

 Amelia Island  
chamber music festival  
24th Season

24

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SEASON

[aicmf.org](http://aicmf.org)



# 24th Season

**Mark O'Connor's An Appalachian Christmas**  
featuring Maggie O'Connor

December 15 & 16

**Sharon Isbin, guitar, with Pacifica Quartet**

January 19

**Robert McDuffie, violin, with William Ransom**

January 27

**Takács Quartet**

February 11

**Jeremy Denk, piano**

February 23

**The Kruger Brothers**

February 28

**Family Concert: Musical Animals**

April 12

with Yinzi Kong, Julie Coucheron, and William Ransom

**The Rites of Spring**

April 27

with David and Julie Coucheron, and Elizabeth Pridgen

**Beethoven & Beer**

June 11

with the American String Quartet

**Festival Finale: Christopher Rex String Seminar**

June 14

featuring the American String Quartet and Beth Newdome Fellows

## Festival Support

The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival has been delivering world-class performances and providing music education for promising young students since our founding in 2001. We have been able to do this thanks to your generous financial support. The largest support of our annual budget comes from individual donors and corporate sponsors like you. Visit us at [aicmf.org](http://aicmf.org) to learn about the many benefits that are available to you by contributing at our various donor levels. In addition, we are a volunteer-driven organization, and you can support us by putting your skills to work as a Festival volunteer. Our website provides complete information on volunteer opportunities and how you can sign up.

Cover photo by **J. Henry Fair**

*Performance venues, programs, dates, and times are subject to change.*

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*All venues for AICMF events are wheelchair accessible.*

# Welcome!

The world's greatest music, internationally known performers, imaginative programming, the magic of the Island, a variety of beautiful concert venues—we hope that you will join us for an unforgettable experience as we celebrate the 24th season of the **Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival!**

We kick off the season with a special festive concert on December 15th and 16th: **“Mark O'Connor's An Appalachian Christmas featuring Maggie O'Connor”** at Walker's Landing. Then the Festival proper begins on January 19th with one of the world's greatest classical guitarists, **Sharon Isbin**, joined by the multi-Grammy Award winning **Pacifica Quartet**. Pianist **Jeremy Denk**, the recipient of both the MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship and the Avery Fisher Prize makes his Festival debut; dynamic violinist **Robert McDuffie** joins us again on Mozart's birthday; the legendary **Takács Quartet** celebrates their 50th anniversary season with us; the Kruger Brothers will delight us with a unique blend of bluegrass, folk, and classical influences;

and **“The Rites of Spring”** will bring Festival favorites **Julie & David Coucheron** back.

We will also offer our annual free **Family Concert, “Musical Animals”** and the **American String Quartet** will present an entertaining **“Beethoven & Beer”** program at Mocama Beer Company.

We close the season in June with our annual **Christopher Rex String Seminar**, welcoming two young rising star Quartets as our **Beth Newdome Fellows** to coach with the **American String Quartet** for a week and present an exciting **Festival Finale** concert all together.

Many of our concerts will sell out early, so look through this brochure and **make your plans now** to join us for another unforgettable Festival!

**William Ransom**  
*Artistic Director*



## A warm welcome to all!

Our Twenty-fourth season builds upon the legacy of bringing an amazing array of artists to perform for you. This season, we continue to broaden our musical horizons by providing not only classical concerts, but those including other genres such as holiday, bluegrass, and family centered performances. We value the importance and excitement of live music knowing that it speaks individually to each listener. For these past twenty-four years, the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival has introduced internationally famous musicians to our Island and to you. This year's series adds to that tradition and to our reputation as one of the nation's premier classical music festivals.

It is also my pleasure to introduce and welcome our new Executive Director, Robyn Lamp. Her extensive and musical background will ensure that the Festival will continue to move forward with excellence. We are so fortunate to have Robyn and we are so grateful to have the support of you, our wonderful patrons, sponsors, and dedicated volunteers.

*Come! Experience this spectacular season with us.*

**Emma Mills Bledsoe**  
*President*





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# Season Dedication



Photo: Steve Leimberg

## **Dr. Joseph A. Marasco, Jr.**

*January 26, 1932 - July 15, 2024*

With endless admiration and gratitude we honor the life of our former Executive Director, Dr. Joe Marasco by dedicating our 24th Season to his memory.

Joe, a dedicated and loving husband and father of four was a true Renaissance man. He was a radiologist, an amateur violinist, a "decent" golfer, gourmet cook, and a man of faith and integrity. He possessed a keen wit and had a natural comfort and ease with others, winning smiles from famous stars to beginning students. Regardless of the group or organization, Joe rose to top leadership positions. Before moving to Amelia Island, over several years he acquired various roles with the Pittsburgh Opera. He served as President of the Board, Executive Vice President and Interim Director. His superior work earned Joe the compliment of being the "glue" that held them together.

Joe and his wife, Carrie, purchased an Amelia Island condo in 1983 and moved here permanently in 2000. In 2004 and 2005 Joe joined the boards of ARIAS, the Jacksonville Symphony, and the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival. In 2013 the AICMF board asked him to assume the position of Executive Director. During the next seven years he helped to usher in a new level of artistic excellence and financial stability. Following open heart surgery in 2020 he resigned his position, however, when his health improved he rejoined us as Executive Director Emeritus.

Joe's passion and enthusiasm for sharing the music he loved helped to ensure the quality and depth of excellence that our audiences as well as those who have performed here with us have known. With nostalgia we remember, with optimism we continue forward. We remain committed and inspired by this one who provided dedication, leadership, and vision.

