

H  RIZONS
A SEASON OF DISCOVERY

Dvořák's New World Symphony

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 | 7 PM
BARBARA W. NELSON FINE ARTS CENTER

Conducted by
DR. RACHEL WADDELL
Finalist for
Music Director & Conductor



Featuring
WILLIS DELONY
Guest Pianist



CONCERT
PRESENTING SPONSOR



GRAND MARQUEE
SEASON SPONSOR





Coca-Cola
ZERO SUGAR
ZERO CALORIE COLA

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ORIGINAL TASTE
Delicious & Refreshing

PANAMA CITY SYMPHONY

 HORIZONS
A SEASON OF DISCOVERY

As the first notes fill the hall, we invite you to experience the extraordinary with Panama City Symphony.

Today, our orchestra stands at an exciting threshold—
fueled by artistic passion and a shared vision for Northwest
Florida.

At the heart of our mission are our incredible musicians, whose
remarkable talent brings every score to life.

Surrounding them is our vibrant network of patrons, sponsors,
and volunteers whose generosity fuels our stage, alongside music
education initiatives that inspire young minds across our region.

A SHARED EXPLORATION

You are an essential part of this milestone chapter
in the search for a new Music Director and Conductor.
Together, our orchestra and audience will discover new sounds, embrace fresh
leadership, and reach new heights of refined artistic excellence.

Thank you for your warm presence, your continued support,
and your belief in the power of live music.

WELCOME TO AN ENCHANTING 31ST SEASON.



DR. RACHEL WADDELL

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Doctor of Musical Arts
Orchestra Conducting

Dr. Rachel Waddell launches
Season 2026-27 on September 19, 2026,
conducting Dvořák's New World Symphony.

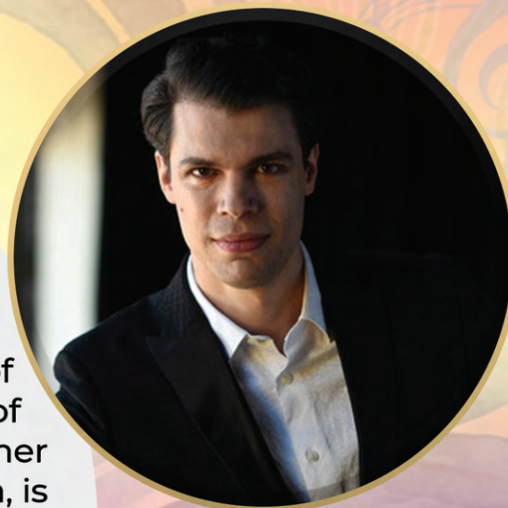
Waddell currently serves as Director
of Orchestras at Colorado State University and
Music Director of Longmont Youth Symphony.
An acclaimed conductor with a Doctor
of Musical Arts from UNLV, her guest
appearances include the Orchestre
Métropolitain and the Rochester
Philharmonic, alongside earning two
American Prize awards in Orchestral
Programming.

**FOUR OUTSTANDING
FINALISTS.
A SPECTACULAR
31ST SEASON.**

ALEX AMSEL

Peabody Conservatory
M.M. Orchestral Conducting

Alex Amsel takes the podium
November 14, 2026, to lead fellow
countryman Piazzolla's The Four Seasons of
Buenos Aires. Amsel, Associate Conductor of
the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and former
Resident Conductor of Houston Grand Opera, is
a dynamic Argentinian-Mexican conductor
recognized for his vibrant musicality and
community outreach. He has led productions at
Utah and Houston Operas and conducted at
major international festivals including Aspen
and Romania's George Enescu Festival. He
founded the Student Composition
Project, commissioning six orchestral
world premieres from young
Arizona composers.



PANAMA CITY SYMPHONY
HORIZONS
A SEASON OF DISCOVERY

ODE TO THE MAESTROS, SPONSORS
Ray & Marlene East

**DR. RYO
HASEGAWA**

Peabody Conservatory
Doctor of Musical Arts
Orchestra Conducting



Dr. Ryo Hasegawa will conduct Beethoven's Eroica and Rautavaara's Cantus Arcticus on Saturday, January 30, 2027. Dr. Hasegawa serves as Assistant Conductor of the Charleston Symphony—where he led the youth orchestra to its Carnegie Hall debut—and Music Director of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra. Holding a Doctor of Musical Arts from Johns Hopkins University's Peabody Conservatory, this rising Japanese conductor has appeared with the Hamburg Symphony and Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra.



Learn More About
Each Finalist at
PanamaCitySymphony.org



DAVID BERNARD

Stony Brook University
MM in Orchestra Conducting

David Bernard closes the finalist series on February 13, 2027, leading *With Love, Tchaikovsky: Symphonic Valentines*. Bernard is an award-winning conductor serving as Music Director of the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony, Massapequa Philharmonic, and Eglevsky Ballet. A Juilliard and Curtis alumnus who has performed at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Bernard was named Conductor of the Year at the 2025 European Classical Music Awards and holds a U.S. patent for the immersive InsideOut Concert format.

WINNER
will conduct
BEETHOVEN'S
9th Symphony
April 10, 2027

THE SEARCH PROCESS FOR OUR NEXT MUSIC DIRECTOR

WHO IS ON THE SEARCH COMMITTEE?



- 11-member Committee:**
- 3 Orchestra Principals (Co-Chairs),
 - 4 Musicians (7 Total Musicians),
 - 4 Board of Directors.

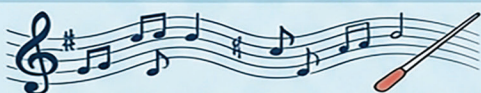


Multiple Virtual Meetings (needs, job desc., timeline, eval. process)



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of Musicians



Identify top candidates with precise musical expertise, vision, & technical skill to conduct and lead.

Role of Board of Directors



Vet administrative & leadership qualities. Validate credentials, character, collaborative spirit, & community commitment.

WHAT WILL FINALISTS DO?



