

BRAHMS

REIMAGINED ORCHESTRATIONS

ELEVEN
CHORALE PRELUDES

FOR ORGAN, OP. 122
ORCHESTRATED BY VIRGIL THOMSON

BLACK SWAN
FOR ORCHESTRA (2010)

(AFTER INTERMEZZO IN A MAJOR,
OP. 118 NO. 2, BY BRAHMS)
ORCHESTRATED BY BRIGHT SHENG

PIANO QUARTET NO. 1

IN G MINOR, OP. 25
ORCHESTRATED BY ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

MICHAEL STERN



KANSAS CITY
SYMPHONY



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Johannes Neakase.

BRAHMS

REIMAGINED ORCHESTRATIONS

Johannes Brahms was a pivotal figure in the Romantic era of classical music. Known for his symphonies, concerti, chamber music, piano works, choral compositions, and over 200 songs, Brahms's influence on the music world is immeasurable.

Brahms was born on May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany, into a Lutheran family and spent much of his professional life in Vienna. He first studied music with his father and later with F.W. Cossel, who eventually passed him to his own teacher, Eduard Marxsen. Between the ages of 14 and 16, Brahms earned money to support his family by playing in inns in the dock area of Hamburg, all the while composing and occasionally giving recitals. His music is deeply rooted in the structures and compositional techniques of the Classical masters, yet it also contains deeply Romantic motifs.

Brahms passed away on April 3, 1897, in Vienna. His innovative approaches to musical composition have left a lasting legacy, making him one of the most significant composers of the Romantic period. The orchestrations of Brahms's works by Virgil Thomson, Bright Sheng, and Arnold Schoenberg are not just reinterpretations, but masterpieces in their own right that beautifully illustrate the enduring influence of Brahms's music.

ELEVEN CHORALE PRELUDES FOR SOLO ORGAN, OP. 122

ORCHESTRATED BY VIRGIL THOMSON

Piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, chimes and strings.

Johannes Brahms composed his final work, *Eleven Chorale Preludes*, in 1896. His dear friend, Clara Wieck Schumann, whom he had known for more than four decades, died that May 20. Brahms himself was in failing health, and would pass away on April 3, 1897, at age 63. Shortly after Clara's death, Brahms created 11 settings of Lutheran chorales, scored for solo organ. Brahms played the works on the piano for some of his friends, but he never performed them in public or published them. Six years after his death, *Eleven Chorale Preludes* was published as the composer's op. 122. They are remarkably beautiful and spiritual works, the musical expression of a composer confronting and accepting the end of his days.

Between 1957 and 1958, American composer Virgil Thomson (1896–1989) arranged Brahms's *Eleven Chorale Preludes* for symphony orchestra.

—Ken Meltzer

These works are based on verses of nine Lutheran chorales, two of them set twice. The preludes were written around the time Brahms became aware of the cancer that would ultimately prove fatal. The original autograph of all eleven was found on Brahms's desk after his passing. The first seven were originally numbered 1, 5, 2, 6, 7, 3, 4. The pieces were of such obvious significance and quality that they were assigned the posthumous opus number 122 and published in 1902.

Virgil Thomson (1896–1989) was a many-faceted composer of great originality and a music critic of singular brilliance. After studying at Harvard, he moved to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger, and remained in France for most of the next 15 years, meeting Cocteau, Stravinsky, Satie and the artists of Les Six. When he finally returned to the US in 1940, he became chief music critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*. Thomson composed in almost every genre, utilizing a style marked by sharp wit and overt playfulness, and produced a highly original body of work rooted in American speech rhythms and hymnbook harmony. Among his most famous works are the operas *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1928) and *The Mother of Us All* (1947), scores to *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1938) (films by Pare Lorentz), and *Louisiana Story* (film by Robert Flaherty). In addition to his compositions, he was the author of eight books, including an autobiography. Included in his many honors and awards are the Pulitzer Prize, a Brandeis Award, the Gold Medal for Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Book Circle Award, and the Kennedy Center Honors.



Kansas City native, Virgil Thomson

BLACK SWAN FOR ORCHESTRA (2010)

(AFTER *INTERMEZZO* IN A MAJOR, OP. 118 NO. 2, BY BRAHMS)

ORCHESTRATED BY BRIGHT SHENG

2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon,
4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, harp and strings.

