



Notable Firsts

Jonathon Heyward's 2022 North American debuts include Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's first performance of Shostakovich's Fifteenth Symphony and world premiere of Xavier Foley's Double-Bass Concerto with Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Conductor's US programme embraces neighbourhood concerts in his debut with Detroit Symphony Orchestra, orchestral showpieces by Hannah Kendall, Beethoven and Prokofiev concertos, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*

'Jonathon Heyward ... did a marvellously incisive job, all clipped rhythms and bristling precision, drawing vivid playing from the SCO musicians,' *The Scotsman*, five-star review of Scottish Chamber Orchestra debut, 10 December 2021



Classical music performers and promoters, argues Jonathon Heyward, should bring palpable change to the communities they serve. The American conductor, hailed last summer by the *Guardian* for his 'exuberant, exhilarating' BBC Proms debut, spent much time during successive lockdowns contemplating the artform's past, present and future. He seized the moment to think about everything from programme planning and commissioning to ways of reaching people ordinarily untouched by live orchestral concerts. Heyward is set to connect with new audiences this season with a run of performances in the United States, comprising debuts with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the Louisville Orchestra in March and April, and with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Grant Park Music Festival in July.

Jonathon Heyward's series of North American dates has been planned to complement his ongoing work as Chief Conductor of the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie. His US engagements begin on the East Coast with three concerts with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (11, 12 & 13 March 2022). His carefully constructed programme opens with Hannah Kendall's *The Spark Catchers*, the aptly titled first-half companion to Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.3 in C minor with Benjamin Grosvenor as soloist. The concert's second half is devoted to Shostakovich's Symphony No.15, marking the Baltimore Symphony's first ever performance of the work.

"Going back to the States always feels special," the conductor comments. "That's where I'm from and where I lived until I was in my late teens. It's particularly exciting to work with these orchestras, with all their unique history and individual and distinctive positions within the country. I'm delighted to start in Baltimore with my dear friend Hannah's piece, which audiences and performers in the States have adored when I've done it there before. Benjamin Grosvenor and I have also become good friends and I'm really excited that we will explore Beethoven together in Baltimore. The biggest thrill of all is that the orchestra said yes when I proposed Shostakovich's final symphony. He was very ill when he composed the piece and had a heart attack soon after completing the score in the summer of 1971. I've always been obsessed with Shostakovich's symphonies and have gained insights into them all by studying the Fifteenth, with its unsettling emotional contrasts and enigmatic quotations from Rossini, Glinka and Wagner and from his own earlier works."

Heyward crosses the country for two performances with the San Diego Symphony (16 & 18 March). His programme comprises Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No.3, Mozart's Piano Concerto No.24 in C minor K.491 (with Yeol Eum Son as soloist) and Shostakovich's Symphony No.9. He takes the Beethoven and Shostakovich works to his home state of Georgia for his Atlanta Symphony Orchestra debut (24 & 26 March). They will be presented in company with the world premiere of Xavier Dubois Foley's Concerto for double-bass, which features the composer as soloist.

“My planned Atlanta Symphony debut was cancelled during lockdown, so it’s great to be able finally to go there,” he says. “It’s a special place to me for several reasons. It was one of the first professional orchestras I ever heard, thanks to a trip we made from high school. It’s such a deep memory – I can remember every second of what was an affirming moment for me, when I knew that I wanted to be in classical music. To be on that stage will be quite remarkable. And I can’t wait to play with Xavier Foley, an enormous talent as performer and composer.”

Jonathon Heyward concludes his month-long spell in the United States in company with the Louisville Orchestra for a matinee concert on 1 April and a full evening programme on 2 April. The latter includes Hannah Kendall’s *Kanashibari*, the Japanese term for ‘sleep paralysis’, Prokofiev’s Violin Concerto No.1 (with Benjamin Beilman as soloist) and Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*. “Hannah’s piece went down really well when the Seattle Symphony and I gave its US premiere last year and I’m looking forward to doing it again,” he reflects. “Teddy Abrams, the Louisville Symphony’s music director, encouraged me to couple *Kanashibari* with Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*, a work I love but have never conducted before. I think it’s a beautiful programme.”

