

DAVID BERNARD

Conductor · Community Builder · Artistic Leader

· davidbernard.com

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Search Committee
Panama City Symphony
501 Harrison Avenue
Panama City, FL 32401

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I was struck when I encountered the Panama City Symphony's search for Music Director — first, that you are looking for not just a conductor, but a leader deeply committed to community immersion, someone who sees the orchestra as actively engaged in the life of the city around it. Second, your commitment to a full-time Music Director. These are both uncommon today, and that speaks to the seriousness of both your and this community's investment in its orchestra — and to the orchestra's investment in its community. Taken together, these aspects of the Panama City Symphony music director opportunity reflect the need for a partner to help build something significant. I would like to be the person who builds it with you. A community growing at the pace Bay County is growing is exactly where an orchestra can make its greatest impact.

Building symphonic performing arts into communities is what I do. As Music Director of the Massapequa Philharmonic, I transformed a little-known ensemble into the Resident Orchestra of the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts — developing partnerships with local museums, ballet companies, schools, and science institutions that made the orchestra genuinely central to Long Island's cultural life. I brought live music back to the Eglevsky Ballet's Nutcracker after decades of recordings. I created multimedia concert experiences that drew sold-out audiences who had never attended a symphony before. And I developed a model of community partnership — give before you get, build relationships and substantial accomplishments before you ask for anything — that consistently turned organizations into advocates and audiences into communities.

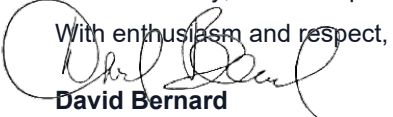
As Music Director of the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony, I have conducted programs at Carnegie Hall and David Geffen Hall, including what remains the largest performance of Beethoven's Ninth in Carnegie Hall history — 200 voices and 100 orchestral musicians drawn from three choruses including the West Point Glee Club. My recordings have received sustained critical recognition in Gramophone, BBC Music Magazine, and Fanfare. But what matters most to me is not what appears in a review. It is the culture I build in every ensemble I lead: one in which I hold myself and every musician to the highest standards of musicianship, where audiences feel genuinely welcomed into the music, and where the community understands that this orchestra exists for them.

The vision for a permanent home — a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center that PCS can truly call its own — alongside your already impressive Barbara W. Nelson Fine Arts Center, reflects a community where culture thrives, and one where the Panama City Symphony is clearly in a position of cultural leadership. That is exactly the kind of community and organization I want to be part of. I bring that same orientation to everything I do — and I know how to be the kind of artistic leader who strengthens and advances that position, on stage and off.

Creativity, engagement, and a deep commitment to the audience experience are what I bring to every position I hold — and they define my approach to every concert and every collaboration. Each performance is led personally — as host, narrator, and guide — creating the direct connection between music and audience that turns a performance into an experience. As a conductor on the approved list of the John Williams Estate and Film Concerts Live, live-to-screen productions are a natural part of my programming palette. Live-to-screen performances represent one of the most powerful arguments for the live symphony orchestra, because a full orchestra doesn't merely accompany a film, it completes it with high-resolution, fully dimensional sound that feels fully immersive and engaging on a level far beyond the recorded soundtrack. The audience feels that they are experiencing the film on another level, and they know it was the live symphony orchestra that brought them there. Collaboration with musicians, choreographers, choral directors, educators, and community partners is at the center of everything — always with the same goal: to make the music feel alive, immediate, and transformative. The administrative and fiscal discipline that sustainable artistic leadership requires are simply part of how I work.

I am genuinely excited about the opportunity to work with the Panama City Symphony — to deepen its connection to this community, and to help lead it into the extraordinary chapter that lies ahead.