During 1892 and 1893, Johannes Brahms composed his final works for solo piano. *The Fantasias*, op. 116 (1892), *Intermezzi*, op. 117 (1892) and *Klavierstücke*, op. 118 and 119 (1893), comprise 20 brief works. For the greater part, virtuosic display yields to affecting lyricism, introspection and harmonic subtlety. The *Intermezzo*, op. 118, No. 2 is in A-B-A form. Cast in 3/4 time, the opening “A” section is in the spirit of a restrained, nostalgic waltz. The central “B” section proceeds to an impassioned outburst, before finally resolving to a varied reprise of “A” and the *Intermezzo*’s wistful closing measures.

This concert features composer Bright Sheng’s orchestration of the piece. Titled *The Black Swan*, the work received its premiere on September 28, 2006, with Gerard Schwarz conducting the Seattle Symphony.

—Ken Meltzer



Brahms dedicated op. 118 to his longtime friend and confidante, Clara Schumann (1819–1896), a renowned pianist and wife of Brahms’s mentor, Robert Schumann (1810–1856). Upon receiving the manuscripts of op. 118 in 1893, she wrote to Brahms about her amazement of how he wrote such “a wealth of sentiment in the smallest of dimensions.”

Bright Sheng (b. 1955), a MacArthur fellow, is a leading contemporary composer whose works are performed globally. His compositions, which include stage, orchestral, chamber, and vocal works, blend diverse musical traditions and transcend conventional boundaries. Sheng's unique oeuvre reflects both his Asian heritage and Western musical tradition. Sheng himself admits: "I consider myself both 100% American and 100% Asian." Born in Shanghai, Sheng moved to New York in 1982 to study composition and conducting privately with Leonard Bernstein. His opera, *Dream of The Red Chamber*, premiered by the San Francisco Opera in 2016, was a finalist for the Best Premiere by the International Opera Awards in London.



COMPOSER

Bright Sheng

Sheng also has an active career as a conductor and concert pianist and often serves as a music advisor and artistic director. He is the Leonard Bernstein Distinguished University Professor at the University of Michigan and the Y. K. Pao Distinguished Visiting Professor at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Here, he founded The Intimacy of Creativity—The Bright Sheng Partnership: Composers Meet Performers.

www.brightsheng.com

PIANO QUARTET NO. 1 IN G MINOR, OP. 25

ORCHESTRATED BY ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

2 piccolos, 3 flutes, 3 oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, 2 B-flat clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets. 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, glockenspiel, orchestra bells, snare drum, triangle, xylophone and strings.

Brahms completed his G-Minor Piano Quartet in 1861. The premiere took place in Brahms' native city of Hamburg on November 16, 1861, with Clara Schumann as the pianist.

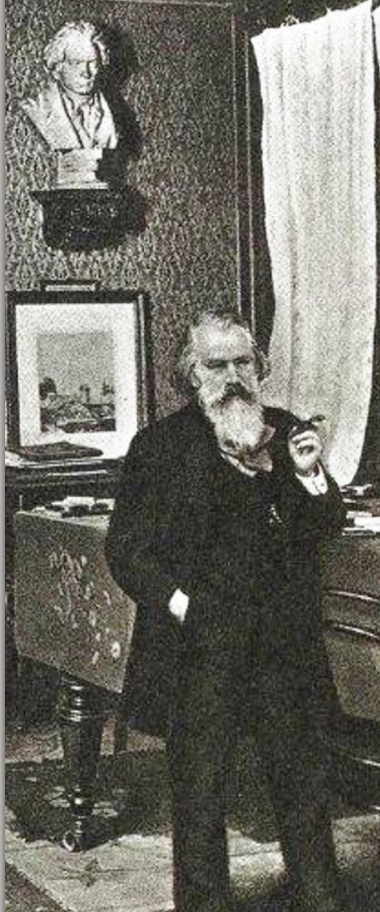
Although Arnold Schoenberg is best remembered for his pioneering work in atonal musical expression, the Austrian composer maintained a lifelong admiration for many of his more traditional predecessors. In particular, Schoenberg harbored a profound respect and affection for the music of Brahms. In 1937, Schoenberg (without the benefit of a commission) created an orchestral version of the Brahms G-Minor Piano Quartet. The premiere of the Schoenberg orchestration took place in Los Angeles on May 7, 1938, with Otto Klemperer conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Even in its original scoring for piano, violin, viola and cello, the work boasts a remarkable wealth and development of thematic material, couched in rich instrumental sonorities. It is among the most "symphonic" of chamber works, culminating in a stunning finale. Schoenberg's orchestration is a respectful and affectionate tribute by one great composer to another. It is also a beautiful and at times thrillingly entertaining piece. And to the extent it presents both composers at their least inhibited, the Brahms/Schoenberg Piano Quartet offers a valuable

insight into the personalities of two of concert music's most influential figures.