Finalist guest conduct

- Guest-conduct a core concert
- Host "MOMENTS WITH THE MAESTRO"

A NEW ERA BEGINS



YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

PATRONS' ROLE



Attend Finalist Concerts & Events.

Provide feedback on Musicality, Performance Energy, Communication Skills via Rating Forms.

POSITION POSTED IN JULY 2026
(Open for one month)



Round 1: Application Review (5 pillars)



Round 2: Interviews & DEEPER INTERVIEWS & SHORTLIST



Deeper Interviews and shortlist

FINALISTS SELECTED



GOAL & UPCOMING CONCERT

SELECT NEW CONDUCTOR
March 2027

DEBUT CONCERT

APRIL 10, 2027:
BEETHOVEN'S NINTH SYMPHONY

ODE TO JOY!



HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF PANAMA CITY SYMPHONY!

Thank you for supporting Panama City Symphony. Your voice matters. Your feedback is a vital part of securing our next Music Director. *You'll use this same rating form throughout the season to evaluate finalists after each concert.*

How to Share Your Thoughts

SCAN THE QR CODE.

This will open a form called
Music Director Finalist Audience Evaluation

Rate the Finalist: Tell us about your experience—especially the candidate's stage presence, energy, and connection with you, our audience!



Why is my Email Address Required?

We ask for your email address to ensure that each patron submits one rating per candidate. Your email will remain private.

How Will My Input Be Used?

Choosing a Music Director is a collaborative journey, and your ratings provide essential insight to help our Search Committee and Board of Directors gauge each candidate's performance charisma, concert experience, and audience connection as part of a thorough evaluation for our organization's next chapter.

How will Musicians Weigh In?

Our orchestra musicians will work closely with each finalist during several rehearsals and performances. Following each concert, musicians will submit orchestra-related evaluations assessing artistic precision, rehearsal dynamics, and musical leadership.

What is the Board's Role?

As the governing body of Panama City Symphony, the Board will consider all points of feedback to make the final decision. In addition to reviewing audience and musician ratings, the Board will evaluate candidates on administrative leadership, fundraising vision, community engagement, and collaboration. While ratings do not act as an automatic tally, every score and comment directly informs the Board's final choice.



PANAMA CITY SYMPHONY ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW



GOVERNANCE: OUR WORKING BOARD

The Board is the force behind the beautiful music and educational programming: a hands-on working board versus a traditional advisory board.

- **Volunteer Hours:** 200-250 per week.
- Equivalent of 5 full-time paid staff!
- Growth in programming has outgrown current volunteer capacity.
- Strategic Goal: Gradually add paid staff as funds are raised.

FINANCIAL INTEGRITY & CONTROLS

Dual-Approval Process:

2 Board Members approve every expenditure.

Rigorous Bookkeeping:

Monthly bookkeeping by the Treasurer; Reviewed by an Independent Accountant.

Independent Oversight:

Board-approved external audit by a specialized non-profit firm.

PCS is a 501c3 non-profit organization.

ACTIVE AND ENGAGED LEADERSHIP

STRATEGIC GOALS & FUTURE GROWTH

Period of unprecedented growth.

1. Build an Endowment Fund for financial security.
2. Be a driving force for a new Performing Arts Center.
3. Grow paid staff and provide health insurance and benefits.
4. Continue steady growth & elevation in all areas.

SEASON PROGRAMMING, EDUCATION & OUTREACH

6-8 Concerts

- 45-70 musicians per concert
- 2 Fundraising Events: Bella Notte and Renaissance to Rock-n-Roll
- 6 Musically Up Close Events
- Biennial Emerging Artists Competition
- 3 in-school music education programs across the region
 - Masterclasses
 - Mentoring Program
 - String Academy
 - Music Outreach
 - Musicians for Hire

Executive Committee

Dr. Marlene East, President

Glass Artist; Mental Health Counselor; Non-Profit
Executive Director (Retired)
*Talents Contributed: Leadership, Graphic Design,
Administrative Organization, Grant-Writing*



Crook Stewart, Vice President

Tour Management and Accounting, Bonnie
Raitt; Co-Owner of The Ghetto Palace;
Co-Founder of Music Matters
*Talents Contributed: Board Recruitment,
Governance Oversight, Concert and Event
Logistics*



Denise Cox, Imm Past President

President, Storm Energy, Ltd
*Talents Contributed: Development, Donor
Relations, Grant-writing, Board Oversight*



Danielle Streichert, Secretary

Health Agent, Peoples First Insurance;
Leadership on Various Non-Profit Boards
*Talents Contributed: Event Planning and
Execution; Non-Profit Board Leadership*

Raymond East, Jr., Treasurer

Owner, East Electrical Contractors (Retired)
*Talents Contributed: Accounting, Budgeting,
Financial Planning, Investment Oversight,
Concert Logistics and Stage Setup,
Construction Expertise*



Sonya Caldwell

Broker/Community Strategist, Caldwell
Broker, LLC
*Talents Contributed: Development,
Donor Relations,
Sponsor Development*



Art Kimbrough

Executive Coach, Vistage Florida CEO;
Author
*Talents Contributed: Leadership,
Relationship-Building, Long-Range
Planning, Public Relations, Retail &
Administrative Expertise, Board
Experience*



Kathleen Collier

Healthcare CEO (Retired); Former Board
Member San Diego Zoo
*Talents Contributed: Finance & Sustainability;
Grant-writing*



David Mashburn

New Home Consultant, Holiday Builders
*Talents Contributed: Leadership, Relationship-Building,
Long-Range Planning, Public Relations, Retail &
Administrative Expertise, Board Experience*



Mary Middlemas

Language and Writing Professor; Writing Center
Director (Retired)
*Talents Contributed: Music Education
Organizational Leadership, Editing*



Karen Roganov

U.S. Military Officer (Retired); Community Writer, Local
Magazines
*Talents Contributed: Community Engagement and
Fundraising*



Marta Rose-Thorpe

Marta Rose Productions: Marketing Strategist, Publisher,
Event Producer; A Superior Mechanical: Business
Development
*Talents Contributed: Public Relations Leadership, Press
Release Writer, Social Media Content Creator, Community
Engagement Coordinator*



