



Carmina Burana Polovtsian Dances

McANINCH ARTS CENTER

Oct 4-5, 2025

Welcome to the McAninch Arts Center!



Dear Friends,

It is always a joy to welcome you to the McAninch Arts Center. Each season, our stage becomes a home for extraordinary artistry from around the world, and we are thrilled to share these experiences with you. From unforgettable music and breathtaking dance to thought-provoking theatre and laugh-out-loud comedy, our touring performances bring the very best of the arts right here to DuPage County.

Your presence here is more than just attending a show—it is a celebration of the arts and a vital part of keeping them alive in our community. Every ticket purchased, every standing ovation, and every shared moment in this theater helps us fulfill our mission to make the arts accessible, engaging, and transformative.

As you enjoy today's performance, I encourage you to explore everything the MAC has to offer—from our gallery exhibitions and educational programs to our local and international collaborations. Whether this is your first visit or your fiftieth, we are honored to share this experience with you and look forward to making you feel right at home.

If you enjoy coming to the MAC, the greatest help you can offer us is to share your experiences with friends and neighbors. Word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful ways to keep the arts thriving in our community. If there is anything we can do to make your experience more enjoyable, please do not hesitate to let us know.

We look forward to entertaining you this evening, and we thank you sincerely for your support of the MAC.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Diana'.

Diana Martinez
Executive Director
McAninch Arts Center



To our wonderful patrons,

On behalf of each of my colleagues in New Philharmonic,
WELCOME TO OUR SEASON!

I have looked to program concerts this season that are
enticing, exciting, different, and moving in every respect.

I have programmed many pieces that you have requested time
after time and new pieces that we have never performed for you as yet:
Carmina Burana, Polovtsian Dances, Cinderella, Harp of Ages. Each of us as
musicians values you as an essential member of our family at NEW PHIL.

It truly is a unique family and we very much look forward to greeting you
before, during, and after each of our performances.

With sincere thanks,
Kirk

P.S. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you for supporting these
excellent and deserving musicians.

KIRK MUSPRATT

Kirk Muspratt, Music Director and Conductor

----- **NEW PHILHARMONIC 2025-2026 SEASON** -----

Carmina Burana

Polovtsian Dances

Sat, Oct 4, 7:30p | Sun, Oct 5, 3p

Romeo & Juliet

Cinderella

Sat, Nov 1, 7:30p | Sun, Nov 2, 3p

New Year's Eve Concert

Wed, Dec 31, 1:30, 5 & 8:30p

Broadway through the Years

Sat, Jan 31, 7:30p | Sun, Feb 1, 1p & 5p

**Harp of Ages & Pictures at an
Exhibition**

Sat, Apr 11, 7:30p | Sun, Apr 12, 3p

Nicole Young, harp

For tickets and information, call (630) 942-4000 or visit **AtTheMAC.org**

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New Philharmonic
Kirk Muspratt, Music Director and Conductor
49th Season 2025-2026

Carmina Burana *Polovtsian Dances*

Kirk Muspratt, Music Director and Conductor

Emily Birsan, soprano
Richard Ollarsaba, baritone
Thomas Aláan, countertenor

Northwest Indiana Symphony Chorus
Thomas McNichols, Director

A special thanks to our sponsors.



Media Sponsor

Sat, Oct 4, 2025, 7:30p
Sun, Oct 5, 2025, 3p
Belushi Performance Hall

PROGRAM

Kirk Muspratt
Music Director and Conductor

- Polovtsian Dances from Prince Igor Alexander Borodin
I. Dance of the Polovtsian Maidens (1833-1887)
II. Polovtsian Dance with Chorus

INTERMISSION

- Carmina Burana: Cantiones profanae*..... Carl Orff
(1895-1982)

Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi

1. O Fortuna 2. Fortune plango vulnere

I. Primo Vere

3. Veris leta facies 5. Ecce gratum
4. Omnia Sol temperat

Uf Dem Anger

6. Tanz 9. Reie
7. Floret silva 10. Were diu werlt alle min
8. Chramer, gip die varwe
mir

II. In Taberna

11. Estuans interius 14. In taberna quando
12. Cignus ustus cantat sumus
13. Ego sum abbas

III. Cour D'Amours

15. Amor volat undique 20. Veni, veni, venias
16. Dies, nox et omnia 21. In trutina
17. Stetit puella 22. Tempus est iocundum
18. Circa mea pectora 23. Dulcissime
19. Si puer com puellula

Blanziflor et Helena

24. Ave formosissima

Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi

25. O Fortuna



Dining Partners!

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For all your pre-show meals and post-show bites, we are thrilled to be partnering with these neighborhood restaurants. Our dining partners offer MAC patrons exclusive discounts and special offers. All MAC ticket orders receive coupons to these local favorite restaurants!

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PROGRAM NOTES

Polovtsian Dances from “Prince Igor”

The musical features that create the exotic atmosphere in the Polovtsian Dances.