With enthusiasm and respect,



David Bernard

Music Director, Park Avenue Chamber Symphony
Music Director, Massapequa Philharmonic & Eglevsky Ballet

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PROFILE

David Bernard is a conductor, community builder, and artistic leader whose work centers on a single conviction: that symphonic music, fully inhabited and genuinely shared with its community, is transformative. As Music Director of the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony, the Massapequa Philharmonic — Resident Orchestra of the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts — and the Eglevsky Ballet, he has built orchestras, audiences, and partnerships that have made symphonic music central to the cultural life of the communities he serves. His recordings are critically acclaimed in Gramophone, BBC Music Magazine, and Fanfare. He is the winner of the European Classical Music Awards Grand Prix 2025 — Conductor of the Year (Platinum Prize), the Master Prize of the UK International Conducting Competition, and multiple First Prizes of The American Prize in Orchestral Conducting.

CONDUCTING POSITIONS

Current Positions

Music Director · Park Avenue Chamber Symphony · *New York, NY*

Full responsibility for season planning, repertoire selection, guest artist engagement, board relations, and budget management. Programming consistently balances the orchestral canon with new commissions and multimedia innovation. Concerts presented at Carnegie Hall, David Geffen Hall, and DiMenna Center for Classical Music. Recordings on Recursive Classics label critically acclaimed in Gramophone, BBC Music Magazine, Fanfare, Stereophile, and The Arts Desk.

Music Director · Massapequa Philharmonic — Resident Orchestra, Tilles Center for the Performing Arts · *Massapequa, NY*

Transformed a little-known regional ensemble into the Resident Orchestra of the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts at Long Island University — Long Island's premier concert venue. Developed sustained partnerships with local museums, schools, science institutions, and ballet companies. Built multidisciplinary programming including multimedia collaborations with scientists, live-to-screen film productions, and community organization partnerships that demonstrably grew new audiences. Managed all artistic budgets, venue contracts, soloist fees, and licensing agreements.

Music Director · Eglevsky Ballet · *Long Island, NY*

Artistic leadership for one of the Northeast's leading regional ballet companies. Restored live orchestral music to the Eglevsky Ballet's Nutcracker after decades of recorded accompaniment. Collaborates closely with choreographers and artistic staff on all musical choices for productions.

Guest Conducting

- Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn, NY
- Greenwich Symphony Orchestra, Greenwich, CT
- Dubuque Symphony Orchestra, Dubuque, IA
- Danbury Symphony Orchestra, Danbury, CT
- China Conservatory, Beijing, China — Conducting and Coaching Residency

CHORAL CONDUCTING

Extensive experience collaborating with adult choruses, children's choruses, and community choral organizations:

- Beethoven Symphony No. 9 — Carnegie Hall
Largest performance of Beethoven's Ninth in Carnegie Hall history — 200-voice chorus and 100-piece orchestra, combining three choruses including the West Point Glee Club. Critically acclaimed recording produced from associated recording session.
- Mozart Requiem — David Geffen Hall (formerly Avery Fisher Hall)
- Holst The Planets with Treble Chorus — Tilles Center for the Performing Arts; Molloy College
Multiple performances featuring the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra Chorus.
- Beethoven Symphony No. 9, Handel Messiah, Vivaldi Gloria — Long Island Choral Society
- Vivaldi Gloria — Dubuque Symphony Chorus and Dubuque Symphony Orchestra

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & PROGRAMS

- Resident Orchestra Partnership — Tilles Center for the Performing Arts at LIU
Developed full residency relationship including concert series, educational programming, and live-to-screen productions. Partnership built through artistic vision and institutional relationship-building.
- Live Music Restoration — Eglevsky Ballet
Restored live orchestral accompaniment to the Nutcracker after decades of recorded music, deepening the artistic product and the partnership.
- COVID-Era Concert Partnership — Nassau County Museum of Art
Developed outdoor concert partnership that enabled live performances when no other Long Island ensemble could perform publicly.
- Academic Partnership — Long Island University Post
Guest Lecturer, Musicianship in Performance Seminar and Masterclass. Partnership developed through orchestral residency relationship with Executive Dean and Tilles Center Director Tom Dunn.
- New Music Community Partnership — Long Island Composers Alliance
Featured one work per concert from a regional composer, connecting the orchestra to the local composing community and expanding programming to include world premieres.
- Live-to-Screen Productions
On Approved Conductors List for Film Concerts Live and the John Williams Estate. Performances include Jaws in Concert at Tilles Center

