



Charlotte Symphony Orchestra

Kwamé Ryan | Music Director

The 2026–27 Season

Annual Gala: Joshua Bell Plays Bruch

Knight Theater

Saturday, November 7, 2026, 8:00 p.m.

Kwamé Ryan, conductor

Joshua Bell, violin

Robert SCHUMANN

Max BRUCH

Symphony No. 4

Violin Concerto No. 1

Music Director Kwamé Ryan leads the Charlotte Symphony in the Annual Gala concert featuring internationally acclaimed violinist Joshua Bell in Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1, a cornerstone of the violin repertoire known for its soaring melodies, rich orchestral writing, and demanding virtuosity. The program opens with Schumann's romantic and gripping Fourth Symphony.

CLASSICAL SERIES

Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade

Belk Theater

Friday, October 9, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 10, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Kwamé Ryan, conductor

Orion Weiss, piano

Levi TAYLOR

Samuel BARBER

Nikolai RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

One Foot After The Other

Piano Concerto

Scheherazade

Music Director Kwamé Ryan opens the Classical Series with a work by CSO Spotlight Artist Levi Taylor, whose versatile sound delivers narrative, color, and cinematic energy to the concert hall, reflecting his work across film and concert music.

Pianist Orion Weiss lends power and sensitivity to Barber's sweeping Piano Concerto, balancing tempestuous passages with dreamy lyricism and rhythmic drive. *Scheherazade* closes the program evoking the perilous seas, lavish palaces, and mythical tales of *One Thousand and One Nights*.

Schubert's Symphony No. 9

Knight Theater

Friday, October 23, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 24, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 25, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

Kwamé Ryan, conductor

Raehann Bryce-Davis, mezzo-soprano

Carlos SIMON

Fate Now Conquers

Gustav MAHLER

Kindertotenlieder

Franz SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 9, "The Great"

Music Director Kwamé Ryan leads a program that explores humanity's enduring struggle against fate and the resilience to prevail. Carlos Simon's work reflects on the unpredictability of life, drawing from a journal entry in which Beethoven confronts his own struggles and ultimately surrenders to forces beyond his control.

Mezzo-soprano Raehann Bryce-Davis brings depth and nuance to Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*, a deeply personal song cycle that transforms reflections on mortality into music of profound tenderness and introspection.

Schubert's life-affirming "Great" Symphony closes the program with heroic grandeur, sweeping scale, and unstoppable momentum — from its noble opening horn call to a triumphant final blaze of exultation.

Strauss & Beethoven

Belk Theater

Friday, November 20, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 21, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Kwamé Ryan, conductor

Bella Hristova, violin

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN

Violin Concerto

Richard STRAUSS

Ein Heldenleben

Acclaimed violinist Bella Hristova joins Music Director Kwamé Ryan and the Charlotte Symphony for Beethoven's lyrical and heroic Violin Concerto. From novel drumbeats that open the work to its famous "hunting horn" theme, the concerto unfolds with melodic elegance and inventive dialogue between soloist and orchestra.

Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life) closes the program with masterful orchestral storytelling, charting a hero's journey through struggle, love, and triumph. Moments of fierce conflict, personal devotion, and ultimate fulfillment create a thrilling showcase of the orchestra's range and virtuosity.

Handel's Messiah

Knight Theater

Friday, December 4, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 5, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 6, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

Aram Demirjian, conductor

tba, soloists

Charlotte Master Chorale

George Frideric HANDEL

Messiah

One of the most revered choral works in history, Handel's *Messiah* features some of the composer's most celebrated music, from the exuberant "Hallelujah" Chorus to "For Unto Us a Child is Born" and the triumphant "The Trumpet Shall Sound." This annual tradition showcases the combined forces of chorus, orchestra, and soloists in a work that continues to delight audiences each holiday season.