Jennifer Shepard

Director of Community Engagement, Shepard Law
*Talents Contributed: Non-profit Management,
Performing Arts Administration, Arts Advocacy, Grant
Writing, Fundraising, Programming, Marketing, Publicity*



Michael Dickey, Legal Advisor

Law Offices of Michael P. Dickey
Talents Contributed: Legal Expertise

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PANAMA CITY SYMPHONY

Season 2026-27 Sponsors & Community Partners



TIER I



Dr. James & Angela Clemmons



Marilyn & Kenneth Gummels



Ray & Dr. Marlene East

TIER II



Dr. Jeffrey Portnoy & Mary Middlemas



TIER IV



Art Kimbrough

TIER III



Colleen Dietrich



David R. Dietrich, MD



Don & Elke McCoy

GIFTS-IN-KIND



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



RESTAURANT PARTNERS



TIER I

\$20,000 and up

The St. Joe Community Foundation

Grand Marquee Season Presenting Sponsor

State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture

General Program Support

Dr. James and Angela Clemmons

Overture Sponsor: Musician Lodging & Travel

Aria Sponsor: Viola Section

Sonata Sponsor: Viola Principal

Ken and Marilyn Gummels

Staccato Sponsor: PCS String Academy

Bella Notte Presenting Sponsor

Concert Sponsor: Mentoring Program

Dr. Marlene and Ray East, Jr.

Ode to the Maestros – Music Director &

Conductor Candidates

TIER II

\$10,000 - \$19,999

Charles A Whitehead Foundation

Ovation Concert Sponsor: Dvorák's New World Symphony

Mary Middlemas and Dr. Jeffrey Portnoy

Concerto Sponsor:

Moments with the Maestro

Sonata Sponsor

Principal Violin II – Miranda Rojas

Principal Bass – David Goldflies

Principal Piano – Ani Mouradian

Panama City Coca-Cola Bottling Company United

Ovation Concert Sponsor: With Love,

Tchaikovsky

The Pineapple Willy's Foundation

Staccato Sponsor: PCS String Academy

TIER III

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Paul Brent Gallery – Paul and Lana Jane Brent

Silver Baton

Dr. Dave and Colleen Dietrich

Serenade Sponsor: Make Music Magic

Florida Power & Light

Serenade Sponsor: Discovering Music

Mack and Eleanor Lewis Family Foundation

Issac W. Byrd Family Foundation

Staccato Co-Sponsors: Emerging Artist Competition

Don & Elke McCoy

Serenade Sponsor: Adult Chorus

Pineapple Willy's/Wicked Wheel

Serenade Sponsor: Guest Artist

Outreach and Masterclasses

ReliantSouth Construction Group

Serenade Sponsor: Music Education Partnership

TIER IV

\$3,500 - \$4,999

Art and Michelle Kimbrough

Concerto Sponsor: Mentoring Program

Woodalls Total Comfort

Encore Sponsor: Ticket Envelopes

ARIA – SECTION SPONSOR

\$3000-\$3250

Dr. James and Angela Clemmons

Viola Section

Urgent Care Vet Panama City; Collin Barras

Bass Section

SONATA – PRINCIPAL SPONSOR

\$2000

Dr. James and Angela Clemmons

Principal Viola – Tim Richardson

Laura and Brian Davidenko

Principal Cello – Georgiy Khokhlov

Joyce DeFranco

Principal Clarinet – John Divine

Harrison, Rivard, & Duncan

Principal Horn – Teddy Branson

Law Offices of Mike Dickey

Principal Trombone – Grant Keel

Dr. Yvonne Traynham

Principal Harp – Katie Damon

NAMED PROGRAM DONATIONS

Scott Clemons in honor of Barbara Clemons

Music Education Partnership

GENERAL FUND DONATIONS

Colin Barras

Elizaveta Blasser

Joe & Marion Oglesby

Bill & Kathy Phillips

Jeffrey Portnoy

Carol Rogers

Robert-Ian Salit

Bob & Judy Stapleton

RESTAURANT PARTNERS

Pre-Concert Meals for Orchestra Musicians, Guest Artists, and Adult & Children's Choruses

Bakery Italia

A Grand Symphony Christmas – Desserts

Cahall's Deli

A Grand Symphony Christmas - Main Entree

Ferrucci Ristorante

Dvorák's New World Symphony

Granny Cantrell's

A Grand Symphony Christmas - Sides

Slice House

With Love Tchaikovsky

Somethin's Cookin'

Piazzolla – Four Seasons of Buenos Aires

Texas Roadhouse

Beethoven's 9th Symphony-Ode to Joy

Yard Bar

Beethoven's Eroica & Rautavaara's

Cantus Articus

Sponsor and Partner Details

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Visit Panama City Beach

Beach Home for the Holidays Sponsor

City of Panama City, Dept. of Parks,

Culture, and Recreation

Musically Up Close

Gulf Coast State College Visual &

Performing Arts - Audition & Masterclass

Venue; Sound Shell & Platforms

Destination Panama City

Seasonal Support

Bay Arts Alliance, Panama City Center for the

Arts - Moments with the Maestro venue

Panama City Ballet

Beach Home for the Holidays Collaboration

Bay Area Choral Society

Grand Symphony Christmas Adult Chorus

Collaboration

Emerald Coast Community Singers

Beethoven's 9th - Ode to Joy Adult Chorus

GIFTS-IN-KIND

Burgunbarrel / Johnson Brothers Maverick

Season Beverage Sponsor – Soirée, Bella

Notté, and Renaissance to Rock-n-Roll

Creative Printing

Preferred local printer

Curiosity Marketing

Website Support

David Adamson Designer Jewelry

Exquisite Jewelry for Season Raffle

DiBacco Importing and Distributing

Moments with the Maestro, Season

Beverage Sponsor

Hallmark

Concert Stage Florals and Centerpiece Decor

Howell Martin & Wilson

Monthly Accounting Oversight

LAMAR

Bonus Billboards for Concert Advertising

PC Downtown Renaissance

Video Recordings of Concerts and Events

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

Mentored Students Recital Venue

CHEERS to our SEASON SUBSCRIBERS

Your support enriches the cultural landscape of Northwest Florida through exceptional symphonic experiences, education, and community partnerships.

