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To our dear patrons, sponsors and community partners, thank **YOU** for your unwavering support. Sinfonia Gulf Coast wouldn't be where it is today without your generous support.

This milestone 20th anniversary season opened October 2 with *Cabaret at Seagar's: An Evening with Bernadette Peters*, featuring the queen of Broadway herself. In November, the Gala event welcomed legendary funk and R&B icon Chaka Khan for an unforgettable night of music. The Toast 'n Jam brunch concert series features sisters Ann Hampton Callaway and Liz Callaway in a *Broadway Holiday the "Calla-way"* and Nicholas Rodriguez in *Sincerely, Sondheim*. Beloved traditions return with *Holiday Pops Spectacular!*, and the main season concerts include *Simply the Best: The Music of Tina Turner, Classical Connections* with Grammy Award–winning harmonica and piano virtuoso Howard Levy, and *Jaws in Concert*, pairing John Williams' iconic score with the blockbuster film on the big screen. The season culminates with the annual Crescendo! weekend—highlighted by vintner dinners and the Main Event starring the return of the internationally renowned and iconic big band, Pink Martini.

Mark your calendars on February 27 and March 1 for our annual Crescendo! weekend, a celebration of musical and culinary arts. This spectacular event supports Sinfonia and its music education and community engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida, including our annual Link Up performances for 3rd through 5th graders in partnership with Carnegie Hall's Weill Institute.

Why is your support instrumental to our success? More than 250,000 school children throughout Okaloosa, Walton and now Bay counties experience the magic of live music with our award-winning Guest Artists in Schools, Ensembles in Residence initiative, Link Up in partnership with Carnegie Hall, all at no charge to them, their families or the schools. Paired with the robust hands-on training in Sinfonia's After School Beginning Strings and Youth Orchestra programs, our programs are making a difference in the community—all with **YOUR** help!



Will Champion Easter

How YOU can help:
Did you know that ticket sales only cover a small percentage of Sinfonia's annual operating costs? Your tax-deductible contribution will enable Sinfonia to continue providing great music and educational outreach to our community.

We hope you enjoy our enhanced 20th anniversary magazine-style program, thoughtfully published by Palm Beach Media Group. We give extra special thanks to Emerald Coast Magazine for designating Sinfonia Gulf Coast as their Best of the Emerald Coast benefiting charity for 2025.

We can't wait to see you this season. In the meantime, feel free to reach out with any questions, comments or just to say hello!

Musically yours,

Demetrius Fuller
Founder | Music & Artistic Director
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MUSIC & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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1,000 candles glowed during Luminescence featuring Catalyst in Seaside Chapel in 2025

Save the dates for the 20th anniversary season!

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Cabaret at Seagar's:
An Evening with Bernadette Peters

NOVEMBER 14
Sinfonia Gala Event:
An Evening with the Legendary Chaka Kahn

DECEMBER 7
Toast 'n Jam:
Broadway Holiday the "Calla-way"

DECEMBER 13
Holiday Pops Spectacular!

DECEMBER 14
Sinfonia Youth Orchestras Winter Concert

JANUARY 8
Simply the Best:
The Music of Tina Turner

JANUARY 23
Crescendo! 2026 Kick Off Lunch:
Bubbles, Bourbon + More

FEBRUARY 7
Classical Connections:
Howard Levy, Harmonica + Piano

FEBRUARY 15
Toast 'n Jam:
Sincerely, Sondheim with Nicholas Rodriguez

FEBRUARY 27
Crescendo! 2026 Vintner Dinners

MARCH 1
Crescendo! 2026 Main Event

MARCH 11
Link Up Concert

MAY 3
Sinfonia Youth Orchestras Spring Concert

MAY 15
Jaws in Concert

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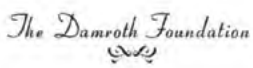














































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Dear Friends of Sinfonia,

It is an incredible honor to serve as President of the Board during such a momentous time in Sinfonia Gulf Coast's history, our 20th anniversary season. As we celebrate two decades of innovation, inspiration and impact, I am both humbled and proud of what this organization has accomplished and even more excited about where we are heading.

From the very beginning, Sinfonia has been more than just music; it has been a movement. Through world-class performances, dynamic community events and a deep commitment to music education, we have inspired hearts, nurtured creativity and opened doors for children throughout our region. This mission has never been more vital, and it remains at the heart of everything we do.

This year marks not only a celebration of our past but also a bold step into our future. Our 20th season will be a banner year, filled with opportunities for growth as we expand our reach and deepen our impact. With new educational initiatives, broader community partnerships and innovative programming, we are determined to ensure that music continues to shape and enrich the lives of the next generation.



I am also incredibly grateful to be surrounded by such a passionate, active and engaged Board of Directors. It is through their dedication, along with the support of our generous patrons and community partners, that we are able to dream bigger and achieve more each season.

Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

9 local leaders have served as president of the Sinfonia Gulf Coast board

On behalf of our entire board and the Sinfonia family, I invite you to join us as we honor our legacy, celebrate this milestone year and look forward to the exciting journey ahead. Together, we will ensure that the power of music continues to inspire, educate and transform for decades to come.

Looking Ahead

This anniversary season promises to be one of our most dynamic yet, featuring:

- A spectacular 20th Anniversary Gala Celebration
- Special guest performances from world-renowned artists
- Expanded youth music education programs across local schools
- New partnerships bringing innovative programming to our community

Thank you for being part of the Sinfonia family. We cannot wait to share this incredible season with you.

With gratitude and excitement,



Elizabeth Boswell
President of the Board
Sinfonia Gulf Coast

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Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

28 — Demetrius Fuller's age when he founded Sinfonia Gulf Coast



Meet Maestro Demetrius Fuller

Founder | Music & Artistic Director

Innovative and energetic conductor Demetrius Fuller has garnered critical acclaim at home and abroad. The 2025-2026 season marks his 20th as Music & Artistic Director of Florida's Sinfonia Gulf Coast. Fuller has redefined the cultural landscape of Northwest Florida by offering inspiring and artistically inventive performances, exciting critics and patrons alike.

CONDUCTOR

Fuller is an award recipient from the National Foundation for the Advancement in the Arts, the Werner Foundation and the International Music Foundation. Fuller trained at the prestigious University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, receiving both his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees.

MUSICIAN

As an accomplished clarinetist, Fuller has performed in the Dame Myra Hess Chamber Music Series, sponsored by the International Music Foundation and broadcast live on Chicago's WFMT 98.7 FM. Festival appearances include the Opera Theater of Lucca (Italy), David Oistrakh (Estonia), Aspen, Cabrillo and Eastern Music Festival (USA). He has appeared in master classes with Gustav Meier, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Daniel Lewis, Marin Alsop, Neeme Järvi, Jorma Panula, Larry Rachleff, David Loebbel and the late Robert Shaw. Fuller has been fortunate to work with various icons in the music industry including: Roberta Flack, Patti LaBelle, Bernadette Peters, Mary Wilson, Patti LuPone, Kristin Chenoweth, Vanessa Williams, Sharon Isbin, Chris Brubeck and Pink Martini, among others.

ARTS ADVOCATE

An advocate of contemporary music, Fuller has premiered, commissioned and/or collaborated with composers such as Augusta Read-Thomas, Dorothy Hindman, Thomas Schneller, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, Joel Hoffman, Moiya Callahan, Samuel Robles, Steven Winteregg, Tan Dun, giving the Southeastern U.S. premier of his *Crouching Tiger Concerto* and Chris Brubeck, giving the Southeastern U.S. premier of both his violin concerto *Spontaneous Combustion* and symphonic tribute *Ansel Adams: America*, which was co-composed with his father, the late Dave Brubeck. Fuller led the Southeast U.S. premier of *Identity – Zhongshan Zhuang*, co-composed by Victor Cheng and Michael Gordon Shapiro, co-commissioned and performed the U.S. premiere of Chris Brubeck and Guillaume Saint-James *Brothers in Arts,* conducted the world premiere of Nico Muhly's full orchestration of his electric violin concerto *Seeing is Believing*, co-commissioned Billy Childs' *Diaspora: Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra* for Steven Banks, and this season has commissioned and will perform the world premier of new dual concerto for harmonica and piano by Howard Levy.

INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM

Abroad, Fuller was invited several times by Maestro Kurt Masur to conduct the l'Orchestre Nationale de France (Paris) in a set of conductor readings. For two seasons, Fuller served as resident conductor of Brazil's Festival of the Mountains in Poços de Caldas and was one of two conductors selected world-wide to conduct the Iraqi National Symphony and three other Iraqi orchestras in a groundbreaking Unity Academy in Erbil, Northern Iraq sponsored by *American Voices* and the U.S. Department of State.



A versatile conductor, Fuller has been chosen to work with some of the world's most prestigious conductors and orchestras.

LEADERSHIP

Fuller sits on the board of directors of the prestigious New York City-based Young Concert Artists (YCA) and will continue to oversee the annual Sinfonia Gulf Coast Prize offered to a winner of the YCA finals each Fall. In 2009, New York City-based *Musicians For Harmony* appointed Maestro Fuller as one of three Artistic Advisors, an honor shared with musical luminaries Arnold Steinhardt of the renowned Guarneri String Quartet and violinist Cho-Liang Lin.

Locally, Fuller serves as a Trustee of the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, is a past chair of the American Cancer Society's Cattle Barons' Ball, has served on the boards of Alaqua Animal Refuge, Cultural Arts Alliance, Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, Okaloosa Arts Alliance and continues to serve as a grant panelist for the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs. In 2023, Fuller was named as a mentor for Grammy U participants in the Grammy Awards/Recording Academy and in 2024 was elected to the Academy as the first professional member. Fuller was recently appointed to a four-year term on the board of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.



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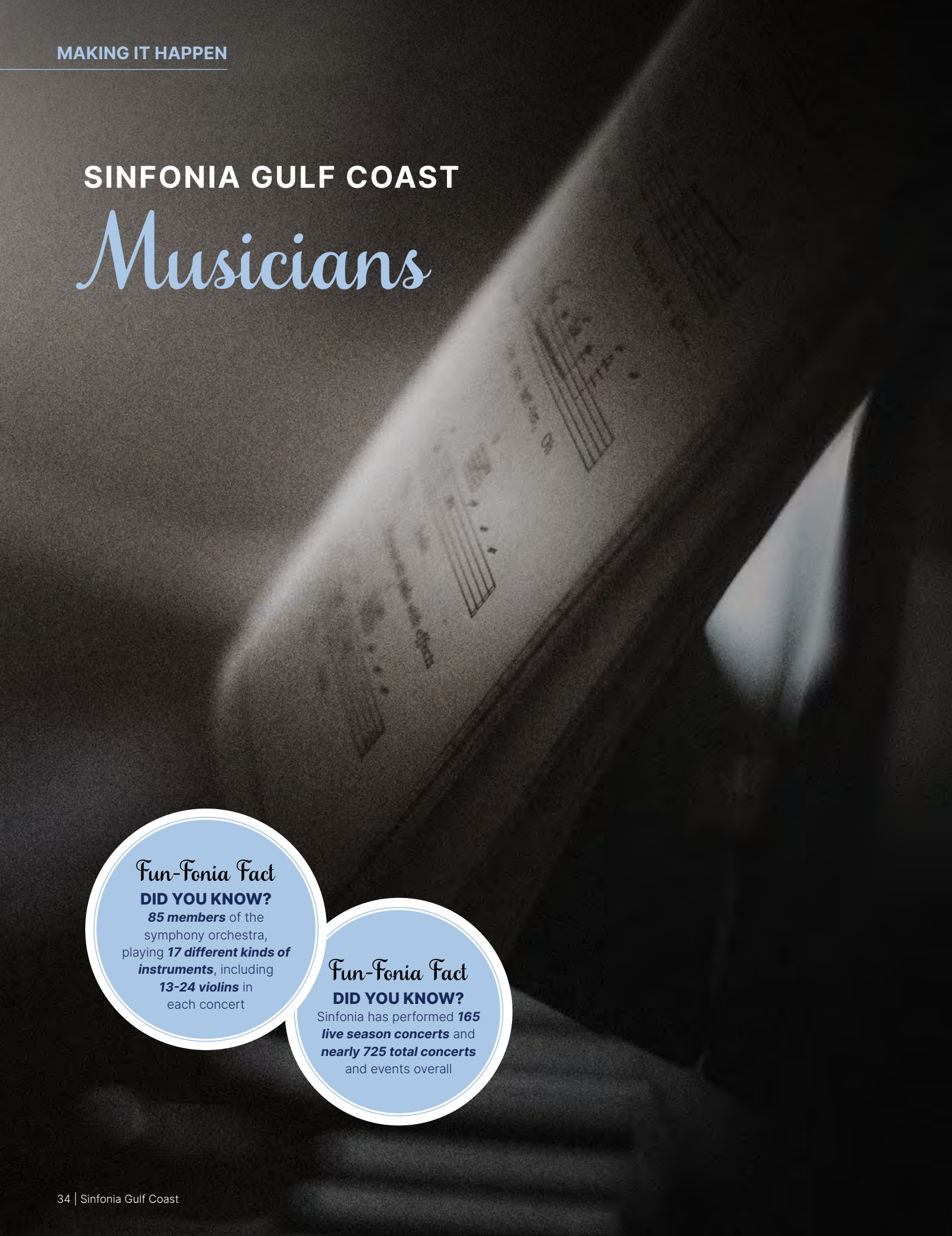


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DID YOU KNOW?

