



[Jacob Riyeff](#) regularly teaches the Core Honors First-Year Seminar and along with required texts, he includes a field trip to the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra on his syllabus. On Sunday 2/23 he took 27 honors students to see Masur Conducts Mendelssohn at the Pabst. His seminar questions and deliberately asks students to resist the social, technological, and economic forces that lead us to develop habits of attention focused on the short, the surface, and the quick. Riyeff says “In order to push back against what recent culture offers, especially online and in pop culture, we’re looking at long arguments, epic poems, and other art forms that demand our sustained attention—attending a concert with the MSO is one engaging and meaningful way to do this kind of questioning outside of the classroom.”

Riyeff works closely with the Honors Program and [Luther Gray](#) the MSO’s Associate Director of Patron Services to coordinate tickets every semester. Because of Riyeff’s efforts, the Honors Program has developed an ongoing relationship with Gray to connect honors students to the arts.

Mendelssohn’s “Italian” symphony was inspired by a tour from Milan to Naples, calling to mind sunny Roman landscapes. “This is Italy!” wrote Mendelssohn, “And now has begun what I have always thought to be the supreme joy in life.” Music Director Ken-David Masur also leads Beethoven’s Second Piano Concerto which abounds with youth and vigor and was written as a showpiece for Beethoven himself. Orion Weiss, a pianist “with virtuosity to spare” (*Washington Post*), performs the Beethoven.