

WAVES & WONDER

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Welcome to the 2025–26 season of The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra (WSO).

We have an extraordinary season planned for you. Music Director Michael Buttermann will present a mix of long-time favorites and innovative contemporary works. To top it off, our last concert of the Masterworks series will feature Peter Boyer's *American Mosaic* in celebration of the 250th anniversary of our nation. We are proud that this special piece was commissioned by the WSO along with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Pops, and other eminent ensembles.

Our recently revised vision is to be recognized in our region as the preeminent performing arts group that serves all audiences. And we will accomplish this by inspiring, transforming, and connecting our community through the power of orchestral music.

With that vision in mind, we have worked with the Williamsburg-James City County (WJCC) School Board to expand our offerings to two full orchestral presentations—one for all 4th-grade students and one for all 5th-grade students in the WJCC system. Michael Buttermann continues to expand our reach and our reputation, and we are delighted to announce that Michael has signed on for another five years. He has had and continues to have a marvelously positive impact on our orchestra, bringing it to new heights and to new national and even international audiences on National Public Radio.

With a Board that continues to grow in its impact and dedication, an extraordinarily talented Music Director, and topnotch administration, the WSO is in excellent hands artistically, financially, and organizationally—a situation enjoyed by relatively few symphony orchestras. We are reaching new audiences and having a growing impact on the cultural community of the Historic Triangle.

Enjoy the season.



Jon E. Krapfl
Chair, WSO Board of Trustees



Photo by Kim Kiely Photography

Dear Friends,

Welcome to a brand new season with your amazing Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra! From stellar guest artists and orchestral masterpieces, to a celebration of America's 250th and favorites from Broadway and the Las Vegas strip, we have something for everyone. We're proud to have become the hottest ticket in town and are thrilled that you have joined us this evening.

We welcome back the astonishing Natasha Paremski to light up the stage in our season opener, and meet rising star violinist Amaryn Olmeda to play Barber's gorgeous *Violin Concerto*. We'll also marvel at the range and variety of Sandbox Percussion Quartet and celebrate the talents of four of our own WSO principal musicians in Haydn's *Sinfonia Concertante*.

Your WSO will be in fine form in such favorites as Prokofiev's blazing *Romeo and Juliet*, Debussy's impressionistic seascape *La Mer*, Hanson's cinematic *Romantic Symphony*, Mendelssohn's inspiring *Reformation Symphony*, and a neglected masterpiece: Dawson's *Negro Folk Symphony*. And we close our subscription season with a multi-media celebration of America's 250th birthday from GRAMMY-nominated composer Peter Boyer, co-commissioned by the WSO along with the National Symphony, Cincinnati Pops, and other elite ensembles.

In November we'll celebrate the release of *Wicked: Part II* with two stars of the Broadway smash who will share music from *Wicked*, *Frozen*, *Les Mis*, and so much more. For the holidays, we're thrilled to welcome back Tiffany Haas (another *Wicked* veteran!) to light up the Kimball Theatre stage once again with her charisma and holiday magic. AND, our annual Cabaret & Cocktails performance features a tribute to Sinatra, the Rat Pack, and 50s Vegas with the amazing Paul Loren.

We are incredibly grateful for the steadfast support of our concert sponsors and underwriters. But most of all, we are grateful for YOU. Appreciative audiences are the reason we come together to create and share great music. Thank you for being with us this evening!

Enjoy,

BIOGRAPHY

Music Director of four American orchestras and a sought-after guest conductor, Michael Butterman is acclaimed for his creative artistry and innovative programming. Foundational to his dynamic career is a deep commitment to audience development and community engagement. In addition to his leadership of the Williamsburg Symphony, he is the Music Director of

the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra, which he has led to national prominence, resulting in an invitation to open the Kennedy Center's inaugural SHIFT Festival of American Orchestras in 2017. He is also the Music Director of the Shreveport Symphony and the Lancaster Symphony Orchestra.