EDUCATION & MENTORSHIP

Guest Lecturer — Musicianship in Performance · Long Island University Post · *Brookville, NY*
Developed and delivers original Musicianship in Performance Seminar and Masterclass, applying a five-dimension interpretive framework to student repertoire in live coaching sessions.

Masterclass Faculty — Preparing for Concertos with Orchestra · The Juilliard School · *New York, NY*

Masterclass Faculty — Preparing for Concertos with Orchestra · Meadowmount School of Music · *Westport, NY*

Guest Faculty — Symphony Orchestra Repertoire; Concerto Competition Judge · Manhattan School of Music · *New York, NY*

Lead Judge and Conductor · Special Music School Concerto Competition · *New York, NY*
Annual competition and concerto showcase for exceptional young musicians. Experience includes mentoring prize winners, selecting concerto repertoire for featured performances with orchestra, and collaborating with composers on world premiere works developed for competition winners.

Orchestral Conducting Seminar · Scope Services · *Long Island, NY*

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- Platinum Prize & Conductor of the Year — European Classical Music Awards Grand Prix 2025
- Master Prize — UK International Conducting Competition
- Grand Prize & Best Saint-Saëns Performance Special Award — Saint-Saëns International Music Competition 2026
- Platinum Prize in Conducting — World Classical Music Awards 2025
- First Prize in Orchestral Conducting, Professional Division (multiple) — The American Prize

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & DISTINCTIONS

- U.S. Patent No. 11,673,070 — InsideOut Concerts® Immersive Concert Format
- Conductors Guild
- GRAMMY Recording Academy — Voting Member

SELECTED PRESS & PUBLICATIONS

Gramophone (2026) *Solving the Problem of Saint-Saëns's Organ Symphony*

Guest blog on the acoustic challenges of the Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony and the InsideOut solution. Picked up by Symphony Magazine (League of American Orchestras).

<https://www.gramophone.co.uk/content/blogs/solving-the-problem-of-saint-saens-s-organ-symphony>

Film Score Monthly (2026) *The Undiscovered Overture: A Conductor's 34-Year Obsession with Cliff Eidelman's Star Trek VI*

Cover feature featuring interview with composer Cliff Eidelman. Editor's note: "My favorite article of the month."

<https://www.filmscoremonthly.com/issues/issue-267/the-undiscovered-overture/>

Symphony Magazine (League of American Orchestras) (2025) *Massapequa Philharmonic Dives into Jaws*

Feature interview on live-to-screen conducting philosophy and the Jaws in Concert performance at Tilles Center.

<https://symphony.org/massapequa-philharmonic-dives-into-jaws/>

Symphony Magazine (League of American Orchestras) (2025) *Astrophysicist Helps Massapequa Philharmonic Orbit The Planets*

Feature coverage of Out of This World multimedia concert with Dr. Jackie Faherty, Senior Scientist, Hayden Planetarium.

<https://symphony.org/astrophysicist-helps-massapequa-philharmonic-orbit-the-planets/>

Opening Night Online (2026) *David Bernard: The Maestro from the Inside Out*

Profile featuring interviews with orchestra musicians on Bernard's approach to orchestral leadership, musicianship, and the culture he builds in rehearsal and performance.

<https://openingnight.online/david-bernard-the-maestro-from-the-inside-out/>

Opening Night Online (2026) *Spellbinding Strauss: David Bernard and the PACS*

Critical review of the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony's all-Strauss InsideOut concert. "Expressive, precise, and artistically impeccable... the evident love between podium and ensemble, a relationship of mutual artistic trust forged over decades of shared music-making."