85 members of the symphony orchestra, playing ***17 different kinds of instruments***, including ***13-24 violins*** in each concert

Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

Sinfonia has performed ***165 live season concerts*** and ***nearly 725 total concerts*** and events overall

VIOLINS
Mari Lunde *
Kate Kelley ^
Kristin Pfeifer Yu ^
Masayoshi Arakawa
Petra Bubanja
Edward Charity
Ken Davis
Sara Fay
Jacqueline Fennell
Taylor Giorgio
Nicholas Hatt
Ian Jessee
Grace Kim
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VIOLA
Laurel Yu ^
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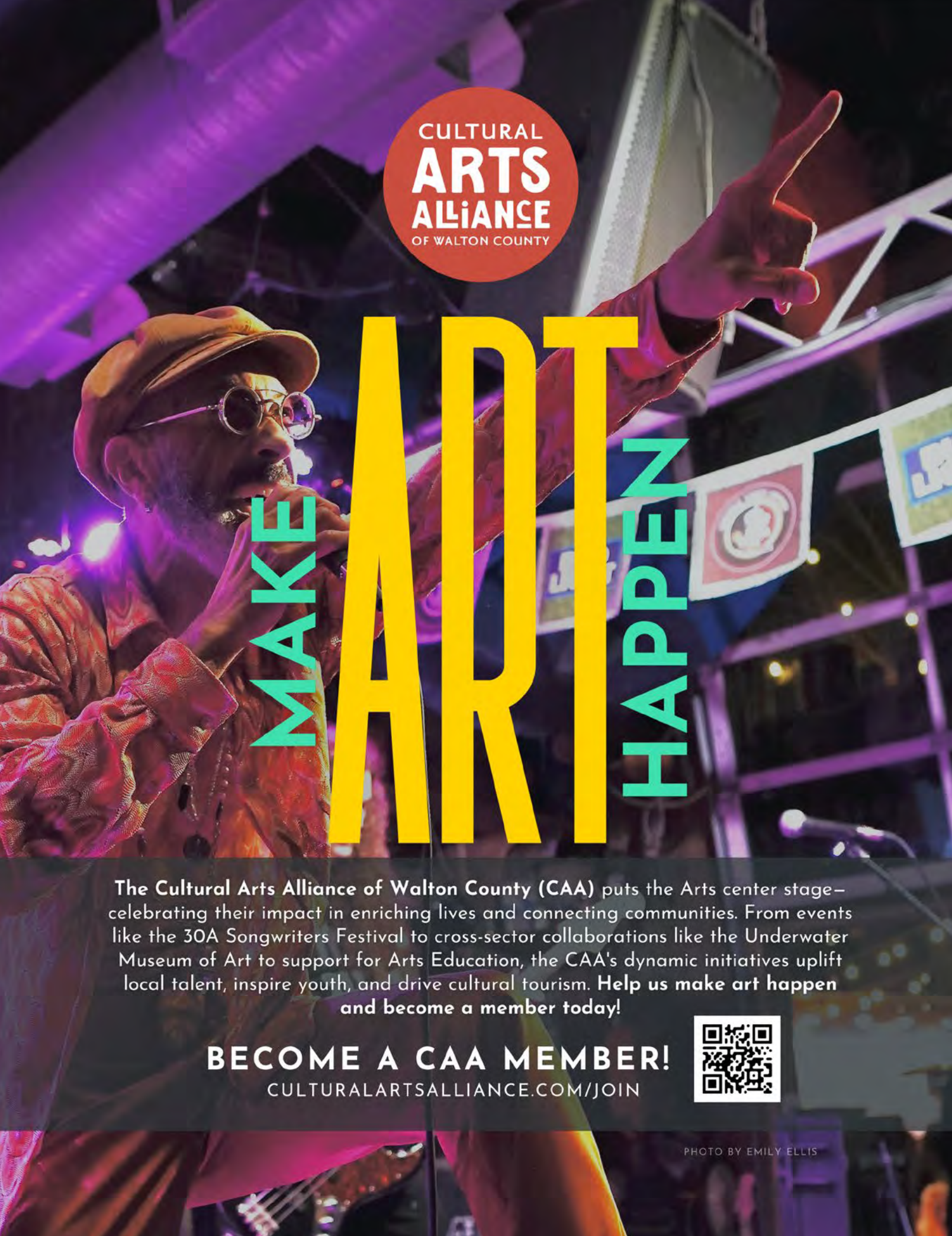
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MEET THE TEAM



Beth Clavier

Director of Events and Patron Services

An Emerald Coast native, Clavier is a seasoned entertainment professional with over 20 years of global experience producing live events. As a young adult, she found her footing in the theater, and from there, she went on to work with the Screen Actors Guild, NBC Universal Orlando and on major productions like the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and Gaylord Palms' ICE! event. Clavier was part of the opening team for Resorts World Sentosa in Singapore, managing entertainment for Universal Studios and operations for S.E.A. Aquarium and the Maritime Museum. When not buzzing behind the scenes at a Sinfonia Gulf Coast event, you'll find her production managing for the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation. Creating unforgettable experiences for the local community is her passion, but her best production to date is her perfectly precocious daughter, Haegen.



Daniel Milana

Development Coordinator

Daniel Milana is a seasoned professional in media, fundraising, project management and content production. He has created and executed engaging branded and editorial programming for both local and national audiences, collaborating with leading companies such as Home Depot, Starbucks, Mattel and media outlets including NPR, NBC, Telemundo and Lifetime Television. Milana attended Florida International University and earned a bachelor's degree in Film Production from the Art Institutes in Atlanta, along with certification in Fundraising from the Georgia Center of Nonprofits. His career includes producing and supporting major film and entertainment festivals such as Sundance and the Atlanta Film Festival. Born and raised in Long Island, New York, Milana embraces his Brazilian/Italian heritage. He resides in Santa Rosa Beach with his wife, Olivia, and their children, Joey and Thalia.



Klara Mikolai

Community Partnership Coordinator

Born in Budapest, Hungary, Klara Mikolai always dreamed of living in the United States. At 16, she began her international studies in Pennsylvania before earning a degree in business administration in Barcelona, Spain. Mikolai later joined Oracle in Prague, where she advanced to sales director for Central Europe. In 2015, she moved to Houston with her family and broadened her expertise in business development. With a passion for supporting small businesses, she has consistently guided companies in relationship management and growth. Today, she is excited to contribute her experience to Sinfonia Gulf Coast.



Zandra Wolfgram

Director of Communications

Zandra Wolfgram is a seasoned marketing communications professional with more than 30 years of experience promoting the performing arts, cultural tourism and hospitality in Cleveland, New Orleans and Northwest Florida. She began her career with Cleveland Playhouse, Theatre League of Cleveland and Great Lakes Theatre, later serving on the Arts Tourism Partnership pilot program in New Orleans. Since relocating to Northwest Florida in 1999, she has led marketing and PR campaigns for resorts, restaurants, golf courses and mixed-use centers, launching award-winning brands and publications. A former editor of Emerald Coast Magazine, her travel and lifestyle writing has appeared in regional and national outlets. A passionate arts advocate, she has served on multiple boards locally and supports national causes. When she isn't on the Emerald Coast, she spends her time in New England with her husband and bulldog, Hapi.



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MEET THE TEAM



Margaret Gordon

Sinfonia Youth Orchestras Music Director / Education and Community Engagement Manager

A native of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, Margaret Gordon is pleased to be returning to the Gulf Coast to give back to the community that fostered her musical ability as a child. As a former student in the Sinfonia Gulf Coast Youth Orchestra, she feels honored to lead others in realizing their musical gifts and nurturing the foundational skills needed to create the next generation of musicians.

Gordon maintains a positive approach to teaching that instills a sense of pride and self-efficacy in her students. Her personal and empathetic approach to teaching allows her students to be curious about their progress and develop the skills necessary to become self-sufficient.

She received a Bachelor of Music in Performance at the University of West Florida and a Master of Music in Performance at Appalachian State University. Her primary instrument is viola.



Ramel Price

Beginning Strings & Sinfonia Youth Orchestras Instructor

Violinist Ramel Price brings both passion and artistry to the stage, captivating audiences as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral performer. A musician since the age of 9, his journey has taken him from Pensacola to concert halls across the country. He has performed with the Pensacola Symphony, Northwest Florida Symphony, Quad Cities Symphony and Atlanta Opera, and appeared as a soloist with ensembles including the Runge Strings Orchestra and University of Iowa Youth Orchestra. Ramel has also participated in acclaimed festivals such as the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival and Music Academy Sinaia in Romania. Equally devoted to teaching, he has guided young musicians at the University of West Florida, inspiring students with his belief in both technical mastery and expressive performance.



Miranda Rojas

Beginning Strings & Sinfonia Youth Orchestras Instructor

Miranda Rojas is a violinist and violist based in Okaloosa-Walton County, Florida. She works with Sinfonia Gulf Coast as an After-School Beginning Strings Instructor. She also maintains a private studio, Rojas Strings, where she teaches violin, viola and cello. As a teacher, Rojas believes in instilling her students with confidence and is passionate about creating safe spaces for learning.

Rojas performs regularly on the violin and viola, including as Principal Second Violin with Panama City Symphony, as well as section player with Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Pensacola Symphony Orchestra, Gulf Coast Symphony Orchestra (Mississippi) and Albany Symphony Orchestra. Rojas received a Master of Music in Violin Performance from Florida State University in 2023.



Isabella Awodele

Education and Outreach Assistant

Isabella Awodele is a music educator originally from Atlanta, Georgia. She is a strong advocate for string music education and began playing viola at the age of 11. In 2023, she graduated from Kennesaw State University with a bachelor's degree in music education. Awodele previously worked in the Cobb County School District as the orchestra director for Betty Gray Middle School. She has maintained a private studio since 2021, where she teaches violin, viola, cello, double bass and guitar to kids aged 6-17, as well as adults.

As a teacher, she emphasizes the importance of students mastering foundational concepts such as posture, technique, music literacy and creativity to foster successful musicianship from the very beginning.

Awodele is eager to continue her journey in music education and is happy to have found a home with Sinfonia Gulf Coast.

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MEET THE TEAM



Kate Kelley

Marketing Coordinator

Originally from Bury St. Edmunds, England, Kelley relocated to Santa Rosa Beach in 1999, bringing with her a lifelong passion for music and design. A founding member of Sinfonia Gulf Coast, she has performed as principal second violin since 2006. She is a graphic designer and has served as the orchestra's marketing coordinator since 2009.

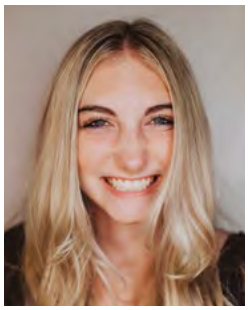
Kelley began playing the violin at age 5 through the Suzuki Method, growing up in a musical family where her father played piano and her brother cello. Her commitment to Sinfonia reflects both her creative and collaborative spirit, blending her artistry on stage with her expertise in marketing and visual communication behind the scenes. Over the past two decades, she has helped shape the orchestra's vibrant identity while contributing to its mission of making classical music accessible and engaging for audiences of all ages.

Among her most memorable performances are works by contemporary composer Chris Brubeck and concertos with Young Concert Artists. Outside of Sinfonia, Kelley enjoys a busy family life as a mother to her daughter, Megan, and shares her home with a lively menagerie of pets, including two dogs, four cats, fish and a horse.



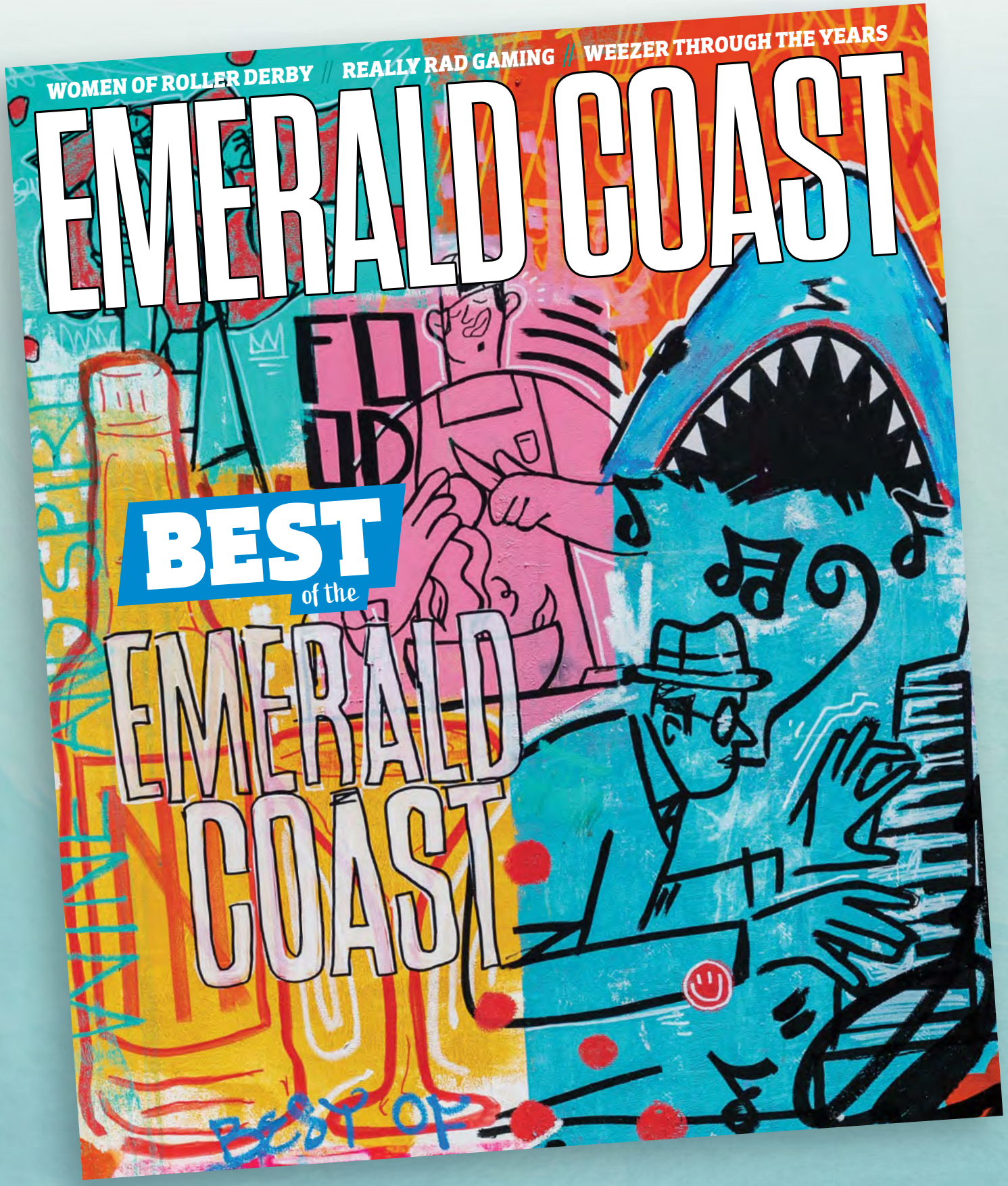
Frances Roy Agency

Founded by Shantelle Dedicke in 2016, Frances Roy Agency (FRA) is an award-winning, full-service strategic marketing firm based on Florida's Emerald Coast. The agency propels brands forward through solutions that drive results and build lasting connections. With a diverse team of experts in strategy, design, digital and media, FRA crafts compelling narratives and impactful visuals for clients across the U.S. Guided by strong core values and a collaborative spirit, FRA operates with a client-centric mindset, ensuring every brand stands out.



