating finish.

# ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS



Photo: Laurence Mueller

Founded in 1958 by Sir Neville Marriner, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields has evolved into a musical powerhouse, an orchestra renowned across the world for its commitment to the musical freedom of its players and the sharing of joyful, inspiring performances.

Today, with Music Director Joshua Bell, ASMF's player-led approach empowers every member of the orchestra. This creates a direct line and electrifying connection between the orchestra and our audiences, resulting in ambitious and collaborative performances that transcend the more traditional conductor-led model.

ASMF will present its most ambitious season of the last decade in 2025/26 continuing to collaborate with the world's great soloists and

directors, including Music Director Joshua Bell (including London's Cadogan Hall in January 2026), Jan Lisiecki, Steven Isserlis, Arthur & Lucas Jussen, Elena Urioste and Khatia Buniatishvili alongside exciting rising stars such as Arielle Beck. The orchestra also embarks on its most significant international season of the last decade, including four tours to the U.S., ASMF's return after 20 years to NYC's Carnegie Hall and four separate tours to countries across Europe.

ASMF welcomes the second year of its partnership as Principal Orchestral Partner at the Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields with a season of concerts launching with a BBC Radio 3-broadcast performance with the inaugural ASMF BBC New Generation Associate Julius Asaf. Further

# ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS

concerts include a celebration of the film *Amadeus*, the world premiere of a new symphony from Eleanor Alberga, and a celebration of the 70th birthday of composer and former ASMF orchestra member and Composer-in-Residence Sally Beamish.

Beyond the concert hall, our commitment to a social purpose manifests in impactful projects that harness the power of music to empower people. We have a longstanding history of work which connects with people experiencing homelessness, and our education projects develop autonomy and creativity among emerging musicians worldwide. This season we extend our growing programme in London to be delivered in cities around the world.

Our collective artistic responsibility fosters enduring collaborations with world-renowned soloists, exemplified by our 15-year partnership with music director and virtuoso violinist Joshua Bell. These collaborations showcase the benefits of trust and true artistic collaboration developed over time.

Building on its rich global legacy, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields remains one of the world's most-recorded orchestras, igniting a love for classical music in people around the world through live performance and digital initiatives. Today, we continue a busy international touring programme alongside a significant presence in the U.K. —making us one of the country's most celebrated cultural exports.

# JOSHUA BELL

## MUSIC DIRECTOR & VIOLIN

With a career spanning almost four decades, Grammy Award-winning violinist Joshua Bell 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 the 2025–26 season, Bell continues to champion the rediscovered Violin Concerto by Thomas de Hartmann, following his recent Diapason D'Or-winning world premiere recording of the work. After giving its UK premiere at London's BBC Proms, he performs the concerto with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, and Oslo Philharmonic, and gives its Canadian premiere during his season-long tenure as a Toronto Symphony Spotlight Artist. With ASMF, he leads extensive tours on both sides of the Atlantic, including returns to the Vienna Konzerthaus and New York's Carnegie Hall. Other orchestral highlights include his first appearances as Principal Guest Conductor of the New Jersey Symphony; concerto dates with the Houston Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Naples Philharmonic, and Ottawa's National Arts Centre Orchestra; and concerts and an Asian tour with Hamburg's NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. As well as giving recitals in the U.S. and Europe, Bell joins Steven Isserlis and Evgeny Kissin for trio programs in New York, Kansas City, Paris, Vienna, and Prague, and



Photo: Matthew Johnson

reunites with Jeremy Denk for duo recitals at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Ravinia Festival.

In 2011, Bell was named Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, succeeding Sir Neville Marriner, who founded the orchestra in 1959. Bell's history with the Academy dates back to 1986, when he first recorded the Bruch and Mendelssohn concertos with Marriner and the orchestra. Bell has since led the orchestra on several albums, including the 2019 Grammy-nominated *Bruch: Scottish Fantasy*. In April 2024, the Academy announced the extension of his contract through the 2027–28 season. Bell is also the Founder and Music Director of the Chamber Orchestra of America (COA), which aims to empower the next generation of artists through performance opportunities, mentorship, and educational outreach initiatives. In April 2025,

# JOSHUA BELL

## MUSIC DIRECTOR & VIOLIN

COA made its debut at TED2025, where Bell gave a TED Talk about the power of live orchestras in today's tech-filled world.

Bell has commissioned and premiered new works by John Corigliano, Edgar Meyer, Behzad Ranjbaran, and Nicholas Maw, winning a Grammy Award for his recording of Maw's Violin Concerto. In 2023–24, he introduced his newly commissioned concerto project, *The Elements*, a five-movement suite by renowned living composers Jake Heggie, Jennifer Higdon, Edgar Meyer, Jessie Montgomery, and Kevin Puts. Bell gave the work's premiere performances with Hamburg's NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra and the Hong Kong Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, and Seattle Symphony.

Bell's many collaborators include Emanuel Ax, Chris Botti, Chick Corea, Renée Fleming, Josh Groban, Lang Lang, Dave Matthews, Anoushka Shankar, Regina Spektor, Sting, and Daniil Trifonov.

As an exclusive Sony Classical artist, Bell has recorded more than 40 albums, winning Grammy, Mercury, Gramophone, Diapason D'Or, and Opus Klassik awards. He is currently recording Fauré's chamber music with Steven Isserlis and Jeremy Denk, who previously partnered with him on a 2024 Mendelssohn trios release that was a Gramophone "Editor's Choice." Bell's 2019 Amazon Originals Chopin Nocturne arrangement

was the first classical release of its kind on Amazon Music, and his 2013 album with ASMF, on which he conducts Beethoven's Fourth and Seventh symphonies, debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* charts.