Tchaikovsky's Pathétique

Belk Theater

Friday, January 15, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 16, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Kwamé Ryan, conductor

Anne-Marie McDermott, piano

Levi TAYLOR

New Work (World Premiere, CBSO Co-Commission)

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN

Piano Concerto No. 4

Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique"

Commissioned in honor of the United States's 250th anniversary, this new work by Spotlight Artist Levi Taylor draws on the words of civil rights leader John Lewis and his call to make "good trouble."

Pianist Anne-Marie McDermott performs Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, a work of ingenious contrasts. From its brooding piano introduction to a playful dialogue between soloist and orchestra, the concerto includes moments of lyricism and dramatic tension, resolving into a jubilant finale.

Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" is known for its profound melancholy and confessional nature, a work the composer said contained his "whole soul." Defying expectation, the symphony abandons triumph for a final movement that dissolves into silence, a striking conclusion to this intensely emotional work.

Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5

Belk Theater

Friday, February 5, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 6, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Valentina Peleggi, conductor

Jon Lewis, cello

Anna CLYNE
Camille SAINT-SAËNS
Sergei PROKOFIEV

Masquerade
Cello Concerto No. 1
Symphony No. 5

Inspired by the 18th-century promenade concerts held in London's pleasure Gardens, Anna Clyne's *Masquerade* conjures costumes, masked guises, and a lively sense of celebration.

Principal Cellist Jon Lewis performs Saint-Saëns's First Cello Concerto, a work that showcases the cello's expressive range and versatility.

Conceived as "a symphony on the greatness of the human soul," Prokofiev composed his Fifth Symphony while WWII raged across Europe. Lyrical and intense, this dynamic work of contrasts serves as a triumphant, optimistic celebration of humanity's strength and resolve.

Beethoven's Symphony No. 9

Belk Theater

Friday, February 26, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 27, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Kwamé Ryan, conductor

tba, soloists

Charlotte Master Chorale

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN

Calliope TSOUPAKI

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN

Overture to *The Creatures of Prometheus*

Aurora (U.S. Premiere)

Symphony No. 9

Beethoven's monumental Ninth Symphony takes center stage in a program shaped by resilience, heroism, and joy. This transcendent work celebrates the human spirit's triumph over struggle, culminating in one of classical music's most surprising and uplifting moments — the "Ode to Joy," where chorus and orchestra unite in a breathtaking musical expression of hope.

The program opens with the Overture to *The Creatures of Prometheus*, portraying the mythic hero who brings enlightenment to humanity, alongside *Aurora*, inspired by the perilous journey refugees undertake across the Mediterranean in search of safety and a better future.

Gershwin's Concerto in F

Belk Theater

Friday, March 12, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 13, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Daniela Candillari, conductor

Michelle Cann, piano

Julia ADOLPHE

Samuel BARBER

George GERSHWIN

Underneath the Sheen

Symphony No. 1

Concerto in F

Grammy Award-winning pianist Michelle Cann returns to the Charlotte Symphony to perform Gershwin's exhilarating Concerto in F. Both sophisticated and playful, the concerto captures the youthful optimism of a nation finding its musical voice through Charleston rhythms, blues influences, and Gershwin's signature blend of jazz and orchestral writing.

Julia Adolphe's *Underneath the Sheen* opens the program with shimmering textures that evoke beams of sunlight filtering through California's towering Redwood forests. Barber's First Symphony follows, showcasing his gifts for lyricism, drama, and vivid orchestration.

Dvořák's Symphony No. 7

Knight Theater

Friday, April 2, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 3, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 4, 2027, 3:00 p.m.

Hans Graf, conductor

Calin Ovidiu Lupanu, violin

Sergei RACHMANINOFF

Aram KHACHATURIAN

Antonín DVOŘÁK

The Rock

Violin Concerto

Symphony No. 7

Concertmaster Calin Ovidiu Lupanu steps into the spotlight for Khachaturian's Violin Concerto, a virtuosic showpiece filled with bold contrasts, lush Romanticism, and Armenian folk influences. Written during a surge of Czech national pride, Dvořák's powerful Seventh Symphony brings the program to a gripping finale — unfolding through a dark, foreboding opening to tender lyricism and an energetic folk-dance scherzo, before building to a triumphant conclusion.

