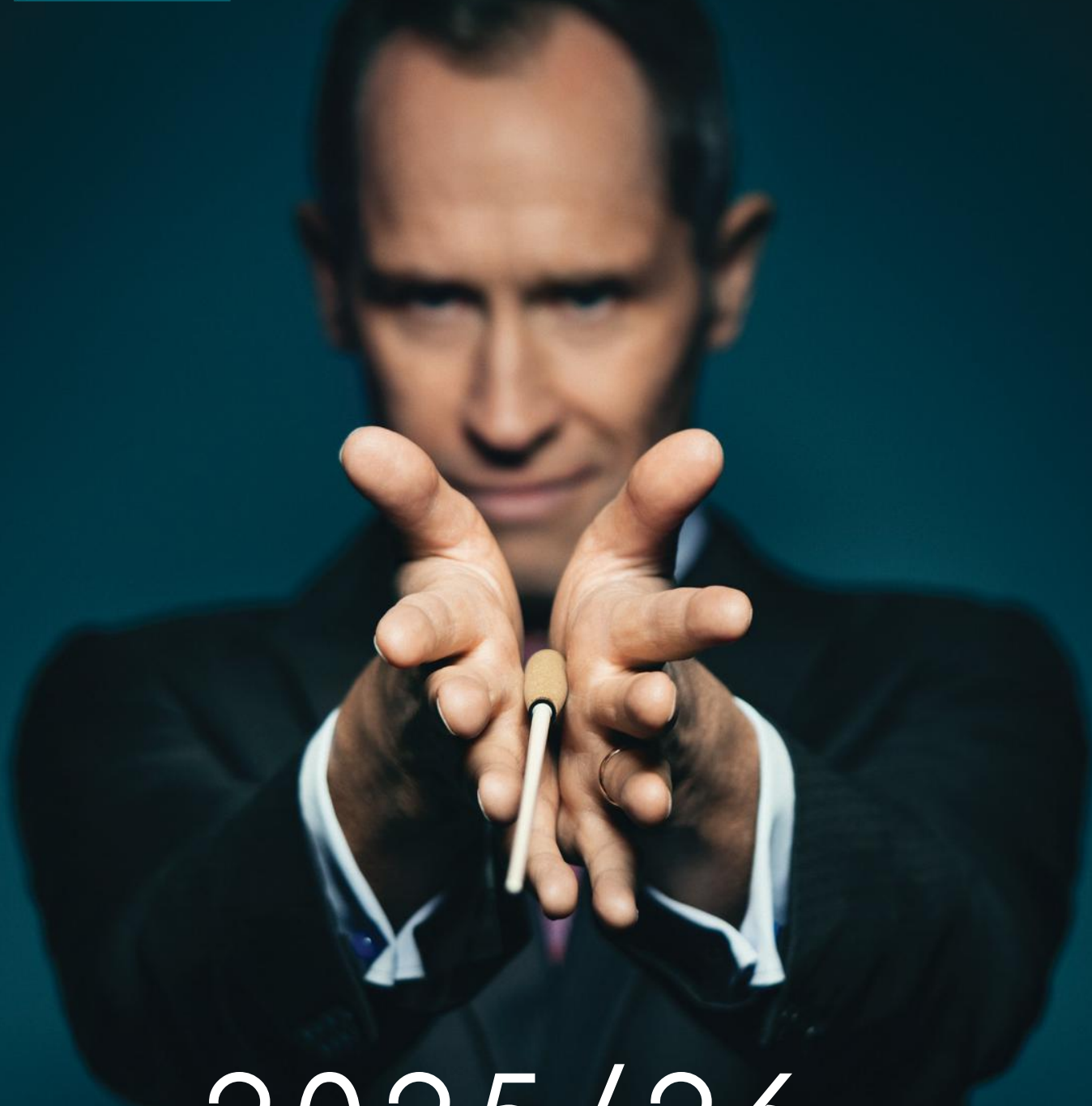




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2025/26

CONCERT SEASON

WITH ALASTAIR

From the Board President

Dear Friends of The Symphonia,

Each new season brings a sense of renewal and the joy of live music. As The Symphonia enters its 21st season, we are grateful for the community that shares this journey with us. Your enthusiasm, loyalty, and support make our work possible.

We are proud to announce Alastair Willis as The Symphonia's first Music Director, overseeing all aspects of concert programming and continuing as creator of his theatrical and immersive New Directions series. Having worked with The Symphonia since its earliest seasons, Alastair has helped shape the ensemble's artistic vision and expanded its creative reach.