Bridget Gorder Administrative and Events Coordinator

A Colorado native, Bridget Gorder is a published researcher, performer, conductor, music educator and arts administrator based in the Florida Panhandle. She earned her bachelor's degree in choral music education from Florida State University, graduating summa cum laude and receiving honors that include Torchbearer 100 and Garnet and Gold Scholar. Gorder has presented research nationally, won top prizes in competitions such as King's Peak and Charleston International, and recorded professionally with her a cappella group, the AcaBelles. She is pursuing a master's in arts administration and cultural entrepreneurship at Northeastern University as a Creative Leader Fellow. With experience at Sinfonia Gulf Coast and Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation, she is passionate about advancing the impact of arts organizations. She lives in Pensacola with her fiance and golden retriever.


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Magic Makers

STORIES OF ARTISTRY, PASSION AND COMMUNITY

As Sinfonia Gulf Coast celebrates its 20th anniversary, we pause to spotlight just a few of the extraordinary people who have shaped its journey—on stage, behind the scenes and in the community. From musicians and guest artists to patrons, students and volunteers, these profiles capture the heart of Sinfonia: a shared belief in the power of music to inspire, connect, and transform lives.

A Moment With ... Morgan James

Broadway and recording artist Morgan James first joined Sinfonia Gulf Coast in 2012 as a guest vocalist for a holiday program. Invited by Music Director Demetrius Fuller, she recalls an instant friendship. "His easygoing nature and sense of humor made me fall in love, and we always have a great time together," she says. Since then, James has returned for multiple performances, blending her Broadway, R&B and jazz artistry with Sinfonia's versatility.

Performing live, James says, is her passion and purpose. "There is nothing that can take the place of live music and theater," she reflects. She credits Sinfonia's "open-mindedness and sense of collaboration" with redefining the orchestra experience—qualities that keep her coming back.

Among her favorite memories is a holiday concert mishap when she and Fuller realized neither had brought the music charts. Instead of panicking, they laughed through the scramble, turning the near disaster into a highlight they still joke about today. More recently, a magical night at the Armani show in New York ended with James being invited on stage to sing with Chaka Khan, with Fuller cheering her on.

Looking ahead, James hopes Sinfonia continues to thrive, inspiring audiences through the power of collaboration.



Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

7 annual Wine Women & Shoes fundraisers were hosted between 2011 and 2017, raising ***more than $1.5 million***



A Moment With … Laurel Yu

For more than 16 years, Laurel Yu has been an integral part of Sinfonia Gulf Coast—first as a section violist and since 2011 as artistic administrator and personnel manager. From contracting every musician on stage to serving as the vital link between the music director, staff and orchestra members, Laurel ensures the orchestra runs seamlessly.

A professor of music at Valdosta State University, he brings artistry and insight to his dual roles. Yu treasures the annual Link Up concerts, where Sinfonia performs for thousands of students, calling them among the most meaningful experiences of his career. He recalls unforgettable performances—from Mozart and Rachmaninoff concertos to thrilling film scores like *Jurassic Park* and *Psycho*.

Some memories extend beyond the stage, like an impromptu brunch jam with Time for Three and Chris Brubeck, complete with pots and pans as percussion. For Yu, such moments capture Sinfonia's spirit: world-class artistry, unexpected joy and community connection.

Looking ahead, he hopes Sinfonia continues to bring vibrancy, excellence and education to Northwest Florida. Or, as musicians fondly say, *SinFUNia*.

A Moment With … Patty Hall

For nearly two decades, Destin resident Patty Hall has been a familiar face at Sinfonia Gulf Coast performances, volunteering wherever needed but most often as an usher. "I love meeting new people and seeing friends we've made, enjoying a night out together with fine entertainment," she says. Her love of music goes back to childhood—singing hymns in church, kid-style songs with friends and attending concerts at the Chautauqua Institution with her family. "I believe God made us to sing and play instruments in honor and praise to Him, our maker and the creator of music," Hall reflects.

Among her favorite Sinfonia experiences was watching *Indiana Jones and Raiders of the Lost Ark* performed live-to-film. "The orchestra never missed a beat—it was like being at a live Broadway show," she recalls, hoping one day to see *The Phantom of the Opera* presented the same way. She also cherishes Sinfonia's outdoor Fourth of July concerts, which bring together patriotic music, community and fireworks in a perfect holiday setting.



To Hall, Sinfonia brings "big city" entertainment to the Emerald Coast, enriching the region with artistry and joy. Describing Sinfonia in one word as "class," she says she plans to keep volunteering for another 20 years.

A Moment With … Jeff Dannelly

As a founding partner of Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its former board president, Jeff Dannelly has been a driving force behind the orchestra's growth and success. A lifelong musician himself — he began with piano before playing saxophone through college — Dannelly credits his passion for the arts to his mother, a middle school chorus teacher for more than 30 years. "I always knew the importance of having access to music in schools," he says.

That value has become even more personal as his own children have followed musical paths: His son is now majoring in music at Florida State University, and his daughter is considering the same. "It reinforces for me the vital role music education plays here locally and how important it is for Sinfonia to bring those opportunities into our schools," Dannelly adds.

He describes Sinfonia as "bringing top talent from around the world with flair" — the kind of artistry rarely seen in smaller communities. Favorite memories include Kristin Chenoweth's glamorous performance for Sinfonia's 10th anniversary. Looking ahead, Dannelly envisions Sinfonia expanding as a cultural hub, drawing even larger acts and diverse programming to the Emerald Coast. In one word, he sums up Sinfonia's journey and future: *Bravo!*





A Moment With … Victoria Sage Floyd

For six years, Navarre native Victoria Sage Floyd has been immersed in Sinfonia Gulf Coast's Youth Orchestra program, where she now serves as Sinfonietta Strings mentor, student conductor, and concertmaster. She first joined Sinfonietta Strings at just 8 years old after encouragement from her teacher, a former Sinfonia conductor and quickly discovered the joy of orchestral music. "When I first heard the brass, woodwinds, strings and percussion come together, a spark was lit inside me," Floyd recalls.

Her time with Sinfonia has offered more than performance opportunities. As a high school mentor, she guided younger musicians each week, an experience she describes as so rewarding she often forgot she was also earning volunteer hours. One standout moment came in December 2024, when she conducted Sinfonietta Strings in concert — an experience that inspired her to pursue a degree in music education.

Floyd fondly remembers outings like watching *Jurassic Park* performed live-to-film by Sinfonia's professional orchestra, and she treasures performing alongside renowned groups like Time for Three and Violectric. For her, Sinfonia is "empowering," instilling confidence, skills and friendships that will last a lifetime. Looking ahead, she hopes Sinfonia continues expanding music programs for young people across Northwest Florida.

A Moment With … Patti Burcham

Patti Burcham or "Patti B" as she affectionately called, first encountered Sinfonia Gulf Coast at a gala headlined by Kristin Chenoweth. She recalls being "completely and utterly blown away" by the performance and by the incredible artistry of the orchestra. "I had no idea such an incredibly talented orchestra was right here in Northwest Florida," she says.

But what truly inspired Burcham to become involved was learning about Sinfonia's education mission. "They have impacted more than 250,000 school children in Okaloosa and Walton counties over the last 20 years," she notes with pride. Just this year alone, more than 4,000 children have benefited from Sinfonia's programs, in addition to those participating in the Sinfonia Youth Orchestras, which provide the highest-quality training for young musicians.

As a proud supporter and Treble Maker, Burcham helps ensure that these programs remain free to students. "So many of these children would not ever be exposed to such important and impactful music programs were it not for Sinfonia," she says.

For Burcham, the orchestra is a cultural treasure and an essential community resource. "Every day, I am in awe of what Sinfonia accomplishes," she reflects, crediting Music Director Demetrius Fuller and his team for making Northwest Florida a true haven for music and the arts.





A Moment With … Nicholas Rodriguez

For Broadway and concert star Nicholas Rodriguez, performing with Sinfonia Gulf Coast has become both a professional highlight and a personal joy. Introduced to Music Director Demetrius Fuller by longtime friend Morgan James, Rodriguez first headlined Crescendo! in 2018. "I had such a blast—not just performing, but getting to know everyone involved," he recalls. Eight years and six performances later, he considers Sinfonia part of his extended family.

To Rodriguez, live music is storytelling at its purest. "It's an emotional journey shared between audience and performers, and every night it's different," he says. Singing with a full orchestra, he adds, brings "an electricity that can't be beat." He credits Sinfonia with redefining the orchestra experience by mixing genres, fostering unexpected collaborations and making classical music accessible to all.

Among many memorable moments, creating his first solo holiday concert with Fuller stands out as a career milestone. Favorites also include *Get Happy!*, his Judy Garland tribute with James, and the multimedia dimension it brought to the stage.

Looking ahead, Rodriguez hopes Sinfonia continues to expand its reach and inspire future generations. In one word, he describes the orchestra as "family"—a testament to both its artistry and heart.

A Moment With … Mari Lunde



For nearly two decades, violinist Mari Lunde has made the journey from Cincinnati, Ohio to serve as concertmaster of Sinfonia Gulf Coast. Performing with the orchestra five to six times each season since 2007, she brings artistry and leadership that have become central to Sinfonia's sound.

Lunde, who also performs with the Cincinnati Symphony, the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra and the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, was first invited to join Sinfonia by Music Director Demetrius Fuller, a colleague from her Cincinnati days in the early 2000s. "I was honored when Demetrius asked me to be part of this exciting project," she recalls.

Over the years, she has embraced the variety of programming that defines Sinfonia — from intimate classical concerts to bold, genre-blending productions. Highlights include collaborations with the dynamic trio Time for Three and Steve Hackman's innovative mashups, such as *Tchaikovsky X Drake*. "The range of performances keeps everything fresh and exciting, and it's been a joy to share that with the Gulf Coast community," she says.

For Lunde, Sinfonia represents more than concerts — it is a celebration of music's power to inspire and connect. "I'm proud to be part of an orchestra that continues to enrich lives across Northwest Florida."

A Moment With … Shalyce Kauzlarich



For more than a decade, Shalyce Kauzlarich has brought her passion for music into the classroom as a music specialist at Shalimar Elementary and onto the stage as hostess for Sinfonia Gulf Coast's Link Up concerts. Having served in this role many times over the last 12 years, she treasures the joy of seeing her students experience the power of live performance. "It brings out an energy in me and my students that recorded music doesn't have," she says.

Her first time hosting Link Up remains one of her favorite memories. "The energy of the orchestra behind our recorders and voices was absolutely exhilarating," she recalls. She especially enjoys the "Swings" program, which adds an extra level of fun to the annual concert series. Beyond Link Up, she fondly remembers attending film music and patriotic concerts, noting how much her family enjoyed the shared experience.

To Kauzlarich, Sinfonia offers a fresh take on a traditional institution, blending classical and modern music while creating meaningful opportunities for young musicians. Looking ahead, she hopes to see her students one day attending or even performing with Sinfonia. For her, one word captures the orchestra's essence: "Magnificent."


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SINFONIA INITIATIVES

Link Up IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CARNEGIE HALL

♪

Paint the Music

♪

Sinfonietta Strings & Intermediate Strings

♪

Sinfonia Youth Orchestra

♪

Musicians in Schools

♪

Guest Artists in Schools

♪

Live orchestra performances for students

♪

Ensembles in Residence in the schools in partnership with Florida State University









Educational outreach remains at the forefront of Sinfonia's mission. Since it was established in 2006, Sinfonia Gulf Coast has introduced music to more than 250,000 children in Okaloosa, Walton and Bay counties.

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When you hear the hum of 3,700 grade school children clutching recorders and barely able to contain their excitement as a live Link Up concert is about to commence, it's clear, after 16 years, educational outreach remains at the forefront of Sinfonia Gulf Coast's mission.

Entertain. Educate. Inspire. These three simple words are a mandate for Northwest Florida's only fully professional orchestra and its music and artistic director, maestro Demetrius Fuller. And that includes young music makers.

Thanks to the generous support of its community partners, by the end of the 2025-2026 season, Sinfonia will have served more than 250,000 children in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

ON A MISSION TO...
ENTERTAIN | EDUCATE | INSPIRE

> *If children are not introduced to music at an early age, I believe something fundamental is actually being taken from them.*
>
> *— Luciano Pavarotti*

Some of the many ongoing initiatives Sinfonia uses music to reach and connect with young people each year:

- Sinfonia Youth Orchestra Ensembles
- After School Beginning Strings Programs
- Link Up program in conjunction with Carnegie Hall
- Guest Artists in Schools
- Live orchestra performances for students
- Paint the Music in partnership with 3rd-8th graders in Okaloosa & Walton Counties
- Ensembles in Residence in the schools in partnership with Florida State University
- Arts in Medicine Program

Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

4,000+ 3rd-5th graders participate in Link Up each year



Go to **SinfoniaGulfCoast.org/education** to learn more about how you can support Sinfonia Gulf Coast's music education outreach programs.

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SINFONIA GULF COAST

Link Up IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CARNEGIE HALL



Students in grade 3-5 are given the opportunity to join the orchestra in this highly participatory program, in which they learn to sing and play an instrument in the classroom and perform with a professional orchestra from their seats at a culminating concert with Sinfonia Gulf Coast.

