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SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES SIX NEW MUSICIANS JOINING THE ORCHESTRA IN THE 2025–26 SEASON

New musicians include Associate Concertmaster Jason Issokson, Section First Violin Yvette Kraft, Section Second Violins Jane (Hyeon Jin) Cho and Kingston Ho, Section Cello Sarah Chong, and Second Oboe Brooks Fisher, who join the Orchestra in September 2025

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—The San Francisco Symphony welcomes six new musicians to the Orchestra's roster in the 2025–26 season.

Associate Concertmaster **Jason Issokson** (San Francisco Symphony Foundation Chair) joins the San Francisco Symphony in September 2025 and succeeds Nadya Tichman, who stepped down as Associate Concertmaster in 2022 following 31 seasons in the position.

Also joining the Orchestra this September are Section First Violin **Yvette Kraft** (Isaac Stern Chair), Section Second Violins **Jane (Hyeon Jin) Cho** and **Kingston Ho**, Section Cello **Sarah Chong** (Elizabeth C. Peters Cello Chair), and Second Oboe **Brooks Fisher** (Dr. William D. Clinite Chair). They, along with Issokson, will perform their first concerts as members of the San Francisco Symphony this month, including the Orchestra's annual All San Francisco Concert on September 11 and the Opening Gala on September 12.

Additional Orchestra Updates

Principal Trombone Timothy Higgins and Bass Trombone Christopher Bassett will be on leaves of absence during the 2025–26 season. Higgins will undertake two projects with the San Francisco Symphony this season while on leave—on October 3–5, Gustavo Gimeno and the Orchestra give the world premiere of Higgins’s *Market Street, 1920s*, commissioned by the SF Symphony, and on May 29–30, Higgins joins conductor Miguel Harth-Bedoya and the Orchestra for the United States premiere of Jimmy López’s *Shift*, a concerto for trombone and orchestra, co-commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and San Diego Symphony.

Associate Principal Trombone Nick Platoff resigned from his position with the San Francisco Symphony at the end of the 2024–25 season to assume the role of Principal Trombone in the Houston Symphony.

The San Francisco Symphony welcomes two one-year substitutes for the 2025–26 season: Michael Stevens will serve as Acting Principal Horn and Jack Bryant will serve as Acting Utility Horn.

New Musician Bios

Jason Issokson, Associate Concertmaster

Jason Issokson joins the San Francisco Symphony as Associate Concertmaster, holding the San Francisco Symphony Foundation Chair, starting with the 2025–26 season. He has served as a member of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra since 2019. Concerto highlights include engagements with the Fort Worth Symphony, Aspen Concert Orchestra, Waco Symphony, Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, East Texas Symphony Orchestra, Great Falls Symphony, Abilene Philharmonic, Sendai Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestra di Teatro San Carlo, and the Orchestra Internazionale d’Italiae, among others.

Over the past decade Issokson has performed extensively in string quartets, first as a founding member of the Argus Quartet and subsequently as the second violinist of the Rolston String Quartet.

Issokson was awarded the top prize at the International Violin Competition “Andrea Postacchini,” third prize at the International Alberto Curci Violin Competition, and the prize for best performance of a commissioned work at the International Max Rostal Competition. Chamber music honors include first prizes at the M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition and the Concert Artists Guild Competition.

He studied with Midori at the Manhattan School of Music and the University of Southern California.

Yvette Kraft, Section First Violin

Yvette Kraft joins the first violin section of the San Francisco Symphony, holding the Isaac Stern Chair, in the 2025–26 season. She was the winner of both the 2024 Aspen Music Festival Violin Concerto Competition and the 2024 DeLay Fellowship Award. Internationally, she placed second at the 2020 Grumiaux International Violin Competition in Brussels, was a semifinalist in the 2019 Louis Spohr International Violin Competition in Weimar, and was a 2023 Frances Walton Competition solo winner. She is an NPR *From the Top* Fellow and has collaborated with artists

such as Augustin Hadelich, Gil Shaham, Arnaud Sussman, Jon Kimura Parker, and Jeremy Denk. Kraft was the concertmaster of the 2024 New York String Orchestra Seminar at Carnegie Hall. She has soloed with numerous orchestras including the Seattle Symphony, San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, and Spokane Symphony. After studying with Simon James, she completed her studies as a student of Robert Lipsett at the Colburn Conservatory of Music, winning the 2025 Frances Rosen Prize upon graduation.

Jane (Hyeon Jin) Cho, Section Second Violin

Jane (Hyeon Jin) Cho joins the San Francisco Symphony second violin section in the 2025–26 season. She was a finalist in the 2022 16th International Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition.

Born in South Korea, Cho began violin lessons at the age of six and studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School in the United Kingdom and the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria. She earned her bachelor's degree with first class honors from the Royal College of Music in London and recently completed her master of music degree at the Juilliard School with Catherine Cho. She also earned her artist diploma from the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Belgium.

Cho has collaborated with artists including Gidon Kremer, Christian Tetzlaff, Augustin Dumay, Gary Hoffman, Miguel da Silva, and Pamela Frank, and recorded her debut CD with members of the Debussy Quartet. She also has performed as a substitute musician with the New York Philharmonic. She performs on a Giuseppe Nadotti violin, made in Piacenza, Italy, ca. 1775.

Kingston Ho, Section Second Violin

Kingston Ho joins the San Francisco Symphony's second violin section with the 2025–26 season. He recently completed a master's degree at the Colburn School of Music, where he studied with Robert Lipsett. Previously, he earned a bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University, where he studied with Cornelia Heard.

A native of New Jersey, Ho began playing violin at the age of five. He has served as concertmaster of the Verbier Festival Orchestra and was a fellowship recipient at the Aspen Music Festival. He was also previously a member of the New York String Orchestra Seminar and National Youth Orchestra of the USA, where he played in a side-by-side concert with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

As a part of the Eunoia Quartet, he won first prize at the MTNA National Chamber Music Competition. He has also been a winner of the Vanderbilt University Concerto Competition and National YoungArts Foundation Competition, special prize recipient at the Fritz Kreisler Competition, semifinalist at the Premio Paganini Competition, and quarterfinalist at the Queen Elisabeth, Michael Hill, and Carl Nielsen competitions.

Sarah Chong, Section Cello

Sarah Chong joins the San Francisco Symphony cello section, holding the Elizabeth C. Peters Cello Chair, in the 2025–26 season. A Bay Area native, she began her musical studies at age nine under Jihee Kim. She has appeared as a soloist with the Prometheus Symphony Orchestra as well as the FilAm Music Foundation and was a prizewinner at the MTNA Competition, United States Open Music Competition, and American Fine Arts Festival Competition.

An avid chamber musician, Chong performed on the stages of the St. Paul String Quartet Competition and Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition. Other notable chamber appearances include the Meadowmount School of Music, Music@Menlo, and Musique Dans le Gers. Chong was the cellist in residence of Nova Linea Musica's 2024–25 season, focusing on new music and commissions. She spent years under the guidance of the Dover Quartet and has shared the stage in performance with the Takács Quartet. Other chamber influences include Rainer Küchl, Kikue Ikeda, David Geber, and Julia Lichten.

Chong received her bachelor's degree in cello performance and a minor in psychology from Northwestern University, where she studied under Hans Jørgen Jensen and Wei Yu.

Brooks Fisher, Second Oboe

Brooks Fisher joins the San Francisco Symphony oboe section, holding the Dr. William D. Clinite Chair, with the 2025–26 season. He was an acting member of the San Francisco Symphony in the 2024–25 season and previously served as principal oboe of Symphony San Jose. He has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra, American Ballet Theatre, Utah Symphony, National Symphony, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Ballet, and Houston Symphony.

Fisher received his bachelor's degree from Oberlin College and Conservatory, where he studied with Robert Walters, and he earned a master's degree from Rice University, where he studied with Robert Atherholt. He also studied with Eugene Izotov at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he received a professional studies certificate.

A native of the Bay Area, Fisher's first oboe teacher was Brenda Schuman-Post. He was a member of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra and coaches that ensemble today.

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