Our 2025-26 season features masterworks by Mozart, Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto (March 8, 2026), and Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (March 8, 2026), alongside a chamber version of Dvořák's *New World* Symphony (January 24 & 25, 2026) and Poulenc's Organ Concerto (November 23, 2025). This January, we are especially proud to present the world premiere of *Ebenus*, a concerto for clarinet co-composed by Kinan Azmeh and Christophe Chagnard and commissioned by Virginia & Harvey Kimmel. Developing a tradition, Holiday Pops returns to Mizner Amphitheater (presented by the City of Boca Raton) and a theatrical New Directions concert, *Vienna's Riches*, completes the season.

Beyond the stage, The Symphonia inspires through education and outreach. Strings & Self-Esteem empowers children through music, while our complimentary ticket program welcomes audiences from Lighthouse for the Blind, Boca Helping Hands, the Levis JCC, and Canines Providing Assistance to Wounded Warriors. Our partnership with the Youth Orchestra of Palm Beach County provides young musicians the opportunity to perform alongside Symphonia professionals.

Through collaborations with the City of Boca Raton, The Boca Raton, and the Boca Raton Museum of Art, we continue to connect art, education, and live performance in meaningful ways.

Thank you for joining us for another remarkable season. Your support ensures that The Symphonia's artistry will continue to inspire and uplift our community for years to come.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sheldon Kwait".

Sheldon Kwait
President, Board of Directors
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2025-2026 CONCERT SEASON

MOZART & TIM

November 23, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
St. Gregory's Episcopal



HOLIDAY POPS

WITH THE SYMPHONIA

Presented by the City of Boca Raton
December 6, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
Mizner Park Amphitheater



DVORAK'S NEW WORLD PREMIERE

January 24, 2026, 7:00 p.m.
January 25, 2026, 3:00 p.m.
The Studio at Mizner Park



BEETHOVEN'S EMPEROR

March 8, 2026, 3:00 p.m.
St. Gregory's Episcopal



VIENNA'S RICHES

A NEW DIRECTIONS CONCERT

April 11, 2026, 7:00 p.m.
April 12, 2026, 3:00 p.m.
The Studio at Mizner Park



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MOZART AND TIM

St. Gregory's Episcopal
Sunday, November 23, 2025 | 03:00 PM

ALASTAIR WILLIS, Music Director

TIM BRUMFIELD, Organ Soloist

The Music Director's Chair is sponsored by The Kimmel Family.

Musica Celestis

Aaron Jay Kernis

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

I. Allegro

II. Romanze: Andante

III. Menuetto: Allegretto

IV. Rondo

Organ Concerto

Francis Poulenc

Tim Brumfield, Organ Soloist

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Victoria Stepanenko
Antonio Rincon
Orlando Forte

Violin II

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Monica Chervesan
Siobhan Cronin
Dale Sandvold
Tony Huang
Benita Dzhurkova

Viola

David Pedrazza
Valerie Judd
Karen Hebermehl
Alexandra D'Amico

Cello

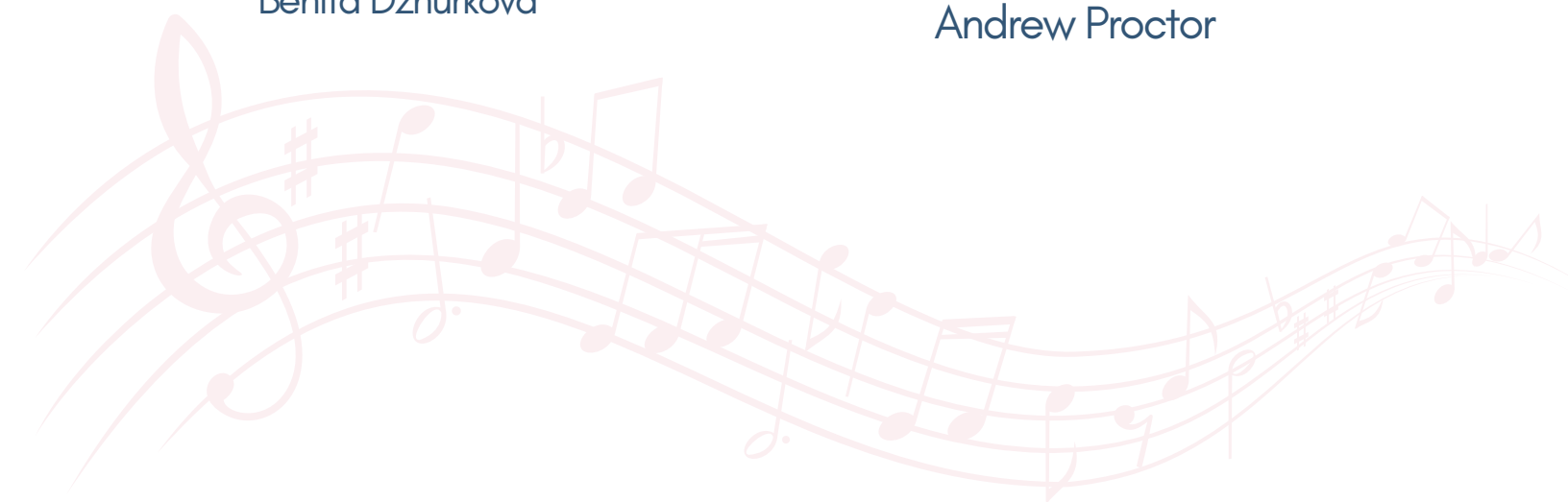
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Aaron Merritt
Joel Osigna