Bell worked with John Corigliano on the film soundtrack for *The Red Violin* (1998), which won the composer an Academy Award and made Bell a household name. Since then, he has appeared on several other soundtracks, including *Ladies in Lavender* (2004) and *Defiance* (2008). To commemorate the 20th anniversary of *The Red Violin*, he performed with live orchestra to screenings of the film at festivals and with the New York Philharmonic. He appeared three times as a guest star on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson and made numerous appearances on the Amazon series *Mozart in the Jungle*. Bell is also featured on six *Live from Lincoln Center* specials, as well as on a PBS *Great Performances* episode, "Joshua Bell: West Side Story in Central Park." In 2020, PBS presented *Joshua Bell: At Home with Music*, a nationwide broadcast produced entirely in lockdown by Tony and Emmy Award-winning director Dori Berinstein. Sony Classical subsequently released the companion album: *Joshua Bell: At Home with Music (Live)*.

A keen advocate for accessible music education, Bell received the 2022 Paez Medal of Art from the Venezuelan American Endowment for the Arts, and the 2019 Glashütte Original Music Festival Award,

presented in association with the Dresden Music Festival. He has also partnered with Trala, the tech-powered violin learning app; is actively involved with Education Through Music and Turnaround Arts; and, in 2014, mentored and performed alongside National YoungArts Foundation string musicians in an HBO Family Documentary special, *Joshua Bell: A YoungArts Masterclass*.

Through an ongoing partnership with Embertone, the leading virtual instrument sampling company, Bell launched the Joshua Bell Virtual Violin. A sampler for producers, engineers, artists, and composers, this is widely considered the best virtual instrument of its kind. He also collaborated with Sony PlayStation 4 VR on the Joshua Bell VR experience, which features Bell and pianist Sam Haywood performing in full 360-degree VR.

In 2007, a Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* story, about Bell performing incognito in a Washington, D.C. metro station, sparked an ongoing conversation about artistic reception. This inspired Kathy Stinson's 2013 children's book, *The Man with the Violin*, and an animated film with music by Academy Award-winning composer Anne Dudley. Illustrated by Dušan Petričić, Stinson's 2017 book, *Dance with the Violin*, offers a glimpse into one of Bell's childhood competition experiences. Bell debuted the "Man with the Violin" festival at the Kennedy Center that same year, later presenting a "Man

with the Violin" family concert with the Seattle Symphony.

Born in Bloomington, Indiana, Bell began playing the violin at the age of four and started 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 has also received the 2003 Indiana Governor's Arts Award and, in 1991, a Distinguished Alumni Service Award from the Jacobs School of Music. In 2000, he was named an "Indiana Living Legend." Bell has performed for three American presidents and the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. He participated in former president Barack Obama's Committee on the Arts and Humanities' first cultural mission to Cuba, subsequently joining Cuban and American musicians for an Emmy-nominated PBS *Live from Lincoln Center* special. Titled *Joshua Bell: Seasons of Cuba*, this celebrated the renewal of cultural diplomacy between Cuba and the United States.

Bell performs on the 1713 Huberman Stradivarius violin.

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Steve & Janie Schomberg  
Ralph Schultz Family Foundation  
Charlotte & Rudy Schulz Director's Fund  
Marvin & Helen Schumacher  
Thomas R. Scott  
Hazel H. Seaba  
Nancy J. Sereduck  
Aaron & Lisa Shileny  
Shive-Hattery Architecture + Engineering  
Richard & Vicki Siefers  
Jonathan Simmons  
John & Dyan Smith  
Elliott & Caroline Sohn  
Jim Spevak  
Daniel R. & Beth Holden Stence  
Anna & Jeff Stone  
Edwin & Mary Stone  
Strauss Family  
Lyse Strnad & Tom Leavenworth  
Kristin E. Summerwill  
Suzanne Summerwill & James Flitz  
W. Richard (1935–2025) & Joyce Summerwill  
Melvin and Diane (1943–2025) Sunshine  
Alan & Liz Swanson

The Chuck Swanson Executive  
Directorship of Hancher Auditorium Fund  
Think Iowa City  
James & Robin Torner  
Dick & Buffie Tucker  
Douglas & Vance Van Daele  
The Rhoda Vernon Endowment  
Bill Waldie & Pat Heiden  
Anne Wallace & William Gay  
Stuart & Lynn Weinstein  
Paul Weller & Sara Rynes-Weller  
Stephen & Victoria West  
West Music  
Ryan & Amanda West  
LaDonna & Gary Wicklund  
Ellen M. Widiss  
Candace Wiebener  
Derek & Pamela Willard  
Barbara Wilson & John Lammers  
in memory of Wally Chappell  
James & Lena Wockenfuss  
Sara & Sherwood Wolfson  
Educational Fund  
Steve Wolken & Sue Montgomery Wolken  
George & Carrol Woodworth  
Catherine Zaharis & Robert Michael  
Deborah & Rodney Zeitler

HANCHER'S 2025-2026 SEASON IS DEDICATED TO

# WALLY CHAPPELL



Above: Robert Joffrey (left) with Wally Chappell (right) backstage at the original Hancher Auditorium in 1986.

We recently lost a major member of our Hancher family. Former executive director and forever friend Wally Chappell peacefully passed away in April of 2025 in Iowa City at the age of 83. His incredible wife Karen was by his side. Wally was a leader at Hancher Auditorium and the University of Iowa, a force within the field of the arts, and an unmatched champion for culture in Iowa City. He was full of love for people, passion for experiencing the world (art, food, adventure!), and always advocating for his community.

Our giants cannot be replaced, but they can be remembered with awe, joy, and sadness all at once. We can carry forward the values and inspiration they left behind. Our Hancher family will always build upon the incredible legacy left for us by Wally. He is a hero in our minds and his spirit is forever in our hearts.

  
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