CARNEGIE HALL Weill Music Institute

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Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

25+ elementary schools participate in our current outreach programs in Okaloosa, Walton and Bay counties

Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

1,240+ outreach programs (including Link Up, Sinfonia Youth Orchestra, Paint the Music, etc.)

Go to **SinfoniaGulfCoast.org/education** to learn more about how you can support Sinfonia Gulf Coast's music education outreach programs.

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SINFONIA GULF COAST MUSIC EDUCATION

SINFONIA EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Fun-Fonia Facts

DID YOU KNOW?

Entertain, Educate and Inspire are mission mandates

Each year Sinfonia Gulf Coast impacts more than 20,000 students throughout Okaloosa and Walton Counties, Florida. Continued support from our education partners throughout the community has enabled the organization to continue to bring the highest quality music education initiatives via live orchestra concerts, musicians and guest artists in the schools, a Youth Orchestra program and expanded collaboration with Carnegie Hall's Link Up project.

Continuing Initiatives:

- Link Up Program in conjunction with Carnegie Hall
- Paint the Music for 3rd-8th graders in Okaloosa and Walton Counties
- Live orchestra performances for students
- Concert attendance and bus transportation is always provided free of charge to schools and students
- Sinfonia Youth Orchestra Ensembles
- Chamber music performance opportunities for students
- After School Beginning Strings Programs
- Private studio lessons for string students
- Guest Artists in Schools
- Ensembles in Residence in the schools in partnership with Florida State University
- Impacted more than 250,000 school children since 2006









Go to **SinfoniaGulfCoast.org/education** to learn more about how you can support Sinfonia Gulf Coast's music education outreach programs.



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Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

Sinfonia Gulf Coast hosts the only After School Strings program of its kind in Northwest Florida. Currently, ***more than 100 students*** are enrolled in ***9 different string programs at 8 schools***

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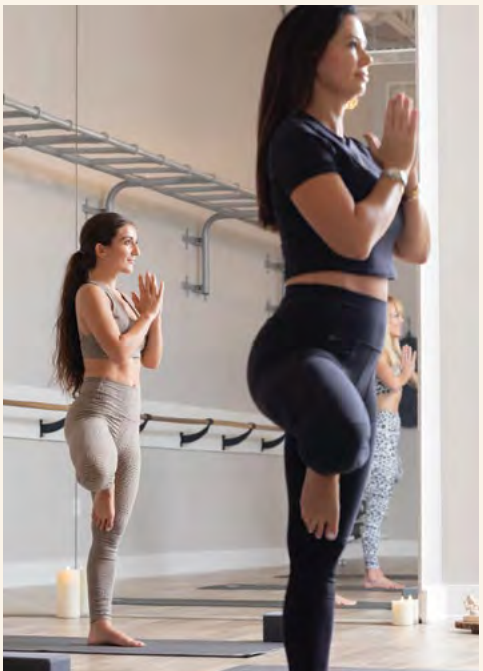




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Broadway star Brian Stokes Mitchell with Maestro Fuller at Holiday Pops (2023)

BEHIND THE Baton

Looking back on 20 years of memories, milestones and magical moments

BY ZANDRA WOLFGRAM

"I am thrilled to present to you a new sound, a new season and a new symphony. It is my honor to introduce Sinfonia Gulf Coast as the only full professional orchestra ready to set the standard for exhilarating entertainment along our Emerald Coast.

"Sinfonia will redefine the symphonic experience for both seasoned aficionados and those new to the classical genre. Talented musicians, amazing guest artists and premier events will make this season feel like a breath of fresh air."

Sinfonia Gulf Coast Music and Artistic Director Demetrius Fuller wrote this gracious, yet bold, prophecy in his first Director's Letter published in the program for the inaugural 2006-2007 season.

Fast-forward 20 years, and maestro Fuller has delivered on his prophetic promise ... and more.

And, yes, this 40-something-year-old entrepreneurial music maker is still "thrilled ... and honored" to "set the standard for exhilarating entertainment along our Emerald Coast."

The first year, Sinfonia launched a series called Coffee with the Conductor to introduce Fuller to the community and help get the word out about Sinfonia. We invite you to grab a coffee and settle in to hear from the maestro as he reflects and reminisces about the early days of Sinfonia Gulf Coast and how it has evolved since it formed 20 years ago.

Q: What does making music mean to you?
DF: Music is a way to share joy, emotion and feelings and a way to convey thoughts that you can't use words for. Even before learning piano or clarinet, I was singing along to *Sesame Street*.

Q: Do you believe music is a universal truth?
DF: It sounds cliche, but it really is true. You can have a guest artist who doesn't speak English, such as SooBeen Lee, a Young Concert Artist violinist. It didn't matter when we were rehearsing and playing. It's almost an existential type of experience that translates through music.

Q: Why did you want to form Sinfonia Gulf Coast?
DF: It was more than just about the music to me. It was a community endeavor. It was an educational endeavor. We created Sinfonia because our area did not have a professional stand-alone symphony orchestra to serve the community, and it did not have an opportunity for school children to have an outlet to learn a string instrument and experience quality outreach opportunities. A civilization is only as good as its arts and culture.

Q: How did you first start?
DF: We formed the symphony with an existing contingency of local orchestra players and community members who rallied to the cause. We launched a Founding Partner Program. I went to Mike Freeman's office at Whitney Bank (now Hancock Whitney) and said, "I need a line of credit." I didn't have collateral, so I signed up 10 partners at $50,000 cash up to five years. I got eight and Kay Phelan got two. It was not difficult, and the support was forthcoming. The Howard Group, Destin Commons, Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, St. Joe Company and Legendary Marine were among the founding partners.

Q: How does Sinfonia fit into the local arts scene?
DF: I hope locals agree we've made a huge impact on the local cultural landscape. We are a destination in terms of one-stop symphony shopping, so to speak. Overall, we're here to entertain and become a source of cultural support for the area but also to become a part of people's lives. Beyond music, we provide education and a social offering. Together,



Morgan James and Maestro Fuller at a photo shoot in New York

those elements are what Sinfonia has brought to the community.

Q: What is at the heart of Sinfonia's mission?
DF: Music education is integral to our mission. Over the past 20 years, we've focused on our educational outreach, and it's become a standard staple in Okaloosa, Walton and now Bay counties as a supplement to their in-school curricula. Link Up, impacting almost 4,000 kids in third through fifth grades each school year, is remarkable. Obviously, we provide a service to the community, but more than people just buying a ticket, what we do is not a stopgap; our patrons really understand what Sinfonia does and what their money goes to. They see the value in what we provide.

Q: Were the early days a struggle?
DF: I never thought of it as a struggle. It was something we just had to do. I was not alone. We still have an engaged board of at least a dozen members, and there are well over 100 names on our volunteer roster. With our founding partners and board of directors, we laid out a great plan. The first three seasons were a little tough financially. We always had incredible patrons and support. Starting during an economic downturn catapulted the urgency to create a solid, capable organization. A big reason for our success is that, administratively, we organized a strong ensemble of people running things behind the scenes, and we have that to this day.

Q: Did you ever have doubts?
DF: I was always very confident. Ego and confidence are two different things. I never paid attention to what people said; I just did it. I said, "Yes, you can," and, "Watch us." You figure out ways to turn a "no" into a positive, and therein lies the magic.

Q: What is your secret to success?
DF: There is no secret other than hard work and tenacity. I always joke that talent factors in there somewhere, but that is not the leading force. I surround myself with amazing sponsors, artists and staff members who first believe in Sinfonia Gulf Coast and were — and still are — capable of following through on the quality level Sinfonia is known for.

Q: How did you attract the A-list you have?
DF: I was able to travel the world and guest conduct and meet many artists and agents/managers. I went to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music (CCM), one of the top five music schools in the U.S. Many of the artists who sit in the orchestra were classmates of mine or attended CCM. Many successful artists on the scene today are CCM grads. I think awareness is a critical thing. I didn't know Bernadette Peters, (Sinfonia's first celebrity guest artist in 2006) but was aware of her. Kristin Chenoweth (performed for Sinfonia's 10th anniversary gala) has become a friend. Morgan James was a last-minute replacement when Broadway star Christiane Noll fell ill, and she has become one of my best friends. Surrounding yourself with that caliber of talent, who respect and agree with your vision and can assist your mission, is a recipe for success.

Q: How did Bernadette Peters, the first celebrity guest artist, come about?
DF: I called her agent. Carol Gagliardi (founding board member) was a huge fan of Bernadette Peters and her role in *Into the Woods*. I figured



Roberta Flack and Maestro Fuller (2007)

Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

Sinfonia Gulf Coast has elevated the quality of live entertainment by presenting ***dozens of A-list stars*** and Broadway performers, such as Bernadette Peters, Kristin Chenoweth, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Trombone Shorty, Patti LaBelle, Roberta Flack, Patti LuPone and many more.

if I could get Bernadette, it would solidify that we are breaking into this scene, and we mean business. Bringing Bernadette back to start our 20th season is a full-circle moment.

Q: What milestone moments come to mind as you celebrate 20 years?
DF: For our fifth anniversary, we launched the amazing ArtStrings violin exhibit. That was the first real "aha" moment on a large scale because of the compilation of everything it took to get to that point. When the community came together, it was a great melding of art, music and continuity of support. It took us to the next level. There are so many more: Roberta Flack, Mary Wilson of the Supremes, Patti LaBelle, Vanessa Williams, Patti LuPone and Kristin Chenoweth have graced the Sinfonia stage. Our most important work, however, lives in the classrooms and with our after-school string programs and Sinfonia Youth Orchestra.

Q: You've experimented with creating novel experiences.
DF: Yes. Mary Wilson of the Supremes was the first Seagar's Cabaret event. We were going for a Carlyle Café vibe, and it worked. That set the stage for the Seagar's Cabaret series. I think everybody was blown away. Not everything has been incredible, but what we've done well is tailored our programming to our audience.

Q: What are some of your personal standout performance moments?
DF: Artistically, Kristin Chenoweth was a huge success any which way you slice it. But, to this day, my favorite concert gala was Roberta Flack in 2007. She was extraordinary. She remains the most standout gala musician. She didn't miss a beat, literally; she was on it.

Q: You surely have a lot of "backstage" stories.
DF: Most people have no idea what happens behind the scenes. The first season, we were presenting a gospel choir as part of our holiday concert called "Too Hot to Handel." We had to find a Hammond B-3 organ, and the closest one we could find was in Tampa. We had to drive a rented U-Haul to Tampa to pick it up. The night of the show, the gospel choir was MIA! They took a wrong turn somewhere, and two tires on the bus exploded. They arrived one minute before the performance started.

Q: What does it mean to you to be celebrating 20 years?
DF: Relevance! It's a testimony to the overall picture, the orchestra, education outreach, the social events



Broadway and film star Kristin Chenoweth and Maestro Fuller at Sinfonia's 10th Anniversary Gala Event

... all managed with support from our board, our staff and volunteers. It means continued support from an incredibly resilient community that has shown their support and desire for what Sinfonia produces. It all melds and works together.

Q: You have weathered storms, oil spills, economic recessions and a global pandemic. What are you doing as a leader to ensure Sinfonia not only survives but thrives during tough times?
DF: Overall, we continue to create a product that our audience finds relevant, and we try to be the big thinker in the arts community.

Q: What have you learned?
DF: Patience, which is not my strong point. That the word "no" doesn't mean no forever; it means just not right now. Good things come to those who wait.

Q. Why does support for the local arts matter?
DF: The arts matter, period. You cannot have a successful destination with any sort of pulse without arts and culture.

Q: Why has Sinfonia captured the imagination and interest of the community?
DF: We call it FunFonia. That is the biggest key. We pay our musicians well and treat them with respect. They know they are important and valued. We try to make our concerts fun for everyone. We have great energy, and it makes a difference. Our venues are known for cosmos not cough drops.

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Fun-Fonia Fact

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As the first gala guest artist, Bernadette Peters is a full-circle first; ***returning 20 years later*** to celebrate with *Cabaret*!

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MEET Bernadette Peters



Throughout her illustrious career, Bernadette Peters has dazzled audiences and critics with performances on stage, in film and television, in concert and on recordings. She has earned numerous accolades, including three Tony Awards, a Golden Globe, four Emmy nominations, four Grammy nominations and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Best known for her work on stage, Peters is one of Broadway's most acclaimed performers. She recently starred in the Cameron Mackintosh production of *Stephen Sondheim's Old Friends*, celebrating the life and work of Stephen Sondheim. The production premiered in London, marking her West End debut, before transferring to Los Angeles and an extended Broadway run in spring 2025.

Her recent Broadway credits include *Hello, Dolly!, Follies, A Little Night Music* and *Gypsy*, each earning her Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations. She also appeared in City Center's Encores! production *A Bed and a Chair: A New York Love Affair*, featuring music by Stephen Sondheim and orchestrations by Wynton Marsalis.

Peters received both the Tony and Drama Desk Awards for her performance in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song and Dance* and another Tony Award for the revival of Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun*. She earned Tony nominations for her work in Neil Simon's *The Goodbye Girl*, Sondheim's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Sunday in the Park with George*, Jerry Herman and Gower Champion's *Mack and Mabel* and Leonard Bernstein's *On the Town*. She also earned a Drama Desk nomination for her unforgettable portrayal of the Witch in Sondheim's *Into the Woods*.

Peters' television career includes numerous acclaimed performances. Most recently, she appeared in the Apple TV+ series *High Desert* and NBC's *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist*, which earned her an Emmy nomination and later became a TV movie, *Zoey's Extraordinary Christmas*, for The Roku Channel. Her additional credits include *Katy Keene* (The CW), *The Good Fight* (CBS All Access) and the Golden Globe-winning Amazon Prime series *Mozart in the Jungle*.

Her earlier television work includes appearances in *Smash*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Ugly Betty* and *Ally McBeal*, for which she received an Emmy nomination. She also starred in the Lifetime TV movie *Living Proof*.