## Ticketing Specials

### **Visitors to Amelia Island**

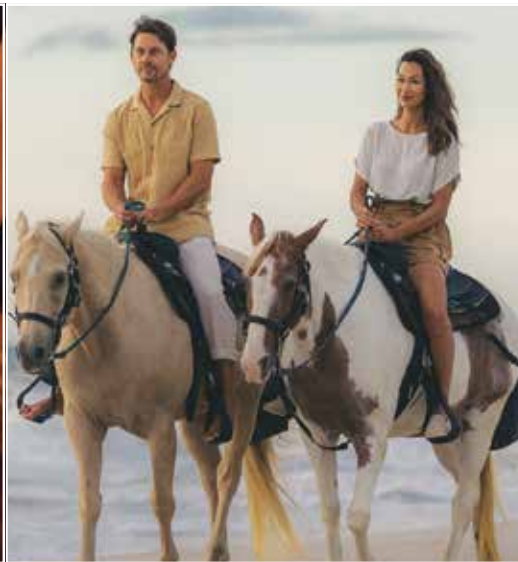
If you are visiting Amelia Island you may be eligible to receive a 50% discount on Festival tickets by presenting a valid confirmation from any lodging establishment located on Amelia Island. To get the discount - check availability, make your lodging reservation, and then call the Festival office at 904-261-1779 to purchase your discounted tickets.

### **Students Tickets**

We are thrilled to offer students under the age of 25 tickets to most events for \$15. Tickets are available for purchase on [aicmf.org](http://aicmf.org). Some exclusions apply.

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THE RITZ-CARLTON

AMELIA ISLAND



# Mark O'Connor's An Appalachian Christmas

Featuring Maggie O'Connor

December 15, 2024, 5:00 PM

December 15, 2024, 5:00 PM

Walker's Landing

Grammy-winning composer and fiddler Mark O'Connor has created several arrangements of Christmas classics and fashions a wondrous mixture of both instrumental and vocal music in bluegrass and other American music genres. Concertgoers are treated to fresh takes on traditional songs with a few original compositions included. His renditions are playful and joyous, but can be strikingly earnest too. Mark and Maggie have performed *An Appalachian Christmas* together as husband and wife for nearly 10 years. Much of the year they tour behind their latest recording of original Americana songs and classics, *Life After Life*. Together on stage, Mark and Maggie have a dynamic energy that bring their individual expertise to holiday themes and classics in the most delightful and musically satisfying way.



Photo: Maia Rosenfeld

## Mark O'Connor

Mark O'Connor began his creative journey at the feet of American fiddling legend Benny Thomasson, and the iconic French jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli. Today, he has melded these influences into a new American classical music and is perpetuating his vision of an American School of String Playing. O'Connor has won three GRAMMYS, seven CMA awards and several national fiddle, guitar and mandolin champion titles. He has composed nine concertos, and two symphonies recorded by the Baltimore Symphony, London Philharmonic, and Colorado Symphony. O'Connor is well-known for his chamber music including his million-selling composition *Appalachia Waltz* featuring Yo-Yo Ma for the Sony Classical label. His current album is *Life After Life*, an Americana music collection of his original songs and some classics he sings with his wife Maggie O'Connor who is featured on lead vocals. In 2023, O'Connor released his memoir, *Crossing Bridges: My Journey from Child Prodigy to Fiddler Who Dared the World*. He has also authored a series of educational books called the O'Connor Method that is now the fastest growing violin method in the country.

## Maggie O'Connor

*"One of the most talented and imaginative artists working in music -- any music -- today."*

- The Los Angeles Times

American violinist/fiddler and vocalist, Maggie O'Connor performs a variety of musical styles throughout the U.S. and beyond, most recently as a member of the GRAMMY award-winning bluegrass group, the O'Connor Band. She spends most of her time now performing with her husband, violinist and composer Mark O'Connor. Together they have appeared as guest soloists with the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, the Santa Rosa Symphony, the Nashville Symphony, and appeared in violin duo performances in such prestigious settings as the Yehudi Menuhin Centennial celebration at the Berlin Konzerthaus, the Lockenhaus, Austria Musikfest, and the Leopold Auer Festival in Hungary. In an Americana duo setting, the couple tours music from their new album, *Life After Life*, a collection of original songs and classics. Along with performing, Maggie continues to work as co-director with Mark at O'Connor Method String Camp.

More information on Mark O'Connor can be found at: [www.markoconnor.com](http://www.markoconnor.com), [www.markandmaggieoconnor.com](http://www.markandmaggieoconnor.com). The O'Connor Method for violin and strings is distributed by Shar Music [www.oconnormethod.com](http://www.oconnormethod.com). For Mr. O'Connor's downloadable sheet music and recordings on his own OMAC Records label distributed by ONErpm, please visit [www.markoconnor.com](http://www.markoconnor.com) and [www.omacrecords.com](http://www.omacrecords.com). Mark and Maggie O'Connor use D'Addario Strings and Equipment

# Sharon Isbin with Pacifica Quartet

January 19, 2025, 5:00 PM

Amelia Plantation Chapel

Classical guitar virtuoso Sharon Isbin performs alongside the renowned Pacifica Quartet.

## Sharon Isbin

Acclaimed for her extraordinary lyricism, technique and versatility, multiple GRAMMY Award winner Sharon Isbin was named Musical America Worldwide's 2020 Instrumentalist of the Year, the first guitarist in their 59-year award history. She was inducted into the 2023 Guitar Foundation of America Hall of Fame and received their Artistic Achievement Award. Hailed as "the pre-eminent guitarist of our time," she has been soloist with over 200 orchestras, and has performed in the world's finest halls across 40 countries.

Winner of the Munich ARD, Madrid and Toronto Competitions, Germany's Echo Klassik and *Guitar Player's* Best Classical Guitarist awards, she performed in Scorsese's Oscar-winning *The Departed*, at Ground Zero for the first internationally televised 9/11 memorial, the White House by invitation of President Obama, and as the only classical artist in the 2010 Grammy Awards. The documentary *Sharon Isbin: Troubadour*, seen by millions on over 200 PBS stations and abroad, won ASCAP's Television Broadcast Award and is available on DVD/Blu-ray and streaming on Amazon and PBS Passport. Recent highlights include sold-out concerts at the Kennedy Center, Kimmel Center, and Carnegie Hall including a collaboration with Sting.

