



# AN EVENING OF FIRSTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, AT 7 PM  
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MARCH 18 & 19, AT 8 PM

## NASHVILLE SYMPHONY

GIANCARLO GUERRERO, *conductor*

JOSÉ SIBAJA, *cornet*

**JOHN ADAMS**  
*The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra*

**12 minutes**

**BRAD WARNAAR**  
**Cornet Concerto**

**20 minutes**

*Live Recording*

*I. "and you are?..."*

*Nashville Symphony Commission*

*II. Bill Moore*

*World Premiere*

*III. The Ta-ca-Ta-ca Toccata*

**José Sibaja**, *cornet*

### INTERMISSION

**20 minutes**

**C.F. KIP WINGER**  
**Symphony No. 1, "Atonement"**

**26 minutes**

*Live Recording*

*S.O.S. (... - - - ...)*

*Nashville Symphony Commission*

*Eleos (. . . . - - - ...)*

*World Premiere*

*Metamorphosis (- - . . . - - - - - . . . . . - - - - - . . . . .)*

*Metanoia (- - . . . - - - - - . . .)*

**SAMUEL BARBER**  
**Symphony No. 1, Op. 9,**  
**"Symphony in One Movement"**

**20 minutes**

*Allegro ma non troppo*

*Allegro molto*

*Andante tranquillo*

*Con moto (Passacaille)*

CLASSICAL  
SERIES PARTNER



This concert will be recorded live for future broadcast. To ensure the highest-quality recording, please keep noise to a minimum.

## AT A GLANCE

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An evening of firsts means an evening of discovery: for this all-American program, only one of the four composers is no longer alive, and two of the works are being heard in world premieres. John Adams, who has just reached the eminent age of 75, remains as active as ever and is completing another opera. *The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra* dates from early in his career, when Adams was first gaining international prominence, and bridges his enormously influential work for the concert hall and opera house. This widely performed piece blends a free-wheeling use of Minimalist devices with evocations of popular American styles from the past.

A veteran of the film score world, Brad Warnaar complements his Horn Concerto introduced by Nashville Symphony in 2017 with a rare example of a concerto for the cornet, a cousin of the trumpet that produces a mellower, more singing tone quality. Warnaar channels the spirit of the John Philip Sousa Band's principal cornet and also pays homage, tender and humorous, to present-day colleagues and friends.

With his Symphony No. 1, the metal and glam rock star C. F. Kip Winger continues his development as a composer working with the potential offered by an orchestra. The impetus for previous works—such as *Conversations with Nijinsky*, performed by the Nashville Symphony in 2017—was the ballet stage, but with his inaugural venture into the genre of the symphony, Winger has taken an autobiographical direction that uses symbolic patterns drawn from Morse code to trace a process of a lost soul's atonement.

We end with the oldest music on the program: the brilliant symphonic debut of the young Samuel Barber, which he composed in his late 20s while living in Europe. The Symphony No. 1 distills the four-movement design of a classical symphony into a single, event-crowded movement. Inspired by the example of Jean Sibelius in his Seventh Symphony, Barber reworks the three themes presented at the outset over the course of the work to reinforce the cohesion of the whole.

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# JOHN ADAMS

## *The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra*

Born on February 15, 1947, in Worcester, Massachusetts

Currently lives in Berkeley, California

**Composed:**  
1985

**Estimated length:**  
12 minutes



**First performance:**

January 31, 1986,  
Lukas Foss conducting the Milwaukee Symphony

**First Nashville Symphony performance:**

February 16, 1990, conducted by Kenneth Schermerhorn at War Memorial Auditorium.

Just last month, John Adams turned 75, and the year promises to be a creative milestone as well for this living American treasure. In September, San Francisco Opera will launch its 100th-anniversary season with the world premiere of his new opera *Antony and Cleopatra*, to a libretto the composer himself has crafted from Shakespeare as well as classical sources. *The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra* takes us back to the years when Adams was first emerging on the international scene with his debut opera, *Nixon in China*, which premiered at Houston Grand Opera in 1987. The Bay Area-based Adams composed *Nixon* after completing a landmark residency with the San Francisco Symphony. The residency culminated in the 1985 premiere of his orchestral work *Harmonielehre*, now a staple of the contemporary concert repertory.

*Nixon in China* was the first of Adams's collaborations with the pathbreaking stage director Peter Sellars. Its premise was to take a deep look into an iconic media event of recent history: the trip President Nixon made to normalize relations with the People's Republic of China in 1972. Beneath the surface of photo ops lurked the potential for a dramatic exploration of the clash of ideologies as well as a reflection on the intermingling of the personal and the political.

