

Masterworks Six

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# Beethoven & Brahms

Sunday, March 8, 2026  
2:30 p.m. at the Isabel



PHOTOS: S. WILD

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# Beethoven & Brahms

**Kingston Symphony**  
Evan Mitchell, Conductor  
Anna Sagalova, Piano

## Program

**Montgomery (1981 - )**  
Starburst

**Beethoven (1770 - 1827)**  
Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58  
*Allegro moderato*  
*Andante con moto*  
*Rondo: Vivace*

### Intermission

**Brahms (1833-1897)**  
Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98  
*Allegro non troppo*  
*Andante moderato*  
*Allegro giocoso*  
*Allegro energico e passionato*



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# Anna Sagalova, Piano

Anna Sagalova is a distinguished Ukrainian pianist and Honoured Artist of Ukraine. She studied with People's Artist of Ukraine, Professor Tamara Vyerkina at the I.P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts in Kharkiv, and later completed postgraduate studies with Professor Gerlinde Otto at the Franz Liszt University of Music in Weimar, Germany. She also earned a Doctoral Degree in Arts from the Kharkiv I.P.K. National University.



Anna is a laureate of numerous international competitions in Italy, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Germany, and is highly regarded for her expressive artistry and refined pianism. She has performed as a soloist with symphony orchestras throughout Ukraine, collaborating with conductors from Canada, the United States, Austria, Switzerland, Great Britain, and beyond.

Her international concert career has taken her to renowned venues such as the State Radio Studio in Bern, the International Museum of the Red Cross in Geneva, the Orpheum Theatre in Canada, Bösendorfer Hall in Vienna, the Liszt House Museum and Altenburg Concert Hall in Weimar, among others. She has also appeared at prestigious festivals, including Days of Ukrainian Culture in Poznań, the International Music Festival in Lubostroń, the International Chamber Music Festival in Shanghai, Kyiv Music Fest, and Kharkiv Assemblies.

Her performances have been broadcast on radio and television, and she has released two CDs.

In addition to her concert career, Anna has made significant contributions to cultural life in Ukraine. In 2016, she was elected Chair of the Council of Young Scientists at the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine and became a member of the National Council on Cultural and Art Education. She took part in drafting key legislation on higher artistic education, including the laws On Education and On Scientific and Technical Activity.

Anna is also a dedicated teacher, giving masterclasses in Ukraine, Spain, and the UK, and serving as a jury member at national and international piano competitions. Many of her students have won prizes at prestigious competitions.

Since 2022, Anna has been based in Canada, teaching at the Vancouver International School of Music while maintaining an active performing career. Her concert schedule in Canada has included performances in Vancouver, Ottawa, Toronto, Halifax, Moncton, Parksville, Nanaimo, Abbotsford, Ladner, and Surrey. With her extensive international experience and artistic achievements, she represents a vibrant new voice on the Canadian music scene, bringing fresh energy and perspective to its cultural life.

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# Notes from our Maestro

This concert is all about resilience and resolve, featuring composers who were making their mark by going against tradition with spectacular results. They each fought expectation to create their works and in doing so crafted music of enduring beauty.

We open with a newer work that I predict will join the musical greats with Jessie Montgomery's Starburst. Montgomery aims to create music that is surprising and evocative, but always "listenable", and Starburst is the perfect example of her extraordinary talents. This brief one-movement work for string orchestra is a play on imagery of rapidly changing musical colours. Exploding gestures are juxtaposed with gentle fleeting melodies in an attempt to create a multidimensional soundscape. The work evokes an astronomical starburst, the rapid formation of a large number of new stars in a galaxy at such a rate as to alter the structure of the galaxy. Montgomery matched this great energy to the nature of the performing ensemble who was premiering the work, Sphinx Virtuosi.

A portrait of Jessie Montgomery, a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a grey textured blazer over a dark top and large white earrings. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera against a dark, horizontally-slatted background.

Jessie  
Montgomery

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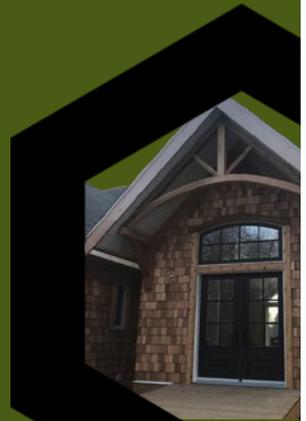


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Portrait of Beethoven  
by Christian Horneman.  
Painted 1803.

Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4, incidentally the last piece he ever performed with orchestra in front of an audience, reaches beyond the veil of mere music and touches something truly spiritual, even transcendental, in the process. Expressive playing lies at the heart of this concerto, and its gentle triumph broke new ground for the concerto concept. Far from the crashing keyboard attacks for which Beethoven was well known, this concerto demands discipline, subtlety, control, and finesse. The concerto's uniqueness perhaps is responsible for its lack of popular traction for many years. It was performed only twice in Beethoven's lifetime, and not until Mendelssohn revived it in 1836 did it begin to receive justified acclaim.