Isbin's catalogue of over 35 albums has sold over a million copies. Her *Live in Aspen* was recorded with India's foremost sarod virtuoso Amjad Ali Khan at their sold-out Aspen Music Festival concert and released in 2024 for the Festival's 75th anniversary. Her two recordings named Best of 2020 feature world premieres composed for her: *Affinity* showcasing Chris Brubeck's dazzling guitar concerto, along with works by Leo Brouwer, Tan Dun, Antonio Lauro and Richard Danielpour; and *Strings for Peace*

with Maestro Khan. Her 2019 *Souvenirs of Spain & Italy* with the Pacifica Quartet debuted at #1 on Amazon, and *Alma Española*, the first Spanish art song album with guitar of its kind in 40 years, was honored with a 2018 Grammy Award for Producer of the Year. Her Grammy-winning *Journey to the New World* with guests Joan Baez and Mark O'Connor spent 63 consecutive weeks on top *Billboard* charts, and her Latin Grammy-nominated Rodrigo *Aranjuez* with the New York Philharmonic is their only recording with guitar. Other highlights include *Bach Complete Lute Suites* in landmark editions created with her mentor Rosalyn Tureck, and *Sharon Isbin & Friends: Guitar Passions* with rock and jazz guests Steve Vai, Heart's Nancy Wilson, Stanley Jordan and Romero Lubambo.

Author of the *Classical Guitar Answer Book*, Isbin has premiered over 80 works written for her by some of the world's finest composers, including concerti by John Corigliano, Christopher Rouse, Tan Dun, Aaron Jay Kernis, Joseph Schwanter, and Lukas Foss. Recent world premieres include *Song of a Dreaming Sparrow* by Schwanter which she premiered with the Pacifica Quartet at New York's 92NY and on tour in 2022, Karen LeFrak's *Bailamos* with the National Symphony in their 2023 Labor Day concert for over 10,000 on the US Capitol Lawn and her *Miami Concerto* in 2024. She directs guitar departments she created at the Aspen Music Festival and The Juilliard School. Visit: [www.sharonisbin.com](http://www.sharonisbin.com)

*Sharon Isbin appears by arrangement with: OPUS 3 ARTISTS, 470 Park Avenue South, 9th Floor North, New York, NY 10016*

*CDs: Sony Classical, Warner Classics, Cedille, ZOHO, Concord, Bridge Records*

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[www.sharonisbin.com](http://www.sharonisbin.com)



# Pacifica Quartet

With a career spanning three decades, the multiple Grammy Award-winning Pacifica Quartet has achieved international recognition as one of the finest chamber ensembles performing today. The Quartet is known for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style, and often-daring repertory choices. Having served as quartet-in-residence at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music for over a decade, the Quartet was also previously the quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 2021, the Pacifica Quartet received a second Grammy Award for *Contemporary Voices*, an exploration of music by three Pulitzer Prize-winning composers: Shulamit Ran, Jennifer Higdon, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich.

Formed in 1994, the Pacifica Quartet quickly won chamber music's top competitions, including the 1998 Naumburg Chamber Music Award. In 2002 the ensemble was honored with Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award and the appointment to Lincoln Center's The Bowers Program (formerly CMS Two), and in 2006 was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant. With its powerful energy and captivating, cohesive sound, the Pacifica has established itself as the embodiment of the senior American quartet sound.

The Pacifica Quartet has proven itself the preeminent interpreter of string quartet cycles, harnessing the group's singular

focus and incredible stamina to portray each composer's evolution, often over the course of just a few days. Having given highly acclaimed performances of the complete Carter cycle in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Houston; the Mendelssohn cycle in Napa, Australia, New York, and Pittsburgh; and the Beethoven cycle in New York, Denver, St. Paul, Chicago, Napa, and Tokyo (in an unprecedented presentation of five concerts in three days at Suntory Hall), the Quartet presented the monumental Shostakovich cycle in Chicago, New York, Montreal, and at London's Wigmore Hall. The Quartet has been widely praised for these cycles, with critics calling the concerts "brilliant," "astonishing," "gripping," and "breathtaking."

The members of the Pacifica Quartet live in Bloomington, IN, where they serve as quartet-in-residence and full-time faculty members at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. Prior to their appointment, the Quartet was on the faculty of the University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana from 2003 to 2012, and also served as resident performing artist at the University of Chicago for seventeen years.

**Simin Ganatra** - violin

**Austin Hartman** - violin

**Mark Holloway** - viola

**Brandon Vamos** - cello



Photo: Austin Ward

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# Robert McDuffie

January 27, 2025, 7:00 PM

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Emmy Award-winning violinist Robert McDuffie enjoys a dynamic and multifaceted career. While appearing as soloist with renowned orchestras on five continents, he has also shared the stage with eclectic musicians such as R.E.M. bassist Mike Mills and Rolling Stones pianist Chuck Leavell. Philip Glass dedicated his Violin Concerto No. 2, The American Four Seasons to Mr. McDuffie and he has performed it more than 100 times around the world. Mike Mills composed Concerto for Violin, Rock Band and Orchestra for him. This year, he received an Emmy award for A Night of Georgia Music with Mike Mills, Chuck Leavell, rock band and the McDuffie Center for Strings ensemble, which is currently airing on PBS stations across America. Mr. McDuffie is the founder of both the Rome Chamber Music Festival in Italy and the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University in his native city of Macon, Georgia.

He recently completed a U.S. tour performing Brahms' Violin Concerto with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra, including a critically acclaimed performance at Carnegie Hall. He has also appeared as soloist with most of the premier orchestras of the world, including the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics; the Chicago, San Francisco, National, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, St. Louis, Montreal, and Toronto Symphonies; the Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Minnesota Orchestras; the London and Czech Philharmonics; Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, North German Radio Orchestra,

Düsseldorf Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Hamburg Symphony, Bruckner Orchestra Linz, Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala, Santa Cecilia Orchestra of Rome, Venice Baroque Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Mexico, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and all of the major orchestras of Australia.