To create the “exotic” atmosphere in the Polovtsian Dances, Alexander Borodin, a member of the nationalist group of Russian composers known as “The Five,” employed musical techniques characteristic of 19th-century Orientalism. This was a common approach for Russian composers portraying the nomadic tribes from the steppes east of Russia. While Borodin was not an ethnomusicologist studying authentic Polovtsian folk music, he masterfully blended orchestration, melody, rhythm, and harmony to craft a convincing musical representation of a foreign culture.

Here are the specific musical features that contribute to the work’s exotic sound:

Instrumentation and orchestration

- Vibrant tone colors: Borodin uses a “brilliantly colorful orchestration” to evoke a sense of splendor and spectacle.
- Prominent woodwinds: The work features soloistic woodwinds that “brighten the already exotic, lithe melodies”.
 - English horn and oboe solos: These instruments carry the plaintive, lyrical melody of the “Gliding Dance of the Maidens,” creating a haunting and sorrowful effect. Their reedy tone was often used in Orientalist works to suggest a non-European landscape.
- Energetic percussion: A wide array of percussion, including prominent tambourine and timpani, adds rhythmic drive and a feeling of spectacle, particularly in the energetic dances.
- Powerful brass: Borodin uses powerful and shining brass to convey the “barbaric splendor” of the Polovtsian warriors, particularly in the more vigorous sections and the climax.

Melody and harmony

- Lyrical and melancholy themes: The “Gliding Dance of the Maidens” features a flowing, yet mournful, melody. Its expressive quality captures the homesick sadness of the captured slave women.

PROGRAM NOTES

- Chromaticism and modal inflections: The melodies sometimes employ chromatic intervals, including the augmented second, to give them a distinctive, non-Western scale-like quality. In the “Gliding Dance” theme, the slight modal shift between major and relative minor also adds to the exotic atmosphere.
- Repetitive melodic phrases: Short, repetitive melodic patterns give the music a trance-like, hypnotic feel, suggesting a different, non-European sense of time.

Rhythm and tempo

- Rhythmic vitality: The wild, energetic dance sequences are built on powerful and driving rhythmic motifs that contrast sharply with the slower, more lyrical sections.
- Syncopation: The use of syncopated rhythms adds a liveliness and unpredictability that deviates from Western classical tradition, giving the music a spirited folk-dance character.
- Shifting meters: The alternation between the slow 4/4 meter of the “Gliding Dance” and the fast $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ meters of the “Wild Dances” creates a dynamic, shifting soundscape. The vigorous gallop of the $\frac{3}{4}$ dance evokes a sense of unrestrained energy.

Thematic and dynamic contrasts

- Juxtaposition of moods: The work’s structure, which alternates between the gentle, flowing melody of the maidens and the frantic, ferocious energy of the male warriors, creates a dramatic push-and-pull effect. This is key to the overall theatrical and exotic feeling.
- Spectacular finale: The final, sweeping grand celebration brings the different themes together in a thrilling and dramatic climax, creating a sense of overwhelming, celebratory chaos.

Through these techniques, Borodin creates a vivid and memorable scene that, though it relies on Western tropes of Orientalism, effectively transports the listener to the world of the Polovtsian camp.

Carl Orff

Carmina Burana

From the very first bars of Orff's *Carmina Burana* you feel as though you are entering a completely different world: the mythic appeals of the opening chorus seem to well up from another age to *O Fortuna*, the goddess of fortune both good and ill: you see figures in brightly colored costumes assembling on a mountain summit; partiers engage in their favorite pursuits; and lovers vent their feelings, each in his or her own way. You laugh and suffer with them, sharing their feelings, celebrating with them as the music runs its inevitable course.

Carmina Burana is a scenic cantata composed by Carl Orff in 1935 and 1936. It is based on 24 of the poems found in the medieval collection of the same name found in a Benedictine monastery in 1803. Orff first encountered the text in 1884 publication which included English translations of 46 poems from the collection mostly in Latin verse, with a small amount of Middle High German and Old Provençal. Orff was unfamiliar with the tunes to which these songs were originally sung and had to invent every note, every sound and rhythmic pattern, no matter how brief. The selection of poems covers a wide range of familiar topics: the fickleness of fortune and wealth, the ephemeral nature of life, the joy of the return of Spring, and the pleasures and perils of love and celebration.

Much of the compositional structure is based on the idea of the turning Fortuna Wheel. Within each scene, and sometimes within a single movement, the wheel of fortune turns, joy turning to bitterness, and hope turning to grief. "O Fortuna", the first poem in the Schmeller edition, completes this circle, forming a compositional frame for the work through both the opening and closing movements.