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Beethoven opens the work with the pianist playing the first theme. Then, the soloist drops away and the orchestra begins by adding to the first subject and ushering in a second melody in a minor key. A smaller third idea is also presented before the pianist reappears. The second andante movement continues the discourse between soloist and orchestra. A rather stern orchestral part vies with the lyrical piano which comments with unsurpassed tenderness, both in dialogue and a ravishing monologue. An aggressive third movement begins without pause from the second. Strings burst with a flourish, playing an energetic tune. The soloist quickly joins in with the trumpets and percussion adding colour. A lyrical second theme emerges, but the consistent mood is propulsive. A long coda brings the concerto to a close.

Brahms' Symphony No. 4 is his most majestic and most powerful, in my opinion. It remains his greatest symphonic achievement and cements him as a genius and an innovator. This piece grabs you and never lets go. The opening two-note theme is played by the violins and every time it appears, it seems to change direction, creating a sense of unease. This theme is enhanced by surging arpeggios played in the low strings. Eventually, the woodwinds offer a new idea that transitions to a rhythmic tango presented by the cellos and horns. From there, the themes continuously unfold into an emotional build-up that seems unstoppable, until finally erupting with both power and resolve.



Portrait of Johannes Brahms  
by C. Brasch.  
Painted 1889.

Unison horns usher in the second movement with a powerful melody whose medieval Phrygian mode gives it a nostalgic quality. The richly-harmonised second theme, for strings, has an almost chorale-like simplicity. Solo woodwind instruments are also featured in this movement with a particular focus on the clarinet, an instrument Brahms came to love.

A scherzo follows, full of movement and fury. The quick pace, driving rhythmic patterns, and thundering full-orchestral passages – with the triangle adding a touch of lustre – give the music a special energy absent elsewhere in the work. The last movement consists of a series of variations on a repeated bass pattern. The strings are featured in the early variations, followed by a flute solo that precedes a gentle, lightly-scored episode, and then the original theme returns in the winds and brass. The music becomes increasingly harmonically adventurous until the end. Trombones, absent from the preceding three movements, make the finale brass-dominated and despairing, bringing the work to one of the most bleak but thrilling conclusions in the symphonic repertoire.

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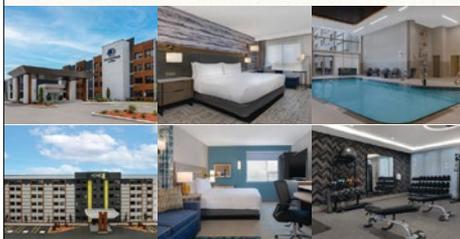
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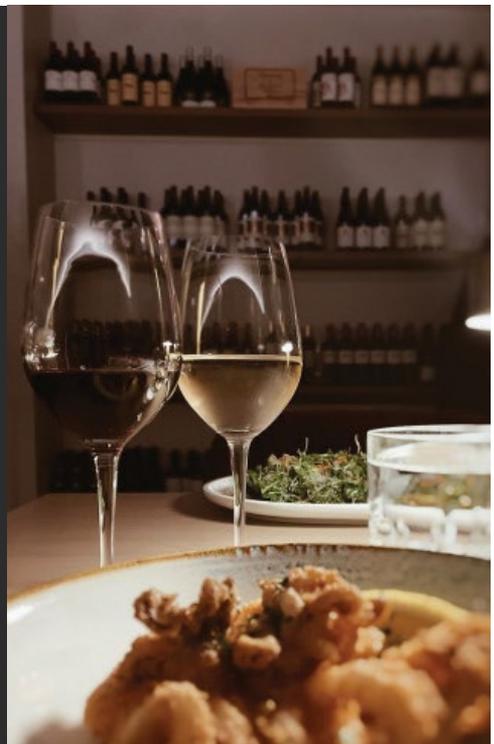
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Renaissance Supper Club**

Alan Taylor will provide history and tasting notes for five single malt whiskies from the Scottish Highlands. Delicious food pairings and a live auction make this a night to remember!

Tickets are \$129 each and are available at [store.kingstonsymphony.ca](http://store.kingstonsymphony.ca) or by calling 613-546-9729.



Mercedes Benz Kingston



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Kingston  
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# Under Paris Skies

Saturday, April 11, 2026

7:30 p.m. at Grand Theatre

Jill Barber, Singer

Lucas Waldin, Guest Conductor

Enjoy the timeless classics of Edith Piaf, Charles Trenet, Jacques Brel, and others performed by award-winning Canadian songstress Jill Barber and your Kingston Symphony. In *Under Paris Skies*, Jill brings her special affinity for French chansons and her warm contralto voice to such hits as *La Vie En Rose*, *C'est Si Bon*, and *La Mer*. The evening also features musical love letters to the City of Lights by Count Basie, Nat King Cole, Eartha Kitt, and more.

Tickets available at [www.kingstonsymphony.ca](http://www.kingstonsymphony.ca)



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