Baton levels are based on subscriptions to our core concerts.

With sincere thanks to our cherished patrons. While we have worked diligently to ensure this list is accurate, we apologize for any errors. Please let us know if you would like to request a correction.



The unwavering support of our Silver and Purple Baton subscribers represents a truly remarkable level of patronage. Their generous gifts help us bring our specific musical and educational programs to life, which is why we proudly include them on the Sponsor pages.

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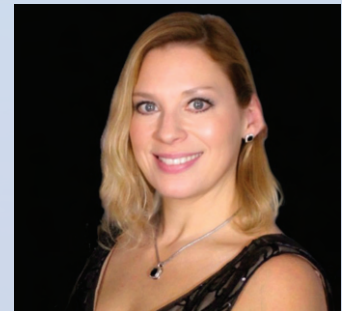
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Leslie Christianson
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Dvořák's New World Symphony

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 | 7 PM

BARBARA W. NELSON FINE ARTS CENTER

Conducted by
DR. RACHEL WADDELL
Finalist for
Music Director & Conductor



Featuring
WILLIS DELONY
Guest Pianist



CONCERT
PRESENTING SPONSOR



GRAND MARQUEE
SEASON SPONSOR



MUSICIANS' MEAL
SPONSOR



Renaissance to Rock-n-Roll

Musicians of
**PANAMA CITY SYMPHONY &
WILL THOMPSON BAND**



A FRIGHTFUL FUSION OF SOUND!

OCTOBER 30, 2026, 6-9 PM

ENTER
WEARING A
GHASTLY
DISGUISE

CAPTAIN ANDERSON'S EVENT CENTER



BUY TICKETS



PIAZZILLA

FOUR SEASONS OF BUENOS AIRES

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 14, 2026 | 7 PM

Conducted by
ALEX AMSEL
Finalist for
Music Director & Conductor



Featuring
DR. BENJAMIN SUNG
Guest Violinist



BUY TICKETS



MUSICIANS' MEAL
SPONSOR



ST. ANDREW BAPTIST CHURCH
3010 W. 15TH STREET
PANAMA CITY

GRAND MARQUEE
SEASON SPONSOR



PANAMA CITY

≈ SYMPHONY ≈

with the
Panama City Ballet

NOVEMBER 28, 2026 | 6 PM
AARON BESSANT PARK PANAMA CITY BEACH

**FREE Concert Presented by
Visit Panama City Beach**

*Bringing the Sounds of the Season
to Panama City Beach since 2015*

Nathaniel Efthimiou
GUEST CONDUCTOR

GA GRAND SYMPHONY CHRISTMAS



Christina Burroughs
DIRECTOR
PCS ADULT CHORUS



Kenny Kirkland
DIRECTOR
PCS CHILDREN'S CHORUS



Dana Langford
CHORAL DIRECTOR
BAY AREA CHORAL SOCIETY



Nathaniel Efthimiou
GUEST CONDUCTOR

With Adult & Children's Choruses

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2026 | 7 PM
BARBARA W. NELSON FINE ARTS CENTER

GRAND MARQUEE
SEASON SPONSOR



ADULT
CHORUS SPONSOR
Don & Elke McCoy

MUSICIANS MEALS
SPONSORS



BUY TICKETS



Beethoven's EROICA & Rautavaara's CANTUS ARCTICUS

Saturday
January 30, 2027
7 PM

St. Andrew
Baptist
Church

Conducted by
DR. RYO HASEGAWA
Finalist for
Music Director & Conductor



Featuring
MANA TAKAHASHI
Guest Violinist
2026 PCS Emerging Artists Winner
High School Division

EMERGING ARTIST SPONSOR
MACK AND ELEANOR LEWIS FAMILY FOUNDATION

BUY TICKETS



MUSICIANS' MEAL
SPONSOR



3010 W. 15th Street
Panama City

GRAND MARQUEE
SEASON SPONSOR



Bella Notte '27
MIDNIGHT IN MANHATTAN
 TIMELESS MELODIES OF THE CROONER ERA

FEATURING DIDI STONE, VIOLINIST & VOCALIST
 PCS 2024 EMERGING ARTIST WINNER

Empire State Presenting Sponsor
 Kenneth & Marilyn Gummels

Rockefeller Center Wine Sponsor
 Burgunbarrel

Broadway Lights Photobooth Sponsor
 Paul Brent Gallery

A FUNDRAISING GALA
 FEBRUARY 3, 2027
 6 - 9 PM
 FSU-PC HOLLEY CENTER
 PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA
 FORMAL ATTIRE / BLACK TIE PREFERRED

BUY TICKETS





With love,
TCHAIKOVSKY
 SYMPHONIC VALENTINES

Conducted by
DAVID BERNARD
 Finalist for
 Music Director & Conductor



Featuring
JOSHUA THAI
 Guest Violinist
 2026 PCS Emerging Artists
 Winner College Division



CONCERT
 PRESENTING
 SPONSOR



GRAND MARQUEE
 SEASON SPONSOR



MUSICIANS
 MEAL SPONSOR




BUY TICKETS



A GRAND FINALE Beethoven's 9th Symphony *Ode to Joy*

With Choruses &
Guest Vocalists

ADULT
CHORUS SPONSOR
Don & Elke McCoy



Kristin Wendland
DIRECTOR
EMERALD COAST
COMMUNITY SINGERS



Christina Burroughs
Soprano
DIRECTOR
PCS ADULT CHORUS



Mabs Nolen
MEZZO SOPRANO



Christian Sanders
TENOR



Lloyd Reshard
BASS BARITONE



SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2027 | 7 PM

Helen Blackburn Auditorium,
Arnold High School
550 N. Alf Coleman Road, Panama City Beach

BUY TICKETS



MUSICIAN MEAL
SPONSOR



GRAND MARQUEE
SEASON SPONSOR



Sailing Towards 2029: The Encore of Our Symphony Cruise!