As a guest conductor, Mr. Butterman has led many of the country's preeminent ensembles, including the Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony, Detroit Symphony, and Houston Symphony. Other recent appearances include performances with the Fort Worth Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, Charleston Symphony, Hartford Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Syracuse Symphony, New Mexico Symphony, Santa Fe Symphony, California Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic, Spokane Symphony, El Paso Symphony, Mobile Symphony, Winston-Salem Symphony, Pensacola Opera, Asheville Lyric Opera, and Victoria Symphony (British Columbia). Summer appearances include Tanglewood, the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, Colorado Music Festival, and the Wintergreen Music Festival in Virginia. This season, he returns for a fourth time to conduct Cuba's renowned Havana Chamber Orchestra.

A passionate advocate for music education, Mr. Butterman recently completed a 19-year association with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra as its Principal Conductor for Education and Community Engagement. Concurrently he enjoyed a 15-year tenure with the Jacksonville Symphony, first as Associate, and then as Resident Conductor. He is also the founding Music Director of the Pennsylvania Philharmonic, an orchestra uniquely devoted to introducing orchestral music to young people.

Mr. Butterman gained international attention as a diploma laureate in the Prokofiev International Conducting Competition and as a finalist in the prestigious Besançon International Conducting Competition. As the recipient of the Seiji Ozawa Fellowship, he studied at Tanglewood with Robert Spano, Jorma Panula, and Maestro Ozawa, with whom he shared the podium to lead the season's opening concert. Earlier, Mr. Butterman was sponsored by UNESCO to lead the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Moldova in a concert of music by American masters.

For six seasons, Mr. Butterman served as Music Director of Opera Southwest in Albuquerque, New Mexico. During much of that time, he was also Director of Orchestral Studies at the LSU School of Music and was Principal Conductor of the LSU Opera Theater. Previously, he held the post of Associate Conductor of the Columbus Pro Musica Orchestra, and served as Music Director of the Chamber Opera, Studio Opera, and Opera Workshop at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. As its Associate Music Director, he led the Ohio Light Opera through two festivals, conducting over 35 performances each summer.

While at Indiana University, Mr. Butterman conducted a highly acclaimed production of Leonard Bernstein's little-known *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue* in a series of performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, receiving unanimous praise from such publications as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Variety*, and *USA Today*. He was subsequently invited to New York at the request of the Bernstein estate to prepare a performance of a revised version of the work.

Michael Butterman's work has been featured in more than three dozen nationwide broadcasts on public radio's Performance Today. He can be heard on two CDs recorded for the Newport Classics label and on an album in which he conducts the Rochester Philharmonic and collaborates with actor John Lithgow. A new recording on the Reference Recordings label featuring the Boulder Philharmonic and Aldo López-Gavilán is set to be released in late 2025.

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NEW DATE!

CABARET & COCKTAILS

COME SWING WITH ME!

featuring Music Director Michael Butterman
& Guest Artist Paul Loren



Time travel back to the heyday of the 1950s Las Vegas strip, where the biggest names in show business held sway, and enjoy a musical journey through The Great American Songbook.

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SANDBOX PERCUSSION

Ian Rosenbaum | Jonny Allen
Terry Sweeney | Victor Caccese

The “exhilarating” (*The New York Times*) and “utterly mesmerizing” (*The Guardian*) GRAMMY®-nominated Sandbox Percussion champions living composers through its unwavering dedication to contemporary chamber music. In 2011, Jonathan Allen, Victor Caccese, Ian Rosenbaum, and Terry Sweeney were brought together by their interest in expanding the percussion repertoire. Today, they are estab-

lished leaders in contemporary music for percussion, engaging a wider audience for classical music through collaborations with leading composers and artists.

In 2025, Sandbox Percussion made its debut on NPR’s *Tiny Desk* with a genre-defying program of pieces by Andy Akiho and Viet Cuong; and, in 2024, they recorded percussion for the feature film *The Wild Robot* (DreamWorks). Sandbox Percussion is the first percussion ensemble to receive the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant; at the 2024 ceremony, they performed “Pillar V,” from *Seven Pillars*, Akiho’s 2021 suite for percussion quartet, which *The New York Times* called “as pure as music gets.” It was nominated for two GRAMMY® awards and was a Pulitzer Prize finalist.

Building on that success, Sandbox Percussion and Akiho embark on a project in 2025-26 to create a new work with Akiho joining on steelpan; “Pentalateral I,” the first completed movement, is available now as a single. Throughout the season, the quintet continues to create and record the rest of the piece, giving premieres of individual movements in select venues.