On the big screen, Peters has appeared in more than 30 films, earning a Golden Globe Award for her performance in *Pennies from Heaven*. Her other notable films include *The Jerk, The Longest Yard, Silent Movie, Annie, Pink Cadillac, Slaves of New York, Woody Allen's Alice, Impromptu, It Runs in the Family, Coming Up Roses, The Broken Hearts Gallery* and, most recently, a cameo in *tick, tick... BOOM*!

As a recording artist, Peters has released six solo albums, including the Grammy-nominated *I'll Be Your Baby Tonight, Sondheim, Etc.: Bernadette Peters Live at Carnegie Hall* and *Bernadette Peters Loves Rodgers & Hammerstein*. She has also been featured on numerous original Broadway cast recordings.

Beyond the stage and screen, Peters is a dedicated humanitarian. She devotes her time to Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and co-founded Broadway Barks with Mary Tyler Moore. The annual star-studded event promotes dog and cat adoptions across New York City and the tri-state area. In 2023, while performing in London, she helped launch West End Woofs, a sister organization fostering collaboration among animal shelters and rescue groups in the United Kingdom.

For her philanthropic efforts, the American Theatre Wing presented Peters with the Isabelle Stevenson Tony Award, which recognizes individuals in the theater community who have made significant humanitarian or charitable contributions.

A New York Times best-selling author, Peters has written three children's books: *Broadway Barks, Stella Is a Star!* and *Stella and Charlie: Friends Forever*, with proceeds benefiting animal charities.

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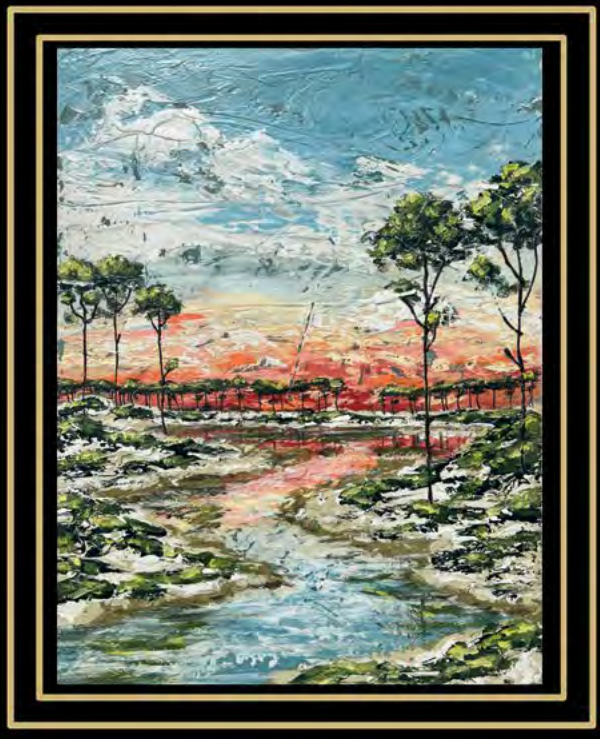
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MEET THE LEGENDARY Chaka Khan

Yvette Marie Stevens, known worldwide as Chaka Khan, was born March 23, 1953, in Chicago. The eldest of five children, she grew up in a lively, creative household where music was constant. Her father, Charles Stevens, was often described as a beatnik, while her mother, Sandra Coleman, encouraged her children's artistic curiosity. Raised in the Hyde Park neighborhood, Khan was immersed early in gospel, jazz and soul. She began singing in a group with her sister, Yvonne, setting the stage for a career that would make her one of the most dynamic voices in popular music.

Khan's professional breakthrough came in the early 1970s when she joined the funk-rock band Rufus. With her unmistakable voice and bold stage presence, she helped the group soar to national attention. Rufus released a string of hits, including *Tell Me Something Good*, written by Stevie Wonder, and *Sweet Thing*. Both became R&B classics and established Khan as a powerhouse frontwoman. Her ability to blend funk, rock and soul helped define the band's sound and set the bar for female vocalists across genres.

In 1978 Khan launched her solo career with the release of *Chaka*, her debut album, which featured the disco-soul anthem *I'm Every Woman*. The single became a defining song of empowerment and a timeless dance-floor favorite, later covered by Whitney Houston in tribute. While still performing with Rufus, Khan began to expand her sound as a solo artist, experimenting with pop, jazz and electronic influences that showcased her versatility.

Her 1984 album *I Feel for You* marked a creative and commercial breakthrough. The title track, a reimagined version of a Prince composition, fused rap, synthesizers and R&B grooves in a way that felt ahead of its time. It earned Khan a Grammy and gave her a crossover hit that introduced her to a new generation of fans. Other standout songs from her solo catalog include *Through the Fire*, a soaring ballad celebrated for its emotional depth, and *What Cha' Gonna Do for Me*. Across her albums, Khan's voice — fluid, fierce and fearless — proved capable of reinventing itself while remaining instantly recognizable.

Over her five-decade career, Khan has released more than a dozen albums and collaborated with a remarkable range of artists, including Quincy Jones, Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles and Mary J. Blige. She is often called the "Queen of Funk," but her influence reaches far beyond that genre. She helped pioneer the integration of rap in R&B production and inspired generations of performers with her blend of technical mastery and expressive freedom.

Khan's achievements are staggering: 10 Grammy awards, more than 70 million records sold and countless honors for lifetime achievement and vocal excellence. Her songs have been sampled by hip-hop and R&B artists, ensuring her sound remains present in contemporary music. In 2023, she was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame with the Musical Excellence Award, a fitting tribute to her impact on modern music and culture.

Even after more than 50 years in the spotlight, Khan continues to perform and record, bringing the same passion and intensity that defined her early career. Whether commanding the stage at a festival or delivering a heartfelt ballad in concert, her artistry feels timeless — vital, emotional and deeply human. For audiences, a Chaka Khan performance is more than nostalgia; it's a celebration of endurance, empowerment and the transcendent power of music.



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MEET The Callaways

> *"Their voices blend and soar majestically like eagles!"* — *Rex Reed,* The New York Observer



ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY is one of America's most gifted artists in pop and jazz. A leading champion of the Great American Songbook, she's made her mark as a singer, pianist, composer, lyricist, arranger, actress, educator, TV host and producer. Voted by broadwayworld.com as Celebrity of the Year and two years in a row as Best Jazz Vocalist, Ann is a born entertainer. She is best known for her Tony-nominated performance in the hit Broadway musical *Swing!* and for writing and singing the theme song to the hit TV series *The Nanny*. She made her feature film debut opposite Angelina Jolie and Matt Damon in the Robert De Niro film *The Good Shepherd*. Callaway is a multi-platinum-award songwriter whose songs are featured on seven of Barbra Streisand's recent CDs. She's recorded 83 CDs as a soloist and guest, and her latest critically acclaimed CD, *Finding Beauty: Originals Volume 1*, debuted at No. 1 on iTunes Jazz. Ann's honors include The Theater World Award, 17 MAC Awards, several Bistro Awards, the Mabel Mercer Award, the Johnny Mercer Award for Songwriting, The Blanton Peale Award for Positive Thinking and her induction into The Women Songwriters Hall of Fame.



LIZ CALLAWAY is a Grammy nominee, Tony nominee and Emmy award-winning actress, singer and recording artist. She made her Broadway debut in Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along*, received a Tony award nomination for her performance in *Baby*, and for five years, won acclaim as Grizabella in *Cats*. She has also starred in the original casts of *Miss Saigon*, *The Three Musketeers* and *The Look of Love*. Liz sang the Academy award-nominated song *Journey to the Past* in the animated feature *Anastasia* and is also the singing voice of Princess Jasmine in Disney's *Aladdin and the King of Thieves* and *The Return of Jafar*. Other film work includes the singing voice of the title character in *The Swan Princess, The Lion King 2: Simba's Pride, Beauty and the Beast, Lyle, Lyle the Crocodile* and *The Brave Little Toaster Goes to Mars*. Liz can be heard on numerous cast albums as well as her seven solo albums, including her new album, *To Steve With Love: Liz Callaway Celebrates Sondheim*, a deeply personal examination of the man who changed the landscape of musical theater and how it changed the life of the performer.

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MEET THE CAST OF Holiday Pops Spectacular!



JESSICA HENDY (VOCALIST)

Jessica Hendy, hailed as one of Broadway's powerhouse vocalists, is the only performer to appear in both the original and revival Broadway productions of *Cats* as Grizabella. Her other Broadway credits include *Aida* and *Amour*, along with national tours of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. A Drama Desk nominee and Off-Broadway Alliance Award winner for her acclaimed one-woman musical *Walking With Bubbles*, she has also starred in *Next to Normal, Miss Saigon* and *Songs for a New World*. A graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Hendy appears with symphonies worldwide in concerts including *Music of the Knights, Blockbuster Broadway!* and *Rock 'N Radio*. She is delighted to return to the Sinfonia Gulf Coast stage, where she last appeared in *Music of the Knights* in 2024.



SCOTT COULTER (VOCALIST)

Scott Coulter is one of New York's most honored vocalists, earning five MAC Awards, five Bistro Awards and two Nightlife Awards. A frequent performer at Birdland, 54 Below and Carnegie Hall, he's also an Emmy nominee and starred in the PBS special *A Christmas Carol: The Concert*. Coulter regularly performs with symphonies worldwide and collaborates with artists including Stephen Schwartz, Ben Vereen and Sheena Easton. He is the creator and director of touring productions such as *Music of the Knights* and *Blockbuster Broadway!* and serves as artistic director of the Pocono Mountains Music Festival and founder of Pocono Pops! A graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Coulter also leads Spot-On Entertainment and Spot-On Arts Academy. He is pleased to be back with Sinfonia Gulf Coast, having performed in *Music of the Knights* in 2024.



JOHN BOSWELL (PIANIST)

John Boswell has served as musical director for Judy Collins, Andy Williams, Faith Prince and Scott Coulter, among others. He played the role of Moose in the national tour of *Crazy for You* and has appeared on *The Tonight Show, Today* and *CBS This Morning*. His symphonic credits include *Jerry Herman: The Broadway Legacy Concert, Blockbuster Broadway!* and *Music of the Knights*. Boswell has performed in shows such as *Three Men and a Baby ... Grand!, Cinema Toast* and *Cashino*, and his Broadway and Off-Broadway credits include *Crazy for You, The Secret Garden* and *Back to Bacharach and David*. A recipient of UCLA's Frank Sinatra Award, he has released eight albums of original piano music and is delighted to return to the Sinfonia Gulf Coast stage, having performed in *Music of the Knights* in 2024.

HOLIDAY CHAMBER CHORUS

This choral ensemble is largely connected through Florida State University's College of Music. Under the direction of current Ph.D. in Music Education students, Steven Olson and Sarita Olson-Gustely, the ensemble features undergraduate students, graduate students and alumni of the university. Their studies represent majors in vocal performance, music education, choral conducting and arts administration. Collectively, the ensemble has experience singing a wide range of choral repertoire and is dedicated to creating musically excellent performances.





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MEET THE CAST OF 'Simply The Best'



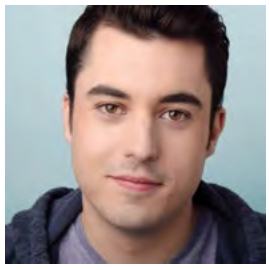
SHALEAH ADKISSON (VOCALIST)

Shaleah Adkisson is a singer and actress who has been captivating audiences nationwide for more than 18 years. She has appeared on Broadway and on tour in *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical* and starred as Joanne in the off-Broadway revival of *Rent*. Her other theater credits include *Clybourne Park, Avenue Q, The Hot Mikado, Beehive: The '60s Musical, Ain't Misbehavin', Grease, Nunsense* and *Children of Eden*.

Since 2013, Adkisson has toured the country with the all-female tribute shows Back to the Garden — honoring Joni Mitchell, Carole King and Laura Nyro — and *August 1969: A Tribute to the Women of Woodstock*.

When not performing, she works in the Education and Community Engagement Department at New York City Center, managing in-school theater and dance programs. She dedicates this performance to her husband, Jose, and her son, Lucas.

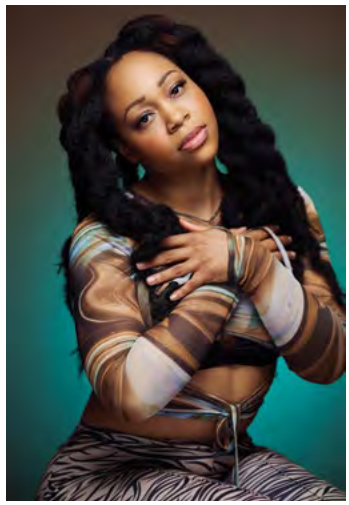
TYLER HUCKSTEP (VOCALIST)



Originally from Crawfordsville, Indiana, Tyler Huckstep is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) and now calls New York City home. His theater credits include *The Sting* (Paper Mill Playhouse), *Shrek the Musical* (international tour), *Legally Blonde* (Manship Theatre), *Oklahoma!* (John W. Engeman Theater) and lead production vocalist aboard Celebrity Cruises.

When not on stage or behind a microphone, Huckstep teaches fourth grade in the Bronx, New York. He extends his gratitude to Scott Coulter for inviting him to join this celebration of Burt Bacharach's music, to his fiancé, Ryan, for endless support and to his family in Indiana for cheering him on every step of the way.

TAMIKA LAWRENCE (VOCALIST)



Tamika Lawrence is a two-time Grammy award-winning singer, actor and writer. Her Broadway credits include *The Heart of Rock and Roll, Caroline, or Change, Gettin' the Band Back Together, Come from Away, Dear Evan Hansen, Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, If/Then, Matilda* and *The Book of Mormon*.

Off-Broadway, she has appeared in *Black No More* (Drama Desk Award nomination for Best Actress in a Musical), *Rent, The Tempest* and *Hercules at The Public Theater*. Her television work includes *That Damn Michael Che*, *Modern Love*, *The Last O.G.*, *The Wiz Live!*, *Vinyl*, *Show Me a Hero*, *Blue Bloods* and *Law & Order: SVU*.