Our **30th Anniversary Cruise** was a sensational success! We were so inspired by the unforgettable memories, breathtaking views, & joyful camaraderie, and we are thrilled to announce we plan to do it again!

Coming Again in 2029! Stay tuned for details.

Musically Up Close

A Partnership Between

PANAMA CITY PARKS, CULTURE & RECREATION
and

PANAMA CITY SYMPHONY



Ryan W. Stone

Six Strings to Sunday



Fri., Jan 22, 2027
3:30 pm
Panama City
Garden Club
Free Admission

Wesley Saunders

Tenor, with String Quartet



Fri., Feb. 19, 2027
7:00 pm
Panama City
Garden Club
VIP \$50 for 2
\$10 General
Tickets on EventBrite

Carter Doolittle

Reimagining the Saxophone

Fri., March 19, 2027
3:30 pm
Martin Luther
King Jr Rec Center
Free Admission



Joshua Thai

Rhapsody & Reverie

Fri., April 16, 2027
7:00 pm
Panama City
City Hall Rotunda
VIP \$50 for 2
\$10 General
Tickets on EventBrite



Panama City Symphony String Academy Spring Concert



Fri., May 14, 2027
5:00 pm
Martin Luther
King Jr Rec
Center
Free Admission

Ashley Overby & Leonard Ligon

The Low and the Overlooked

Fri., June 11, 2027
3:30 pm
Panama City
City Hall Rotunda
Free Admission



Learn More About
Musically Up Close



HORIZONS

A SEASON OF DISCOVERY

Celebrating 10 Years of Moments with THE MAESTRO

Meet PANAMA CITY SYMPHONY'S FOUR FINALISTS FOR MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Fridays, 3:00- 5:00 pm, Main Gallery, Center for the Arts



Rachel Waddell

September 18, 2026
Conducting
Dvořák's
New World
Symphony
(9/19/26)



Alex Amsel

November 13, 2026
Conducting
Piazzolla's
Four Seasons
of Buenos Aires
(11/14/26)

Ryo Hasegawa

January 29, 2027
Conducting
Beethoven's
Eroica and
Rautavaara's
Cantus Arcticus
(01/30/27)



David Bernard

February 12, 2027
Conducting
With love,
Tchaikovsky,
Symphonic
Valentines
(02/13/27)



Winning Conductor!

April 9, 2027
Conducting
A Grand Finale:
Beethoven's 9th Symphony,
Ode to Joy
(04/10/27)

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MAKE MUSIC MAGIC

Designed for our youngest K-2 audiences, our Make Music Magic program helps children develop an awareness and appreciation for music.

Through interactive singing, exercises that use motor skills, and imaginative activities, students are guided to listen, react, and share their thoughts about different musical genres. The program helps children understand how music can express emotion and connect them to others.



With Gratitude to our 2026-27
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Dr. David and Colleen Dietrich

Grades K - 2nd

DISCOVERING MUSIC

Symphony organizations have long recognized the need for early music education, which has been shown to improve academic skills, including math, language, and test scores, while also heightening listening abilities and increasing creativity. The Discovering Music program for students in grades 3-5 helps them explore the fundamental ingredients of music. In this program, musicians engage young minds by demonstrating their instruments' unique qualities and showing how they are used to create a full musical performance through active listening, individual instrument demonstrations, and interactive learning.



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Grades 3rd - 5th

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

In 2025-26, Panama City Symphony established Music Education School Partnerships, creating vibrant collaborations with area schools. This season, we welcome new Partners: Hiland Park Elementary, Kate Smith Elementary, and Girls Inc. of Bay County. Unlike traditional single school visits, the core mission of this program is sustained engagement. By returning to the same classrooms multiple times throughout the season, Symphony musicians build meaningful relationships with students and deliver a deeper, sequential music education curriculum. Special thanks to Principal Second Violinist Miranda Rojas for her exceptional work in curriculum development and presentation, and Pianist Ani Mouradian for her vital artistic collaboration.



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Grades K - 5th

GUEST ARTIST OUTREACH & MASTERCLASSES

The Symphony's guest artists serve as dedicated educators and community builders who bring music directly into local venues like schools and retirement communities, sharpening their own performance and communication skills while enriching the community. In addition, Masterclasses present high school and college students the opportunity to engage with professional vocalists and musicians. Through group lectures, one-on-one guidance, and direct instruction, students refine their technical and presentation skills while gaining valuable insight into pursuing a career in music.



With gratitude to our 2026-27
Guest Artist Outreach & Masterclasses
Sponsors

MENTORING PROGRAM

The Panama City Symphony Mentoring Program offers advanced high school musicians in grades 9–12 a pre-college orchestral experience. Mentees rehearse alongside Symphony professionals, take private lessons, and perform in assigned concerts and a student recital. Through this immersive training, participants build key technical skills and discipline to prepare for college-level music study.

Elisabeth Courtney Violin, 12th Homeschool

Elisabeth wants to gain experience playing advanced repertoire with professional musicians in an orchestral setting as she prepares to pursue a degree and career in violin performance.

Gabriella Kinsey Clarinet, 12th Bay High School

Gabriella values the collaborative teamwork of ensemble playing and wants to grow as a performer so she can help others succeed while working toward her long-term goal of earning a doctorate in music.

Conner Long Trombone, 12th Bay High School

Conner hopes to refine his musicianship and sight-reading skills in a professional ensemble setting as he works toward earning a degree in music education and pursuing a career as a band director or orchestral musician.

Leda Anaya Marques Horn, 11th Bay High School

Driven by a passion for music performance and education, Leda Anaya aims to challenge herself, expand her musical range, and experience the supportive community of playing alongside talented professionals.

Hannah Mitchell Violin, 10th Homeschool

Hannah seeks to deepen her knowledge of orchestral music and gain valuable ensemble experience to lay the groundwork for a future career in college-level violin instruction or professional performance.