Sandbox Percussion also continues to champion *Re(new)al*, Cuong’s green energy and environment-themed 2017 concerto for percussion quartet. They reunite for the world premiere of a new work by Cuong to be performed with the Albany Symphony, which commissioned and premiered *Re(new)al*.

Another season highlight is the collaboration with violinist Kristin Lee, the founder and artistic director of Seattle’s Emerald City Music, where Sandbox Percussion is ensemble-in-residence this season. Together, they present a Vivian Fung world premiere, and the Pacific Northwest premiere of recent works by Joan Tower and Gabriella Smith. Lee joins Sandbox Percussion again at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for *Sonic Spectrum IV*, a program that includes Lou Harrison’s Concerto for Violin with Percussion Orchestra.

Over the season, Sandbox Percussion performs Simeon ten Holt’s minimalist work *Canto Ostinato*. The group’s arrangement for percussion quartet and two pianos was performed at Lincoln Center *Summer for the City*. A new recording by Sandbox Percussion, Erik Hall, and Metropolis Ensemble is scheduled for release in spring 2026 on the Western Vinyl label. At Duke University, Sandbox Percussion and the Tyshawyn Sorey Trio present *Max Roach at 100*, a tribute

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to the influential jazz drummer. At Stanford Live, Sandbox Percussion joins the choir The Crossing for *You Are Who I Love*, the last work by the late Harold Meltzer, set to Aracelis Girmay's poem about the undocumented immigrant experience in the U.S.

The group's latest release is *Don't Look Down* (PENTATONE, 2025), an album that "stretches and challenges the listeners' ears" (*BBC Music Magazine*), featuring music by longtime collaborator Christopher Cerrone, with Hanick on piano and mezzo-soprano Elspeth Davis. The album received three GRAMMY® Award nominations, for Best Classical Compendium, Best Contemporary Classical Composition (the title piece), and Best Engineered Album, Classical.

Sandbox Percussion also recorded percussion music for its first feature film, *The Wild Robot* (DreamWorks, 2024), an animated science fiction film directed by Chris Sanders, with music by Kris Bowers. It received three Academy Award nominations, and a GRAMMY® Award nomination for the score.

Sandbox Percussion holds the positions of ensemble-in-residence and percussion faculty at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and The New School's College of Performing Arts, where they have created a curriculum with entrepreneurship and chamber music at its core. The 2025-26 season is the group's second year on faculty at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. Sandbox Percussion endorses Pearl/Adams musical instruments, Zildjian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks and mallets, Remo drumheads, and Black Swamp accessories.

MASTERWORKS CONCERT 4

PRELUDE TO *KHOVANSCHCHINA*

Modest Mussorgsky

Born March 21, 1839, in Karevo, Pskov, Russia

Died March 29, 1881, in St. Petersburg

Orchestrated by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

Modest Mussorgsky died at the age of 42 from acute alcoholism. His friends, the other champions of Russian musical nationalism, hastened to preserve his incomplete compositional legacy. In some cases, this meant orchestration; in others it meant filling out sketches to the point where the surviving composer left as much of a mark on the resulting work as Mussorgsky.

Rimsky-Korsakov is the most significant of those who tinkered with Mussorgsky's music. *Khovanschina* was the first score Rimsky-Korsakov addressed. The opera is set in the late seventeenth century, a period of political chaos in Russian history called the *Streltsi* [musketeer] uprisings. The title translates roughly to "The Khovansky Affair," alluding to the Khovansky princes who had plotted against the boy Tsar Peter in the 1680s and 1690s. Mussorgsky subtitled this introduction "Dawn over the Moscow River." The unmistakable Russian sound of the prelude derives from the folk-like tune Mussorgsky chose as its centerpiece. The chimes are vintage Mussorgsky and will be immediately recognizable as such to anyone who knows *Boris Godunov*. His stage directions to the opera amount to a program for the prelude, with roosters crowing, bells ringing, and sun breaking over the domes of the Kremlin.

Instrumentation: woodwinds in pairs, 4 horns, timpani, tam-tam, harp, and strings.

