



# THE SYMPHONIA

South Florida's Premier Chamber Orchestra



2025/26

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CONCERT SEASON

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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 21<sup>st</sup> 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  
The Symphonia



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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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# BEETHOVEN'S EMPEROR

St. Gregory's Episcopal  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2026 | 3:00 PM**

**ALASTAIR WILLIS, Music Director**  
LINDSAY GARRITSON, Piano Soloist

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

*Le Tombeau de Couperin* ..... Maurice Ravel

- I. Prelude: Vif
- II. Forlane: Allegretto
- III. Menuet: Allegro moderato
- IV. Rigaudon: Assez vif

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73, *Emperor*..... Ludwig van Beethoven

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio un poco mosso
- III. Rondo: Allegretto

Lindsay Garritson, Piano Soloist

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# THE SYMPHONIA MUSICIANS

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Gus Correa  
Claudia Cagnassone  
Sheena Gutierrez  
Ericmar Perez

## **Violin 2**

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Victoria Sepanenکو  
Dale Sandvold  
Eddie Martinez  
Antonio Rincon  
Tony Huang

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David Pedraza  
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Aaron Merritt  
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Janet Clippard

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Elissa Lakofsky

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Jeff Apana

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Michael Forte

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Gabriel Bevers  
Matt Cory

## **French Horn**

Greg Miller  
Eva Conti

## **Trumpet**

Gabriel Gutierrez  
Michael Hankins

## **Timpani**

Andrew Proctor

## **Harp**

Laura Sherman



## **LE TOMBEAU DE COUPERIN**

**- MAURICE RAVEL**

BORN MARCH 7, 1875, IN CIBOURE, BASSES-PYRÉNÉES, FRANCE

DIED DECEMBER 28, 1937, IN PARIS, FRANCE

*This original version of this work for solo piano was premiered on April 11, 1919, in Paris by Marguerite Long. The present version for orchestra was first heard on February 28, 1920, by the Pasdeloup Orchestra, conducted by Rhené-Baton. It is scored for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, harp, and strings.*

Maurice Ravel was born thirteen years after Claude Debussy but, despite ardent admiration for his elder colleague's music, followed his own path. His dealings with authority figures were never pleasant, as Ravel worked at his own pace, not conforming to deadlines set by others. Having entered the Paris Conservatoire at age fourteen, he would be dismissed from the institution three times before ending his quest for a degree. Students were required to win the school's competitions in order to gain approval for further studies. First as a pianist, then as a composer, Ravel failed to win. Then in 1905, upon reaching the thirty-year age limit for competing, he was eliminated in the first round.

By this time in his career, he was already active with the *Société Nationale de Musique*, having composed several works that are still heard today. As unseemly as it might be, all of the finalists were students of the same teacher, who also served as a judge. In what was called the *Affaire Ravel*, the French newspapers published reports of these new indiscretions at the Conservatoire, forcing the resignation of the director, and placing composer Gabriel Faure at the school's helm. Ravel emerged as a leading composer with a promising career, but Europe's crumbling political structures and the carnage of World War I would disrupt his livelihood.

During the war, Ravel enlisted as a supply truck driver. Always on the front lines, he experienced the horror of losing several friends to the hostilities. His world view and his music were forever changed by the experience. Before the war, Ravel had begun a piano suite that remained unfinished. After his discharge (due to his mother's death) in 1917, he returned to the suite. He had originally conceived the work to honor the golden age of France and the music of seventeenth-century keyboardist and composer Louis Couperin, but now the suite seemed even more important since Europe had been plunged headlong into the twentieth century. Old Europe was no more.

All of these ideas came together under the title *Le tombeau de Couperin*. A tombeau is a work designed to honor someone after death. Ravel's work is a tribute to Couperin, but even more so the concept of the earlier ways of life in France - forever lost to the ravages of war. However, the composer went one step further by attaching the name of a fallen friend to each movement.

Ravel's musical style is influenced heavily by standard dance forms, especially those found in the Baroque keyboard suites of Rameau and Couperin. This backward-looking influence might seem to be at odds with Ravel's progressive musical style, but the two opposing influences fit together seamlessly. Old and new are honored side by side.

Ravel orchestrated the work soon after the piano version was completed, dropping the toccata and fugue from its original six movements. The four remaining pieces provide the usual grace and colorful orchestration that are Ravel's most audible trademarks. Special attention should be given to the oboe in this work, as it is entrusted with extensive solos throughout. *Le tombeau de Couperin* opens with a graceful prelude, complete with imitations of the unique ornamentation used by Couperin. A tender *forlane* (an Italian dance with dotted rhythms) follows, giving way to a stately *menuet*. Quick and festive, a brisk *rigaudon* ends the work with a burst of orchestral color.

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## **CONCERTO NO. 5 IN E-FLAT MAJOR FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 73, "EMPEROR" - LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

BORN DECEMBER 16, 1770, IN BONN, GERMANY

DIED MARCH 26, 1827, IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA

*This work was premiered on November 28, 1811, by the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig with Friedrich Schneider as soloist and Johann Philipp Christian Schulz conducting. It is scored for solo piano, pairs of woodwinds, horns, and trumpets, with timpani and strings.*

When Ludwig van Beethoven left his hometown of Bonn and relocated to the famed musical capital of Vienna in 1792, his entire reputation was at stake. He had become well known in Bonn as a gifted pianist and a promising young composer. When Franz Joseph Haydn had passed through Germany on his first journey to London in 1791, he had invited the twenty-one year old composer to make a pilgrimage to Vienna as his student. Bonn's biggest musical fish suddenly found himself engulfed by the sprawling ocean of Vienna.