Orff's aim was not to create a modernist masterpiece, nor even to conjure up the world of the Middle Ages. Rather, he used medieval poems and music to appeal to elemental feelings. The melodies have succinctness and memorability that recall authentic folk traditions. The rhythms are so lively and enthralling that they affect us on an almost physical level. Although Orff uses little more than the sort of orchestra normally associated with the Classical repertory, he manages to coax from it sounds that might have been heard at the dawn of history and that cast their immediate spell on the listener.

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Carmina Burana was first staged by the Frankfurt Opera on June 8, 1937. Shortly after the greatly successful premiere, Orff wrote to his publisher, Schott Music, "Everything I have written to date, and which you have, unfortunately, printed, can be destroyed. With *Carmina Burana*, my collected works begin."

- Courtesy of Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra.

ABOUT NORTHWEST INDIANA SYMPHONY CHORUS

The Northwest Indiana Symphony Chorus is comprised of gifted singers from the Chicagoland area who share their talents with the Symphony on a volunteer basis.

Led by Thomas McNichols, the Chorus will perform on this season's Northwest Indiana Symphony Holiday Pops concerts December 4 & 6, 2025 at Hard Rock Live Stage in Gary, IN and Valparaiso High School. The ensemble will also present their own concert, Dan Forrest's *Requiem for the Living*, on March 29, 2026 at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster, IN.

Established in 1987, The Northwest Indiana Symphony Chorus has performed with the Symphony in everything from Requiems to Reggae. This talented group is the choral component of the Symphony Society, providing added texture and versatility to the Symphony's performance repertoire.

Repertoire has included, Bernstein's Ninth Symphony, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Requiems by Fauré, Duruflé and Verdi, Hoist's *The Planets*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, and Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, plus Bizet's *Carmen* with The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center. The Chorus occasionally performs with other area orchestras and presents its own concerts of Choral Masterworks.

Singers 17 years of age and older are eligible to audition in the August or January auditions. Rehearsals are held on Tuesday evenings in Munster.



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Described as “luminous” (*The Guardian*) and “radiant” (*London Telegraph*), soprano **Emily Birsan** is known to Chicago audiences for her “mesmerizing” (*Splash Magazine*) performance as Violetta in Verdi’s *La Traviata* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Previous performances include leading roles at Lyric Opera, Welsh National Opera, Edinburgh International Festival, Boston Lyric

Opera, Madison Opera, and concert performances at Carnegie Hall, BBC Symphony, Ravinia Festival, Grant Park Symphony, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and the Chicago Philharmonic. With the Chandos Record Label, Birsan has recorded Elgar’s oratorio, *The Saga of St. Olaf*, with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Sir Andrew Davis.

In the 2025/2026 season, she appears as Speranza Celeste in Stradella’s *Ester* with Haymarket Opera Company in Chicago, performs as soprano soloist in Brahms’s *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with Apollo Chorus, *Carmina Burana* with New Philharmonic Orchestra, Poulenc’s *Gloria* with Lacrosse Symphony Orchestra, and premieres the new opera called *Everlasting Faint* with Madison Opera in the Spring.

2023-2024

Birsan made her return to Edinburgh International Festival for Strauss’ *Capriccio*, as well as made her premiere performance of Strauss’ *Four Last Songs* with the University of Illinois Symphony Orchestra. She premiered new works with LUNART Festival in Madison, WI, and sang the role of Asteria in Handel’s *Tamerlano* with Haymarket Opera to great acclaim.

2021-2022

Susanna in *Il Segreto di Susanna* with Opera Festival Chicago’s inaugural season, Euridice in *Orfeo ed Euridice* with Inland Northwest Opera, Beatriz cover and 2nd Flower with Chicago Opera Theater in *La Hija de Rappucini*, and appearances with the St. Louis Bach Society and St. Augustine Music Festivals.

2019-2020

Appearances with the Aspen Ideas Festival, Peninsula Music Festival, Mozart’s *Requiem* with the Bach Society of St. Louis, Beethoven’s *Mass in C* with the Phoenix Symphony, Mahler’s *Symphony No. 4* with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, and Handel’s *Messiah* with the Boise Philharmonic and Tucson Symphony.

2018-2019

In the 2018-2019 season, she went on for an ailing colleague at the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Violetta in *La Traviata* for which SplashMags.com acclaimed "This opera is about Violetta, and the Lyric has a superb one here." Additionally, she performed Violetta with Nashville Opera, Handel's *Messiah* with the Illinois Philharmonic, Jacksonville Symphony, and Louisiana Symphony, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with the Jacksonville Symphony, the title role in *Rusalka* with Madison Opera, Mahler's 8th *Symphony* with Madison Symphony, and Sandman/Dew Fairy in *Hänsel und Gretel* with the Edinburgh International Festival.

2017-2018

Joined Sir Andrew Davis and the Liverpool Philharmonic, Violetta in *La Traviata* with Indianapolis Opera, Handel's *Messiah* with the Jacksonville Symphony, a tour singing the role of Maria Callas with Pop-Up Magazine on the West Coast, Mahler's 4th *Symphony* with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and her debut with Welsh National Opera as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*.

