

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Eric Pritchard has served as first violinist of the Ciompi Quartet of Duke University since 1995. Mr. Pritchard tours worldwide as a chamber musician and he has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Boston Pops, Indianapolis Philharmonic, and Orchestra New England. As a member of the Alexander String Quartet, he was awarded First Prize at the London International String Quartet Competition and premiered works by Aaron Copland, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. Pritchard's chamber and solo recordings have been released on Naxos, MSR, Albany and Toccata Classics. A graduate of Indiana University and the Juilliard School. He also is a certified teaching member of Alexander Technique International.

Carol Chung is First Violinist of the Lyricosa Quartet and Concertmaster of the North Carolina Opera Orchestra. Since 2000, she has performed with the North Carolina Symphony in a substitute or acting section capacity. In the summer, she serves on the artist faculty of the Renova Music Festival in western Pennsylvania, both as a chamber music coach and as a certified Alexander Technique teacher. She holds both the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in violin performance from the Cleveland Institute of Music and has performed and worked with members of the Tokyo, Vermeer, Cavani, and Juilliard Quartets.

Simon Ertz is principal viola of the Winston-Salem Symphony and the North Carolina Opera Orchestra and teaches viola at UNC, Chapel Hill. Simon studied viola at the Royal Northern College of Music where he was awarded the Thomas Barret memorial prize for viola. By the time Simon graduated from the RNCM, he was working with orchestras such as the BBC Philharmonic, Northern Chamber, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. Since moving to the States, he has performed in venues across the country, including appearing at the Aspen Music festival, the Chicago Chamber Music Society, and at the Library of Congress where he performed on the Tuscan Medici Stradivarius. Simon Ertz plays a viola made by his brother, Neil Ertz.

Bonnie Thron has been Principal Cellist of the North Carolina Symphony

since 2000. Her first encounter with the music of Bill Robinson was when her husband, clarinetist Fred Jacobowitz, met Bill at a concert and suggested he write a clarinet trio. The piece appeared within one month and has been performed frequently. Bonnie has also embraced Robinson's Gayatri sonata for cello and piano and has performed the Cello Concerto written for her. She has an active teaching studio and has been performing every summer at the Sebago Long Lake Music Festival in Harrison Maine since 2002.

Fred Jacobowitz, clarinetist, received his Bachelors and Masters degrees from the Juilliard School, where he studied with the late Leon Russianoff. He made his New York debut at Carnegie Recital Hall and has participated in the Marlboro Music Festival. He is equally at home in the worlds of Classical, Jazz, and Folk, having performed and recorded with his Kol Haruach Klezmer Band and his duo, Ebony and Ivory. Mr. Jacobowitz resides in Raleigh, NC, where he teaches and plays concerts with his wife, Bonnie Thron and with Anatoly Larkin. He runs his own business, Case Closed (www.case-closed.us), fixing musical instrument cases and is a professional youth baseball umpire and basketball referee.

Maestro William Henry Curry, Music Director and Conductor of the Durham Symphony Orchestra, was formerly the Resident Conductor of the North Carolina Symphony. He has guest conducted many of the world's greatest orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Chicago, Cleveland, and Houston Symphonies as well as the Israel Chamber Orchestra, the National Orchestra of Thailand, and the National Orchestra of Taiwan. Maestro Curry has held Resident Conductor posts with the Baltimore Symphony, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the New Orleans Symphony Orchestra and has served as Associate Conductor of the Indianapolis and Atlanta Symphonies. In November 2024, Curry received the prestigious Governor's Award, the State's highest civilian honor, from Governor Roy Cooper, and the following month, he received an Honorary Doctorate from UNC Greensboro in recognition of his extraordinary accomplishments and trailblazing career.

Frances Bushman is an accomplished Soprano based in Apex, North Carolina. She is currently a rostered member of the North Carolina Opera

Chorus and has been a featured soloist with Concert Singers of Cary and the NC State Chorale. Originally from South Florida, Fran has sung as a principal artist with the Lyric Orchestra of Fort Lauderdale and as a professional ensemble member in the Orlando Opera Chorus. This season, she will be making her operatic debut as Ines in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* with North Carolina Opera.