The work is in four movements. The first opens with a melody, introduced by the clarinets, which returns in various guises throughout the movement. The second-movement *Intermezzo*, in A-B-A form, contrasts C-minor episodes with a more playful central A-flat major section. The third movement, also in A-B-A form, features a yearning melody framing a stirring march-like episode in C major. The finale is a whirlwind dance in the Roma style. Brahms' friend, Joseph Joachim, who also featured Roma music in his violin concerto *In the Hungarian Manner* (1861), exclaimed, "You have defeated me on my own territory!" Schoenberg's generous use of percussion enhances the finale's propulsive character, right to the closing bars.

—Ken Meltzer



Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) born on September 13, 1874, in Vienna, Austria, was a revolutionary composer whose work significantly transformed the traditional harmonic structures of classical music, particularly what he coined as developing variation, a departure from conventional tonal harmony.

Schoenberg's early career was rooted in late-Romanticism, but his style evolved dramatically following his development of the twelve-tone technique, a method of composition that involves using a series of all twelve notes in the chromatic scale. This technique, also known as dodecaphony, established a new compositional method that was not dependent on a key signature.

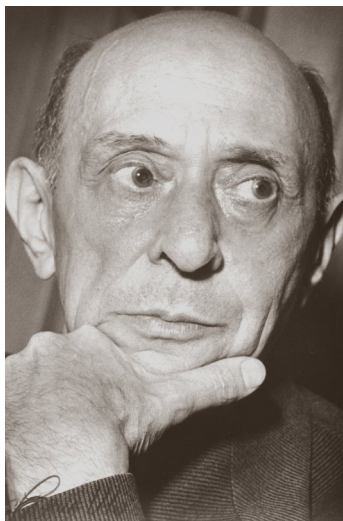
Serialism, another significant contribution by Schoenberg, is a method of composition that uses a series of musical elements such as pitch, rhythm, dynamics, and articulation. In serialism, these elements are ordered into a row that serves as the basis for the piece's structure, creating a complex and intricate web of musical relationships.

Schoenberg's influence extended beyond his compositions. He was also a prominent music theorist and teacher, and his pedagogical work led to the establishment of the Second Viennese School. This group of composers, which included his students Anton Webern and Alban Berg, were united by their exploration of atonality and their innovative approaches to musical composition.

Among Schoenberg's most influential works are *Verklärte Nacht* (1899) (*Transfigured Night*), an early string sextet that showcases his late-

Romantic style, and *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), a groundbreaking song cycle that employs the twelve-tone technique. His opera *Moses und Aron* (1930-32), although unfinished, is considered a masterpiece of modernist music. Schoenberg's orchestration of Brahms's **Piano Quartet** (1937), is also notable for its complexity and the way it expands on Brahms's original composition, adding a richly textured, symphonic dimension using the twelve-tone technique and serialism.

Schoenberg's life and career were dramatically affected by the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany. As a Jewish composer, Schoenberg was targeted by the Nazi Party, which labeled his works as degenerate music and forbade them from being published. He fled Germany briefly living in Paris, France before settling in the United States in 1933, becoming an American citizen in 1941. He taught at the University of California at Los Angeles until his retirement in 1944, and continued to compose until his death on July 13, 1951.



Arnold Schoenberg



MICHAEL STERN

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Michael Stern's celebrated 19-year tenure as music director of the Kansas City Symphony is notable for the orchestra's remarkable artistic ascent, organizational development and stability, and the extraordinary growth of its varied audiences. With a determined focus on impeccable musicianship and creative programming, Stern and the orchestra have partnered with Grammy® Award-winning Reference Recordings® for an ongoing series of highly praised CDs.

Stern is also music director of the National Repertory Orchestra, a summer music festival in Breckenridge, Colorado, as well as the newly rebranded Orchestra Lumos, formerly the Stamford (CT) Symphony. He was recently named artistic advisor of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, one of Canada's foremost orchestral ensembles, and following a 22-year

tenure as founding artistic director of Iris Orchestra in Germantown, Tennessee, he now serves the newly reimagined Iris Collective as artistic advisor.

Stern has led orchestras throughout Europe and Asia, including the Budapest and Vienna radio symphonies, the Helsinki, Israel, London, Moscow and Royal Stockholm philharmonics, London Symphony, National Symphony of Taiwan, Orchestre de Paris and Tokyo's NHK Symphony, among many others.

In North America, Stern has conducted the Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, Indianapolis, National (Washington, D.C.), Montreal, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Seattle and Toronto symphonies, the Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras, as well as the New York Philharmonic. He has been a regular guest at the Aspen Music Festival and School, where he also worked with students at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen.