Lawrence's film credits include *Mean Girls, Better Nate Than Ever, The Greatest Showman, Dear Evan Hansen, White Girl* and *Breakable You*.



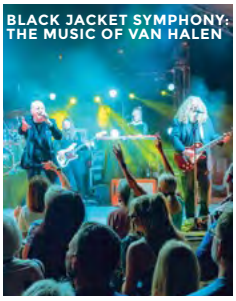
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Ying Li, pianist

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Celebrate classical masterworks with Ying Li in her Sinfonia Gulf Coast debut. Winner of the 2021 Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions, Li brings expressive depth and technical brilliance to Mozart's beloved *Concerto for Piano No. 23 in A major, K. 488*. The program also features Beethoven's *Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21*, showcasing the composer's bold emergence as a symphonist. Performed as part of Sinfonia Gulf Coast's 20th anniversary season, this Classical Connections concert promises an elegant and inspiring evening of orchestral music.

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MEET Ying Li

Chinese pianist Ying Li is a winner of the 2021 YCA Susan Wadsworth International Auditions, as well as recipient of The Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival Prize and the Tri-I Noon Recitals Prize. She has also received top awards at the Antonio Mormone International Prize, Sarasota Artist Series Piano Competition, International Liszt Piano Competition for Young Pianists, and was a finalist at Concours musical international de Montréal.

She has performed with leading orchestras including The Philadelphia Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, L'Accademia Orchestra del La Scala, Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland Pfalz, and the Stuttgart Philharmonic, with conductors Lina Gonzalez-Granados, Xian Zhang, Dan Ettinger, Eric Jacobsen, Jonathon Heyward, Dame Jane Glover, and Leslie Suganandarajah.



Photo: Shervin Lainez



Photo: Shervin Lainez

Her recent highlights include concerto appearances with the Minnesota Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Orlando Philharmonic, Eugene Symphony, Aiken Symphony, and the Salisbury Symphony, along with festival performances as a Bravo! Vail Piano Fellow, her debut at La Jolla SummerFest, and a return to the Nantucket Musical Arts Society.

This season she will appear with the Chattanooga Symphony, Carolina Philharmonic, Kiel Philharmonic at Sala Verdi in Milan, Chamber Orchestra Aquila, Anchorage Symphony, Loudoun Symphony, and the Maryland Symphony.

Recital engagements include the Milano Torino Festival Internazionale della Musica, Laguna Beach, The 222 in Healdsburg, and Hayden's Ferry Chamber Music. She will also be featured on the YCA Season Finale at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in May 2026.

A dedicated chamber musician, Ying has performed at the Verbier Festival Academy, Ravinia's Steans Institute, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, and the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival.

After earning her Bachelor of Music from the Curtis Institute in 2019, Ying completed both her Master of Music and Artist Diploma at The Juilliard School under the guidance of Robert McDonald.

Ying Li's place on the YCA roster in 2025-2026 is generously sponsored by the Alan and Li Colberg Family Foundation.

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Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, K. 488 — **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

I. Allegro
II. Adagio
III. Allegro assai

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 21 — **Ludwig van Beethoven**

I. Adagio molto — *Allegro con brio*
II. Andante — *cantabile con moto*
III. Menuetto — *Allegro molto e vivace - Trio*
IV. Adagio — *Allegro molto e vivace*

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 23 IN A MAJOR, K. 488
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Born 27 January, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria
Died 5 December, 1791 in Vienna, Austria

- Mozart was an astonishing musical prodigy, evincing keyboard talent at age 4
- His father Leopold was a court violinist and composer in Salzburg, and taught the boy violin and clavier
- Leopold took Wolfgang and his sister Marianne on concert tours in the early 1760s, when they were still small children
  Wolfgang started his professional career in Salzburg, but moved to Vienna at age 25
- He was enormously successful in the Austrian capital, but a poor money manager

Mozart distills his style to pristine perfection in the Piano Concerto No.23 in A major, a key he reserved for works with a transparent, joyous quality. For its gentle strains, he used clarinet in the orchestra instead of the more piquant oboes, forgoing timpani and brass. The result is intimate and tender, absent of the military flourishes in the larger-scale concertos. The soloist dazzles with brilliant passage work in the outer movements, with poignant tragedy in between. In the finale, a secondary theme that sounds a bit like "Dixie" lends bounce and exuberance, bringing the concerto to a sparkling close.

Mozart reserved the key of A major for special works. His compositions in A reflect tranquility, clarity of spirit and a measure of intimacy that are rarely present in other tonalities. Both Mozart's A Major Piano Concerti (K. 414 and K. 488) are exquisite jewels with an immediate melodic appeal that does not preclude emotional weight. This later concerto holds a special place in the Mozart canon, more fully realizing the tenderness, pathos, and sparkle hinted at so generously in the earlier work.

As a performing artist in the Vienna of the 1780s, Mozart was famed for his brilliant improvisations. In his piano concerti he left us a tantalizing glimpse of his improvisatory style in the surviving cadenzas. These cadenzas present a paradox: Mozart generally committed them to manuscript paper only when they were intended for someone else. When performing concerti in public, he relied on his own inexhaustible invention, creating the cadenzas spontaneously. Thus, those cadenzas produced for his students are the best surviving evidence we have of his imaginative, freer playing. They submit readily to the interpretive keyboard gifts of other pianists. The first movement cadenza to the A Major concerto is Mozart's sole surviving cadenza for any of the dozen concerti he composed between 1784 and 1786. It is played by virtually all pianists who perform this work, including Ms. Dinnerstein in these performances.

Many writers have noted the increasing importance of opera in Mozart's instrumental works during the 1780s. His dancing bassoon lines in the concerto's zesty finale look forward to the irresistible shenanigans brought to such masterly perfection in *The Marriage of Figaro* (which Mozart completed just months after this concerto). Even more striking is the emotional intensity of the slow movement. H.C. Robbins Landon has drawn a parallel between the *Adagio* and the affective arias of Mozart's opera seria heroines; there is a prescient relationship between this music and that of Pamina in *The Magic Flute* as well.

Once again, tonality plays an important role: this Adagio is the only instance in all of Mozart of a movement in the dark key of F-sharp Minor, the relative minor of A Major. Musicologist and pianist Charles Rosen singles out the slow movement as an astonishingly poignant expression of grief and despair, referring to its "passionate melancholy". Mozart achieves this by the simplest of means; no virtuoso figuration interferes with the tragic intimacy of this lovely *Adagio* in slow Siciliana rhythm.

Despite the jollity and brilliance of the ensuing rondo-finale, our memory of the slow movement is never fully erased. Mozart gives us a powerful reminder of it in a thrilling F-sharp Minor episode. He concludes the concerto with brilliant figuration in an exuberant style, but that echo of wistfulness still hangs in the air.

The score calls for two clarinets, two bassoons, solo piano, and strings.

SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN C MAJOR, OP. 21
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Beethoven grew up knowing and hearing the symphonies of Mozart and Haydn. When he was born, Mozart was busy writing his Salzburg symphonies. When he was a teenager, Mozart was writing his extraordinary late symphonies. Haydn had honed his symphonic skills. In 1770, Haydn already had 49 symphonies under his belt and was on his way to write 106 (if one includes the Hoboken categorization). In 1795, when Beethoven began to sketch a symphony, Haydn produced the Drumroll and London symphonies: numbers 103 and 104.

It is not surprising that Beethoven's First Symphony did not appear until 1800. The success of the two classical masters was very likely intimidating. It is also not surprising that his First Symphony bore many of the hallmarks of classical style he had studied with both Haydn (unsuccessfully, as they did not get along) and Mozart (although the latter is not fully documented). Furthermore, it is surprising that with his debut into the symphonic genre, he was hailed as their successor and a voice of the future. That newness emerged in the very first measures of Opus 21. It was not a full-fledged echo of poise and obedience to classical values.

Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 premiered on April 2, 1800 at the Burgtheater in Vienna (there were no concert halls at that time), which the composer had rented for a concert to promote his own music. The *Allegemeine Musikalische Zeitung* reported "this was the most interesting concert in a very long time." Ironically, just as he was entering a successful phase in his compositions, he was given the bad news that his hearing problem was incurable. By 1802, in the Heiligenstadt Testament he was even considering suicide. His commitment to the art of music and his place therein saved him from himself.

The first movement, marked *Adagio molto-Allegro con brio*, begins with a twelve-measure introduction; in place of the classical style introduction, Beethoven opens with a series of chords coming from winds and horns with *pizzicato* accompaniment from strings. The first iteration is dominant-tonic movement in F major. The second touches on C, but the last moves strongly into G major. What this means is that the composer is breaking new ground, and shying away, misleading us, from the home key of C major. One critic mentioned "such a beginning is not suitable for the opening of a grand concert in a spacious opera house." Additionally unusual are the dynamic markings of fp (a sudden loud to soft) in each measure. At the *Allegro con brio* marking, Beethoven finally assures the C major tonality with a soft introduction of the first theme presented by violins. Herein is the beginning of the corpus of the work. The second more lyrical theme is introduced by oboe in conversation with the flute. From this point forward, the music behaves in classical direction and format, but with more dynamic contrasts and harmonic colorations than usual. The development is concise, focusing on the first theme, and the recap expands the initial ideas.

The second movement, *Andante cantabile con moto*, provides a simple theme, which is the subject of the entire movement. Hushed trumpets and drums add delicate coloration.

Beethoven titles his third movement *Menuetto* (an older form of minuet). It is a far cry from the anticipated courtly stately dance. This music rushes headlong into a sprightly scherzo-type affair: animated, energetic, and relentless. "Although the DNA of Beethoven's First Symphony was classical, there were definite mutations. Especially in the scherzo. Although marked as a menuetto, the music was not majestic, poised, or dance-like. It was fast, marked *molto* and *vivace* to encourage a brisk pace. Beethoven's metronome markings for allegro usually spanned 80 to 96. And with the modifiers the composer wanted more zest. Overall, this movement was a fitting goodbye to the eighteenth century" (Maynard Solomon). The graceful trio offers relaxation and serenity before the energy re-ignites until the finish.

Like the first movement, Beethoven teases us with a slow beginning before lifting the curtain on an exciting *Allegro molto e vivace*. Opus 21 concludes in high spirits featuring violin flurries in rapidly moving notes starting softly and scaling the heights into louder dynamics, the so-called Mannheim rocket. The Mannheim school (mid-18th century) created several orchestral innovations, which were dramatic, exciting, thrillers and novel for their time. The "rocket" is indeed like fireworks, and Beethoven launches a lot of them in this movement. Listen for the changes in tempi, as if gathering breath before dashing onward. Another Mannheim novelty is also present: the General Pause, sudden cessation of all sound and then almost immediate re-entry into high-octane movement.


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EMERALD COAST magazine

MEET THE GUEST ARTISTS FOR 'Sincerely, Sondheim'



NICHOLAS RODRIGUEZ, VOCALIST

Nicholas Rodriguez is thrilled to return to Northwest Florida with Sinfonia Gulf Coast. A 2024 Grammy nominee, he has built an extensive career spanning Broadway, film and the concert stage.

Rodriguez was recently seen on Broadway in the Tony Award-winning revival of Company opposite Patti LuPone and Katrina Lenk. He toured nationally as Captain Georg von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*, directed by Jack O'Brien, and made his Broadway debut in Disney's Tarzan. Off-Broadway credits include *The Toxic Avenger: The Musical, Almost Heaven: Songs of John Denver* and *Death for Five Voices*.

He is currently performing in *The Sound of Music* and touring with the multimedia symphonic production *The Eyes of the World: From D-Day to VE-Day*, which has included performances at Carnegie Hall with the Boston Pops and at the White House.

Rodriguez has an extensive relationship with Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., where he has appeared in multiple acclaimed productions, including *Mother Courage and Her Children* opposite Kathleen Turner; Carousel as Billy Bigelow (Helen Hayes nomination); *Destiny of Desire* as Sebastian; *My Fair Lady* as Freddy (Helen Hayes nomination); and *The Light in the Piazza* as Fabrizio. His portrayal of Curly in *Oklahoma!* earned him the 2011 Helen Hayes Award for Best Actor in a Musical and recognition by The New Yorker's Hilton Als as one of the Top 10 Performers of 2010.

On screen, Rodriguez appeared in *Sex and the City 2* and is featured on the film's soundtrack. He is also widely known for his portrayal of Nick Chavez on ABC's *One Life to Live*, a role that earned him the GLAAD Media Award, the 2009 Visibility Award and, along with his castmates, recognition as one of GLAAD's Men of the Year.

As a concert artist, Rodriguez has performed as a soloist with symphony orchestras across the United States and abroad, including appearances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center and with the Boston Pops.

He has served on the faculty of the Broadway Dreams Foundation for 16 years and as the organization's artistic director. His debut album, *The First Time...*, based on his acclaimed one-man show of the same name, is available through PS Classics and on iTunes.



JOHN MCDANIEL, PIANIST

John McDaniel is a Grammy and Emmy award-winning music director, composer, director, arranger, orchestrator and producer. He serves as an artistic director at the Tony Award-winning Eugene O'Neill Theater Center.

Most recently, McDaniel arranged, orchestrated and served as music director for *Carol Burnett: 90 Years of Laughter + Love* on NBC, which earned the Emmy award for Outstanding Primetime Variety Special. He also produced and directed a virtual concert of *Sticks & Stones* — for which he is the composer — starring Audra McDonald and Javier Muñoz. In addition, he is camp director of Kristin Chenoweth's Broadway Boot Camp.

His Broadway credits include *Bonnie and Clyde* (Drama Desk Award nomination for best orchestrations), *Catch Me If You Can, Brooklyn* (producer and orchestrator), *Annie Get Your Gun* (Grammy Award), *Taboo, Chicago, Grease, Patti LuPone on Broadway* and *Company – The Original Cast in Concert* at Lincoln Center.

On television, McDaniel is best known for *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, where he earned two Emmy awards and eight nominations. Throughout his career, he has collaborated with an extraordinary range of artists, including Cab Calloway, Shirley MacLaine, George Burns, Joel Grey, Betty Buckley, Bette Midler, Shirley Jones and Katy Perry.