Before he could get started on the opera, Adams needed to fulfill a commission from the National Endowment for the Arts for the Milwaukee Symphony, which became *The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra*. It has gone on to become one of his most frequently performed short concert pieces. Adams turned the project into an opportunity to experiment with the new sound world he was beginning to conjure for *Nixon*. *The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra* therefore represents a somewhat unusual relationship to its operatic source: the composer characterizes it as an "outtake," a "kind of warming up" for the full opera rather than an excerpt or a "fantasy on themes from" *Nixon in China*.

### WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The moment in the opera that inspired Adams's music for *The Chairman Dances* was intended for the final scene, in which political ceremony gives way to personal reminiscence and elegiac reflection. Chairman Mao joins his younger wife Chiang Ch'ing (as Jiang Qing is spelled in Alice Goodman's verse libretto), a former film and stage actress and a prime mover behind the brutal conflict known as the Cultural Revolution, to "gatecrash" a banquet being held for the President and his entourage.

They begin to dance a foxtrot.

Adams' music already shows his signature command of orchestral color and sonority. It weaves together his free-wheeling use of Minimalist devices with evocations of popular American styles from the past. The result is a cinema-like montage suffused with surreal nostalgia—the dance conjures memories of a shared past. “Themes, sometimes slinky and

sentimental, at others bravura and bounding,” Adams writes, “ride above in a bustling fabric of energized motives.”

*Scored for 2 flutes (both doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets (2nd doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, piano, harp and strings*

## BRAD WARNAAR

### Cornet Concerto

Born on March 14, 1950,  
in Flint, Michigan

Currently resides in  
Los Angeles

**Composed:** 2017-19



**First performance:**

These Nashville Symphony performances are the world premiere.

**Estimated length:**

20 minutes

The Nashville Symphony first performed music by Brad Warnaar in April 2017, when principal horn Leslie Norton appeared as the soloist in his Horn Concerto. Warnaar recalls that he was approached by Jeff Bailey, then the orchestra's principal trumpet, about composing a concerto for him. “As we discussed the possibilities, we hit upon the idea of featuring the close cousin of the trumpet: the cornet,” says Warnaar, who completed the score in late 2019, though the world premiere was delayed by the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

Raised in a musical family, Warnaar trained as a French horn player and has had a widely varied performance career as a professional musician in various U.S. and Canadian orchestras. In 1980, he relocated to Los Angeles to focus his efforts on the entertainment industry. Warnaar has worked with some of

the best-known artists in popular music and jazz in studio sessions and played on more than 1,000 film soundtracks.

As an orchestrator and arranger, Warnaar has collaborated with many prominent composers in film scoring. Avid moviegoers have likely heard his orchestrations of scores by Bill Conti, Michael Kamen, or Brian Tyler (of the *Fast and Furious* franchise). Warnaar continues to add to a growing catalogue of his own orchestral compositions. In addition to the two concertos performed by the Nashville Symphony, he has composed new works for groups ranging from chamber ensembles to full symphony orchestra. His current work-in-progress is a symphony that responds to the initial year of upheaval caused by Covid 19, which he has subtitled *MMXX*.

What differentiates the cornet from trumpet? While they appear at first glance largely similar,

the different shapes of each instrument's tubing result in a mellower, more singing tone quality for the cornet, while the trumpet is brighter and, when called for, more strident. Despite the paucity of cornet concertos, Warnaar explains, the instrument found another niche: "During the heyday of the concert bands led by John Philip Sousa and others, the cornet was arguably the most popular solo instrument in the world, most famously in the hands of virtuoso performer-composer Herbert L. Clarke, who, during his tenure as principal cornet of the Sousa band, created a large repertoire of music featuring the instrument. Typically, these were airs or waltzes with a series of increasingly difficult and showy variations."

Warnaar listened closely to Clarke's music while preparing to write his own concerto in order to "get the sound of the horn in my head; after a while, the sound of the cornet became inextricably linked to that style of music. I decided to have some fun with it."

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The composer has provided the following commentary:

"For the first movement, I envisioned a scenario in which the cornet sets out to embody the spirit of Clarke. The orchestra, already suspicious of this stranger in their midst (hence the movement's title, 'and you are?..'), very quickly becomes confrontational. The cornet wants to be in the 19th century, while the orchestra will have none of it, insisting on the 21st. A *détente* of sorts is arrived at, but the cornet continues to revert to its old ways, first with a waltz with variation, 'Jubilee Waltz' (named after Jeff Bailey's pet pig!) and then with a circus march ('Bailey's Gallop'). Total chaos briefly ensues, cut off by a drum roll and the B-flat major 'Ta-Da,' which started the piece. It's all in good fun.