***MEERESTILLE UND GLÜCKLICHE FAHRT*
[CALM SEA AND PROSPEROUS VOYAGE], OP. 27**

Felix Mendelssohn

Born February 3, 1809, in Hamburg, Germany

Died November 4, 1847, in Leipzig, Germany

At the beach, a calm sea is an idyllic prospect. For sailors, that calm can be disastrous. No wind means no distance traveled. Therefore, in the vocabulary of seafarers, "calm sea" and "prosperous voyage" are mutually exclusive concepts. That is precisely how Johann Wolfgang von Goethe conceived of them in his twin poems that inspired Mendelssohn's overture.

These simple verses had already inspired at least three other composers before Mendelssohn, but Mendelssohn's overture is widely regarded as the most successful. He was the only one to attempt an instrumental (rather than choral) treatment of the poems. Rather than compose a slow introduction followed by a sonata-allegro, he concentrated on the atmospheric contrast between the two poems. Each part exists as an independent tableau, yet they are linked by a masterful transition and by subtle, shared musical connections.

The challenge lay in establishing the deadly calm of Goethe's first poem. Music operates in time and sound. Musical calm risks boredom through stasis. The condition of being motionless cannot extend too long, lest it induce slumber. Mendelssohn solved this conundrum with his

uncanny sense of proportion. Our first hint that a breeze might pick up is a little fillip from the flute. As Aeolus—the god who could excite or subdue the winds at will—stirs the air to a favorable level, the woodwinds take center stage. They provide a logical and convincing transition to the “Prosperous Voyage” section, in which Mendelssohn’s debt to Beethoven is clear.

The coda heralds a joyous and safe arrival into the home port, complete with trumpet fanfares to celebrate the happy occasion. Upon receiving a copy of the manuscript, a pleased Goethe wrote to Mendelssohn, “Sail well in your music, and may your voyages always be as prosperous as this one.”

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (third doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 3 bassoons (third doubling contrabassoon), 2 horns, 3 trumpets, tuba, timpani, and strings.

RE(NEW)AL

Viet Cuong

Born September 8, 1990, in West Hills, California

The son of Vietnamese immigrants, Viet Cuong grew up in Marietta, Georgia, where he was an enthusiastic participant in his high school marching band. His principal instruments are clarinet, percussion, and piano. He holds degrees from Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, and Princeton. He currently divides his time between Las Vegas, where he teaches composition and music theory at UNLV, and Orange County, California, where he is composer-in-residence at the Pacific Symphony. Though he is only 35, Cuong has had his works performed on six continents by major chamber music groups, orchestras, and wind ensembles.

Re(new)al is representative of his music in that it employs unexpected combinations of sounds that engage the ear. It also has an environmental aspect, as his composer’s note explains:

I have tremendous respect for renewable energy initiatives and the commitment to creating a new, better reality for us all. *Re(new)al* is a percussion quartet concerto that is similarly devoted to finding unexpected ways to breathe new life into traditional ideas. The solo quartet therefore performs on several “found” instruments, including crystal glasses and compressed air cans. While the piece also features more traditional instruments, I looked for ways to either alter their sounds or find new ways to play them. Cooperation and synergy are also core themes of the piece. All of the music played by the percussion quartet comprises musical ideas that are evenly distributed among the four soloists.

Re(new)al is constructed of three continuous movements, each inspired by the power of hydro, wind, and solar energies. The hydro movement transforms tuned crystal glasses into ringing hand bells as the wind ensemble slowly submerges the soloists in their sound. The second movement turns each member of the quartet into a blade of a dizzying wind turbine, playing 90’s-inspired drum and bass patterns over a bass line that quotes and expands upon a few bars from one of my favorite drum and bass tracks by DJ Hype. The closing movement simulates a sunrise and evokes the brilliance of sunlight with metallic percussion instruments.

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This concert was supported, in part, by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, which receives support from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.



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Because the percussion quartet moves among three separate stations, one for each movement, there is a visual, choreographic aspect to *Re(new)al* as well. Cuong's evocations of water, wind, and solar communicate on a multi-sensory level.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes (both doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, piano, timpani, a large percussion complement requiring 3 players [I = xylophone, crotales, triangle, bass drum; II = marimba, whip, tam-tam; III = vibraphone, marimba, suspended cymbal, crash cymbals], piano, percussion quartet soloists, and strings.

