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KANSAS CITY ENTERTAINMENT

World's great musicians plus great pieces: This KC concert is 'a triple cheeseburger'

BY PATRICK NEAS *SPECIAL TO THE STAR*
JANUARY 19, 2024 5:30 AM





Pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason will perform with the Royal Philharmonic at the Kauffman Center on Jan. 23. JOHN DAVIS



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Here's a concert that will knock your socks off. The Harriman-Jewell Series presents pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason and the Royal Philharmonic conducted by Vasily Petrenko on Jan. 23 at Helzberg Hall.

The orchestra will perform “Danse” by Debussy and Rachmaninoff’s gorgeous Symphony No. 2. Kanneh-Mason will be the soloist for Prokofiev’s fearsomely difficult Piano Concerto No. 3.

Kanneh-Mason was born in Nottingham, England, into a family of enormously talented children . All seven siblings were featured on the [TV show “Britain’s Got Talent”](#) in 2015, and were immediate audience favorites. Kanneh-Mason studied at the Royal Academy of Music on the Sir Elton John Scholarship and now concertizes around the world as a soloist and with her brother, the acclaimed cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason.

“We’ve actually had Isata on the series before,” said Clark Morris, executive and artistic director of the Harriman-Jewell Series. “We were really pleased to feature her alongside her brother, and now she’s coming back as the featured soloist with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Of course, they’re one of the world’s great orchestras, and we’ve had them before, too, but it will be a treat to hear them in Helzberg Hall.”

Kanneh-Mason will perform the Piano Concerto No. 3 by Prokofiev, a piece she performed last year at the BBC Proms. Prokofiev himself was the soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the work’s premiere in 1921. It wasn’t long before the Piano Concerto No. 3 became a challenge every professional pianist would attempt. The concerto even achieved some mass popularity after it was featured in the 1980 film “The Competition.” It’s a dazzler, for sure, and it will be exciting to hear Kanneh-Mason’s rendition.

The rest of the program is what Morris calls “pretty intense.” It begins with “Danse,” an early piano piece by Debussy orchestrated by Ravel. Then it’s Rachmaninoff’s heart-on-the-sleeve Symphony No. 2. Music doesn’t come more lush than this

symphony.

Rachmaninoff conducted the premiere in St. Petersburg in 1908. It was a hit from its first performance, and has remained one of Rachmaninoff's most popular works. Its soaring melodies are the epitome of romanticism.

Vasily Petrenko is the conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. *Tarlova*

The conductor, Vasily Petrenko, it must be noted, is worth the price of admission himself. Born in what was then Leningrad in 1976, He has distinguished himself as one of the finest conductors of his generation. Petrenko's discography is huge, including a fantastic cycle of the Shostakovich symphonies. Petrenko has Russian music in his veins, and is the perfect conductor for Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff.

With two of the juiciest works of classical music performed by some of the world's greatest musicians, no wonder Morris says this concert is "a triple cheeseburger."

7 p.m. Jan. 23. Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. \$12.50-\$90. 816-415-5025 or [hjseries.org](https://www.hjseries.org).

PARK ICM PRESENTS THE ROSAMUNDE TRIO

Park University's International Center for Music presents the Rosamunde Trio on Jan. 25 at the 1900 Building. The program has yet to be announced.

This globe-hopping trio has two local members, violinist Ben Sayevich and cellist Daniel Veis, both members of the Park faculty. The pianist is Martino Tirimo, a distinguished musician born in Cyprus. Tirimo is another musician with an amazing discography, and a vast repertoire, including the piano concertos of Michael Tippett and Antonin Dvorak..

Veis and Sayevich are well-known to local classical music lovers. All three musicians are devoted teachers as well as extraordinary musicians, whose overflowing love of music makes their performances special.

7:30 p.m. Jan. 25. 1900 Building, 1900 Shawnee Mission Parkway. \$10-\$30. [icm.park.edu](https://www.icm.park.edu).

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