<https://openingnight.online/spellbinding-strauss-david-bernard-and-the-pacs/>

Gramophone (2024) *Beginnings and Endings: A Personal View of Mahler Through His First and Ninth Symphonies*

<https://www.gramophone.co.uk/content/blogs/beginnings-and-endings>

RECORDINGS & CRITICAL RECEPTION

Recordings with the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony on Recursive Classics span Mahler (Symphonies 1, 5, 9), Beethoven (complete symphonies), Tchaikovsky (Symphonies 4, 5, 6), Dvořák (Late Symphonies), Stravinsky (Rite of Spring), and British and American music. Selected reviews:

"A sincere and considered engagement with Mahler's inexhaustible score, full of warmth, longing and immediacy. Bernard's ear for textural interplay and contrapuntal transparency yields striking high-definition moments." —

Gramophone

"One of the best Mahler 9s I've heard in several years — deeply moving, well played, handsomely engineered and emotionally satisfying." —**The Arts Desk**

"David Bernard treats each of the symphonies with alert and respectful acuity. He trusts Dvořák's metronome markings, often to surprising and exciting effect." —**Gramophone**

"Bernard's shaping is unsurpassed in dramatic effectiveness — the clarity he gives to the varied voices is a joy." —**Fanfare Magazine**

EDUCATION

- The Juilliard School, New York, NY
- The Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia, PA
- Stony Brook University — MM, Orchestral Conducting

REFERENCES

Maurice Curry · Executive Artistic Director, The Eglevsky Ballet · mbrandoncurry@gmail.com · (646) 242-6241
Tom Dunn · Executive Director, Tilles Center / Executive Dean, LIU · tom.dunn@liu.edu · (516) 299-2537
Zlatomir Fung · Internationally Renowned Cello Soloist, First Prize Tchaikovsky Competition · zfungcello@gmail.com · (774) 534-1959
Ann Setzer · Faculty, The Juilliard School · ann.setzer@juilliard.edu · (917) 526-1992

VIDEO RECORDINGS

The following recordings represent a range of repertoire, conducting style, rehearsal approach, and audience engagement:

Highlight Reels

Beethoven — Symphony No. 5 / Greenwich Symphony Orchestra (*InsideOut Concert with Rehearsal*)

Chronicles a single day with an unfamiliar professional orchestra, from rehearsal through InsideOut performance with full audience interaction.

<https://youtu.be/DwSBHtJhsTs>

Ligeti — Atmosphères / Park Avenue Chamber Symphony (*InsideOut Concert*)

Demonstrates how audiences can be drawn into contemporary and unfamiliar repertoire through an immersive approach.

https://youtu.be/wToD8QfHt_8

Holst — The Planets / Park Avenue Chamber Symphony (*InsideOut Concert, Family Event*)

Demonstrates family audience engagement in the InsideOut format.

<https://youtu.be/GXUgww38y7M>

Full Works & Movements

Mahler — Symphony No. 9, IV. Adagio / Park Avenue Chamber Symphony (*InsideOut Concert, 2025*)

<https://youtu.be/NZAAbkZmyPA>

Saint-Saëns — Symphony No. 3, “Organ Symphony” (Complete) / Park Avenue Chamber Symphony (*InsideOut Concert, 2025*)

Immersive performance addressing the work’s acoustic challenges; subject of Gramophone guest blog and Symphony Magazine pickup.

<https://youtu.be/hC9PbrhGsbM>

Stravinsky — The Rite of Spring (Complete) / Park Avenue Chamber Symphony

<https://youtu.be/dvHDnaWjtnC>

Stravinsky — The Rite of Spring, Sacrificial Dance / Park Avenue Chamber Symphony

<https://youtu.be/HLWLYeTvlik>

Barber — Adagio for Strings (Complete) / Park Avenue Chamber Symphony (*InsideOut Concert*)

<https://youtu.be/Y5wf7WH1iFs>