CAPE SYMPHONY

"SING US A SONG: THE MUSIC OF BILLY JOEL" SHOW NOTES

The Cape Symphony Orchestra presents "Sing Us A Song: The Music of Billy Joel" Saturday, May 17, 2025 at 3:00 PM and 7:30 PM and Sunday, May 18, 2025 at 3:00 PM at the Barnstable Performing Arts Center.

Cape Symphony

Kevin Fitzgerald, Guest Conductor
Cape Symphony Musicians

We are delighted to welcome Kevin Fitzgerald back to the Cape Symphony podium (his first visit was to lead Passport to Hungary in 2024).

Kevin won the Special Prize for Best Performance of the Contemporary Piece at The Mahler Competition in 2023. He is the first conductor to win this Mahler Foundation sponsored award, which led to his conducting the world premiere of Bernd Richard Deutsch's *Con Moto* with the Bamberger Symphoniker. Kevin was a 2021 Tanglewood Music Center Conducting Fellow, and has been awarded Career Assistance Grants by the Solti Foundation U.S. for four consecutive years.

Kevin has been Associate Conductor of the Jacksonville Symphony since 2022. He's conducting over one hundred performances there, including a fully-staged production of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. He has recorded Sean Shepherd's *Concerto for Ensemble* with the University of Chicago's Grossman Ensemble. This season, Kevin has also conducted the Oregon Mozart Players and the Baton Rouge Symphony, debuted at the Nashville Symphony, and returned as a guest conductor to the Cape Symphony and North Carolina Symphony. He will also return to the New York Philharmonic as a cover conductor for three programs and assist Stéphane Denève at the St. Louis Symphony.

Guest Artists

Our guest artists for "Sing Us A Song: The Music of Billy Joel" are part of the Jeans n' Classics organization.

Jean Meilleur, Vocals

Over a career spanning decades, Jean has performed with scores of major North American orchestras, lending his distinctive voice to some of the greatest popular music of our time. Originally from Madison WI (and a lifelong Green Bay Packer fanatic!), Jean moved to Detroit MI at a young age. Living in the Motor City helped shape his penchant for the Motown, Soul and R&B sounds of the early '70s.

Jean is a prolific songwriter whose singing voice can best be described as passionate and provocative, with a robust timbre that is immediately recognizable. His voice has been heard over the years on many national radio and television jingles and advertisements. He was recently chosen as the Canadian voice of Jim Beam Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey.

John Regan, Piano

Classically trained but conditioned by rock, pop and folk music, John's repertoire is vast. Before joining Jeans 'n Classics in the early 1990s he worked with Second City in London, Ontario and did solo work across southwestern Ontario. He cites Joe Jackson, Tom Waits, Elton John and Roy Bittan as influences.

John has shared the piano with such notables as Roger Hodgson (Supertramp), Lawrence Gowan (Styx), as well as his good friend Don Paulton (Lighthouse, Jeans 'n Classics). He has performed with more than 50 orchestras across North America. In addition to the piano, John often plays host and emcee in J'nC concerts, offering insight and whimsy to the musical selections.

A high school teacher and football coach by day, John lives in London with his wife and two children.

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Arr. Peter Brennen

SHE'S GOT A WAY
Arr. Peter Brennen

SAY GOODBYE TO HOLLYWOOD
Arr. Peter Brennen

SHE'S ALWAYS A WOMAN
Arr. Peter Brennen

BABY GRAND
Arr. Peter Brennen

ONLY THE GOOD DIE YOUNG
Arr. Peter Brennen

~Intermission: 20 minutes~

SCENES FROM AN ITALIAN RESTAURANT
Arr. Peter Brennen

MY LIFE
Arr. Jeff Christmas

LULLABYE
Arr. Peter Brennen

BALLAD OF BILLY THE KID

PIANO MAN

WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE
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Please note the program is subject to change.

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About Today's Program

It's not overstating things to say Billy Joel – lyricist, pianist, composer, performer – is one of the most popular entertainers and recording artists in history. In a career spanning half a century and with over 160 million records sold, he's uniquely defined the sound of American pop and rock music. Among his accolades, he's a six-time Grammy Award winner, and was presented with the Grammy Legend Award in 1990. He was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1992, and received its highest honor, the Johnny Mercer Award, in 2001. He was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1999, and in 2002 was honored as the MusiCares Person of the Year for his accomplishments as a musician and a humanitarian. He was awarded the 36th Annual Kennedy Center Honor in 2013; the following year he received both the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song and the ASCAP Centennial Award.