Mr. McDuffie has a wide-ranging discography and his recent release, Icons, with pianist Elizabeth Pridgen, features sonatas of Philip Glass and John Corigliano as well as John Adams' Road Movies. His acclaimed Telarc, Orange Mountain, and EMI recordings include the violin concertos of Mendelssohn, Bruch, Adams, Glass, Mills, Barber, Rózsa, Bernstein, William Schuman, and Viennese violin favorites. He has been profiled on NBC's Today, CBS's Sunday Morning, and in *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

He has been awarded several honors in Italy: the Premio Simpatia by the Mayor of Rome; the Medaglia Ufficiale della Camera dei Deputati and the Medaglia Speciale del Natale di Roma recognizing the Rome Chamber Music Festival's 20th anniversary; and the Premio delle Muse in Florence. Mr. McDuffie served for ten years on the board of directors of the Harlem School of the Arts in New York City where he was chairman of the artistic and education committee. He plays a 1735 Guarneri del Gesù violin, known as the "Ladenburg." This instrument is owned by a limited partnership formed by Mr. McDuffie.



## William Ransom

Pianist, Artistic Director, master teacher, editor, and judge for international competitions, William Ransom has appeared around the world as soloist with orchestras, recitalist, and chamber musician. He regularly collaborates with leading musicians including Yo-Yo Ma, Richard Stoltzman, David Shifrin, William Preucil, Stephen Isserlis, Cho-Liang Lin, Robert McDuffie, and members of the Emerson, Tokyo, Cleveland, Juilliard, American, St. Petersburg, Borromeo, Parker, Ariel, Lark, Dover, Dali, and Attacca String Quartets. Ransom is the Mary Emerson Professor of Music at Emory University where he is founder and Artistic Director of the Emory Chamber Music Society of Atlanta. A graduate of The Juilliard School, in the summers, Ransom is Artistic Director of the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival and for a decade was an artist-faculty member at the Kamisaibara Pianists Camp in Japan. In 2016 he was named Artistic Director of the Juneau Jazz & Classics Festival and also one of Musical America Worldwide's "30 Musical Innovators". Recently, he was appointed Artistic Director of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival.



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| • <b>Oct 18 &amp; 19</b>    | Sibelius' Violin & Elgar's Enigma | • <b>Apr 4 &amp; 5</b>   | Conrad Tao & Rite of Spring        |
| • <b>Nov 8 &amp; 9</b>      | Rodrigo & Ravel's Boléro          | • <b>Apr 25 &amp; 26</b> | Dvořák's "New World"               |
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| • <b>Jan 10 &amp; 11</b>    | Gershwin & Tchaikovsky            | • <b>Jun 6 &amp; 7</b>   | Gershwin & Copland                 |
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# Takács Quartet

**February 11, 2025, 7:00 PM**

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

The world-renowned Takács Quartet is entering its fiftieth anniversary season in 2024 – 2025. Anniversary projects include a new concerto for them and the Colorado Music Festival orchestra by Gabriela Lena Frank, the release of its latest Hyperion project, 'Flow' by Nokuthula Ngwenyama, and a new album with pianist Marc Andre Hamelin featuring works by Florence Price and Antonín Dvořák.

The Takács maintains a busy international touring schedule. In 2025 the ensemble will perform in South Korea, Japan and Australia. The Australian tour is centered around a new piece by Kathy Milliken for quartet and narrator. As Associate Artists at London's Wigmore Hall, the group will present four concerts featuring works by Haydn, Britten, Ngwenyama, Beethoven, Janáček and two performances of Schubert's cello quintet with Adrian Brendel. During the season the ensemble will play at other prestigious European venues including Barcelona, Budapest, Milan, Basel, Bath Mozartfest and Bern.

The group's North American engagements include concerts in New York, Vancouver, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Lajolla, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Tucson, Portland and Princeton, and collaborations with pianists Stephen Hough and Jeremy Denk. The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Fellows and Artists in Residence at the University of Colorado, Boulder. During the summer months the Takács join the faculty at the Music Academy of the West, running an intensive quartet seminar.

The Takács Quartet is known for its innovative programming. In 2021-22 the ensemble partnered with bandoneon virtuoso Julien Labro to premiere new works by Clarice Assad and Bryce Dessner, commissioned by Music Accord. In 2014 the Takács performed a program inspired by Philip Roth's novel *Everyman* with Meryl Streep at Princeton, and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. They first performed *Everyman*

**Edward Dusinberre** - violin

**Harumi Rhodes** - violin

**Richard O'Neill** - viola

**András Fejér** - cello

at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. They have toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, and played regularly with the Hungarian Folk group Muzsikás.

In 2014 the Takács became the first string quartet to be awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal. In 2012, Gramophone announced that the Takács was the first string quartet to be inducted into its Hall of Fame. The ensemble also won the 2011 Award for Chamber Music and Song presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society in London. The Takács Quartet was formed in 1975 at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest by Gabor Takács-Nagy, Károly Schranz, Gabor Ormai and András Fejér, while all four were students.

The group received international attention in 1977, winning First Prize and the Critics' Prize at the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France. The Quartet also won the Gold Medal at the 1978 Portsmouth and Bordeaux Competitions and First Prizes at the Budapest International String Quartet Competition in 1978 and the Bratislava Competition in 1981. The Quartet made its North American debut tour in 1982. Members of the Takács Quartet are the grateful beneficiaries of an instrument loan by the Drake Foundation. We are grateful to be Thomastik-Infeld Artists.

*The Takács Quartet appears by arrangement with Seldy Cramer Artists, and records for Hyperion and Decca/London Records. The Takács Quartet is Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Colorado in Boulder and are Associate Artists at Wigmore Hall, London. Learn more at [takacsquartet.com](http://takacsquartet.com).*

Photo: Amanda Tipton



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# Jeremy Denk

Proclaimed by the New York Times as "a pianist you want to hear no matter what he performs," Jeremy Denk is also a New York Times bestselling author, the recipient of the MacArthur 'Genius' Fellowship, the Avery Fisher Prize, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

**February 23, 2025, 5:00 PM**

Ritz Carlton Amelia Island

In the 2024/25 season, Jeremy continues his collaboration with longtime musical partners Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis, with performances at the Tsindali Festival and Wigmore Hall, following on from his multi-concert artist residency at the Wigmore in 2023/24. He also returns to the Lammermuir Festival in multiple performances, including the complete Ives violin sonatas with Maria Wloszczowska, and a solo recital featuring female composers from the past to the present day. He performs this same solo programme on tour across the US, as well as continuing his exploration of Bach in ongoing performances of the complete Partitas. Jeremy is known for his interpretations of the music of American visionary Charles Ives, and in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the composer's birth, Nonesuch Records will release a collection of his Ives recordings later this year.