Debussy & Ravel

Belk Theater

Friday, April 16, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 17, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Cosette Justo Valdès, conductor

Pacho Flores, trumpet

Claude DEBUSSY

Gabriela ORTIZ

Maurice RAVEL

Silvestre REVUELTA

Maurice RAVEL

Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

Altar de Bronce

Alborada del gracioso

Tribute to Federico García Lorca

La Valse

Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* opens a program of vivid color and impressionistic sounds, evoking the dreamlike haze of a languid afternoon. Ortiz's *Altar de Bronce* showcases Latin American rhythms and the virtuosity of trumpeter Pacho Flores in a work of molten textures and passages that allow the soloist to improvise. Ravel's *La Valse* closes the program with a gradually intensifying dance that erupts into an irresistible, frenetic finale.

Stravinsky's *Petrushka*

Belk Theater

Friday, April 30, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 1, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Erina Yashima, conductor

tba, soprano

Charlotte Master Chorale

Lili BOULANGER

Of a Spring Morning

Francis POULENC

Gloria

Igor STRAVINSKY

Petrushka (1947 version)

Boulanger's sweet and playful work evokes the start of a new day before Stravinsky's iconic ballet score brings *Petrushka*'s adventures to life with dazzling orchestration, spirited folk rhythms, and a festival atmosphere. Across four tableaux, the work portrays a bustling St. Petersburg carnival, *Petrushka*'s dreams, romance, and the puppet's tragic end, with the famous "*Petrushka* chord" weaving the work together.

The Charlotte Master Chorale joins the Orchestra for Poulenc's radiant and theatrical *Gloria*, inspired by his profound religious experience at the shrine of the Black Virgin of Rocamadour.

Bruckner's *Symphony No. 9*

Knight Theater

Friday, May 21, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 22, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 23, 2027, 3:00 p.m.

Kwamé Ryan, conductor

Ran Dank, piano

Soyeon Kate Lee, piano

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART

Concerto for Two Pianos, K. 365

Anton BRUCKNER

Symphony No. 9

Both lively and lyrical, Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos plays the soloists off one another in seamless interplay, with piano duo Ran Dank and Soyeon Kate Lee engaging in a playful musical dialogue that makes it difficult to distinguish where one voice ends and the other begins.

Bruckner's towering Ninth Symphony brings the Classical Series to a close. Left unfinished at the composer's death, the symphony includes echoes of his previous works, standing as a monument of his creative life — vast in scale and rich with spiritual depth.

POPS SERIES

The Music of Tina Turner

Knight Theater

Friday, October 16, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 17, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

tba, conductor

LaKisha Jones, vocalist

Nova Payton, vocalist

Armando Imagines, vocalist

The songs of the Queen of Rock ‘n’ Roll roar into the hall, celebrating Tina Turner’s drive, defiance, and powerhouse voice. From “Proud Mary” and “What’s Love Got to Do with It” to “Disco Inferno” and “Son of a Preacher Man,” the night pulses with the anthems that made her a legend.

Holiday Pops

Knight Theater

Friday, December 18, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 19, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 20, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

Christopher James Lees, conductor

Charlotte Master Chorale

Special guests to be announced

The spirit of the holiday season comes alive with the timeless magic of traditional carols and festive cheer — including a visit from Santa and friends. Joy fills the hall as warm memories of Christmases past ring clear with favorites like “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” and many more.

The Heart of The Blues

Knight Theater

Friday, January 22, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 23, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Byron Stripling, conductor, trumpet, vocals

Sydney McSweeney, vocals

Bobby Floyd, keyboard

Dive into the heart of American music that gave birth to the blues. The blending musical styles that stirred from New Orleans in the 1920s come together with the Orchestra in a journey of spirited rhythms and classic melodies. The sounds that have shaped the American experience kindle new inspiration in a concert of songs made famous by icons like Louis Armstrong, Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Muddy Waters.