LA MER

Claude Debussy

Born 22 August, 1862, in St-Germain-en-Laye, France

Died 25 March, 1918, in Paris

Debussy harbored a lifelong fascination for the sea. His *La mer* embodies that most mercurial of natural wonders, the endlessly changing undulations of large bodies of water. In its evocation of the play of light upon water and wave upon wave, it is the quintessential impressionist work in music.

La mer comprises three movements reflecting aspects of the sea's quicksilver moods. Their titles translate to "From Dawn 'til Noon on the Sea," "Play of the Waves," and "Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea." Debussy eschews the kind of melody that one hums. While his score is filled with melodic fragments, it is the sweep of coloristic detail that holds our attention. Felicitous orchestral touches abound, but the parts for harp and muted brass, especially in the second movement, reward careful listening.

Debussy was inspired by the visual arts, particularly Japanese paintings. (He requested that his publisher reproduce Katsushika Hokusai's "The Hollow of the Wave off Kanagawa" on the cover of *La mer's* full score. Association with Debussy's music has contributed to that painting's remarkable fame.) His subtitle, "Three Symphonic Sketches," supports the visual association. The play of sunlight and wind upon water is the dominant premise. Debussy spins orchestral magic in this magnificent score.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, tam-tam, 2 harps, and strings.

Program Notes by Laurie Shulman ©2026

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Our publishing deadline may not enable us to list all musicians performing this evening. We apologize for any omissions or errors.

WAVES & WONDER**MASTERWORKS CONCERT 4**

WILLIAMSBURG COMMUNITY CHAPEL | MARCH 3, 2026 | 7:30 P.M.

PRE-CONCERT TALK 6:30–7:00 P.M.

MICHAEL BUTTERMAN
Music Director/Conductor**SANDBOX PERCUSSION
QUARTET**
Guest Artist**PRELUDE TO KHOVANSCHCHINA**

Modest Mussorgsky

CALM SEA AND PROSPEROUS VOYAGE

Felix Mendelssohn

RE(NEW)AL

Viet Cuong

- I. *Hydro*
- II. *Wind*
- III. *Solar*

Sandbox Percussion Quartet

Ian Rosenbaum | Jonny Allen | Terry Sweeney | Victor Caccese

INTERMISSION

LA MER

Claude Debussy

- I. *De l'aube à midi sur la mer (From Dawn to Noon on the Sea)*
- II. *Jeux de vagues (Play of the Waves)*
- III. *Dialogue du vent et de la mer (Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)*

Programs, artists, and dates are subject to change.

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wyomusic.org

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Saturday, November 8, 2025

4:00 p.m. | Williamsburg Presbyterian Church

FALL CONCERT

Sunday, November 16, 2025

4:00 p.m. | William & Mary Concert Hall

WINTER CONCERT

Sunday, February 15, 2026

4:00 p.m. | William & Mary Concert Hall

WINTER CHAMBER PROGRAM CONCERT

Sunday, March 29, 2026

4:00 p.m. | The King of Glory Lutheran Church

SPRING CONCERT

Sunday, May 3, 2026

4:00 p.m. | William & Mary Concert Hall

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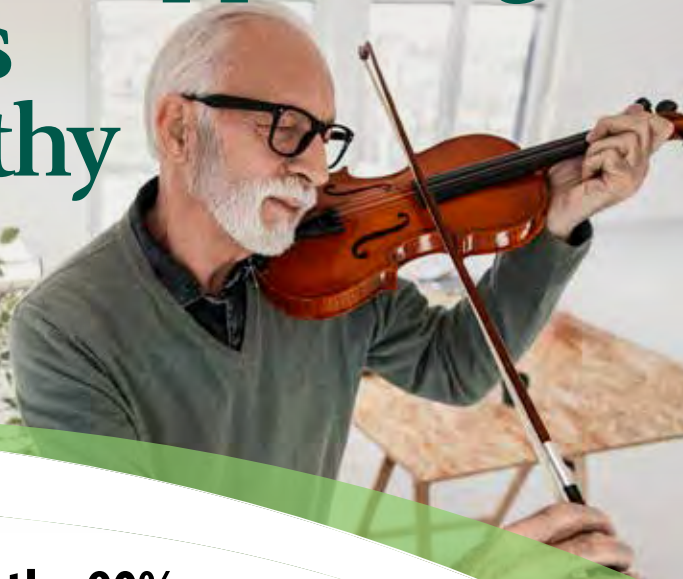
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