Highlights of Jeremy's 2023/24 season included premiering a new concerto written for him by Anna Clyne, co-commissioned and performed by the Dallas Symphony led by Fabio Luisi, the City of Birmingham Symphony led by Kazuki Yamada, and the New Jersey Symphony led by Markus Stenz. He also reunited with Krzysztof Urbanski to perform with the Antwerp Symphony, and with the Danish String Quartet for their festival Series of Four.

Jeremy has performed frequently at Carnegie Hall, and in recent years has worked with such orchestras as Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and San Francisco Symphony. Meanwhile, he has performed multiple times at the BBC Proms and Klavierfestival Ruhr, and appeared in such halls as the Köln Philharmonie, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and Boulez Saal in Berlin. He has also performed extensively across the UK, including recently with the London Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, and Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

**The Ritz Carlton, Amelia Island, will offer a special three-course menu after the concert for \$55 per person. Mr. Denk will be in attendance. Please call the Ritz Carlton for dinner reservations.**

Jeremy Denk is represented exclusively by Opus 3 Artists.

Denk is also known for his original and insightful writing on music, which Alex Ross praises for its "arresting sensitivity and wit." His New York Times Bestselling memoir, *Every Good Boy Does Fine* was published to universal acclaim by Random House in 2022, with features on CBS Sunday Morning, NPR's Fresh Air, The New York Times, and The Guardian. Denk also wrote the libretto for a comic opera presented by Carnegie Hall, Cal Performances, and the Aspen Festival, and his writing has appeared in the New Yorker, the New Republic, The Guardian, Süddeutsche Zeitung and on the front page of the New York Times Book Review.

Denk's latest album of Mozart piano concertos was released in 2021 on Nonesuch Records. The album, deemed "urgent and essential" by BBC Radio 3. His recording of the Goldberg Variations for Nonesuch Records reached No. 1 on the Billboard Classical Charts, and his recording of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 111 paired with Ligeti's Études was named one of the best discs of the year by the New Yorker, NPR, and the Washington Post, while his account of the Beethoven sonata was selected by BBC Radio 3's Building a Library as the best available version recorded on modern piano.

Photo: Michael Wilson



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# The Kruger Brothers

**February 28, 2025, 7:00 PM**  
Walker's Landing

**Jens Kruger** - banjo

**Uwe Kruger** - guitar

**Joel Landsberg** - bass

Born and raised in Europe, brothers Jens and Uwe Kruger started singing and playing instruments at a very young age. Growing up in a family where music was an important part of life, they were exposed to a broad diversity of musical influences. The brothers were performing regularly by the time they were eleven and twelve years old, and they began their professional career in 1979.

CBS Records contracted with Jens and Uwe when Jens was just seventeen years old, and shortly thereafter, the Krugers hosted a radio show on SRG SSR, the Swiss Public broadcast group. Several years later, the brothers teamed up with bass player Joel Landsberg, a native of New York City, who also had a very extensive musical upbringing in classical and jazz music, thus forming a trio that has been playing professionally together since 1995. The trio moved to the United States in 2002 and has ever since been based in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. On June 6th 2006, an official US flag was flown over the US capitol in honor of Jens and his contributions to American culture. Jens and Uwe were eventually made honorary citizens of North Carolina and in 2020 The Kruger Brothers were inducted into the Wilkes County Hall of Fame.

Since their formal introduction to American audiences in 1997, The Kruger Brothers' remarkable discipline, creativity, and their ability to infuse classical music into folk music has resulted in a unique, nuanced sound that has made them a fixture within the world of

acoustic music. The honesty of their writing has since become a hallmark of the trio's work. They have performed with the likes of Doc Watson, Earl Scruggs, Ricky Skaggs, Willie Nelson, and many more.

Accolades abound - in 2011 Jens was inducted into the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame. Two years later, in the fall of 2013, he was awarded the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo & Bluegrass. The Kruger Brothers then performing together with Steve on Late Night with David Letterman. Jens is also a 2021 inductee into the American Banjo Hall of Fame. In their ever-expanding body of work, Jens Kruger (banjo and vocals), Uwe Kruger (guitar and lead vocals), and Joel Landsberg (bass and vocals) together as The Kruger Brothers personify the spirit of exploration and innovation that forms the core of the American musical tradition. Together, they established the incomparable sound that The Kruger Brothers are known for today - their original music is crafted around their discerning taste, and the result is unpretentious, cultivated, and delightfully fresh.





# Free Family Concert: Musical Animals

**April 12, 2025, 3:00 PM**

Fernandina Beach Middle School

Designed for young audiences but perfect for music lovers of any age, our annual Family Concert, Musical Animals, features the humorous musical suite Carnival of the Animals and The Pied Piper of Hamelin. You'll be taken on a fun musical journey that will delight your imagination and fill your heart with joy!

**Yinzi Kong** - viola

**Julie Coucheron** - piano

**William Ransom** - piano

**Frank O'Donnell** - narrator

## Yinzi Kong

Violist Yinzi Kong, born and raised in Shanghai China, was a founding member of the international award-winning Vega String Quartet. Since winning several top prizes at the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition in France, the Carmel String Quartet Competition and the Coleman Competition in the US with the Vega, Miss Kong has enjoyed a versatile career in both solo and chamber music performance and teaching. She has performed in major concert halls around the world including the stages of Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Musikverein in Vienna, and the Musée D'Orsay in Paris; and her live performances have been heard on NPR's Performance Today (USA), the National Radio of China, Shanghai TV, Radio France, France Musiques, and the National Radio of the Czech Republic. Miss Kong currently resides in Atlanta, where she is Artist-in-Residence at Emory University and Kennesaw State University. After moving to the United States in 1995, she received a bachelor's degree from the Harid Conservatory in Florida and a master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music in New York.