Stern has also held conducting positions with Germany's Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra as well as France's Orchestre National de Lyon and Orchestre National de Lille.

Stern received his music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where his major teacher was the noted conductor and scholar Max Rudolf. Stern co-edited the third edition of Rudolf's famous textbook, "The Grammar of Conducting," and also edited a new volume of Rudolf's collected writings and correspondence. He is a 1981 graduate of Harvard University, where he earned a degree in American history.



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KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

Founded by R. Crosby Kemper, Jr., in 1982, the Kansas City Symphony has established itself as a major force in the cultural life of the community. Praised for performances of uncompromising standard, the orchestra is the largest in the region and enjoys a national reputation under the artistic leadership of Music Director Michael Stern.

The Kansas City Symphony also experienced impressive artistic growth through its history and under the batons of Russell Patterson (1982–1986), William McGlaughlin (1986–1997) and Anne Manson (1998–2003). Jason Seber, David T. Beals III Associate Conductor, conducts Family and Pops Series concerts plus holiday and special presentation performances. Charles Bruffy is the Symphony Chorus director.

The Kansas City Symphony serves a metropolitan population of 2.1 million people. The orchestra's 80 full-time musicians are area residents and vital contributors to the artistic life of Kansas City. During its 42-week season, the Symphony performs a wide variety of subscription, educational and outreach concerts. In addition, the Kansas City Symphony performs with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City and the Kansas City Ballet.

www.kcsymphony.org



KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

Michael Stern, Music Director

Jason Seber, Associate Conductor, David T. Beals III Chair

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Justin Bruns[#], Guest
Concertmaster
Stephanie Jeong[^], Guest
Concertmaster
Sunho Kim, Acting
Concertmaster
Miller Nichols Chair
Stirling Trent, Acting Associate
Concertmaster
Chiafei Lin, Acting Assistant
Concertmaster
Noah Geller[‡], Concertmaster
Justine Lamb-Budge[‡],
Associate Concertmaster
Gregory Sandomirsky
Associate Concertmaster
Emeritus
Anne-Marie Brown
Betty Chen
Anthony DeMarco
Susan Goldenberg
Tomoko Iguchi
Dorris Dai Janssen
Filip Lazovski
Vladimir Rykov
Rachel Sandman
Alex Shum
Philip Marten[‡]

SECOND VIOLINS

Tamamo Someya Gibbs, Principal
Kristin Velicer, Acting
Associate Principal
Minhye Helena Choi, Acting
Assistant Principal
Nancy Beckmann
Kathy Haid Berry
Mary Garcia Grant
Kevin Hao
Kazato Inouye
Rena Ishii
Stephanie Larsen
Francesca Manheim
Sarah Peters
Zsolt Eder[^]
Lisa Jackson[^]

VIOLAS

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Matthew Sinno, Associate
Principal
Jessica Nance, Assistant Principal
Kent Brauningner
Sean Brumble
Marvin Gruenbaum
Jenifer Houck
Duke Lee
Jesse Yukimura
Bohyun Kim[#]

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Robert A. Kipp Chair
Susie Yang, Associate Principal
Richard Hill Chair
Alexander East, Assistant
Principal
Maria Crosby
John Eadie
Lawrence Figg
Rung Lee
Meredith McCook
Allen Probus
Matt Beckmann[#]
Emma Hoeft[^]

DOUBLE BASSES

Jeffrey Kail, Principal
Evan Halloin, Associate Principal
Brandon Mason
Caleb Quillen
Richard Ryan
Nash Tomey
Owen Levine[#]
Keith Wymer[#]

[‡] On Leave of Absence

[^] Substitute for Piano Quartet

[#] Substitute for *Black Swan/Chorale Preludes*

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Michael Gordon, *Principal*
Maylou and John Dodds
Turner Chair

Shannon Finney, *Associate Principal*

Jessica Petrasek
Mary Shemon[#]

PICCOLO

Jessica Petrasek

OBOES

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Shirley Bush Helzberg Chair

Alison Chung,
Associate Principal
Tim Daniels

ENGLISH HORN

Tim Daniels

CLARINETS

Raymond Santos, *Principal*
Rebecca Tobin, *Acting Associate Principal*
John Klinghammer

E-FLAT CLARINET

Rebecca Tobin

BASS CLARINET

John Klinghammer

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Barton P. and Mary D.
Cohen Chair
Thomas DeWitt, *Associate Principal*
Nicole Haywood

CONTRABASSOON

Thomas DeWitt

HORNS

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Landon and Sarah
Rowland Chair
David Sullivan, *Associate Principal*
Elizabeth Gray
David Gamble
Stephen Multer,
Associate Principal Emeritus
Cara Kizer[^]