2016-2017

Role debuts as Juliette in Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* with Madison Opera, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Boston Lyric Opera, and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with Florentine Opera. On the concert stage, she made her debut with Melbourne Symphony singing Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, a concert with the Chicago Philharmonic, and was featured with the BBC Symphony in London singing Bliss' *Beatitudes*.

Recent Seasons

Recently, Birsan returned to the Lyric Opera of Chicago as the Italian Singer in *Capriccio*, Leila in *The Pearl Fishers* with Florida Grand Opera, and Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress* with the Edinburgh International Festival, among others. Her critically acclaimed performances on the concert stage include Elgar with the Bergen Philharmonic in Norway, Verdi and Puccini with the Knoxville Symphony and her Carnegie Hall debut with Mozart *Mass in C minor*. With the Chandos Record Label, Birsan has recorded Edward Elgar's oratorio, *The Saga of St. Olaf*, with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Sir Andrew Davis.

Equally at home on the concert stage, Birsan has performed as the soprano soloist in the Mozart *Requiem* with the Madison Symphony Orchestra,

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Schubert's *Mass in Eb* with the Grant Park Symphony, Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* as well as a concert of Bach *Cantatas No. 22 and 32* with the Madison Bach Musicians, and triumphed in "A Mirror on Which to Dwell" by Elliot Carter at the Ravinia Festival in July of 2014. Birsan was also featured as a soloist on the Rush Hour Concert Series and has recorded arias for composer Jimmy Lopez' new opera *Bel Canto* which had its world premier at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2015.

Birsan was awarded first prize from the Musicians Club of Women Competition and was the 2014 Richard F. Gold Career Grant through the Lyric Opera of Chicago. She earned her Bachelor of Music degree from Lawrence Conservatory in Appleton, WI studying with mezzo-soprano Karen Leigh-Post. Master of Music degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Music in 2010, where she performed the title roles in Massenet's *Thaïs*, Handel's *Alcina* and Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*. A student of Julia Faulkner, Birsan was also awarded the Paul Collins Fellowship during her residency at the university. She was Winner of the 2010 Rose M. Grundman Scholarship from the Civic and Arts Union League Competition, First Place in the 2007 Senior Women's Division of the National Association of Teachers of Singing Competition, and multiple award wins from 2008-2011 at the Upper Midwest Region of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.



Mexican-American bass-baritone, **Richard Ollarsaba**, praised by *The Washington Post* for his "meltingly smooth bass-baritone" and for "evoking a young Ruggero Raimondi in looks and manner," represented the USA in the 2019 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition, was a member of the prestigious Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago for three seasons, and a grand finalist in the 2013 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

This season he reprises the roles of Escamillo in *Carmen* with Opera Columbus, Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Portland Opera and Piedmont Opera, and the title role in *Don Giovanni* with Inland Northwest Opera and Arizona Opera.

Season 2022/23 he debuted with the Glimmerglass Festival, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Portland Opera as Escamillo in their respective productions of Bizet's *Carmen*. He debuted with Chicago Opera Theater in the world-

premiere opera *The Life and Death(s) of Alan Turing* composed by Justine F. Chen as Fred Clayton and Judge Harrison, and presented the role of Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Knoxville Opera. On the symphonic stage, he made return appearances as bass soloist with the Palm Beach Symphony in their performances of Handel's *Messiah* and the Master Chorale of South Florida in their performances of Verdi's *Requiem*. He also debuted the self-curated recital "Neighbors Abroad, Family at Home" highlighting compositions from Mexico and the USA at his alma mater in the inaugural performance of the Fletcher Alumni Recital Series at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Recent season credits include the title role of *Don Giovanni* with Opera Hong Kong, Opera Grand Rapids and Opera Carolina, the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro* with New Zealand Opera and Minnesota Opera, as well as Count Almaviva with Virginia Opera, Escamillo in *Carmen* with Kentucky Opera, Minnesota Opera, North Carolina Opera, Tulsa Opera, Annapolis Opera, and the Barhabor Music Festival, and Schaunard in *La bohème* with the Jacksonville Symphony. He has been a repeat featured soloist with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra notably in performances of Haydn's *Mass in Time of War* and Handel's *Messiah*.

While at the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, his tenure included productions of *La Traviata*, *Capriccio*, *Anna Bolena*, *Tosca*, *The Passenger*, *Otello*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Parsifal*, and the title role in *Don Giovanni* – stepping into the iconic part with a few hours' notice. Other operatic engagements include Asdrubale in Rossini's *La pietra del paragone*, Fallito in Gassmann's *L'opera seria*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, and Luciano in Musto's *Bastianello* with Wolf Trap Opera; the title role in *Don Giovanni* with Intermountain Opera Bozeman; Timur in *Turandot* and Rochefort in *Anna Bolena* with Minnesota Opera; Ferrando in *Il 14roavatore* with North Carolina Opera, Colline in *La bohème* and Reverend John Hale in Ward's *The Crucible* with Piedmont Opera, Pistola in *Falstaff* with Opera Omaha, and Antonio in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Opera Cleveland.