The Music of Journey

Knight Theater

Friday, February 19, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 20, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Brent Havens, conductor

Juan del Castillo, vocalist
Special guests to be announced

Defined by driving guitar riffs and sky-high falsetto notes, Journey's unforgettable rock anthems and power ballads soar faithfully with a full band and amplified by the power of the Orchestra. The songs that rocked the airwaves of the 70s and 80s rule the night with "Don't Stop Believin'," "Wheel In The Sky," "Any Way You Want It," and more.

MOVIE SERIES

Back to the Future in Concert

Belk Theater

Friday, October 2, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 3, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

Great Scott! Marty McFly and Doc Brown fire up the DeLorean for a heart-pounding journey through time. See the 1985 classic on the big screen as the Charlotte Symphony performs Alan Silvestri's soaring, unforgettable score live alongside the film.

Rated PG

Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas in Concert

Ovens Auditorium

Friday, November 27, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 28, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

Jim Carrey's Grinch tries to outwit Whoville when one small voice — Little Cindy Lou Who — changes the course of Christmas. The Charlotte Symphony performs James Horner's vibrant score live alongside this family-favorite tale of heart, humor, and holiday spectacle

Rated PG

Top Gun: Maverick in Concert

Belk Theater

Friday, March 5, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 6, 2027, 3:00 p.m.

Pete "Maverick" Mitchell returns to face a high-stakes mission that demands skill, loyalty, and sacrifice. Experience the Academy Award-winning sequel on the big screen as the Charlotte Symphony performs the electrifying score by Lorne Balfe, Harold Faltermeyer, Lady Gaga, and Hans Zimmer — heightening every takeoff, dogfight, and hard-earned victory.

Rated PG-13

The Lion King in Concert

Belk Theater

Friday, April 23, 2027, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 24, 2027, 3:00 p.m.

Hakuna Matata! Young Simba dreams of following in his father Mufasa's footsteps in Disney's 1994 animated classic. See the beloved film on the big screen as the Charlotte Symphony performs the iconic score live, featuring music by Elton John, Tim Rice, Hans Zimmer, and Lebo M.

Rated G

FAMILY SERIES

The Music of Harry Potter

Knight Theater

Saturday, October 17, 2026, 11:00 a.m.

Calling all witches and wizards! The twinkling sounds of a celesta summon the magical world of Hogwarts as John Williams's imaginative scores from the *Harry Potter* movies cast enchantment spells on families of all ages.

Holiday Pops Family

Knight Theater

Saturday, December 19, 2026, 11:00 a.m.

Christopher James Lees, conductor

Charlotte Master Chorale

The spirit of the holiday season comes alive with the timeless magic of traditional carols and festive cheer — including a visit from Santa and friends. Joy fills the hall as warm memories of Christmases past ring clear with favorites like “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” and many more.

The Blues on Parade

Knight Theater

Saturday, January 23, 2027, 11:00 a.m.

Byron Stripling, conductor, trumpet, vocals

Sydney McSweeney, vocals

Bobby Floyd, keyboard

Bright trumpet sounds, spirited rhythms, and classic melodies take us back to the heart of American music — the beginning of the blues. During the season of Mardi Gras, this family-friendly matinee tours the Jazz Age of New Orleans. Songs made famous by icons like Louis Armstrong, Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Muddy Waters bring timeless joy to young audiences.

Dan Brown's Wild Symphony

Knight Theater

Saturday, February 20, 2027, 11:00 a.m.

Let Maestro Mouse and the Charlotte Symphony whisk you away on a whimsical journey through forests, oceans, and beyond to meet playful animal friends. The enchanting musical adventure leaps off the page from Dan Brown's book "Wild Symphony," blending storytelling, stunning visuals, and captivating orchestral music for families.

ALL PROGRAMS AND ARTISTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE
