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SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES THREE NEW MUSICIANS JOINING THE ORCHESTRA IN THE 2026–27 SEASON

New musicians include Associate Principal Second Violin Jung-Eun Shin, Associate Principal Horn Michael Stevens, and Assistant Principal Timpani/Section Percussion James Benoit, who join the Orchestra in September 2026 alongside previously announced section cello Starla Breshears

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—The San Francisco Symphony welcomes four new musicians to the Orchestra's roster in the 2026–27 season.

Associate Principal Second Violin **Jung-Eun Shin**, Associate Principal Horn **Michael Stevens**, and Assistant Principal Timpani/Section Percussion **James Benoit** join the San Francisco Symphony in September 2026. Section cello **Starla Breshears** (Gary & Kathleen Heidenreich Second Century Campaign Chair), whose appointment was announced in March, also joins the Orchestra with the start of the 2026–27 season.

Additional Orchestra Updates

Principal Horn **Diego Incertis Sánchez** has regretfully resigned from his position with the San Francisco Symphony following the 2025–26 season to return to his role with the London Symphony Orchestra and to be closer to family.

The San Francisco Symphony congratulates first violin **Sarn Oliver**, who announced his retirement at the end of the 2025–26 season. Oliver joined the Orchestra in 1995 and was a member of the San Francisco Symphony for 30 years.

The San Francisco Symphony welcomes five one-year substitutes for the 2026–27 season:

Brett Hodge joins the San Francisco Symphony as Acting Principal Horn during 2026–27. **Jack Bryant**, who served as a one-year substitute last season, will continue as Acting Assistant Principal/Utility Horn. Joining them will be **Tristan “Troy” Baban** as Acting Second Bassoon, **Kaylet Torrez** as Acting Third Horn, and **Zachary Litty** as Acting Bass Trombone.

Additionally, SF Symphony violinist **Olivia Chen** will move from the second violin to the first violin section beginning with the 2026–27 season.

New Musician Bios

Jung-Eun Shin, Associate Principal Second Violin

Jung-Eun Shin joins the San Francisco Symphony as Associate Principal Second Violin at the beginning of the 2026–27 season. Based in Germany for much of her professional career, she has served as first concertmaster of the Augsburg Philharmonic Orchestra at Staatstheater Augsburg since 2017. Previously, she was an academy fellow with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra from 2014 to 2016 and subsequently performed with the orchestra as a first violinist during the 2016–17 season. She has also appeared as guest first concertmaster with the Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz in Munich and served as principal second violin of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival Orchestra. In South Korea, she has appeared as first concertmaster of the Seoul Arts Center International Music Festival Orchestra. As a soloist and recitalist, Shin has performed in both Germany and South Korea, including appearances with Sinfonietta Dachau and at the Kumho Young Artist Concert Series. Since 2020, she has also been a member of AUX Trio, performing in Germany and South Korea. She is a prizewinner of several violin competitions in South Korea. A native of South Korea, Shin began studying the violin at the age of four. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Seoul National University and continued her studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich, where she completed a master’s degree and the Meisterklasse postgraduate program.

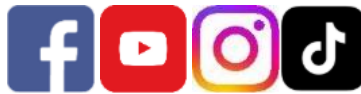
Michael Stevens, Associate Principal Horn

Michael Stevens joins the San Francisco Symphony as Associate Principal Horn for the 2026–27 season. He was an acting member of the San Francisco Symphony in the 2025–26 season and previously served as principal horn of the Rochester Philharmonic. He has also performed with the Chicago Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Auckland Philharmonia, and Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra. A native of East Islip, New York, Stevens earned a bachelor’s degree from Northwestern University’s Bienen School of Music and was a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. His primary teachers included Gail Williams, Jon Boen, Javier Gandara, and Barbara Currie.

James Benoit, Assistant Principal Timpani/Section Percussion

Jim Benoit, a native of Niskayuna, New York, is the newly appointed Assistant Timpani and Section Percussionist of the San Francisco Symphony. Previously, he served as principal timpani of the Pittsburgh Symphony and Seattle Symphony, as well as associate principal percussion and assistant principal timpani of the Fort Worth Symphony. He has also performed as guest principal timpani with the Cleveland Orchestra. As an educator, Benoit is currently on the faculty of Duquesne University. He enjoys teaching and coaching a variety of subjects, including timpani, percussion, and chamber music. He also has a passion for performing and teaching jazz vibraphone, stemming from his time touring and recording as the vibraphonist of The Waitiki 7. Benoit received an artist diploma from Duquesne University, a Master of Music degree from the Juilliard School, and a Bachelor of Music degree from Berklee College of Music.

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