"The second movement is quiet and

meditative, exploring the singing lyrical quality of the cornet. While writing it, I couldn't stop thinking of Bill Moore, my high school friend who was one of the finest cornetists I ever heard. I was eager to have him hear it, and maybe hear him play it one day. Sadly, when I was about halfway through, I received news that Bill had unexpectedly passed away. From then on, I dedicated the movement to his memory, and named it after him. Near the end, there is a moment of high shimmering strings with an arpeggiated figure in the celeste. It wasn't intentional, but hearing it now, it has the feeling of, to paraphrase John Adams, 'the transmigration of a soul.' Perhaps you will feel that as well.

"A joke from Jeff Bailey was the catalyst of the last movement. While discussing what the nature of the concerto should be, he described himself as one who enjoys being in the back of the orchestra, doing his job, not being flamboyant or showy. Then he said, 'But don't get me wrong - I can double-tongue!' I laughed right out loud, and thought to myself: 'You sir, will *definitely* be doing some double-tonguing!' The technique of double-tonguing allows brass and wind players to play repeated notes quickly, and the entire last movement is a fantasia of repeated notes. The title, 'The Ta-ca-Ta-ca-Toccata,' is a play on the syllables employed by brass players when double-tonguing. The repeated 16th notes bounce all around the orchestra, and the movement builds to an energetic conclusion."

*In addition to solo cornet, scored for 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling English horn), 3 clarinets (2nd doubling E-flat clarinet and 3rd doubling bass clarinet), 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 5 percussionists, piano/celeste, harp and strings*

# CHARLES FREDERICK KIP WINGER

Symphony No. 1, “Atonement”

Born on June 21, 1961,  
in Denver, Colorado

Currently resides in Nashville

**Composed:** 1999



**First performance:**

These Nashville Symphony performances are the world premiere.

**Estimated length:**

26 minutes

“You’re a classical composer disguised as a metal guy.” Such was the verdict of composer Richard Danielpour, from whom C. F. Kip Winger began taking private monthly lessons over a decade ago following a breakthrough commission for the San Francisco Ballet (*Ghosts*). Winger originally made his name as a bass guitarist and songwriter in the world of metal and glam rock, collaborating with such figures as Alice Cooper and making the charts with his own band Winger (whose platinum debut album was released in 1988). But Kip Winger, who grew up in a family of jazz musicians, also harbored a love for classical music from a young age. “I studied dance and was in a ballet company when I was a kid. I always wanted to compose but got sidetracked into a rock band,” as he puts it.

Nashville has been Winger’s home since just after the start of the century. In 2017, the Nashville Symphony performed his ballet score *Conversations with Nijinsky*. Also commissioned by the San Francisco Ballet, *Conversations* was nominated for the Best Contemporary Classical Composition category in that year’s Grammy Awards. Music Director Giancarlo Guerrero subsequently commissioned Winger to write his first official symphony—an invitation he says was

simultaneously “inspiring and terrifying.” He adds: “I can write rock music easily, because I’ve done it my whole life. But orchestral music is the music that I hear. It’s what inspires me as an artist.”

Along with Danielpour, Winger refers to his friendships with Michael Kurek (author of *The Sound of Beauty*) and the late Christopher Rouse as important influences for his understanding of classical composition. He points to the Swiss-born, Paris-based Arthur Honegger as an ongoing source of inspiration — particularly his Third Symphony — as well as Samuel Barber and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

There is a line of first symphonies that can be regarded as autobiographical fantasies, arguably starting with Hector Berlioz and his unnumbered *Symphonie fantastique* of 1830. Berlioz’s wildly original score traces the story of a tormented artist trying to cope with unrequited love—a kind of manifesto of a certain Romantic concept of the symphony fused with program music. Gustav Mahler’s First Symphony also incorporates references to the artist as a young man, his early love, struggles, and triumph. Winger describes his First Symphony as “something of an autobiographical piece of music centered around the theme of atonement.” The work imagines “a person who is receiving Morse

code messages of atonement coming from his own lost soul.”

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

A one-word subtitle indicating the “messages” being sent from within is associated with each of the four movements of Winger’s “Atonement” Symphony. The Morse code rhythms that “spell” these words function as foundational patterns. For example, the first movement (“SOS”) begins with the Morse code rhythm used to signal distress played by a MIDI keyboard: short-short-short-long-long-long-short-short-short. That pattern eventually develops across the sections of the orchestra, while Winger superimposes melodies and thematic ideas over it.

“Eleos” (“Mercy”) is the topic of the slow movement, which is followed by “Metamorphosis,” a staccato code tapped out at a rapid pace. The last movement, “Metanoia” (“change of heart”), begins with solo

flute against a backdrop of strings and chimes. Elements shared among these words (the “s” sounds in SOS and Eleos or “meta,” for example) allow for cross-connections between movements.