In addition to performances on the operatic stage, Ollarsaba appears regularly in concert and recital. He has been the bass soloist with the Mainly Mozart Festival in a rare performance of Mozart's *Thamos, König in Ägypten*, Handel's *Messiah* with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony, and Kansas City Symphony, Bach's *St. John's Passion* with the Madison Bach Musicians, Dvorak's *Te Deum* with Apollo Chorus of Chicago,

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Bernstein's *Songfest* at the Ravinia Festival, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the Macon Symphony Orchestra and *Master Chorale* of South Florida, Verdi's *Requiem* with the Salisbury Symphony, and Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* in his debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood. That concert was a gala celebration of the venerable festival's 75th birthday and was telecast nationally on PBS.

A native of Tempe, Arizona, Ollarsaba received his Bachelor of Music from the Cleveland Institute of Music and his Master of Music and post-graduate certificate from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. In addition to the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, he trained at Minnesota Opera, Music Academy of the West, Chautauqua Opera, Aspen Music Festival, Tanglewood, and Wolf Trap Opera.



Critically acclaimed stellar (*Chicago Tribune*) countertenor **Thomas Alán** has been a featured soloist on radio shows, album recordings, concert series, and festivals across the United States. He has performed with groups including Alchymy Viols, Ars Antigua, Bella Voce Camerata, Bach Cantata Vespers, Charlottesville Early Music Access Project, Credo, Elgin Master Elgin Symphony Orchestra

and Chorale, Helios Ensemble, Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra, Mountainside Baroque, Musikanten Montana, and Schola Antiqua. Festival appearances include the Boston Early Music Festival Fringe Series, the Bach and Beyond Baroque Early Music Festival, the Baroque on Beaver Island Festival, the Wicker Park Music Festival, the Bloomington Early Music Festival, and the Ear Taxi Festival.

In media, he's been heard on WGN Radio (Up Late with Patti Vasquez, Nocturnal Journal), WNPR (The Midday), WFMT (The Midnight Special, Midday), and Chicago Irish Radio; has interviewed with Early Music America, Huffington Post, and 98.7 WFMT; and can be heard regularly on podcasts such as Best Nerds Studio and The BBE Live, the latter featured through Early Music America's Wellness Series. His recordings include Vivaldi's solo cantata *Stabat mater dolorosa* for Biretta Books; Haydn's *Requiem* and Vivaldi's *Gloria* with the Elgin Master Chorale and Symphony Orchestra; Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra; and *An Appalachian Summer*, *A Gaelic Summer Carols*, and *Chicago Stories: The Album* with the Bach and Beethoven Experience (BBE). He has premiered several new works written

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for countertenor, including Eric Malmquist's *Two Assyrian Songs, A Portrait of Lam Ho*, and *A Valediction*; Amos Gillespie's *Three Songs*; Mark Nowakowski's *O Dulcis Electe*, Chesterton's *Carol*, and *Mizerna Cicha*; Kurt Westerberg's *Three Orphic Hymns*; Lucas Tuazon's *In service to*; Heidi Joosten's *Edwin in the Lowlands Low*; and Tomás Gueglio's *Blue Heron*.

From 2009-2024, Aláan established himself as a well-known figure in Chicago's musical and sustainability communities. He served as co-director of the Bach and Beethoven Experience (BBE), a chamber music ensemble known within the early music and folk communities for its innovative commissions for period instruments and fun folk/Baroque crossover concerts. As co-director of the groundbreaking OperaWorks™ singer training program, he led the program out of a multi-year hiatus into its post-pandemic relaunch. With Kirsten Hedegaard, he also co-founded The EcoVoice Project, a non-profit focused on climate change advocacy and education through music. At Holy Name Cathedral, he was Associate Conductor of Choirs and Director of the Women's Schola for fifteen seasons while moonlighting as an occasional "liturgical saxophonist" during services. He was a climate change educator at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) where he ran the internationally acclaimed Summer Institute on Climate and the Environment for 12 years (2011-2023) and taught courses such as Music as a Tool for Environmentalism and Change and The Music and Science Connection in the UIC Honors College. His expertise has led him to lead talks and panel discussions through Loyola University's Climate Change Conference, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, the UIC Summer Institute on Sustainability and Energy, the Helena Music Teachers Association, Chicago's The People's Music School, and the national Self Employment in the Arts (SEA) Art Business Entrepreneurship Workshop.