The aesthetics of programming matters to Jonathon Heyward. He remains determined to only perform works in which he believes, a point boldly underlined by his North American concerts and forthcoming dates with the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie. His commitment to taking orchestras into local arts centres, churches and other community venues, meanwhile, is reflected in his itinerary for his debut with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Their four-concert tour of Mendelssohn’s Overture from *Fair Melusine*, Rossini’s delightful Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra and Beethoven Symphony No. 1 opens on 14 July with a concert at the Berman Center for the Performing Arts in West Bloomfield Township. It continues with dates at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Plymouth (15 July); Kirk in the Hills at Bloomfield Hills (16 July); and Our Lady Star of the Sea at Grosse Pointe Woods (17 July).

“I’m so pleased that we will do these wonderful neighbourhood concerts in townships close to Detroit,” comments Heyward. “These go straight to the heart of the community. It’s so incredibly important as we rebuild after Covid to connect with the widest possible audience and to explore how our orchestras and performing groups can become more embedded in their home regions. I hope to bring that ethos, which is common practice with the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, to wherever I work in the future. It’s about constantly asking why we’re programming particular works and who we’re performing them for. Those of us who are still in the classical music world have such a responsibility for bringing it into a completely new light. It’s a great responsibility and a great privilege to have the opportunity to do that.”

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11 March (8pm) & 13 March 2022 (3pm), Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall
12 March 2022, 8pm, Music Center at Strathmore
[Event page](#)

Jonathon Heyward conductor | **Benjamin Grosvenor** piano | **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra**

Hannah Kendall *The Spark Catchers*
Beethoven Piano Concerto No.3 in C minor, Op.37

Shostakovich Symphony No.15 in A major, Op.141

16 March 2022, 7.30pm, California Center for the Arts

18 March 2022, 7.30pm, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe

[Event page](#)

Jonathon Heyward conductor | **Yeol Eum Son** piano | **San Diego Symphony Orchestra**

Beethoven *Leonore* Overture No.3, Op.72b

Mozart Piano Concerto No.24 in C minor, K.491

Shostakovich Symphony No.9 in E flat major, Op.70

24, 26 March 2022, 8pm

Atlanta Symphony Hall

[Event page](#)

Jonathon Heyward conductor | **Zavier Dubois Foley** double bass | **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra**

Beethoven *Leonore* Overture No.3, Op.72b

Xavier Dubois Foley Double Bass Concerto (ASO commission - world premiere)

Shostakovich Symphony No.9 in E flat major, Op.70

1 April (11am) & 2 April 2022 (8pm)

Kentucky Center

[Event page](#)

Jonathon Heyward conductor | **Benjamin Beilman** violin | **Louisville Orchestra**

Hannah Kendall *Kanashibari*

Prokofiev Violin Concerto No.1 in D major. Op.19 (2 April concert only)

Rimsky Korsakov Scheherazade, Op.35

14 July 2022, 7.30pm, Berman Center for the Performing Arts, West Bloomfield Township

15 July 2022, 8pm, Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Plymouth

16 July 2022, 8pm, Kirk in the Hills, Bloomfield Hills

17 July 2022, 3pm, Our Lady Star of the Sea, Grosse Pointe Woods

[Event page](#)

Jonathon Heyward conductor | **Michael Ke Ma** bassoon | **Detroit Symphony Orchestra**

Mendelssohn *Fair Melusina* Overture, Op.32

Rossini Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra

Beethoven Symphony No.1 in C major, Op.21

20 July 2022, 6.30pm

Grant Park Music Festival

[Event page](#)

Jonathon Heyward conductor | **Afendi Yusef** clarinet | **Grant Park Symphony Orchestra**

Farrenc Overture No.1 in E minor, Op.23

Mozart Clarinet Concerto in A major, K.622

Dvořák Symphony No.8 in G major, Op.88