Marilyn &
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ADULT & CHILDREN'S CHORUSES

Following a successful debut last season, Panama City Symphony's Adult and Children's Choruses are back for two major concert performances. These dedicated ensembles bring together adult singers and children to perform with our orchestra. Under the leadership of skilled area directors, the choruses will anchor two signature events this season: A Grand Symphony Christmas in December and Beethoven's monumental Symphony No. 9 in April.



With gratitude to our
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PANAMA CITY SYMPHONY STRING ACADEMY

Panama City Symphony String Academy develops the next generation of orchestral musicians through structured ensemble training. Launched in January 2026 under the direction of educator Rachel Cole—with rehearsals hosted at Palm Bay Elementary School—the program guides 4th–8th graders from foundational technique to the concert stage.

After just four months of instruction, the inaugural beginner cohort made their historic debut, performing “Brio,” composed by Doug Spata and arranged by Ethan G. Kimbrough, side by side with the Panama City Symphony. Just weeks later, the students took the stage again for their first solo recital.

Now in its second semester with roughly 20 new beginners joining the roster, the Academy instills the technical discipline, ensemble skills, and performance experience required for long-term musical growth. Direct exposure to and active support from the Panama City Symphony organization lend unique credibility to the program, offering students rich opportunities to develop their skills, eventually feed into our mentorship program, and hopefully, one day become members of our orchestra.

See these rising musicians at Martin Luther King Recreation Center on May 14, 2027, at 5:00 PM as part of the **Musically Up Close** series.



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Proud Sponsor of Panama City Symphony String Academy

2ND BIENNIEL EMERGING ARTISTS COMPETITION

Panama City Symphony's biennial Emerging Artists Competition celebrates exceptional high school and college classical musicians. In the June 2026 competition, 11 elite finalists participated in a live adjudication. They were evaluated on technical precision, musicality, and stage presence. College Division winner Joshua Thai (violin) and High School Division winner Mana Takahashi (violin) earned cash prizes along with featured solo guest performances with the orchestra during the 2026-27 season. More than \$10,000 in prizes was given to the young artists, courtesy of generous sponsors.

During our January 30, 2027 concert, Mana Takahashi will present Movement I of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35." Joshua Thai will perform Erich Wolfgang Korngold's "Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35," during our February 13, 2027 concert. Each artist will also debut a newly commissioned world premiere piece. Our Musically Up Close series will highlight College Division second-place winner, Carter Doolittle, performing "Reimagining the Saxophone", at the Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center on Friday, March 19, 2027. Joshua Thai will present his recital, "Rhapsody & Reverie", at the Panama City City Hall Rotunda on Friday, April 16, 2027.



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ABOUT OUR ORCHESTRA

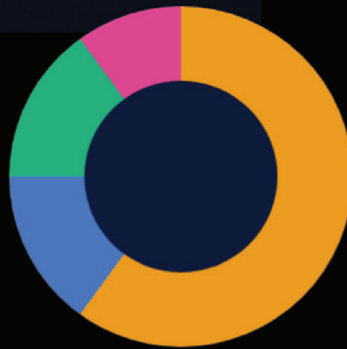
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Evil Woman, The American ELO
Sunday, February 7



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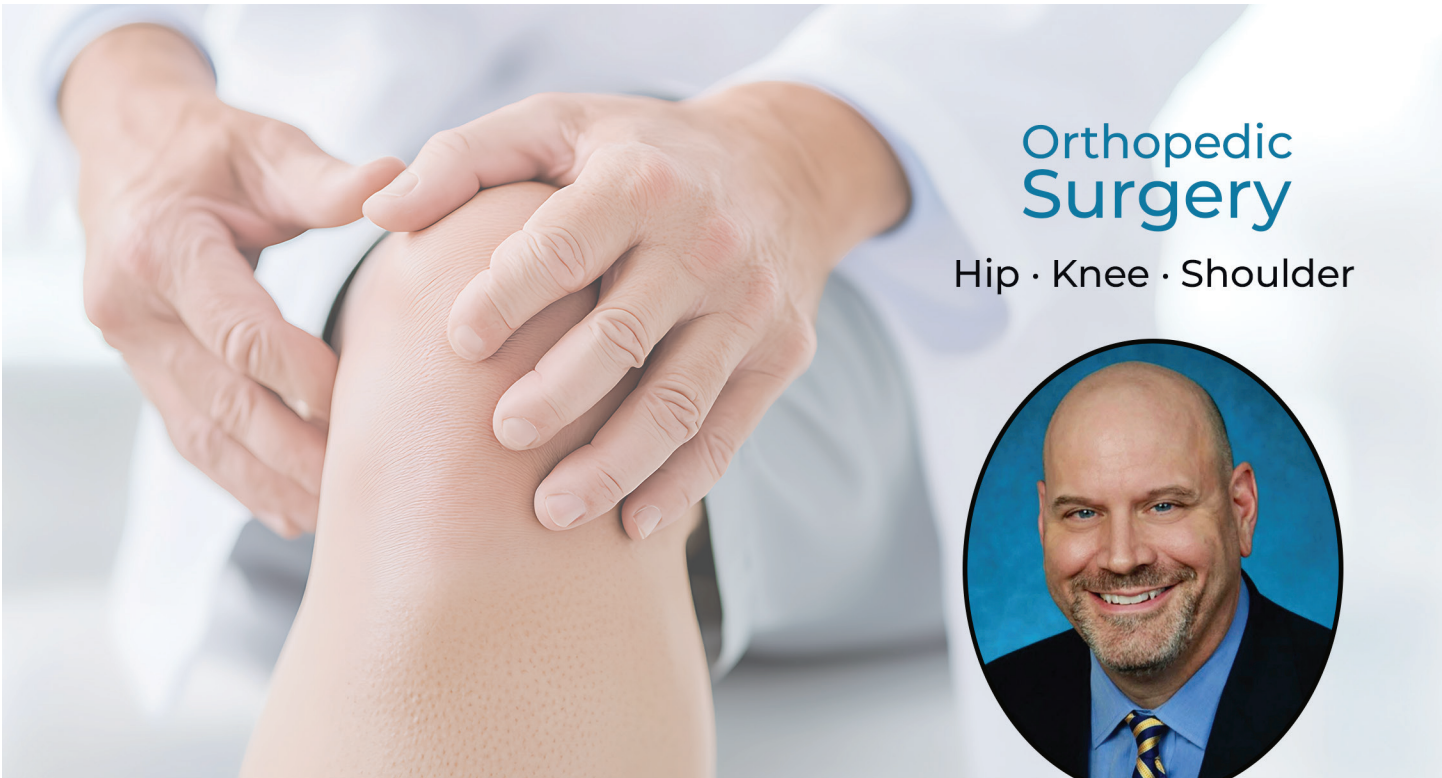
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New World Symphony