In the summer of 2024, Aláan relocated to Seattle. His home studio — Voice Lessons in Seattle — is growing with a vibrant group of singers of all backgrounds and genre interests from classical and musical theater to death metal. His work with people has expanded to the newly launched The Performer's Gym which focuses on performing artist injury prevention, rehabilitation, and strength and functional movement skill development. He also travels 16 across the country leading STEM workshops for university students and early career post-docs which develop science communication skills through operatic performance techniques. Conferences and universities where he's given such workshops include the Next Generation

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Electrochemistry conference, the Communication Science Conference – Atlanta, the University of Colorado Boulder, and the University of Illinois Chicago (2024). In September, he joins St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church to rebuild the choral program as the new choir director.

Aláan received his Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) in Performance from the University of Wisconsin – Madison where he was a Paul Collins Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellow studying with Jim Doing. His research interests include the performance practice and ornamentation of Sean-nòs singers and the use of music in sociopolitical and environmental movements. He received his Master of Arts in Vocal Pedagogy at Texas Woman's University with renowned author and pedagogue, Joan Wall, and his Bachelor of Arts in Music Education (voice and saxophone) from Alderson-Broadbent University. Additional teacher-mentors include Sheri Greenawald, Mark Crayton, Ellen Hargis, Elizabeth Parker, Max von Egmond, Ann Baltz, David Brock, Beverly Hoch, Linda Poetschke, and Lewis Hall. He is a certified personal trainer and nutrition coach through the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM-CPT/CNC) with specializations in sports performance, corrective exercise, and behavioral change, with additional certification through the Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA).

When not engaged in any of the above activities, he can be found cooking or feeding his cat, Theobald, shuffling, or playing World of Warcraft.



Thomas McNichols (Director, Northwest Indiana Symphony Chorus) is the Director of Choral Activities and Vocal Studies at Saint Xavier University in Chicago and is also an alumnus, having earned a double undergraduate degree in vocal performance and music education. He has previously been on faculty at St. Bernadette Catholic Academy, St. Cajetan School, St. Catherine of Alexandria School, and Mother McAuley High School.

While completing his graduate studies in vocal performance at North Park University, McNichols was a featured soloist with the University Choir, Chamber Singers, and Orchestra, and performed the roles of Kei-Ki-Ka-Ko in Offenbach's *Ba-ta-cian*, Prince Aprile in Respighi's *La bella dormenta nel bosco*, Leon in Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso*, and Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. As part of his choral experience at North Park, he was a tenor soloist in performances of Handel's *Messiah*, and a participant in the Bach

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Week festival Chorus in Chicago, under the direction of Dr. Richard Webster.

Internationally, McNichols has performed the roles of Tamino in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* with Lyric Opera Studio in Weimar, Germany, Don Ottavio from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with Toronto, Canada/Opera Festival di Roma in Orvieto, Italy, and The Prince in Dvorak's *Rusalka*. While in Weimar, he was also a featured soloist with the Thuringer Symphoniker, Saalfeld-Rudolstadt, singing highlights as Alfredo in Verdi's *La Traviata*, and Edgar in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Locally, McNichols has performed the role of Nemorino in condensed outreach performances of Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore* through Main Street Opera's educational program with Casa Italia. He has appeared as a chorister with Chicago's Grant Park Music Festival and as a soloist with the Southwest Symphony Orchestra for Mozart's *Requiem*, as well as the Oak Park Symphony excerpts from Wagner's *Parisfal*. He has also appeared in several productions with the formerly 99th Street Theater; Captain Albert Lennox – *The Secret Garden*, Buddy Foster – *Side Show*, and Company – *Shrek the Musical*.



Kirk Muspratt (Music Director and Conductor) recently received the Conductor of the Year award from the Illinois Council of Orchestras. He was also named "Chicagoan of the Year" in classical music by John von Rhein and the staff of the *Chicago Tribune*. In honoring Muspratt, von Rhein said, "Ask the delighted adults and kids who this year flocked to his concerts in west suburban Glen Ellyn with the New Philharmonic Orchestra ... They will tell you he made concert going an interactive experience that was both enlightening and — are you ready? — fun."

Recognized as one of the outstanding figures in the new generation of conductors, Muspratt has garnered international critical acclaim as a "born opera conductor" (*Rheinische Post*), "a knowledgeable musician who delivers superbly controlled, gorgeously shaped readings" (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*), and "friend to local music" (*Midwest Beat Magazine*). The Los Angeles Times declared, "Watch him!"

This season marks the 21st anniversary of Muspratt being both Music Director of New Philharmonic and Artistic Director/Music Director of

PROFILES

DuPage Opera Theatre (now New Philharmonic Opera). In his last fifteen years, productions featured *Otello*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Il Barbiere di Seviglia*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *La Boheme*, *Faust*, *Otello*, *Tosca*, *The Beggars Opera*, *Elixir of Love*, *Turandot*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Così fan Tutte*, *The Mikado*, *La Traviata*, and *Die Fledermaus*.

In 2017 and 2009, New Philharmonic was awarded Professional Orchestra of the Year by the Illinois Council of Orchestras.