Through the Joel Foundation, Billy and Alexis Joel fund music education programs and address urgent humanitarian needs including help for those experiencing food insecurity, PPE for healthcare workers during COVID, and help for the Ukrainian refugees.

Billy Joel is a Steinway Artist, and his portrait hangs in Manhattan's Steinway Hall alongside those of Rachmaninoff and Liszt. He is the first non-classical pianist to be so honored, but classical music is deeply important to him. "I started out playing classical music before I ever wrote a pop song," he said in an interview. "I played Mozart before I played Lennon and McCartney. I played Beethoven before I played Billy Joel."

Joel has blended classical training, rock and roll swagger, and poignant lyrical storytelling to create songs that resonate across genres and generations. Join us as we journey through the music of this true American original, full of emotional truths, beautiful melodies, and great rhythms. What's your favorite?

Our concert begins in 1977, with Anthony at work "in a grocery store, savin' his pennies for someday." **Movin' Out (Anthony's Song)**, a hard-driving anthem of ambition and frustration, embodies blue-collar struggle and the desire to break free from societal expectations. It's all delivered with a punchy groove and signature Long Island bite: "Workin' too hard can give you a heart attack-ack-ack-ack-ack-ack…" Sing along all the way to '**Allentown**' (1982), a gritty reflection of the disillusionment of a generation that "progress" left behind.

The minimalist ballad "**She's Got A Way**" (1971) is one of Joel's earliest love songs. Raw, simple, sincere – it showcases his gift for marrying melody and emotion. He blends nostalgia and liberation in **Say Goodbye to Hollywood** (1986), capturing the hollowness of L.A. glitz (this was long before Joel received his own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2004!). The gentle melody of **She's Always A Woman** (1977) masks the complexity of its biting, yet beautiful lyrics. Love is complicated, and full of contradiction.

The soulful **Baby Grand** (1986), originally a duet with Ray Charles, is an ode to the piano itself, Joel's constant companion and creative muse. Close your eyes and picture a jazz club at the end of the night.

Bouncy, rebellious, and upbeat, **Only The Good Die Young** (1977) picks the pace right back up before we break for a 20-minute intermission.

Scenes from an Italian Restaurant returns us to 1977 – who can forget the bittersweet story of Brenda and Eddie? – followed by that singularly defiant anthem of personal independence, **My Life** (1978). "Go ahead with your own life, leave me alone!"

The western-inspired **Ballad of Billy the Kid** (1973) is a concert favorite, blending myth and music with sweeping theatrical flair.

Piano Man is, of course, Billy Joel's defining song from the 1973 album of the same name. Its poignant observations weave a love letter to performance, all with a rousing waltz rhythm. Like so much of his excellent work it is the essence of bittersweet, capturing both loneliness and joy in unforgettable melody, from the entertainer's remove.

The rapid fire list of historical events in **We Didn't Start the Fire** (1989) is a dense, busy timelapse of cultural change, in sharp contrast to the stark, simple plea of **Honesty** (1979). Fiery crowd-pleaser **Big Shot** (1978) skewers late 70s pretense and excess with classic New York sarcasm.

Our program wraps up with **You May Be Right** (1980), a rollicking high energy classic that doesn't take itself too seriously. It's the perfect finale to a celebratory concert.

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Tickets for "Sing Us A Song: The Music of Billy Joel"

"Sing Us A Song: The Music of Billy Joel" will be performed at the Barnstable Performing Arts Center, 744 West Main Street, Hyannis on Saturday, May 17, 2025 at 3:00 PM and 7:30 PM and Sunday, May 18, 2025 at 3:00 PM. At this writing, some tickets remain for Saturday's performances; Sunday's is sold out.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.capesymphony.org, call the Box Office at 508.362.1111, email tickets@capesymphony.org, or visit us at 2235 Iyannough Road in West Barnstable, MA. The Box Office is open 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday – Friday. During concert weekend, we can only be reached by email.

Only tickets purchased on Cape Symphony's secure website or through the Cape Symphony Box Office are legitimate, guaranteed, and eligible for exchanges or credits in accordance with our ticket policies.

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Behind the Scenes

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