Conducted by
DR. RACHEL WADDELL
Finalist for Music Director & Conductor

Featuring
WILLIS DELONY, Guest Pianist

Ludwig van Beethoven Overture to Egmont, Op. 84 (9')

Florence Price Piano Concerto in One Movement
Willis Delony, piano (19')

Duke Ellington New World A-Comin' — arr. Maurice Peress (10')
Willis Delony, piano

Intermission (20 minutes)

Antonín Dvořák — Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95,
"From the New World" (40')



WILLIS DELONY

Pianist Willis Delony has spent over four decades establishing himself as a premier classical/jazz crossover artist. His extensive discography includes five albums in his "Connections" series on Centaur, along with collaborations featuring artists like violinist Joana Genova, trumpeter Brian Shaw, and oboist Jared Hauser. His newest album, *Standards and Improvisations*, debuted on Centaur in 2026.

Delony has performed internationally as a soloist, arranger, and conductor across the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Latin America. A champion of contemporary music, he has premiered works including Stephen Dankner's Piano Concerto, Greg Yasinitzky's award-winning Jazz Concerto, and his own 2025 composition, *Ebbs and Flows*.

As Boyd Professor of Piano and Jazz Studies at Louisiana State University since 2000, Delony's teaching legacy earned him SEC Professor of the Year honors for LSU in 2020 and induction into the Steinway & Sons Teachers Hall of Fame in 2025.

Program Notes

By Rachel L. Waddell, DMA

Thank you for joining us for an unforgettable opening night with the Panama City Symphony. As we near the end of year-long celebrations marking the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, this program invites us to reflect on where we have been, where we hope to go, and how composers have shaped what we understand as the American spirit and sound.

We begin with Ludwig van Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, written in 1809–1810 as part of the incidental music for Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's play. The drama centers on Lamoral, Count of Egmont, whose execution for defending religious tolerance ignites the Netherlands' fight for independence from Spain. Beethoven, composing amid Europe's own political upheavals, responded to *Egmont's* story with music that conveys resistance, oppression, and ultimately liberation. The overture opens with weighty chords reminiscent of the Spanish sarabande, in triple meter, but heavy rather than dance-like.

As the narrative unfolds, *Egmont* meets his fate (listen for the violins' fatal stroke), followed by a solemn funeral procession. Yet Beethoven refuses to end in darkness: the final pages erupt in radiant triumph, celebrating the movement *Egmont* inspired and future victory.



These themes resonate deeply with American listeners, especially given the work's proximity to our own war for independence. Over the next 250 years, the United States would undergo its own political and cultural transformations, including a search for a distinctly American musical voice: one that honors, and expands, the Western classical tradition. The next three works on tonight's program explore that evolution.

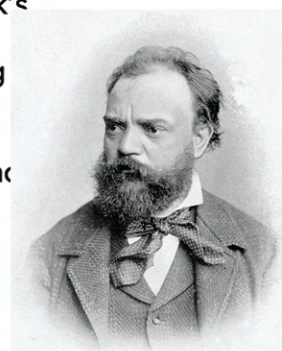
Florence Price and Duke Ellington each engage the concerto tradition through their own cultural lenses. Price's *Piano Concerto in One Movement* blends European Romanticism with African American musical idioms. The opening movement features virtuosic flourishes and a

sweeping cadenza; the second centers an oboe solo shaped by the contours of Black spirituals; and the finale bursts into a Juba Dance, a form rooted in the Kingdom of Kongo and preserved through body percussion when enslaved Africans were denied instruments.



Ellington's *New World A-Comin'* draws from jazz, literature, and his own vision of a better future. He called it a "tone parallel," imagining a world "where there would be no war, no greed... where love was unconditional." Whether heard as a one-movement concerto or a tone poem, the work radiates optimism and expressive freedom. Both pieces are performed tonight by pianist Dr. Willis Delony.

We close with Antonín Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9, From the New World*, composed during his tenure at the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Dvořák believed that Black spirituals and Native American music formed the foundation of America's compositional future, yet he wrote a symphony infused with his Czech musical heritage.



Perhaps because folk traditions across cultures share a certain universality, the work has come to symbolize American vastness and hope. The second movement's English horn melody later became the spiritual "Goin' Home," set to lyrics in 1922 by William Arms Fisher. Together, these works trace a journey of struggle, imagination, and renewal, an evening that challenges and unites us around the shared dream of a brighter future.

