KU Symphony Orchestra with special guest Blake Pouliot violin

Conducted by Creston Herron
PROGRAM

Inspiration! Festive Overture ................................... Quinn Mason (b. 1996)

Special guest Blake Pouliot
  Allegro
  Andante
  Presto in moto perpetuo

20-Minute Intermission

Symphony No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 17 ............... Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)
  Andante sostenuto – Allegro vivo
  Andantino marziale, quasi moderato
  Scherzo. Allegro molto vivace
  Finale. Moderato Assai – Allegro vivo

Program is subject to change.
Please see your pre- and post-performance emails for program notes.

BLAKE POULIOT

Described as “immaculate, at once refined and impassioned” (ArtsAtlanta), violinist Blake Pouliot has anchored himself among the ranks of classical phenoms. A tenacious young artist with a passion that enraptures his audience in every performance, Pouliot has established himself as “one of those special talents that comes along once in a lifetime” (Toronto Star).

Pouliot’s spectacular 2022–23 season included debuts at the symphonies of Arkansas, Bangor, Elgin, North Carolina, Oregon, Tacoma and Westmoreland. He returned to the stages of the Madison and Milwaukee symphonies, as well as the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, performing the works of Beethoven, Saint-Saens and Paganini. Pouliot also brought his recital programming to Temecula, Paris and to his debuts in Boston and at Toronto’s Koerner Hall. He widened his artistic lens in the Boston performance by commissioning the world premiere of Derrick Skye’s solo for violin and electronics, entitled “God of the Gaps.” A prolific collaborator, Pouliot debuted at the Seattle Chamber Music Society and returned to La Jolla Summerfest. He also returned to the National Youth Orchestra of Canada to embark on his second year as artist-in-residence, following last season’s inaugural residency in which the organization welcomed him to cultivate a curated program for students and faculty.
Other recent highlights include debuts with the Boise Philharmonic, Omaha Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Plano Symphony, Sarasota Orchestra and Winnipeg Symphony; and being named artist-in-residence at Orchestre Métropolitain, where he deepened his relationship with the orchestra’s music director, Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Pouliot released his debut album on Analekta Records in 2019 to critical acclaim, including a five-star rating from BBC Music Magazine as well as a 2019 Juno Award nomination for Best Classical Album. Adding to his accolades that year, Pouliot won both the Career Development Award from the Women’s Club of Toronto and the Virginia Parker Prize Career Grant from the Canada Arts Council. He has been featured twice on Rob Kapilow’s What Makes it Great? series and was NPR’s Performance Today artist-in-residence for the 2017–18 season in Minnesota, the 2018–19 season in Hawaii and the 2021–22 season across Europe. In 2016, he was awarded the Grand Prize at the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal Manulife Competition and was named First Laureate of both the 2018 and 2015 Canada Council for the Arts Musical Instrument Bank.

Since his orchestral debut at age 11, Pouliot has performed with the orchestras of Aspen, Atlanta, Detroit, Dallas, Madison, Montreal, Toronto, San Francisco and Seattle, among many others. Internationally, he has performed as soloist with the Sofia Philharmonic in Bulgaria, Orchestras of the Americas on its South American tour, and he was the featured soloist for the first ever joint tour of the European Union Youth Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Canada. He has collaborated with many musical luminaries, including conductors Sir Neville Marriner, David Afkham, Pablo Heras-Casado, David Danchmyr, JoAnn Falletta, Marcelo Lehninger, Nicholas McGegan, Alexander Prior, Vasily Petrenko and Thomas Søndergård.

Pouliot studied violin in Canada with Marie Bérard and Erika Raum, and he completed his training as an associate of The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. He graduated from the Colburn School Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Robert Lipsett, the Jascha Heifetz Distinguished Violin Chair.

Pouliot performs on the 1729 Guarneri del Gesù on generous loan from an anonymous donor.

CRESTON HERRON

Creston Herron is the newly appointed director of orchestral activities for the University of Kansas and serves on the faculty of the Interlochen Arts Camp. Herron previously served as the director of fine arts for the Klein Independent School District, conductor of the Shepherd School of Music Campanile Orchestra at Rice University, director of orchestras at Klein High School and the director of orchestras for the Yes Prep Public Schools.

Herron’s recent engagements as a guest conductor include work with regional and all-state ensembles in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, New Mexico, South Carolina, Tennessee and throughout Texas. He has also served on the summer faculty of the AFA Summer Music Festival, Stephen F. Austin University Summer Music Camp and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music Summer Music Clinic.
As a dedicated pedagogue, Herron enjoys working with current and future educators and young performers. He has presented masterclasses and guest lectures at The Midwest Clinic, Rice University, Shepherd School of Music, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, University of Houston, Moores School of Music, Sam Houston State University, Texas Tech University, The American String Teachers Association, The League of American Orchestras and the NAMM Believe in Music Webinar Series. He also gives professional development workshops to educators locally and nationally and is involved in judging UIL competitions both in solo and ensemble contests.

He has enjoyed national recognition both as an educator and musician, with orchestras earning multiple national titles under his direction, including being named national winner of The American Prize, Grand Champions of the ASTA National Orchestra Festival, Texas Music Educators Association State Honor Orchestra and Grand Champions of the New York Orchestra Cup. Individually, he has gained recognition for his work in music education as the Teacher of the Year at Klein High School, and he was awarded the Marjorie Keller Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award by the state board of the Texas Chapter of ASTA and the Spec’s Charitable Award for Excellence in Music Education by the Houston Symphony.

Alongside his work as an educator, Herron continues to hone his performing skills as a violinist, having collaborated with artists such as Renee Fleming, Mark O’Connor and Rachel Barton-Pine. He has performed with Da Camera of Houston, CCM Spoleto Festival in Italy, Galveston Symphony, Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Pasadena Philharmonic, Eutiner Festspiele Opera in Eutin, Germany and the Houston Latin Philharmonic.

Herron is a graduate of KU—where he received his B.M. in music performance—Rice University, Shepherd School of Music in Houston, TX—where he received his M.M. on scholarship as a Provost Fellow and a Brown Scholar—and he recently received a Master of Education degree in school leadership from Sam Houston State University.

**KU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

The University of Kansas Symphony Orchestra (KUSO) provides performance majors with the highest quality preparation for a professional career in orchestral playing. KUSO offers a comprehensive course of orchestral studies and performs repertoire spanning from the Baroque to the 21st century, including premieres of new works. In addition to large-scale symphonic programming, each season includes performances of major solo works featuring faculty, student and leading international guest artists, who have included PROJECT Trio, Tiempo Libre, Juan-Miguel Hernandez, Blake Pouliot, Joshua Roman and Simone Porter.

KUSO also regularly collaborates with KU Theatre and KU Opera as the resident ensemble for the productions. The orchestra combines with KU Choirs for the immensely popular Holiday Vespers annual concert as well as other choral/orchestral literature throughout the year, and showcases the works of student composers in the KU composition studio. KUSO’s concert stage is the magnificent 2,000-seat Lied Center of Kansas, and the orchestra also regularly performs at the nationally renowned Kauffman Center in Kansas City.