## Julie Coucheron

Born in Oslo, Norway, Ms. Coucheron began playing the piano at age four. She earned her Bachelor and Master's Degree with honors from the Royal Academy of Music in London. At the age of 32, Ms. Coucheron has established an international career, winning awards and prizes in Italy, Germany, UK and in the United States. Ms. Coucheron has worked with musicians such as Claude Frank, Emanuel Ax, Chee-Yun Kim, Christopher O'Riley, Steve Miller Band, Yo-Yo Ma, and Elton John, and has toured Europe, America, South America and Asia, performing in halls like Verizon Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. Ms. Coucheron has performed with the Norwegian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic; Jena Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Philharmonic and the Ukrainian Symphony Orchestra in Kiev. Ms. Coucheron regularly performs at festivals such as the Oslo Chamber Music Festival, Bergen International Music Festival, Amelia Island Music Festival, Madison Chamber Music Festival, Juneau Jazz and Classics and at La Jolla Summer Fest. She is Artistic Director of the Fjord Cadenza festival in Norway, the Kon Tiki Chamber Music Festival in Oslo, Norway and Georgian Chamber Players in Atlanta, GA.

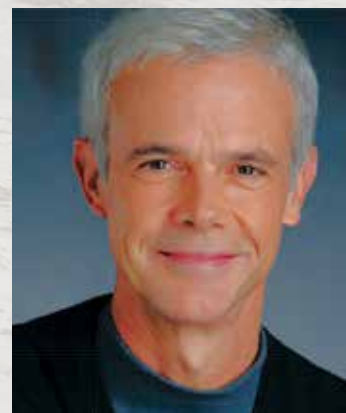
## Frank O'Donnell

Frank O'Donnell is a familiar figure at Amelia Musical Playhouse (AMP) and other local theaters, known for starring in iconic musical and non-musical roles including Atticus Finch and Scrooge. He has narrated at previous AICMF Family Concerts as well as at the Highlands Chamber Music Festival and the Emory Chamber Music Society of Atlanta.



## William Ransom

Pianist, Artistic Director, master teacher, editor, and judge for international competitions, William Ransom has appeared around the world as soloist with orchestras, recitalist, and chamber musician. He regularly collaborates with leading musicians including Yo-Yo Ma, Richard Stoltzman, David Shifrin, William Preucil, Stephen Isserlis, Cho-Liang Lin, Robert McDuffie, and members of the Emerson, Tokyo, Cleveland, Juilliard, American, St. Petersburg, Borromeo, Parker, Ariel, Lark, Dover, Dali, and Attacca String Quartets. Ransom is the Mary Emerson Professor of Music at Emory University where he is founder and Artistic Director of the Emory Chamber Music Society of Atlanta. A graduate of The Juilliard School, in the summers, Ransom is Artistic Director of the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival and for a decade was an artist-faculty member at the Kamisabara Pianists Camp in Japan. In 2016 he was named Artistic Director of the Juneau Jazz & Classics Festival and also one of Musical America Worldwide's "30 Musical Innovators". Recently, he was appointed Artistic Director of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival.





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# The Rites of Spring

**April 27, 2025, 5:00 PM**

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

**David Coucheron** – violin

**Julie Coucheron** – piano

**Elizabeth Pridgen** – piano

*Celebrate the arrival of Spring with this unique program featuring Beethoven, Stravinsky, Vivaldi, and Grieg.*

## David Coucheron

In 2010 when David Coucheron joined the Atlanta Symphony as Concertmaster, he was the youngest concertmaster among any major U.S. orchestra. Throughout his career, Coucheron has worked with conductors Robert Spano, Michael Tilson Thomas, Simon Rattle, Mstislav Rostropovich, and Charles Dutoit. He has performed as soloist with the BBC Symphony, Bergen Philharmonic, Sendai Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic, and the Trondheim Symphony. Coucheron has given solo recitals at Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Kennedy Center and the 1996 Olympic Winter Games, as well as internationally. His chamber music performances have included appearances at Suntory Hall, Wigmore Hall and Alice Tully Hall. Coucheron serves as the Artistic Director for the Kon Tiki Chamber Music Festival in his hometown of Oslo, Norway. He is also on the artist-faculty for the Aspen Music Festival and Brevard Music Festival.

An active recording artist, his recordings, with his sister and pianist Julie Coucheron, include "David and Julie" (Naxos/Mudi) and "Debut" (Naxos). He is also the featured soloist on the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's recording of Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending, which was released on ASO Media.

*Coucheron plays a 1725 Stradivarius, on kind loan from Anders Sveaas Charitable Trust.*



*Photo: Jeff Roffman*

Coucheron began playing the violin at age three. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree from The Curtis Institute, his Master of Music from The Juilliard School and his Master of Musical Performance from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, studying with teachers including Igor Ozim, Aaron Rosand, Lewis Kaplan and David Takeno.







## Julie Coucheron

Born in Oslo, Norway, Julie Coucheron has established an international career, winning prizes in Italy, Germany and the United States. Ms. Coucheron has worked with musicians such as Lazar Berman, Claude Frank, Emanuel Ax, Vladimir Feltsman, John O'Connor and Christopher O'Riley. She has toured internationally playing in great halls such as Verizon Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. Her festival performances include the Oslo Chamber Music Festival, Bergen International Music Festival and at La Jolla Summer fest. In 2002 she released her first recording, 'Debut' on the Naxos label, together with her brother David containing lyrical and virtuoso music from the classical repertoire.

Ms. Coucheron began playing the piano at age four. She earned her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees with honors from the Royal Academy of Music in London while also gaining her teaching diploma at the same institution. Ms. Coucheron enjoys a close collaboration with her brother David and is also an artist with the Georgian Chamber Players. She enjoys a wide range of styles and repertoire emerging from her highly trained classical background to contemporary and popular music. Recent collaborations include performances with artists such as the Steve Miller Band and Elton John.