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Susan Dirgins-Friend
Hideki Sunaga

Percussion

Andrew Proctor



MUSICA CELESTIS

– Aaron Jay Kernis

Born on January 15, 1960, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

This work received its premiere on March 30, 1992, in San Francisco, by Sinfonia San Francisco, conducted by Ransom Wilson. It is scored for string orchestra.

Aaron Jay Kernis is firmly established as one of the most lyrical and accessible composers on today's musical scene. Studying under four composers with widely divergent philosophies of music—the neo-minimalist John Adams, the avant-garde Jacob Druckman, the technological Morton Subotnick, and the serialist Charles Wourinen—led Kernis to create a varied musical style. American popular music and folk influences also play an integral part in his unique musical language.

It is important with any composer to remember that their style characteristics are part of that composer's constantly changing set of musical influences. Kernis' works are usually divided into three style periods, each the result of his interests at the time. In the early 1980s, his music was highly structured, using mathematics as a guiding force. In 1983 Kernis began to write music that was somewhat less rigid, and often influenced by works of art or literature. His most recent style began in 1988, and is more emotionally driven. During this time, he began writing in traditional forms, most notably the symphony and string quartet.

Musica Celestis first saw life as the second movement of Kernis' String Quartet No. 1 in 1990. Somewhat confusingly, the entire quartet bears the same overriding title as its second movement. The composer scored the movement for string orchestra in 1991. Modeled after Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, which also originated as the second movement of *that* composer's String Quartet No. 1, the resemblance is certainly most apparent when the work, soaring higher with overwhelming emotion, abruptly stops, imparting a depth only attainable through silence. The meditative qualities of the *Musica Celestis* derive from Kernis' interest in ancient chant.

Kernis writes:

"Musica Celestis is inspired by the medieval conception of that phrase which refers to the singing of the angels in heaven in praise of God without end. (The office of singing pleases God if it is performed with an attentive mind, when in this way we imitate the choirs of angels who are said to sing the Lord's praises without ceasing.' — Aurelian of Réôme, trans. by Barbara Newman) I don't particularly believe in angels, but found this to be a potent image that has been reinforced by listening to a good deal of medieval music, especially the soaring work of Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179). This movement follows a simple, spacious melody and harmonic pattern through a number of variations (like a passacaglia) and modulations, and is framed by an introduction and codas."

SERENADE NO. 13 IN G MAJOR, K. 525 "EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK"

– Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria

Died December 5, 1791, in Vienna, Austria

This work was completed on August 10, 1787, but the date of premiere is unknown. It is scored for string orchestra.

Early 1787 was a creative time for Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He had returned from a three-week visit to Prague for a production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Facing a promising rebirth of popularity in the Bohemian capital, Mozart reveled in the success and had returned with a commission. The new work would become known as *Don Giovanni* and would take Prague by storm later that year. It is unclear what led Mozart to take a break during his composition of the second act, but the work composed during the respite is among the most familiar in all of music— "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik."

Much speculation has been made about the reason for this work's composition. It is well known that Mozart had financial troubles in his later years, and the period from 1787 until his death in 1791 was the worst of his life. "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" was most likely the result of a commission, dashed off in a short period in August to help make ends meet. It has also been surmised that a wealthy patron could have commissioned the work for an amateur string ensemble. Although the likelihood of this explanation is great, no evidence exists to verify the claim. However, for Mozart to interrupt an operatic project (his favorite genre) there must have been either great financial need or a very special occasion.

"Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" is a serenade—the first such work that Mozart had composed in six years. By definition, a serenade is a work for evening performance, like a nocturne or nocturno. Serenades were composed for performance at 9:00 p.m. (nocturni were heard at 11:00 p.m.), and usually signaled the entry of a person of high social standing. Mozart's work is an example of the looser definition of the word as used in his home city of Salzburg, signifying a multi-movement piece of instrumental music that had no place in any other category.

In its existing form, "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" has four movements, but an additional minuet, now lost, was once included. The remaining movements take the basic form found in a typical symphony of the period – a sonata-form *allegro* first movement, followed by a slow ABA form, a minuet and trio, and a brisk finale. Opening with the famous arpeggiated theme in octaves, the first movement is a textbook example of concise precision in which each note is important to the structure. The serene second-movement Romanze languishes in tranquil reverie. Mozart's minuet and trio is not far removed from the dance that lends this movement its name. Filled with subtle cross-rhythms, the minuet gives way to a quieter trio in a contrasting key. The jolly and lively minuet hums along, taking a few surprise turns along the way. A bright coda brings the work to an effervescent close.

ORGAN CONCERTO

– FRANCIS POULENC

BORN JANUARY 7, 1899, IN PARIS, FRANCE

DIED JANUARY 30, 1963, IN PARIS, FRANCE

This work was premiered privately on December 16, 1938, in the salon of Princess de Polignac in Paris with organist Maurice Durufle and conductor Nadia Boulanger. The first public performance was in June of 1939 at the Salle Gaveau in Paris with Durufle as soloist and Roger Désormière conducting. It is scored for organ solo, timpani, and strings.

Francis Poulenc's upbringing was one of privilege. His father was the head of the multinational pharmaceutical company Rhône-Poulenc and the resultant wealth allowed the family's every want and need to be met without reservation. Francis adored childhood piano lessons and decided early on that his career would be in the musical field. However, his father insisted on a highly regimented classical education at an elite Parisian academy. Once these studies were completed, Francis would be permitted to enter the Conservatoire. However, the deaths of both his parents in the young man's teenage years thwarted his plans. Instead of entering at the famed Conservatoire, Poulenc studied privately with the Spanish pianist Ricardo Viñes. In the discipline of composition, the young composer was largely self-taught.

Through Viñes, Poulenc met several prominent figures in the Parisian arts scene – the poets Apollinaire, Gide, and Claudel and, perhaps most notably, the iconoclastic composer Erik Satie, who influenced many French composers between the 1880s and his death in 1925. In the 1920s, Paris was an artistic melting pot with the debauchery of the cabarets existing alongside the most respected poets, painters, and composers of the day. Poulenc absorbed every available influence as the sardonic wittiness of his music attests. Igor Stravinsky took notice of the teenage composer and convinced the publishing firm of J. W. Chester in London to issue several of his works.

Shortly thereafter, Poulenc was accepted into the group of composers known as Les Six ('The Six') – also including Georges Auric, Germaine Tailleferre, Louis Durey, and Arthur Honegger – who gathered as friends at a bar called La Goya to drink and discuss music. This group composed the most significant French works of the period. Over the next four decades, Poulenc created music in nearly every genre, including three operas, a handful of ballets, several orchestra works, chamber music, and numerous pieces for piano and chorus. He is recognized as the most important composer of French art songs in the twentieth century.

Poulenc's Organ Concerto dates from 1938 and was commissioned by and dedicated to one of the most colorful of characters in the multi-hued spectrum of Parisian eccentrics of the 1920s and '30s. The Princess de Polignac was born in Yonkers, New York, as Winnaretta Singer and was the heir to the sewing machine fortune. When the Civil War broke out in the U.S., the family relocated to France. In 1893 she married Prince Edmond de Polignac, thirty years her senior, in a marriage of convenience (both parties were homosexual) and remained with him until his death in 1901. Having inherited her father's fortune in 1875 and now the Polignac riches, "Princess Winnie" occupied her time by supporting the most promising writers, dancers, actors, artists, musicians, and composers in Paris. Poulenc's association with the Princess began in 1923 when he played one of the four piano parts in the private premiere of Stravinsky's *Les Noces* in her home.

Cont.

The Princess originally offered the commission for an organ concerto to composer Jean Françaix, who turned down the offer and passed it to Poulenc. She intended to play the piece, but Poulenc refused to simplify his ideas. About the same time he began the work, his friend Pierre-Octave Ferroud, an up-and-coming composer and music critic, was decapitated in an auto accident in Hungary. In an attempt to find consolation, Poulenc made a pilgrimage to see the Black Virgin of Rocamadour, a wooden statue in southwestern France. The combination of the composer's grief and religious reawakening informs the Organ Concerto with a unique aesthetic that is unlike any other composition.