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and Annabel Nutter Chair
Philip Clark, *Associate Principal*
Brian Rood
Keith Benjamin[^]

TROMBONES

Roger Oyster, *Principal*
Porter Wyatt Henderson,
Associate Principal
Adam Rainey

BASS TROMBONE

Adam Rainey

TUBA

Joe LeFevre, *Principal*

TIMPANI

Timothy Jepson, *Principal*

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Daniel Morris, *Acting Associate Principal*
Chihiro Shibayama[^]
Marcelina Suchocka[^]
David Yoon[^]

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Keith O. Johnson, our chief engineer and Technical Director, has engineered over 150 releases in the RR catalog. A GRAMMY® Award-winning engineer, Johnson is a true audio legend, having designed and patented many innovative products in the professional and consumer fields. The RR Sound comes from his singular methods and equipment, almost all hand-built or extensively modified by him. Microphone techniques range from purist to complex, depending on the musical forces and the performing space involved. Johnson’s expertise in electronic behavior and acoustic perception led to his development (with digital engineer Michael Pflaumer) of the revolutionary HDCD

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Sean Royce Martin has been a part of the RR engineering team since 2005 and keeps RR on the cutting edge of digital audio advancements and innovation. Martin digitally captures and engineers all of RR’s sessions, as well as editing and mastering RR and *Fresh!* releases. Sean has received four GRAMMY® nominations for Best Engineered Classical Album and mastered the GRAMMY® Award-winning RR album *The Poetry Of Places*. In addition to his work with RR, Martin is an audio engineer at Skywalker Sound for Lucasfilm and records San Francisco Bay Area artists at the RR studio.



Recorded at Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for Performing Arts,
Kansas City, Missouri, May 31–June 10, 2019

PRODUCER: Peter Rutenberg
ENGINEER: Keith O. Johnson
RECORDED BY: Sean Royce Martin
MASTERING ENGINEER: Sean Royce Martin
EDITING: Sean Royce Martin; JoAnn Nunes
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Marcia Gordon Martin
ART DIRECTOR: JoAnn Nunes
COVER PAINTING: *Passion Flowers with Hummingbirds*, 1883
by Martin Johnson Heade (1819–1904)
PROGRAM NOTES: Ken Meltzer
COPY EDITORS: Marcia Gordon Martin; Marcus Johnson

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Frank Byrne, Emma Kail, Jason Seber, Rebecca Martin, and Dave Tebow

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BRAHMS

REIMAGINED ORCHESTRATIONS

ELEVEN CHORALE PRELUDES FOR ORGAN, OP. 122

ORCHESTRATED BY VIRGIL THOMSON

- 1 No. 1 *My Jesus Calls to Me (Mein Jesu, der du mich)* 2:53
- 2 No. 2 *O Blessed Jesus (Herzliebster Jesu) (two versions)* 4:29
- 3 No. 3 *O World, I Now Must Leave Thee (O Welt, ich muss dich lassen)* 2:20
- 4 No. 4 *My Faithful Heart Rejoices (Herzlich tut mich erfreuen)* 1:20
- 5 No. 5 *Deck Thyself, My Soul (Schmücke dich, O liebe Seele)* 1:28
- 6 No. 6 *Blessed Are Ye Faithful Souls (O wie selig seid ihr doch, ihr Frommen)* 1:07
- 7 No. 7 *O God, Thou Faithful God (O Gott, du frommer Gott)* 5:18
- 8 No. 8 *Behold, a Rose is Blooming (Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen)* 2:39
- 9 No. 9 *My Heart is Filled with Longing (Herzlich tut mich verlangen)* 2:01
- 10 No. 10 *My Heart is Filled with Longing (Herzlich tut mich verlangen) (second setting)* 2:01
- 11 No. 11 *O World, I Now Must Leave Thee (O Welt, ich muss dich lassen) (second setting)* 2:49

12 BLACK SWAN FOR ORCHESTRA (2010) 7:04

(AFTER *INTERMEZZO* IN A MAJOR, OP. 118 NO. 2, BY BRAHMS)

ORCHESTRATED BY BRIGHT SHENG

PIANO QUARTET NO. 1 IN G MINOR, OP. 25

ORCHESTRATED BY ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

- 13 I. *Allegro* 14:16
- 14 II. *Intermezzo* 8:21
- 15 III. *Andante con moto* 11:13
- 16 IV. *Rondo alla zingarese* 9:16

MICHAEL STERN



KANSAS CITY
SYMPHONY