## Elizabeth Pridgen

Pianist Elizabeth Pridgen has distinguished herself as a soloist and chamber musician, performing internationally at storied venues including Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall, Merkin Hall, and Weill Recital Hall, the Tilles Center on Long Island, Spivey Hall in Atlanta, Alice Tully Hall, and the Kosciuszko Foundation, and the "Rising Stars Series" at the Ravinia Festival.

In her role as Artistic Director of the Atlanta Chamber Players, she frequently performs at festivals including the Rome Chamber Music Festival in Italy, the Strings Music Festival in Steamboat Springs, the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the River To River Festival, the Water Island Music Festival, and the Madison Chamber Music Festival. An avid chamber performer, Pridgen has collaborated with artists such as Elmar Oliveira, Robert McDuffie, Yo-Yo Ma, Lynn Harrell, Hilary Hahn, Sarah Chang, Anne Akiko Meyers, Jennifer Koh, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, the Diaz String Trio, Cuarteto Latinoamericano, and the American String Quartet. She performs regularly with violinist Amy Schwartz Moretti and cellist Julie Albers as a member of the Cortona Trio and with the Georgian Chamber Players.

Pridgen was a Distinguished Artist and Piano Chair at the McDuffie Center for Strings and held the G. Leslie Fabian Piano Chair at the Townsend School of Music at Mercer University. She received her Master of Music degree at The Juilliard School where she studied with Joseph Kalichstein and earned her bachelor's degree at the Peabody Conservatory of Music as a student of Ann Schein.

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# Festival Finale:

## Beethoven & Beer

*with The American String Quartet*

**June 11, 2025, 5:00 PM**

Mocama Beer Company

**Peter Winograd** - violin

**Laurie Carney** - violin

**Matthias Buchholz** - viola

**Wolfram Koessel** - cello

### American String Quartet

Internationally recognized as one of the world's finest quartets, the American String Quartet has spent decades honing the luxurious sound for which it is famous. The Quartet celebrated its 45th anniversary in 2019, and, in its years of touring, has performed in all fifty states and has appeared in the most important concert halls worldwide. The group's presentations

of the complete quartets of Beethoven, Schubert, Schoenberg, Bartók, and Mozart have won widespread critical acclaim, and their MusicMasters Complete Mozart String Quartets, performed on a matched quartet set of instruments by Stradivarius, are widely considered to have set the standard for this repertoire.

Recent seasons featured performances of the Quartet's major project together with the National Book Award-winning author Phil Klay and the poet Tom Sleigh, which offers a groundbreaking program combining music and readings that examines the effects of war. The Quartet also collaborated with the renowned author Salman Rushdie in a work for narrator and quartet by the film composer Paul Cantelon built around Rushdie's novel *The Enchantress of Florence*.

*Photo: Stew Levy*





# Christopher Rex String Seminar

*with The American String Quartet & Beth Newdome Fellows*

**June 14, 2025, 3:00 PM**

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

These tremendously imaginative collaborations cement the American String Quartet's reputation as one of the most adventurous and fearless string quartets performing today, as comfortable with the groundbreaking as with the traditional.

The Quartet's diverse activities have also included numerous international radio and television broadcasts, including a recent recording for the BBC; tours of Asia; and performances with the New York City Ballet, the Montreal Symphony, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Recent highlights include performances of an all-sextet program with Roberto and Andrés Díaz, many tours of South America, and performances of the complete Beethoven cycle of string quartets at the Cervantes Festival in Mexico and the Tel Aviv Museum in Israel.

The American's additional extensive discography can be heard on the Albany, CRI, MusicMasters, Musical Heritage Society, Nonesuch, and RCA labels. Most recently the group released "Schubert's Echo," which pairs Schubert's monumental last quartet with works bearing its influence by Second Viennese masters Alban Berg and Anton Webern. This repertoire posits that the creative line from the First to the Second Viennese Schools is continuous – and evident when these works are heard in the context of each other.

As champions of new music, the American has given numerous premieres, including George Tsontakis's Quartet No. 7.5, "Maverick," Richard Danielpour's Quartet No. 4, and Curt Cacioppo's a distant voice calling. The premiere of Robert Sirota's American Pilgrimage was performed



*Honoring the memory of Christopher Rex*

around the U.S. in the cities the work celebrates. The Quartet premiered Tobias Picker's String Quartet No. 2 in New York City in celebration of the 90th anniversary of the Manhattan School of Music.

Formed when its original members were students at The Juilliard School, the American String Quartet's career began with the group winning both the Coleman Competition and the Naumburg Award in the same year. Resident quartet at the Aspen Music Festival since 1974 and at the Manhattan School of Music in New York since 1984, the American has also served as resident quartet at the Taos School of Music, the Peabody Conservatory, and the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.



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# Education Initiatives and Civic Engagement



Over the past twenty-three years, the Festival has provided learning experiences for young musicians ranging from violin lessons for children to masterclasses and coachings for college-level musicians. Current and past initiatives have included The Christopher Rex String Seminar for our Beth Newdome Fellowship Artists, a multi-generational strings class at Nassau County Council On Aging, outreach concerts to local schools and assisted living facilities in Nassau County, and music lessons at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Nassau County. This season, we are thrilled to partner with Jacksonville University to provide our regional musician community with the opportunity to participate in three different Master Classes taught by Sharon Isbin, Jeremy Denk, and the Takács Quartet.

## The Christopher Rex String Seminar



Beginning with our inaugural year, the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival knew the importance of Music Education. Master Classes and tutoring for our Young Resident Artists program played an important role in our early seasons. Now in our 23rd season, our main education initiative has not only thrived, but expanded into annual The Christopher Rex String Seminar" with "This valued educational initiative has not only thrived but has expanded into the annual Christopher Rex String Seminar. We invite rising star string students to be our Beth Newdome Fellowship Artists. These students are on the cusp of their professional careers and hail from the nation's leading conservatories and universities. For a week in late May, they are mentored by professional musicians. This training program culminates in a series of public performances including outreach concerts in the community and our Festival Finale Concert in June.