In his first months at New Philharmonic, Muspratt instituted a Side-by-Side program for local high school students. Five years ago, Muspratt initiated a popular Solo Competition for Children that results in a child performing at every New Philharmonic concert. In order to involve the community to the maximum, Muspratt has created “Just Ask Kirk™” cards for audience members’ questions and a “Kirkature™” cartoon to help advocate the credo: “Classical music is for everyone.”

Muspratt begins his 25th acclaimed season as Music Director of the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra (NISO). In 2006, with NISO, he initiated the South Shore Summer Music Festival.

From 1991 through 1996, Muspratt served as resident conductor to Lorin Maazel at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Prior to that, he was appointed as associate conductor to Joseph Silverstein at the Utah Symphony Orchestra (1990-1992). From 1987 through 1990, Muspratt served as assistant conductor to Leonard Slatkin at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra as well as music director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. He was music director of the Alberta Ballet from 1997 through 1999. At the New York Philharmonic, Muspratt has served as a cover conductor. During the 2018 and 2019 season Muspratt served as a guest conductor at the Joffrey Ballet.

In addition to his work in Pittsburgh, Utah and St. Louis, Muspratt has guest conducted the orchestras of Los Angeles, Montreal, London, Korean Broadcast Symphony, Detroit, Rochester, National Arts Center, Vancouver, Knoxville, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Victoria, Thunder Bay, New Orleans, Stamford, Binghamton, Lafayette, South Bend, Puchon, Annapolis, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and Baltimore Chamber Symphony. Summer debuts have included the Tanglewood, Chautauqua and Sewanee Music Festivals and the Banff Center for Performing Arts.

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In Europe, Muspratt was assistant conductor in the opera houses of Monchengladbach/Krefeld, Germany, from 1985 to 1987. His American opera-conducting debut came with the Utah Opera in 1991. He returned there to premiere Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*. Maestro Muspratt has conducted *Die Fledermaus* for the Calgary Opera, *Faust* and *Merry Widow* for the Utah Opera, *Of Mice and Men* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for the Arizona Opera, all to stunning critical acclaim. In addition, he debuted at the Ash Lawn-Highland Summer Opera Festival in Virginia. He returned to Arizona Opera to conduct their production of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, to the Utah Opera for their new production of *Faust* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* at Opera Illinois.

In 1983 and 1984, Muspratt was invited to be a scholarship student at the Chautauqua Institute and in 1986 was selected as a conducting fellow at the Aspen Music Festival. A year later, he was invited into the Conducting Program at the Tanglewood Festival. In 1988, he was chosen to be one of three conducting fellows for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute at the Hollywood Bowl.

As a teacher, Muspratt has taught at the Conductors' Institute of the University of South Carolina, the Conductors' Guild National Workshops, Association of Canadian Orchestras National Conference in Toronto, the Conductors' Studio at Illinois State University and at Westminster Choir College in Princeton. During the summer, he has often taught a graduate conducting class at VanderCook College of Music and for the last three summers has been teaching at the Northwestern University Summer Opera Seminar. In 2019, he taught graduate conducting master classes at Illinois State University and judged the concerto competition at Northwestern University.

Having always enjoyed working with young people, he has conducted the Pennsylvania Regional Orchestra and the Pennsylvania All-State Orchestra and most recently the IMEA District 9 orchestra. Muspratt has conducted the Boston University Tanglewood Orchestra at the Tanglewood Festival.

Muspratt has been the recipient of numerous awards, among them grants from the Canada Council and the Presser Foundation. In 1983 and again in 1984, he was winner of the Strauss Conducting Prize while a conducting student at the Vienna Conservatory. During his tenure in Utah, he received the first Utah Up'n Comers Award ever given to a classical musician. This honor was awarded to Muspratt for his work and involvement in the Utah

PROFILES

Arts Community. In 1987, he was named winner of the prestigious Exxon/Affiliate Artists Award.

He began his studies as a pianist in New York with Harold Zabrack and Continued his studies at Temple University with Adele Marcus and Alexander Fiorillo. After completing graduate studies, Muspratt was accepted into the conducting program at the Konservatorium in Vienna, Austria.

Muspratt is a native of Crows Nest Pass, Alberta, Canada. He became an American citizen in the summer of 2010.

In 2016, he was honored to become a Paul Harris Fellow, an award named for the Rotary International Founder, Paul Harris. In 2025, Muspratt was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Lethbridge.



Benjamin Nadel is a classically trained conductor, pianist, and violinist based in the Chicago area. He is currently the Associate Conductor and Orchestra Librarian for New Philharmonic and held those same positions at the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra from 2016-2024. In addition, he is the Music Director for the Youth Symphony of DuPage, and the Orchestra Director for the Northwest Indiana Symphony Youth Orchestra and North

Central College.

From 2011 – 2015 Nadel spent his summers with the Midwest Institute of Opera, as the assistant conductor to Maestro Joshua Greene of the Metropolitan Opera. While there, he conducted productions of *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Carmen* in addition to assisting and coaching productions of *Die Zauberflöte* and *La Cenerentola*.