Mezzo-soprano **Erica Jackson** is a captivating performer with an exciting, lush voice and intense, authentic expression. Recent stage credits include Flora in *La traviata* and Second Lady in *The Magic Flute*. A Kansas City area native, Erica holds degrees from William Jewell College and the University of Missouri–Columbia. In the Raleigh, North Carolina area, she has worked with North Carolina Opera, North Carolina Master Chorale, and Concert Singers of Cary, in addition to her work at Chicago Summer Opera, Spotlight on Opera, Miami Classical Music Festival, and Oberlin in Italy. She lives in Raleigh, North Carolina with her husband and her cats Grace and Boba.

Mr. Corey Leak, tenor, is the music teacher at The Raleigh School in Raleigh, North Carolina. A native of Harlem, New York, he began singing at age four in his home church, Travelers Rest Baptist Church. At thirteen, he joined the Boys Choir of Harlem, touring professionally for five years throughout the United States and internationally, including performances in Japan, China, Israel, Belgium, and Austria. Mr. Leak is a graduate of the Choir Academy of Harlem and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music/ Vocal Performance from Shaw University and a Master's in Music Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. He has pursued additional vocal studies at Indiana University, Boston University, and Westminster Choir College. He continues to study with Dr. Lorneita Cornwall, sings with Cumberland Choral Arts, and serves as youth choir conductor at Saint Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church. His greatest joy is inspiring students to embrace music across all genres.

Dr. DeMar Austin Neal, IV is a critically acclaimed baritone and educator balancing a diverse performance career with higher education and private instruction. A founding member of the classical quartet VOX, his stage credits span opera, musical theater, and concert soloing with the North Carolina Opera and North Carolina Symphony among others. His favorite roles include Papageno, Junius, and Major-General Stanley. As an Associate Professor at Wake Tech and faculty at NC State and Meredith College, Dr. Neal teaches a

wide variety of courses, including applied voice, music appreciation, and history of rock music. He also maintains a robust private studio, training clients across all genres from art song to death metal.

Brad Croushorn (Lyric Bass-Baritone) sings in the Triangle Vocal Project, NC State Univ. Choral Artists, and American Caroling Company. As a choral composer, his works are published by many of the top publishers. Locally, he is a member of the North Carolina Songwriters Co-op and Carolina Contemporary Composers. For many years, Brad was an editor for Alfred Music Publishing and is currently Music Director at Saint Andrews Presbyterian in Raleigh. He holds a B.A. from Eastern Men- nonite University and M.M. from Westminster Choir College. Brad's outlook in writing and in life is ecumenical and inclusive. When not performing or writing, he immerses himself in the possibilities of song everywhere – a gift deeply treasured! Visit www.BradCroushorn.net to discover more.

Following the musical upbringing in Russia and later in Great Britain, **Anatoly Larkin** settled in the United States in 2000. In Minnesota, while completing his doctorate, he was a pianist with the new music ensemble Zeitgeist, premiering and commissioning works from contemporary American composers. In 2005, he joined the music technology company Zenph in Raleigh, NC, where he created Re-Performances® of great pianists from their historical acoustic recordings. Gould, Tatum, Rachmaninoff and Peterson albums released on the Sony Masterworks label were met with critical acclaim. For Steinway, Anatoly produced Re-Performances of Steinway Immortals. Anatoly currently resides in Cary, NC with his family, where he works as a teacher, performer, accompanist and a professor at NC State University.

Reyna Blyss Alston is a dynamic composer, conductor, and recording artist from Durham, North Carolina. A graduate of High Point University, she composed and arranged music for twelve vocal and instrumental ensembles during her under- graduate studies and conducted premieres of her works across the U.S. and Europe. She recently made her compositional and conducting debut at Duke Chapel and performed her arrangements as a pianist at Carnegie Hall. Reyna completed her master's degree in Choral Conducting and a post-baccalaureate certificate in Composition in May 2025. She now

serves as Minister of Music at United Church of Chapel Hill, where she directs multiple ensembles and composes original works for worship. She also currently serves as Assistant Conductor of the Duke University Chorale. Reyna is especially passionate about working with collegiate and professional ensembles. Her compositional voice reflects an interest in modal mixture, text painting, and J.S. Bach's approach to harmony and voice leading.