*Photos by Lea Lewin Gallardo*



## Master Classes

Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival is proud to partner with Jacksonville University to offer talented young students an opportunity to study with the world-renowned artists the Festival brings to the island. This season, students will have three opportunities to work with artists on the Jacksonville University campus:

**January 18, 2025 – Sharon Isbin, guitar**

**February 10, 2025 – Takács Quartet, strings**

**February 24, 2025 – Jeremy Denk, piano**

*These master classes are free and open to the public for observation.*



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### Gold Nautilus (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Name in Program

Primary Early Ticket Purchase

VIP Seating at Master Classes

Patron Party

2 Free Tickets per Season (Non-Headliner)

### Platinum Nautilus (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Name in Program

Primary Early Ticket Purchase

VIP Seating at all Ticketed Events

Patron Party

4 Free Tickets per Season (Non-Headliner)

Concert Sponsorship (Non-Headliner)

Post-Concert Reception with Artists\*

### Diamond Nautilus (\$10,000 - \$19,999)

Name in Program

Primary Early Ticket Purchase

VIP Seating at Ticketed Events

Patron Party

6 Free Tickets per Season (Headliner)

Concert Sponsorship (Headliner)

Post-Concert Reception with Artists\*

Reserved Parking Space at Concert Venue\*\*

### Hope Diamond Nautilus (\$20,000+)

Name in Program

Primary Early Ticket Purchase

VIP Seating at Ticketed Events

Patron Party

10 Free Tickets per Season (Headliner)

Concert Sponsorship (Headliner)

Post-Concert Reception with Artists\*

Reserved Parking Space at Concert Venue\*\*

The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Your donation is tax-deductible.

You may give securely on our website (aicmf.org) or mail your contribution to:  
P.O. Box 15866  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32035

\*Not available at all concerts

\*\*Reserved parking available at select venues. Reserved parking is non-transferable



# Current and Past Government Support

Amelia Island Tourist Development Council  
National Endowment for the Arts  
State of Florida Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture

## Business Support

First Federal Bank  
Keyboard Connection- Jack Melvin  
Ritz-Carlton Amelia Island  
WestRock



## Special Thanks

Amelia Art Studio  
Amelia Dental Group  
Amelia Island Opera, Inc.  
Amelia Music Studio  
Amelia Plantation Chapel  
Anne and Bill Gower  
Axia Public Relations  
Bill Hensley  
Bill Ivins, Ivins Ink Studio  
Bob Bolan, governance consultant  
Braddock Metallurgical  
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Courson & Stam LLC, Certified Public Accounts  
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Emma Mills Bledsoe  
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First Baptist Church Fernandina Beach  
First Port City Bank  
First Presbyterian Church  
Foy Maloy, Fernandina Beach News Leader  
Heymann Williams Realty  
Ivins Ink Studio  
Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra  
Jeanne Connor  
Jeff and Shelley Hirshberg  
Jim and Jane Flynn  
Kurt Marasco, IT consultant  
Larry Hickman, Piano Transport Services

Launch Printing  
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Linda Powers and Patrick Bilanchone  
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Marsha Joyner  
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Dr. Nick and Lis Krawiecki  
Penny Reid, Mouth of Amelia  
Phil Kelly, Amelia Islander Magazine  
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
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Richard Burroughs and Nancy Bartmess  
Skip Becker, Piano Tuning  
St. Peter's Episcopal Church  
Stephania Dunnmon  
Steve and 'Cille Ramsey  
Steve Zebrasky  
Stewart Pikula  
Story & Song Center for Arts & Culture  
Sue Braddock  
Sue Sinor, grant writer  
Dr. Tim Snyder, Jacksonville University  
Walker's Landing, AIP  
Tom and Vicki Whittemore  
Will Howerly, luthier services  
WJCT Public Media

## Volunteers

Dr. Joan Averett  
Cynthia Bonczkiewicz  
Peter Carter  
Linda Cooley  
Ken and Carol Copithorne  
David Dunnmon  
Joyce Ellenson  
Steve Halloway  
Lis Krawiecki  
Dan Knight  
Alwynne Lamp

Alfred Laub  
Susan Magg  
Mary McKee  
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Amelia Island  
chamber music festival



# Leadership Team

2024-2025

## Executive Board

Emma Mills Bledsoe, *President*  
Marsha Joyner, *Vice President*  
Lauren Templeton, *Secretary*  
Vicki Whittemore, *Treasurer*  
Hugh Williams, *Marketing*

## Board Members At Large

Nancy Bartmess  
Jeanne Conner  
Anne Coonrod Hensley  
Beth Marasco Ivins  
Nick Krawiecki  
Sharon Lennon  
Carrie Anderson Mays  
Irene Sanchez

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## Executive Director

Robyn Lamp

## Artistic Director

William Ransom

## Business Manager

Stephania Dunnmon

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## Founder

Christopher Rex

## Executive Director Emeritus

Dr. Joe Marasco

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## Our Mission

Present the world's greatest musical artists in chamber music concerts of classical and alternative genres for diverse audiences.

Offer music education to concert attendees, students, and aspiring young musicians.

Promote local businesses and tourism by attracting music lovers from Nassau County, Northeast Florida, and beyond.

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Brochure design and background photography by Bill Ivins at Ivins Ink Studio, Fernandina Beach.

The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. It is registered with the State of Florida and is in good standing with regards to its Solicitation of Contributions registration (#CH19166).

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-HELP-FLA (800-435-7352), OR VIA THE INTERNET AT WWW.FLORIDAConsumerHELP.COM. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. #CH19166



Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival  
P.O. Box 15886  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32035  
[aicmf.org](http://aicmf.org)



Tickets available at [aicmf.org](http://aicmf.org)  
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and on Instagram [@aicmfestival](https://www.instagram.com/aicmfestival)