Along with the Morse code patterns, Winger assigns a major role to a recurring harmonic idea that he terms the “brick wall chord.” The image he had in mind involves his imagined protagonist “trying to follow the path of atonement but constantly coming up against this brick wall. He can’t break through the barrier into a state of enlightenment.” Each time it recurs, the chord is orchestrated differently. At the end of the “Metamorphosis” movement, the chord finally resolves and leads directly into the last movement. Winger compares it to the sensation of “floating out to sea.”

*Scored for 2 flutes 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 trumpets, 4 horns, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (5 players), harp, piano and strings*



# SAMUEL BARBER

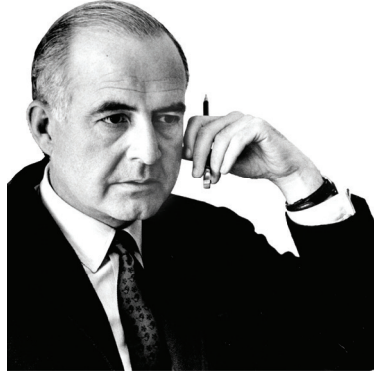
Symphony No. 1, Op. 9, "Symphony in One Movement"

Born on March 9, 1910, in West Chester, Pennsylvania

Died on January 23, 1981, in New York City

**Composed:**  
1935-36

**Estimated length:**  
20 minutes



**First performance:**

December 13, 1936, in Rome, with Bernardino Molinari and the Symphony Orchestra of the Augusteo

**First Nashville Symphony performance:**

October 7, 1994, conducted by Kenneth Schermerhorn at Andrew Jackson Hall in the Tennessee Performing Arts Center.

Samuel Barber's years as a prodigy student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia foreshadowed the brilliant career that would soon unfold. In his 20s, Barber already produced a series of compositions that established his name internationally. These early works revealed a unique voice characterized by a gift for lyricism and direct expression and a command of traditional language and models. This resulted in a brand of American Romanticism that increasingly put Barber at odds with the direction followed by his Modernist contemporaries. The final phase of his career traced a tragic downward spiral as the composer became a recluse beset by depression and heavy drinking. But the pendulum has since swung back in Barber's favor.

In 1937, the Symphony No. 1 became the first symphonic piece by an American composer to be performed at the Salzburg Festival (which was founded in 1920). The influential conductor Arturo Toscanini heard the work and was deeply impressed by the young composer. He requested something to perform with his fledgling NBC Symphony Radio Orchestra. Barber responded with the Adagio for Strings (a reworking for string orchestra of the slow movement of his First String Quartet). Its premiere over the radio waves in

November 1938 affirmed his status as a leading American composer.

The Symphony No. 1 is the work of an American abroad. Barber composed the piece while living in Italy, his prize for receiving the American Prix de Rome. Barber's creative process was painstaking, and his previous experience writing for an orchestra was limited to the sparkling Overture to *The School for Scandal* (1931) and the tone poem *Music for a Scene from Shelley* (1933). Although Barber did produce a Symphony No. 2 in 1944 — while he was conscripted into the U.S. Air Force — the self-critical composer withdrew it from his official catalogue and even destroyed the original score, recycling some of its music for his piece *Night Flight*. (A copy of the Symphony No. 2 resurfaced after his death.) Along with several concertos, Barber's other significant symphonic pieces are three compositions he called *Essays for Orchestra*.

## WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The obvious model for a compact, single-movement symphony at the time Barber composed this work was the Seventh (and final) Symphony by Jean Sibelius, which



premiered in 1924. Like the Finnish composer, Barber distills the four-movement design of a traditional symphony into a version of the sonata form associated with a first movement, thus reinforcing a sense of overall unity and coherence. The result, as he explained, is “a synthetic treatment of the four-movement classical symphony. It is based on three themes of the initial *Allegro non troppo*, which retain throughout the work their fundamental character.”

The Symphony begins with an outburst of dramatic turbulence, leading immediately into a first theme that proves readily malleable in later contexts. Two more themes follow: one mournful and inward, the other an exhortation punctuated by brassy splendor. An eventful development builds in excitement, but rather than resolve into the recapitulation, the orchestra cascades into a scherzo that presents fragments of the opening theme.

This segues into a serene but moody section

that is based on an extended version of the second of the Symphony’s three main themes. Barber’s elegiac lyricism makes special use of the oboe. The music builds to a climax and then subsides for the finale, which is formulated as a *passacaglia*—a short motif (here, drawn from the first theme), which is insistently repeated in the bass. Barber introduces a progression of ideas over this bass in a delayed, thrillingly executed recapitulation of all the original material. The Symphony ends where it began, the opening turbulence now recast as a statement of grandly tragic finality.

*Scored for 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes and English horn), 2 clarinets and bass clarinet, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, harp and strings*

— *Thomas May is the Nashville Symphony’s program annotator.*

