



PRO ARTE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OPENS 2025-26 SEASON WITH *SWEET LOVE, WILD DANCE* SEPTEMBER 21 AT SANDERS THEATRE

*Concert Kicks off Orchestra's 48th Season
Set to Feature Four Full Ensemble Concerts*

(Newton, MA- August 13, 2025) **Gisèle Ben-Dor**, celebrating 25 years as Conductor Emerita of Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, leads the opening concert of the 2025-26 season, *Sweet Love, Wild Dance*, on Sunday, September 21st at historic Sanders Theatre in Cambridge. Pro Arte's season will present 4 concerts on their Ensemble Series throughout the year, as well as a more intimate Salon Series. For tickets and information about all concerts, visit www.proarte.org.

Sweet Love, Wild Dance opens with the dramatic overture to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, followed by his Piano Concerto No. 17. 18 year-old pianist **Seokyoung (Sean) Hong**, winner of the prestigious Cliburn International Junior Competition at the age of 15 will be the soloist.. The program includes Ginastera's vibrant ballet *Estancia*, with baritone **Marcelo Guzzo** narrating the story of a city boy who falls in love with a rancher's daughter in just one day.

Conductor Emerita Ben-Dor served as Music Director of Pro Arte from 1991-2000, and has continued her longtime collaborations over the past 25 years. She has led top orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and New World Symphony. Honored by the Carnegie Foundation as "A Great Immigrant and a Great American," she also serves as Conductor Laureate of the Santa Barbara Symphony.

Born in Korea, Seokyoung Hong began playing the piano at the age of five, quickly demonstrating remarkable potential. He received training in both piano and composition at the Seoul Art Center Prodigy Academy and later at Yewon School, Korea's most prestigious art school. Seokyoung moved to the U.S. to further his studies at the

Walnut Hill School in Natick, and will be a freshman this year at New England Conservatory of Music.

Marcelo Guzzo, who has gained international acclaim performing leading operatic roles in distinguished theaters around the world, is celebrated for his “magnificent voice, magnetic stage presence and authentic charm.” His portrayal of De Siriex, in a filmed version of Puccini’s *Fedora* at Teatro Grattacielo in New York City in 2020, was praised by Opera News Magazine for bringing a “welcome darkness of timbre and presence to his dramatic scenes.”

The 2025-26 season continues November 2, as **Sarah Ioannides** makes her Pro Arte debut with *Uncommon Gems*, a program showcasing rarely heard works. Ioannides, Music Director of Symphony Tacoma and Director of Orchestral Activities at Boston University, leads a diverse selection of works that includes Béla Bartók’s *Roumanian Folk Dances*—originally written for piano and later arranged by the composer for chamber orchestra. The program also features *Intermezzo* by Swedish composer and trailblazing organist Elfrida Andrée, Copland’s *Duo* with principal flutist **Ann Bobo**, and Poulenc’s spirited *Sinfonietta* to close the evening.

Conductor **Conner Gray Covington** leads *A Musical Menagerie* on January 18, 2026. This family-friendly concert, presented at Newton City Hall’s War Memorial Auditorium, will offer a repertoire for the young and young-at-heart. The program will indeed be a menagerie with Rimsky-Korsakov’s, *Flight of the Bumblebee*; along with selections from Mussorgsky/Ravel- *Pictures at an Exhibition*; Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake Suite*; Saint-Saens’ *Carnival of the Animals*; Beethoven’s *Pastorale Symphony*; and Caroline Shaw’s *The Mountain that Loved a Bird*.

On April 12, 2026, conductor **Paul Polivnik**, who led Pro Arte for concerts in 2019 and 2022, returns to conduct *Signs of Life*, featuring works for string orchestra. The concert will include Dvořák’s *Nocturne*, Shostakovich’s *Chamber Symphony*, and Hailstork’s *Sonata da Chiesa*, concluding with Elgar’s *Introduction and Allegro*.

On May 17, 2026, in a special non-subscription concert, **Kevin Leong** conducts *A German Requiem*, a collaboration between Pro Arte, the **Concord Chorus**, and **Masterworks Chorale**. Soprano **Carley DeFranco** and baritone **Dana Whiteside**, join the 150 voices in the chorus for a lively show. The program also features a world premiere by Jonathan Bailey Holland.

About Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra

Pro Arte is a professional, musician-led cooperative chamber orchestra that shares its passion for music through exceptional performances that enrich, engage, and educate.

The ensemble performs familiar and adventurous music in concert halls and welcoming community settings. Founded in 1978 by Harvard chaplain and visionary Larry Hill, Pro Arte is one of only four cooperative orchestras in the country. Unlike traditional orchestras, Pro Arte's players, as well as the conductor, decide what music the Orchestra will perform and who the guest artists will be.

Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra is a member of the Newton Cultural Alliance.

Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra presents *Sweet Love, Wild Dance* at 3pm on Sunday September 21 at Sanders Theatre in Cambridge. Ensemble concerts on Sunday November 2 and April 12 take place at The Second Church in Newton, 60 Highland Street, West Newton MA. *A Musical Menagerie* on Sunday January 18 at 3pm takes place at Newton City Hall War Memorial Auditorium, 1000 Commonwealth Ave., Newton. The May 17 Brahms *Requiem* collaboration takes place at Cary Memorial Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington.

Tickets and information for all concerts can be found at www.proarte.org.

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