McDaniel has also guest conducted with more than a dozen symphony orchestras across the United States, including five special concerts with his hometown St. Louis Symphony. He began studying piano with his mother and went on to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drama from Carnegie Mellon University.









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MAIN EVENT!

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2026
Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, Magnolia Ballroom
Join us for world-class vintners, delectable bites, a seated lunch, expert spirit purveyors, amazing auction items and the return of iconic big band Pink Martini paired with the full orchestra of Sinfonia Gulf Coast. $250/person

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MEET CRESCENDO! 2026 SPECIAL GUEST ARTISTS

Pink Martini

Now in its 31st year, Pink Martini — the unstoppable engine of joy — returns to the Sinfonia Gulf Coast stage to help celebrate the orchestra's 20th anniversary season.

Founded by Thomas Lauderdale, the band continues its mission to bring multicultural connection and inclusion to concert stages across six continents.

Presenting a mélange of catchy, old-fashioned pop, global color, foot-tapping big-band sound and Hollywood glamour, Oregon's most famous "little orchestra" performs music intended to reach audiences of all ages and backgrounds. The ensemble has collaborated with a range of iconic voices, including the band's first lead singer China Forbes, the inimitable Storm Large, NPR's Ari Shapiro, the soulful Edna Vazquez, America's Got Talent finalist Jimmie Herrod and international sensation Meow Meow.

Pink Martini has appeared on legendary stages around the world, including the Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Hall, the Sydney Opera House, Royal Albert Hall in London and Bercy Arena in Paris. The band has released more than a dozen albums on its in-house label, Heinz Records, including the recent EP *Bella ciao*, featuring the anti-fascist title track sung by Storm Large.

As The Washington Post notes, "This is rich, hugely approachable music, utterly cosmopolitan yet utterly unpretentious. And it seems to speak to just about everybody ... from grade-schoolers to grandmothers to the young and hip and beautiful."





TOP 10 REASONS TO Crescendo!

Save the dates for the event extravaganza of the season supporting Sinfonia Gulf Coast **BY ZANDRA WOLFGRAM**



1 **Cre·scen·do** (/krəˈSHenˌdō/)
Even the name is full of fun! It's such an exciting word — it's a noun, adverb, adjective and verb.

2 Cheers! With the celebratory signature cocktail by Skybar at the Edge, lauded winemakers pouring select vintages and spirit purveyors sharing samples of their tasty craft, it is easy to raise a glass to toast the delicious libations at Crescendo!



3 There is no set theme this year, but with Pink Martini as the featured live performers, I think we all know the assignment! Whatever you choose, you'll surely be "in the pink."

4 Let us entertain you! Crescendo! always surprises and delights. You'll have to come back to see what's in store for 2026.

5 The venue. The event will be held in the lovely Magnolia Ballroom in Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, so it is sure to be a swank soiree. You had us at "ballroom."



6 We're starved! With the excitement of this extravaganza, we've already worked up quite an appetite. We love a late lunch/early dinner served at clothed tables set with candles and creative decor.

7 Party prizes galore! With an exciting raffle, eventful box pull, silent auction of art, wine, jewels, excursions and more, plus the live auction of curated A-list travel getaways that you couldn't possibly plan yourself, it's a win-win!

8 Gathering with gal pals and gents. The perfect way to shake off the winter blues and usher in spring is with the sizzle of Crescendo!

9 Treble Makers! As a member of the Treble Makers, you're considered a VIP at Crescendo. Your $650 contribution will enable Sinfonia to continue performing music with more than 3,500 elementary students throughout Okaloosa and Walton counties, thanks to Link Up — Sinfonia's collaborative partnership with Carnegie Hall's Weill Institute of Music.





10 Local kids! Proceeds from Crescendo benefit Sinfonia and its music education programs, which include musicians/guest artists in schools, free orchestra concerts, bus transportation for students, Sinfonia Youth Orchestra program, Arts in Medicine initiative with Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital on the Emerald Coast and Link Up.

Save The Dates

Crescendo! Kick-off event, **Bubbles, Bourbon + More**, *is Friday, Jan. 23 at Hotel Effie.*

Vintner Dinners *are Friday, Feb. 27 at various venues along the coast.*

Crescendo! Main Event *is Sunday, March 1, in the Magnolia Ballroom at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort. This event will sell out, so reserve your seat today at SinfoniaGulfCoast.org.*









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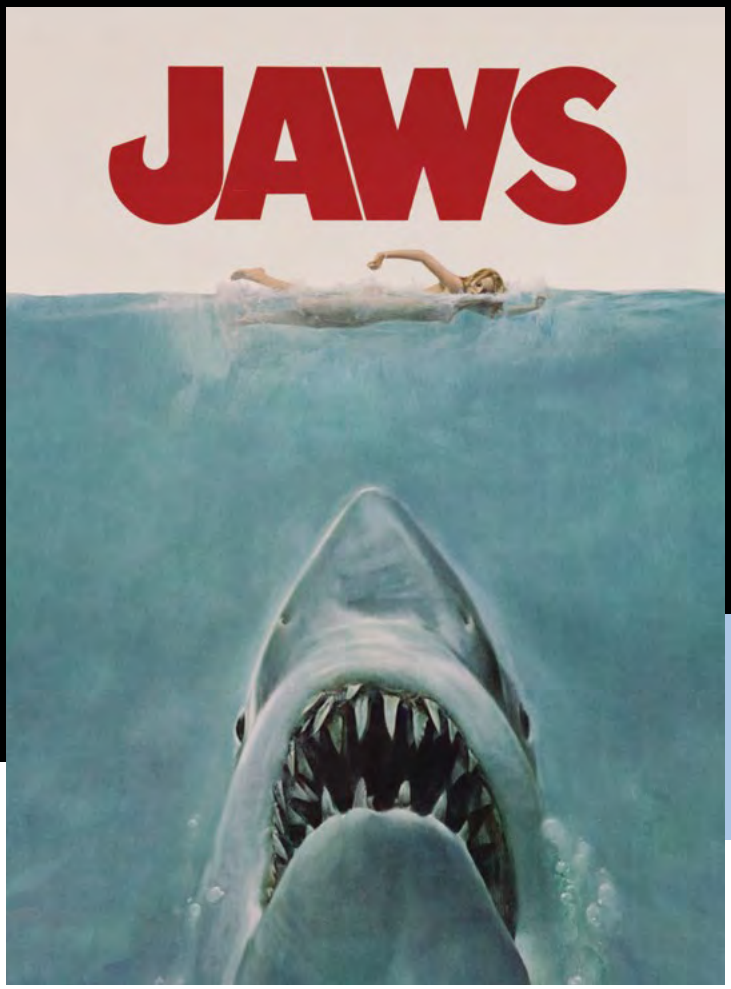
As a Treble Maker, your contribution will enable Sinfonia Gulf Coast to continue to perform some of its more important music — music for our children. Since 2006, Sinfonia has impacted more than 250,000 school children in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

YOUR $650 CONTRIBUTION INCLUDES:

- 1 ticket to Crescendo! Kick Off Lunch on January 23, 2026 at Hotel Effie ($175 Value)
- 1 ticket to Crescendo! Main Event on March 1, 2026 ($250 Value)
- Early VIP entrance to Crescendo! Main Event for Treble Makers only
- Special invitation to JIMMY CHOO 2026 event
- Special recognition at all Crescendo! events
- Special VIP invitation to experience Link Up 2026 with all of the students on March 11, 2026. An event not available to the public
- Knowing that you helped provide music education programs to over 4,000+ children in Okaloosa and Walton Counties this year!

To make a donation to become a Treble Maker, simply contact info@SinfoniaGulfCoast.org







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FILM IN CONCERT

Jaws in Concert

FRIDAY, MAY 15 | 7:30 P.M.
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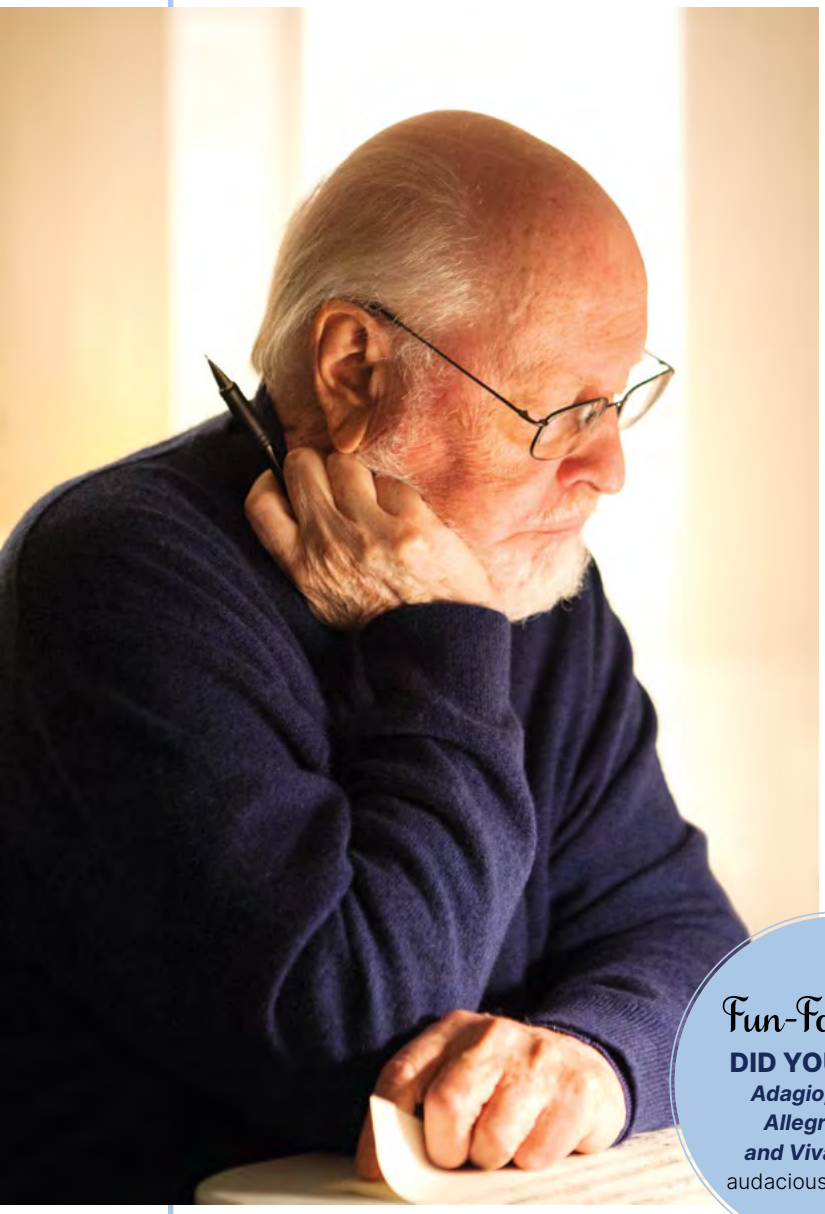
FRANCES ROY

EMERALD COAST magazine

MEET COMPOSER

John Williams

In a career spanning more than six decades, John Williams has become one of America's most accomplished and successful composers for film and the concert stage. He remains one of our nation's most distinguished and contributive musical voices. He has composed the music for more than 100 films, including all nine *Star Wars* films, the first three *Harry Potter* films, *Schindler's List, E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, Jaws, Jurassic Park, Saving Private Ryan, Lincoln, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Superman* and the *Indiana Jones* films. He served as music director of the Boston Pops Orchestra for 14 seasons and remains their laureate conductor. He has composed numerous works for the concert stage, including two symphonies and more than a dozen concertos commissioned by some of America's most prominent orchestras. He has received five Academy Awards and 54 Oscar nominations, seven British Academy Awards, 26 Grammys, four Golden Globes and five Emmys. His other honors include the Kennedy Center Honors, the National Medal of Arts, an honorary KBE from Queen Elizabeth II, the Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute, Spain's Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts and the Gold Medal from the UK's prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society.



A NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER

When I first saw *Jaws*, I didn't quite fully realize what a wonderful opportunity it presented for the orchestra to play a very personal role in the accumulated effect of the film. Steven Spielberg and I had reservations about the "thump-thump" motif of the principal musical theme. But it was fun, and it seemed to have worked.

It's thrilling for both Steven and me to realize that this unique film still captures the imagination of viewers after so many years, and that audiences now can enjoy the movie live in concert, accompanied by a magnificent orchestra like Sinfonia Gulf Coast.

