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Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Presents ‘Voices of Nature,’ Featuring Music By Debussy, Haydn & Dvořák

Concert Features Associate Conductor Valery Saul, Cellist Gabriel Martins

LITTLE ROCK, AR. (March 26, 2026) — The [Arkansas Symphony Orchestra](#) (ASO) presents its final concert of the 2025-2026 Stella Boyle Smith Masterworks season, “Voices of Nature: Debussy, Haydn & Dvořák,” at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 2, and at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 3, at the Robinson Center.

This program invites audiences to experience the beauty and mystery of the natural world through music. From moments of quiet reflection to passages full of energy and movement, the concert highlights how composers across eras have drawn inspiration from nature’s landscapes, moods and rhythms. The concert also marks Associate Conductor Valery Saul’s appearance on the Masterworks podium, a celebratory conclusion to her three-year tenure with the ASO.

“‘Voices of Nature’ explores the many soundscapes of the natural world through two masterworks: ‘Afternoon of the Faun’ by Claude Debussy and Symphony No. 8 by Antonín Dvořák,” Saul said. “Debussy’s shimmering tone poem evokes the dreamy atmosphere of a mythic woodland afternoon, while Dvořák’s symphony celebrates the vitality and rustic beauty of the Bohemian countryside. This program will also feature cellist Gabriel Martins, who will present Joseph Haydn’s radiant Cello Concerto No. 1 in C major.”

A Brazilian-American cellist, Martins is recognized as one of the most compelling young artists of his generation, praised for his rich tone, expressive sensitivity and commanding stage presence. A top prizewinner at major international competitions, he has performed as a soloist with leading orchestras across the U.S. and abroad.

Tickets are \$19, \$30, \$50, \$77 or \$92 (subject to change), with \$15 tickets for active-duty military and college students. Thanks to Bank OZK of Little Rock, all Arkansas kids 18 and under get free admission with the purchase of an adult ticket. Tickets can be purchased online at arkansassymphony.org, at the Box Office in the Robinson Center an hour and a half before the concert or by phone at (501) 666-1761, ext. 1.

Concert Conversations with ASO’s Librarian Geronimo Oyenard

All concert ticket holders are invited to a pre-concert lecture an hour before each concert. These talks feature insights from guest artists and feature musical examples to enrich the concert experience.

Artists

Valery Saul, conductor ([bio](#) | [photos](#))

Gabriel Martins, cello ([bio](#) | [photos](#))

Program

Claude Debussy: "Prélude à L'après-midi d'un faune" ("Afternoon of a Faun")

Joseph Haydn: "Cello Concerto in C" with Gabriel Martins, cello

Antonín Dvořák: "Symphony No. 8"

About The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra is the leading employer of professional performing artists in Arkansas and is celebrating its 60th season in 2025-2026. The ASO recently opened its first permanent home, the ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center, in the East Village between Heifer International and the Clinton Presidential Library. The state's first music center is a radically welcoming hub of musical activity for all Arkansans, housing programs of the E. Lee Ronnel Music Academy, a broadcast studio, and the River Rhapsodies Chamber Music Series. ASO is the resident orchestra at Robinson Center and performs over 60 concerts yearly for more than 165,000 people through its Stella Boyle Smith Masterworks Series, First Orion Pops Series, River Rhapsodies Chamber Music Series, and numerous concerts throughout Arkansas. The E. Lee Ronnel Music Academy reaches over 30,000 Arkansans in over 200 schools from ages 4 to 104 through the string academy, youth ensembles, bucket band, community orchestra, ASO Children's Choir, the annual Children's Concert, and more. In 2020, over 1 million people in over 30 countries viewed the ASO musician-led Bedtime with Bach series. The ASO employs 14 full-time musicians, over 70 part-time musicians, and 16 administrative staff members with an annual operating budget of \$4.9 million. The ASO is a member of the League of American Orchestras and a partner orchestra of the National Alliance for Audition Support, an unprecedented national initiative to increase diversity in American orchestras. For more information about the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra call 501-666-1761 or visit www.arkansassymphony.org.

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