Poulenc's Organ Concerto is in seven distinct sections all organized into a single movement. One can easily hear a clear progression from feelings of anger and confusion to acceptance within the work, but Poulenc never divulged his intended meaning.

The work opens with a shocking and almost sinister passage for the soloist. Pizzicato low strings join the brooding melody, which gives way to a lyrical theme in the strings. In typical Poulenc style, the second section is filled with dissonant harmony and angular melodies that are propelled by a driving rhythmic pulse. An andante section interrupts with dotted rhythms and then proceeds through a series of two climaxes to become quite menacing at the end. Music from the second section returns, but soon grows into something quite different with dazzling organ writing and daring harmonies. A lovely slow section follows, but the tenderness is soon defeated by dissonant organ chords that lead to an allegro that seems inspired by Parisian cabaret music. The finale returns to the music of the opening with its sinister organ chords. However, the mood soon turns to one of resignation and peace as a poignant viola solo enters. Pizzicato strings enter and the movement feels as if it is winding down. A final organ gesture provides a very meaningful conclusion.

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Hina Khuong-Huu EOIVC 2023



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Music Director, ALASTAIR WILLIS

Grammy-nominated conductor Alastair Willis is in his ninth season as Music Director of the South Bend Symphony Orchestra, and is now The Symphonica's first Music Director, having served as its Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor for five years. In past seasons, Willis has guest conducted orchestras around the world including the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Mexico City Philharmonic, Orquestra Sinfonica de Rio de Janeiro, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchestra Berlin, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, China National Orchestra (Beijing), Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra and Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma) among others.

His recording of Ravel's "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges" with Nashville Symphony and Opera for Naxos was Grammy nominated for Best Classical Album in 2009.



Last season, Willis was re-engaged by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Qatar Philharmonic, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, Salute to Vienna, and Seattle's Music of Remembrance. This season he returns to the Qatar Philharmonic, Music of Remembrance, and Gyor Philharmonic in Hungary.

Previous positions include Music Director of the Illinois Symphony, Principal Guest Conductor with the Florida Orchestra's Coffee Concert series, Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony, Assistant Conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestras, and Music Director of the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Born in Acton, Massachusetts, Willis lived with his family in Moscow for five years before settling in Surrey, England. He received his bachelor's degree with honors from England's Bristol University, an Education degree from Kingston University, and a Masters of Music degree from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Willis currently resides in South Bend, Indiana, with his wife and daughter.



Organ Soloist, TIM BRUMFIELD



Tim Brumfield enjoys an extraordinary career as a conductor, pianist, organist, and composer, touring regularly as a soloist and featured musician, and is often asked to lecture on the art of improvisation.

He has been a member of the Grammy Award winning Paul Winter Consort since 1998 and has performed throughout the world including Denmark, England, France, Japan, Italy, and Southeast Asia. Tim has collaborated in performance with such renowned artists as the late pianist Dave Brubeck, the late drummer Max Roach,

legendary folk singer Judy Collins, the American Spiritual Ensemble, The American Brass Quintet, jazz trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, and The New York City Gay Men's Chorus at Carnegie Hall among others. He has had the special honor of performing for His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama being featured with saxophonist Paul Winter and the renowned Monks of the Drepung Loseling Monastery. A silent film organist extraordinaire, Tim performs annually at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York, for its Halloween Extravaganza, accompanying silent films such as The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Nosferatu, and Phantom of the Opera.

Originally from Richmond, Kentucky, Tim served as Cathedral Organist at the world's largest gothic cathedral, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City from 2002-2009, and served as Associate Organist there from 1997. He has toured with the Cathedral Choristers performing throughout the Northeast and Canada, and throughout England with performances at the famed Salisbury Cathedral and St. Paul's Cathedral, London. Most recently, Tim appeared with Wycliffe Gordon at the Savannah Music Festival performing Gordon's score to "Within These Gates", a silent film by Oscar Micheux. Tim's composition A Place Called Old Kentucky, co-written with song writing partner Louis Birro, was featured as part of the Alltech World Equestrian Games held in Lexington and is featured on his CD entitled Kentucky Serenade which also includes such classics as Simple Gifts, Blue Moon of Kentucky, and My Old Kentucky Home. His mass setting, Mass for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine had its Lincoln Center debut in 2015 at Avery Fisher Hall being performed by The National Chorale.

Tim currently serves as Director of Music, Organist, and Choirmaster at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church of Boca Raton and is a distinguished Honorary Fellow of the National College of Music in London.



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