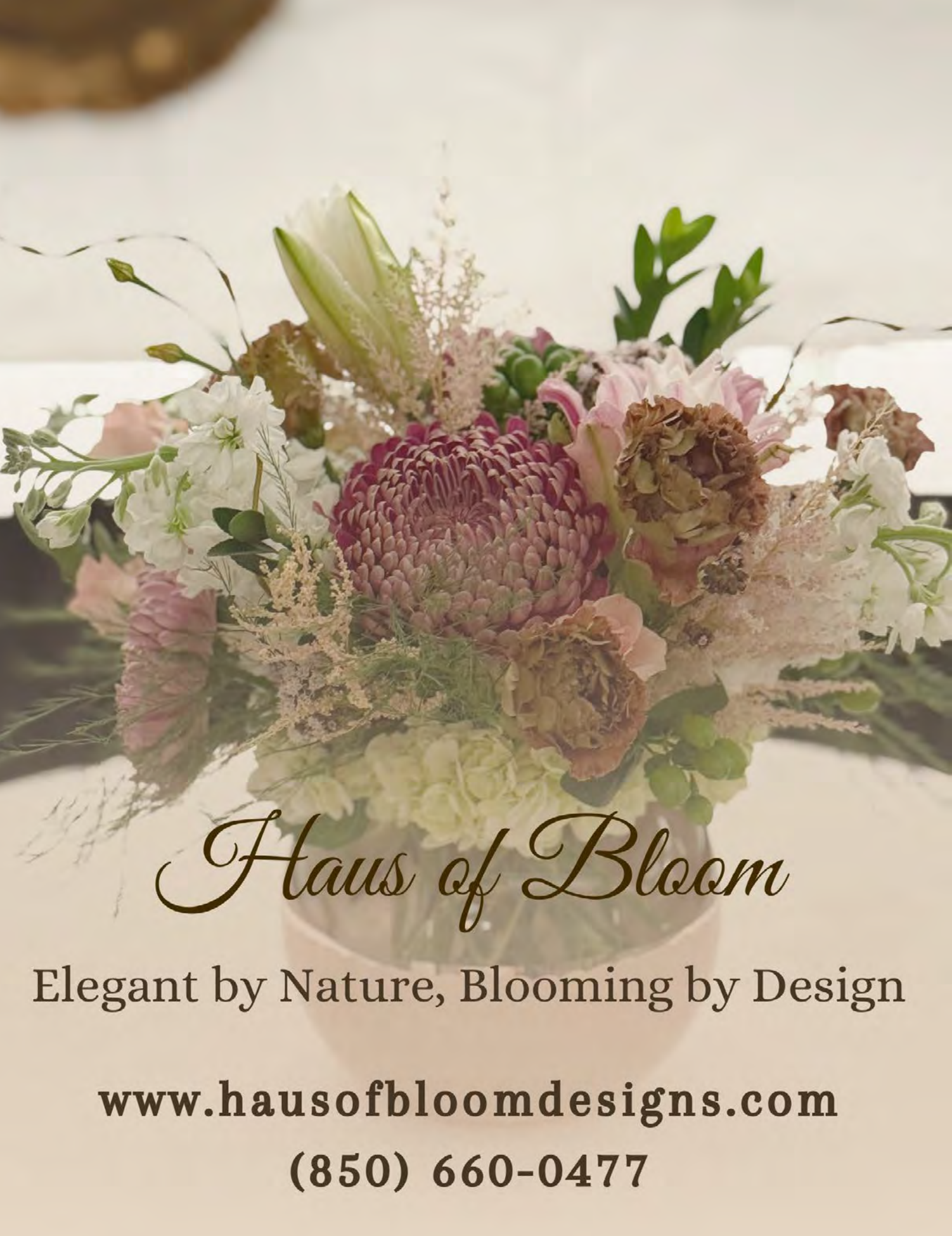
This is the greatest possible reward for the joyous and fun-filled task of making *Jaws*.



Fun-Fonia Fact

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Symphonic Journey



Sinfonia Gulf Coast celebrates 20 years of redefining the symphony experience through bold performances, community partnerships and music education under Maestro Demetrius Fuller

BY ZANDRA WOLFGRAM

Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

BRAVO! Basic membership was ***$50*** in 2006, today friends in the Maestro's Circle donate ***$50,000+***



In 2005, conductor and visionary Demetrius Fuller founded Sinfonia Gulf Coast with a bold but clear intent: to redefine the symphony experience along Florida's Northwest Gulf Coast, making orchestral music more imaginative, accessible and community connected.

From its humble beginnings just two decades ago, Sinfonia has grown into a thriving nonprofit arts enterprise, curating music that entertains, educates and inspires. Today, the orchestra celebrates this milestone, having presented more than 750 concerts and events reaching over half a million patrons — a remarkable impact in a region often considered underserved by traditional arts infrastructure.



Vocalist Morgan James and Maestro Demetrius Fuller at Alys Beach for Sinfonia Pops! in 2023

Music lovers have been treated to performances from acclaimed guest artists spanning Broadway, jazz, classical crossover and beyond: Tony- and Emmy-winning Kristin Chenoweth; Broadway luminaries Bernadette Peters and Patti LuPone; R&B legend Roberta Flack; powerhouse Trombone Shorty; Mary Wilson of the Supremes; crossover sensation Time for Three; Grammy winners like John Pizzarelli, Howard Levy, and the Parker Quartet; the beloved Pink Martini; vocalists Morgan James, Mathew Morrison and more. These stellar collaborations have become hallmarks of Sinfonia's innovative programming.

But artistry isn't Sinfonia's only measure of success. Through its Sinfonia Guest Artists in the Schools outreach and music education program, the organization has brought music education to more than 250,000 students, deepening the region's cultural fabric through school concerts, workshops and interactive projects.

Partnership has been central to the orchestra's community commitment. Whether joining forces with the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation for Paint the Music educational events, offering free youth orchestra concerts, or collaborating with the Northwest Florida Ballet, Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County and Okaloosa Arts Alliance, Sinfonia ensures that its music resonates across generations and communities.

At the heart of this two-decade symphonic journey lies Maestro Demetrius Fuller, whose leadership spans not just musical direction but bold program curation, artistic outreach and administrative prowess. Now entering his 20th season as music and artistic director, Fuller has helmed the creative evolution of the orchestra, staging boundary-stretching concerts that delight critics and patrons alike. Those who know his story speak of his adventurous spirit — whether premiering works by living composers, leading orchestras abroad, or commissioning new music to expand the orchestral canon.

As Sinfonia Gulf Coast turns 20, its legacy is rich: a modern symphony model rooted in musical excellence, inclusive access and community partnership. With a dynamic blend of celebrated artists, youth enrichment and community collaboration, the orchestra has built a resonance that echoes far beyond Northwest Florida's performance venues.

Here's to the next 20 years — where innovation meets tradition, and every note inspires.

SINFONIA GULF COAST MAGICAL MILESTONE MOMENTS



2006



AUGUST 12, 2006:
Beethoven & Botox at Versailles Spa in Miramar Beach is the first Bravo! fundraising event.



2007





SEPTEMBER 12, 2006:
Broadway and film star Bernadette Peters performs in *Journey Through Broadway* at the Emerald Coast Convention Center.

JULY 13-23, 2007:
Maestro Fuller travels to Erbil, Iraq to work with Iraqi orchestras as part of the American Voices Unity Academy.

OCTOBER 15, 2007:
R&B icon Roberta Flack performs with Sinfonia Gulf Coast.

SINFONIA GULF COAST MAGICAL MILESTONE MOMENTS CONTINUED



FEBRUARY 14, 2009:
Beyond the Score: Classical Music Exposed incorporates local actors Craig Hoover and Bruce Collier as narrators, as well as dancers from the Ballet Conservatory with Tchaikovsky's music.

OCTOBER 21, 2010:
An Evening with Mary Wilson of the Supremes at Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood highlights Sinfonia's fifth season.

FEBRUARY 3, 2012:
Ansel Adams America, a contemporary piece that beautifully weaves mesmerizing music by Dave and Chris Brubeck and compelling photography by Ansel Adams.





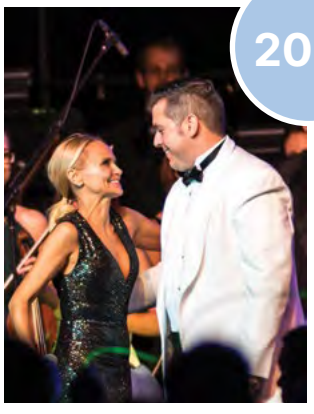








JANUARY 24, 2014:
Bernstein Beat, to honor the music of Leonard Bernstein, featuring Bernstein's daughter, Jamie Bernstein, as narrator.



MARCH 29, 2014:
Sinfonia Gala Event features Tony and Olivier Award-winning singer and Broadway actress Patti LuPone, who is a tour de force during her one-woman concert: *Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda* at the Emerald Coast Convention Center.

NOVEMBER 1, 2014:
The 9th season Gala Event features the U.S. premiere of the patriotic piece *Brothers in Arts: 70 Years in Liberty*, featuring composer Chris Brubeck and the French Jazzarium at the Emerald Coast Convention Center.

NOVEMBER 13, 2015:
Emmy and Tony-winning actress and singer Kristin Chenoweth charms the audience at the Emerald Coast Convention Center for Sinfonia's 10th anniversary Gala Event, proving big, beautiful things sometimes come in small packages.



2018

MARCH 7, 2018:
The Emerald Coast Convention Center is transformed into an electrifying concert hall when Sinfonia Gulf Coast presents its fifth annual live Link Up concert performance: *The Orchestra Swings*, showcasing the talents of 3,640 3rd through 5th graders performing on the recorder live with Sinfonia Gulf Coast.



FEBRUARY 25-27, 2022:
Crescendo! 2022 was a vivacious explosion of color and excitement as eventgoers raised record funds for Sinfonia and its music education community outreach initiatives.

OCTOBER 11, 2022:
Sinfonia Gulf Coast invited Patti LaBelle, the "Godmother of Soul," to perform at the annual Gala event.



2024

MARCH 23, 2024:
The Classical Connections presents spellbinding Steven Banks and his innovative talent on the saxophone.

APRIL 24, 2024:
In partnership with Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation, Sinfonia Gulf Coast invites students in grades 3 through 8 to express their creativity through music and visual arts mediums before watching a live theatrical performance with *Paint the Music*.



2019

NOVEMBER 15, 2019:
The 14th Sinfonia Gala Event, an *Evening with Vanessa Williams*, enraptures audiences at Henderson Beach Resort & Spa.







JANUARY 21, 2023:
Classically trained vocalist, Broadway veteran and recording artist Morgan James returned to the Sinfonia stage in a tribute to the music icon, Judy Garland.

NOVEMBER 4, 2023:
Grammy-nominated Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue captivated guests at the Sinfonia Gulf Coast Gala event at Hotel Effie.



2023



MAY 18, 2024:
Sinfonia Gulf Coast traveled back to prehistoric times, playing John Williams' iconic score accompanied by the film, *Jurassic Park*, on screen.

MAY 17, 2025:
Conceived and arranged by Steven Hackman, Sinfonia presented a genre-defying performance that fused the classical music of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky with the modern hip-hop sound of Drake.



2025

A LOOK BACK AT MAGICAL MOMENTS FROM CABARET AT SEAGAR'S: AN EVENING WITH

Bernadette Peters









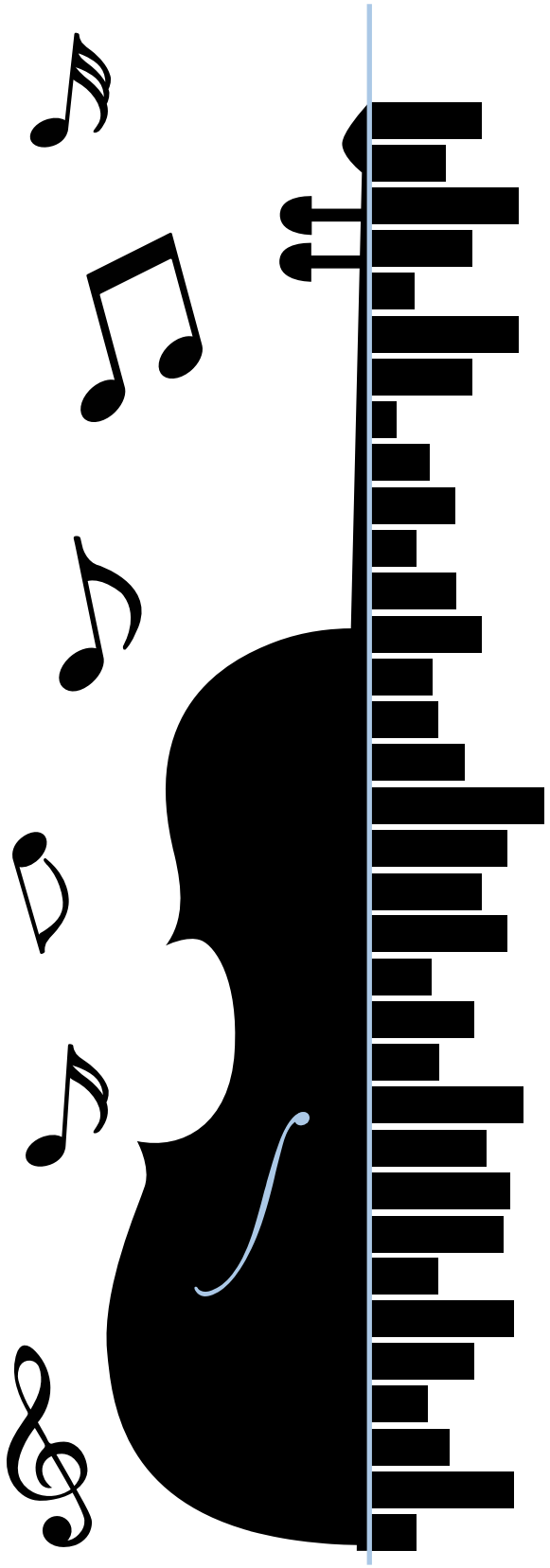




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MEMORABLE MOMENTS FROM SINFONIA GALA EVENT: AN EVENING WITH THE LEGENDARY

Chaka Khan













Jim Clark Photography

DEAR FRIENDS, PATRONS, SPONSORS AND FELLOW MUSIC LOVERS,

Fun-Fonia Fact

DID YOU KNOW?

Endless ... the amount of gratitude Sinfonia Gulf Coast has for its loyal fans, followers, patrons, donors and community supporters



Michael Kushner

What an incredible journey these 20 years have been — two decades of inventive and poignant moments that remind us why music matters. When we launched Sinfonia Gulf Coast, our charge was simple yet ambitious: to entertain, educate and inspire our community through imaginative programming that expands the traditional role of what an orchestra means to a community.

You have been at the heart of this endeavor. To our patrons, your applause, your presence, your faith in what we do — it transforms scores on a page into a living experience. To our sponsors, your steadfast support empowers us to innovate, to push beyond the traditional, to take artistic risks. To our friends and music lovers, your enthusiasm fuels our creative spirit, reminding us that music is not just heard — it is felt, shared and lived.

As we celebrate this milestone, I am reminded that every note we play is also a gesture toward community, connection and possibility. Thank you for walking this path with us, for believing in the power of sound to transform, to heal, to uplift.

Here's to the next movement: more daring and meaningful programs, deeper collaborations, brighter futures — and always ... music.

With gratitude and a full heart,



Demetrius Fuller
Founder | Music & Artistic Director
dfuller@sinfoniagulfcoast.org

P.S. We still believe in those three words: entertain, educate and inspire. Thank you for joining us throughout this musical journey.

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