

PRESS RELEASE



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ORCHESTRA

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SARAH HICKS EXTENDS CONTRACT WITH MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA AS PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR OF LIVE AT ORCHESTRA HALL SERIES

The Minnesota Orchestra announced today that Sarah Hicks will continue to lead the Orchestra's "Live at Orchestra Hall" series through the 2023-24 season, serving as principal conductor and overseeing artistic planning for the series. Hicks, who will lead the Orchestra in a televised Young People's Concert on November 3 and a pair of *Black Panther Movies & Music* performances on November 5 and 6, first joined the Orchestra in 2006 and assumed her current position in 2009. During the pandemic, she served as host of the Orchestra's livestream and broadcast series *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*, a role she will also continue.

"Sarah Hicks is such an important part of the Minnesota Orchestra team," said Minnesota Orchestra Music Director Osmo Vänskä. "For over a decade she has taken great care of our Live at Orchestra Hall series, building connections with audiences, creating innovative concert programs and leading the players with very fine musicianship. She has endless creative ideas, and I know she and the Orchestra will continue to do many exciting things together in the years ahead. These concerts are in great hands."

The Live at Orchestra Hall series covers a broad spectrum that celebrates popular music, Broadway classics, movie scores and world music, among other offerings. Under Hicks' leadership, the series has featured artists from Minnesota's renowned popular music scene, with Hicks developing orchestral concerts with Dessa, Cloud Cult and The New Standards. In 2019, she led the Orchestra in an ambitious album with Dessa, recorded live across two sold-out performances at Orchestra Hall and released on the Doomtree Records label. Hicks is currently working with director Peter Rothstein, composer Robert Elhai, and writer/storytellers Kevin Kling and PaviElle French on a new Minnesota Orchestra holiday concert that will debut this December.

"It's a thrill to continue in a role that encompasses my most meaningful priorities as an artist: telling stories through music, welcoming and connecting with audiences from across all our communities, and collaborating with great musicians and artists," says Hicks. "My connection with the Minnesota Orchestra and our audiences has only grown through the pandemic, and I can't wait to step on the podium again this fall at Orchestra Hall."

Said Minnesota Orchestra President and CEO Michelle Miller Burns, "Sarah has played a critical role in connecting the Orchestra to expanded audiences on our livestreams and TV broadcasts, and her creative contributions to these digital experiences has made them better programs. We are thrilled she'll continue to be part of our artistic leadership team."

Sarah Hicks

Sarah Hicks joined the Minnesota Orchestra as assistant conductor in 2006, making history as the first woman to hold a titled conducting post with the Minnesota Orchestra. In 2009, she was named to her current position (originally called Principal Conductor of Pops and Presentations), succeeding trumpeter Doc Severinsen in that role, and devoted herself to programming a wide spectrum of music for Orchestra audiences. She also conducted the Inside the Classics series for ten seasons. In 2020, she assumed another high-profile role with the Orchestra, serving as the on-camera host and a script writer for the Twin Cities PBS broadcast and online livestream, *This Is Minnesota Orchestra*. Hicks hosted 18 broadcasts in the 2021-22 season (and conducted three of them) and will continue to serve in this capacity for future broadcasts.

A specialist in film music and the film-in-concert genre, Hicks has premiered Pixar in Concert and Disney-Pixar's *Coco in Concert*; her live concert recording of "A Celebration of the Music of *Coco* at the Hollywood Bowl" can be seen on Disney+ and her work on *The Little Mermaid Live* was broadcast on ABC. With the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, she recorded film music for an album titled *The Morricone Duel*, which was released in 2018 and has been broadcast around the world, garnering over 150 million views on YouTube.

Hicks has garnered national and international acclaim as a highly sought-after conductor: she has guest conducted both in the U.S and abroad, leading such ensembles as the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Pops, Cincinnati Pops, Dallas Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Melbourne Symphony, Tokyo Philharmonic and Malaysian Philharmonic, among many others.

The 2021-22 season sees her returning to the San Francisco Symphony, Dallas Symphony and Hawaii Symphony and marks her debuts with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the Grant Park Music Festival. Her opera appearances include engagements with the East Slovak State Opera Theater and the Curtis Opera Theater. With the Minnesota Orchestra, this season she will lead the Orchestra in its first Movies & Music concerts since the pandemic began, conducting film versions of *Black Panther* (November 5 and 6, 2021), *Toy Story* (November 27 and 28, 2021), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (January 27-29, 2022) and *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi* (April 21-24, 2022), as well as concert collaborations with PBS travel host Rick Steves and Cloud Cult.

Hicks is a frequent guest lecturer and panelist and was on the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music from 2000 to 2005 and served as its staff conductor until 2012. Her interest in the intersection of mental health and music led to the production of a Minnesota Orchestra concert titled *Music and the Mind*, and her commitment to open conversation about mental health issues continues through her blog, podcast, YouTube series and other online advocacy.

Born in Tokyo and raised in Honolulu, Hicks trained on both the piano and the viola. She received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University as a composition major and she holds an artist's diploma in conducting from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with the late pedagogue Otto-Werner Mueller.

November Minnesota Orchestra Performances with Sarah Hicks

Young People's Concert THE SCIENCE OF SOUND

Wednesday, November 3, 2021, 4 p.m. Central

Minnesota Orchestra
Sarah Hicks, conductor
Catherine Carson, violin

Offered in partnership with the Science Museum of Minnesota, the concert will explore the physics behind sound production and how our brains translate this into music.

To View: Watch live for free on Twin Cities PBS (Channel 2 in the Twin Cities), via the Orchestra's social media channels or at minnesotaorchestra.org.

U.S. Bank Movies & Music BLACK PANTHER WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Friday, November 5, 2021, 8 p.m. / Orchestra Hall
Saturday, November 6, 2021, 8 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Minnesota Orchestra
Sarah Hicks, conductor
Massamba Diop, talking drum soloist

Conducting the first Movies & Music concert performances since the pandemic began, Sarah Hicks leads the Orchestra in Ludwig Göransson's Oscar-winning *Black Panther* score live to picture.

Tickets: 612-371-5656 or minnesotaorchestra.org

U.S. Bank Movies & Music DISNEY IN CONCERT: TOY STORY WITH THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Saturday, November 27, 2021, 2 p.m. / Orchestra Hall
Saturday, November 28, 2021, 2 p.m. / Orchestra Hall

Minnesota Orchestra
Sarah Hicks, conductor

The fantastic fun-filled journey of two likeable toys, Woody and Buzz Lightyear, comes to life onstage at Orchestra Hall on Thanksgiving weekend.

Tickets: 612-371-5656 or minnesotaorchestra.org

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