Nadel began his conducting studies with Dr. Glenn Block at Illinois State University while completing his undergraduate degree in Music Education. He then went on to receive his MA in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Iowa with Dr. William LaRue Jones. He has participated in several summer music festivals, including a program with Cincinnati Conservatory as a part of the summer music festival in Spoleto, Italy.

Aside from his work as a professional conductor, Nadel has a strong connection and personal interest to music education. He believes that one

of the most important aspects of being an artist is to pass along that experience and knowledge to the next generation of musicians. To that end, Nadel has worked with several high school ensembles in the Chicago area, including New Trier, Metea Valley, Glenbard West, Glenbard South, and Stevenson High School. His work has included side by side concerts with New Philharmonic. He has also led conducting workshops for the Opus Chamber Music camp, North Central College, and Illinois State University.

Nadel is a current member of the International Conductor's Guild (ICG), Major Orchestra Librarians Association (MOLA), and the Illinois Council of Orchestras (ICO).



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We are always looking for enthusiastic, dedicated, reliable and customer service-oriented people to become volunteers serving as ushers, greeters and docents at our events. Volunteers provide invaluable service by assisting guests to their seats, answering questions and most importantly creating a welcoming environment for our guests. Volunteers are unpaid, but that doesn't mean you won't be rewarded. The cultural perks you'll enjoy as a volunteer include vouchers for every shift worked offering discounts to use at the MAC Box Office and invitation to our annual volunteer appreciation dinner including prizes and gifts.

Visit AtTheMAC.org/Volunteer to fill out an online application and for more information on requirements and qualifications. Applications accepted year-round.

For more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator
Rob Nardini: nardinir@cod.edu | (630) 942-3705.

HOUSE NOTES

- Cameras and recording devices are not allowed in the theater and are prohibited by our contracts with the artists.
- Smoking is not permitted in the theater or on campus.
- For your comfort and security, all backpacks and large bags must be checked.
- Please turn off all cell phones and any other alarms while in the theater.
- Emergency phone number at COD Police Department for after-hour calls is (630) 942-2000.
- Latecomers seated at discretion of the House Manager.
- Groups of 10 or more may contact (630) 942-3026 or groupitx@cod.edu to arrange for group discounts.
- If you notice a spill in the theater, please notify an usher.
- McAninch Arts Center volunteers are people who assist the house staff in areas of ticket taking, ushering and general management during performances. To get involved, call (630) 942-3705.
- **For Americans With Disabilities Act** accommodations, call (630) 942-2141 (voice) or (630) 858-9692 (TDD).
- **Infrared Assistive Listening Devices:** For audience members who desire audio amplification of performances, headsets with individual volume controls are now available. You may check out the headsets at the Box Office with a driver's license. *Underwritten by a generous gift from The Knowles Foundation.*

MAC STAFF LISTING

MAC Administrative Staff

Director of the McAninch Arts Center	Diana Martinez
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Assistant Business Manager	Linda Sharbaugh
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Assistant Curator	Julia Walker
Gallery Assistant	Madelene Przybysz
Marketing and Patrons Services Coordinator	Janey Sarther
Graphic Designer	Wendy Melgar
Director of Development for Cultural Arts	Jon Nadel
Education and Community Engagement Coordinator	Mandy Rakow
Project Manager	Kari Schoettle
Office Manager/Events Coordinator	Morgan Bainbridge
Student Clerical Assistant	Kate Cadag

MAC Box Office and Front of House Staff

Box Office Manager	Julie Elges
Assistant Box Office Supervisors	Daniel Arzola, Elise Wash
Box Office Assistants	Patrick Garon, Joanne Hunt
Patron Services Manager	Tom Murray
House Manager/Volunteer Coordinator	Rob Nardini

MAC Resident Professional Ensembles

Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, Managing Artistic Director	Gus Menary
Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, Associate Artistic Director	Daniel Millhouse
Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, Business Manager	Bryan Burke
New Philharmonic, Music Director and Conductor	Kirk Muspratt
New Philharmonic, Associate Conductor and Librarian	Benjamin Nadel
New Philharmonic General Manager	Paula Cebula
New Philharmonic Personnel Manager	Karen Dickelman
New Philharmonic Assistant Librarian	Ryan Michel

MAC Design and Technical Staff

Technical Production/Lighting/Sound Coordinator	Richard Arnold, Jr.
Technical Theater Supervisor	Sabrina Zeidler
Costume and Make-up Design Coordinator	Kimberly G. Morris
Assistant Costume Coordinator and Stitcher	Gretchen Woodley
Production Manager	Joe Hopper
Sound and Lighting Specialist	Ben Johnson
Lighting Production Specialist	Elias Morales
Audio Production Specialist	Fisher Parsons
Events Production Specialist/Tech. Director – BTE	Caitlyn Woods
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