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Alyssa Albert
Deborah Cafarelli
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Charity Pence

VIOLA

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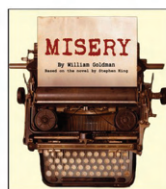


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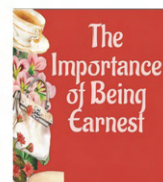
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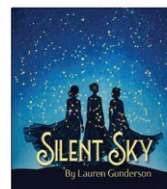
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 by Joyce DeFranco



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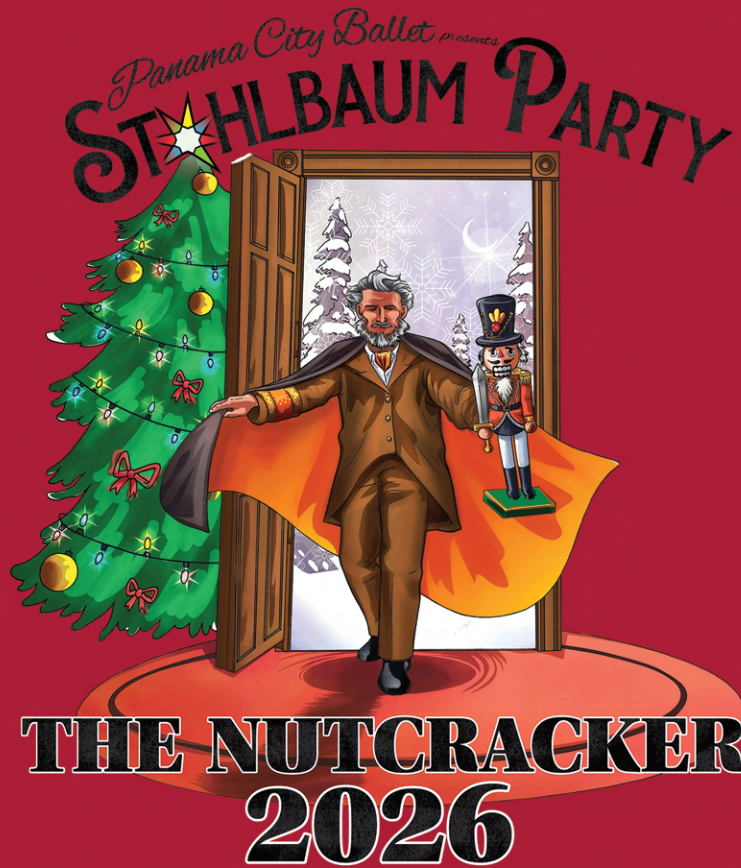
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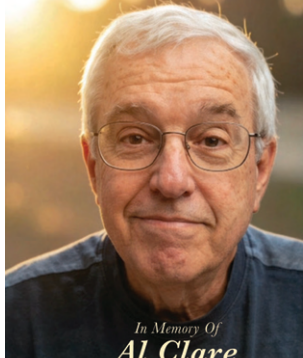




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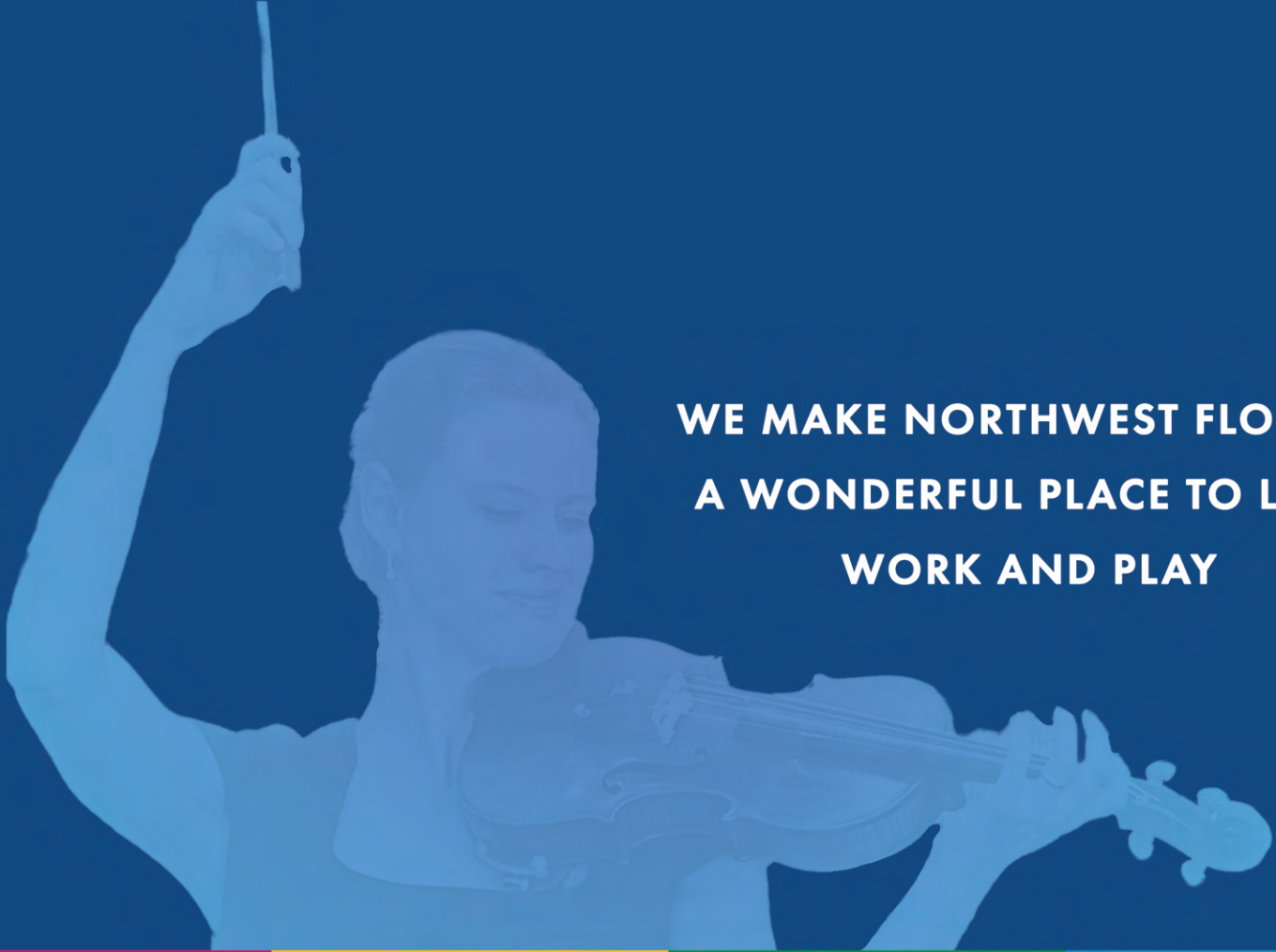


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