Beethoven felt immense pressure to prove himself if he was ever to become recognized in a town so full of famous musicians. It seemed natural that his pianistic virtuosity, the most visible of his talents, should be his ticket to success. So it was as a pianist that Beethoven made his first inroads into Viennese society by playing in the homes of aristocrats. He also presented public concerts, often as benefit performances for musical or political causes - and sometimes for the purpose of funding his own career. It was against this background that the first four piano concertos arose as showcases for his skills as pianist and composer. By the time Beethoven composed his final piano concerto in 1809, his deafness had progressed to the point that he did not even conceive of the work as a vehicle for his own performance.

His premiere performance of the Fourth Concerto, on the same program as the Choral Fantasy on December 22, 1808, was disastrous. Being unable to hear the orchestra, synchronization was simply not possible and the performance fell apart - a mishap that Beethoven blamed on the orchestra and conductor when the fault was clearly his own.

During the *Emperor Concerto's* composition, the French army invaded Austria for the fourth time in eighteen years. According to an often quoted story, the composer huddled in the basement of his brother's suburban Vienna home with pillows over his ears. At this moment in time, it is clear to even a casual observer that whatever respect the composer once held for Napoleon, if it had not already dissipated, was blasted away by the cannons invading the neighborhood. It is often assumed that the moniker *Emperor* refers to Napoleon, but this cannot be true. Likewise, it probably does not derive from the heroic character of the music. The answer is quite simple, but only recently proposed after nearly two centuries of speculation - the premiere occurred on the Austrian holiday commemorating Emperor Joseph II's accession of the throne (as father of the sitting Emperor, this day was celebrated with great fervor).

Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto must be considered the pinnacle of his Heroic Period and is without doubt a full-fledged masterpiece of the Romantic Period. The first movement begins with a three bold chords, each of which is embellished by extended cadenza-like passages for the soloist. Taking the place of the usual slow introduction, this preparatory filigree leads directly to the martial main theme of the allegro. As the movement progresses through the usual sonata form, march-like rhythms remain a crucial element. The opening chords return just before the recapitulation with its usual restatement of the movement's themes.

Beethoven's second movement (*adagio un poco mosso*) begins with a devotional theme, followed by piano triplets and figurations throughout. When everything seems to be complete, the texture thins to a lone B-natural in the bassoon. It is with only this one pitch that Beethoven brilliantly sets up a transition by simply lowering that pitch by a half-step, thereby allowing a seamless transition to the key of the final movement. The piano plays tentative, short fragments that coagulate into the main theme of the finale, connecting the movements without pause. Beethoven's brilliant finale incorporates elements of sonata form into its structure. However, since the rollicking main theme returns between contrasting episodes, it must be classified as a rondo. One especially noteworthy moment is near the end when the rest of the orchestra drops out of the texture, leaving only the soloist and timpanist in an unusual duet. A brisk coda provides an exhilarating conclusion to this monumental work.



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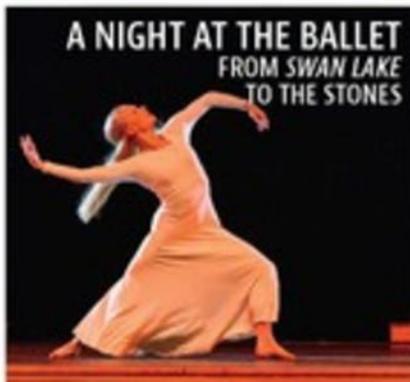
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# MUSIC DIRECTOR, ALASTAIR WILLIS

Grammy-nominated conductor Alastair Willis is in his ninth season as Music Director of the South Bend Symphony Orchestra, and is now The Symphonia'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.



## PIANO SOLOIST, LINDSAY GARRITSON

Dr. Lindsay Garritson has performed throughout the United States and abroad since the age of four. She has appeared on stages such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Place des Arts (Montreal), and has been featured as soloist with the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Métropolitain (Montreal), Atlantic Classical Orchestra, Orquestra Sinfônica Barra Mansa (Brazil), the Yale Philharmonic Orchestra, and the European Philharmonic Orchestra, among others.

An award-winning performer, Lindsay has received top prizes at the Montreal International Piano Competition, USASU Bösendorfer International Piano Competition, and the Mozarteum

International Chopin Competition (Salzburg). She was selected as a participant in the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition as well as a finalist for the German Piano Award in Frankfurt, Germany. Most recently in September 2024, Lindsay completed a successful five-city solo recital tour in China.

An avid chamber musician, Lindsay has performed with Ani Kavafian, Elmar Oliveira, Carter Brey, Ettore Causa, and Ian Rosenbaum, among many others. She is currently a member of the Bergonzi Piano Trio with violinist Scott Flavin and cellist Ross Harbaugh, and they have released an album featuring Beethoven and Brahms trios. Since 2018, she has been a collaborative pianist for the prestigious Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival.

Lindsay is a passionate advocate for new music, and her Carnegie Hall solo recital debut featured the world premiere of Carl Vine's Piano Sonata No. 4, a work written for her. Concurrently, her second solo album titled "Aphorisms: Piano Music of Carl Vine" was released. She has also recorded the complete works for flute and piano by Samuel Zyman (Albany Records), and premiered works by composers David Ludwig, Nick Omiccioli, and Polina Nazaykinskaya.

Lindsay holds degrees from Principia College (B.A. in Music), Yale School of Music (M.M. and Artist Diploma), and the University of Miami (D.M.A.). Her piano teachers include Santiago Rodriguez, Boris Berman, Luiz de Moura Castro, Choong-Mo Kang, Zena Ilyashov, Emilio Del Rosario, the late Jane Allen, and Jennifer Lim Judd. She is currently on faculty at Broward College and resides in Jensen Beach, Florida.



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