



2023 wcf symphony Youth Concert

Educator Guide

The Evolution of African American Music

with Guest Artist Bruce Henry

Jason Weinberger

Artistic Director

Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center

Catherine Cassidy Gallagher Great Hall

March 28, 2023

Dear Educator,

When you listen to rock, gospel, R&B, soul, jazz and hip-hop, you are hearing the survival of African culture in America. The Evolution of African American Music, developed by 2022-23 resident artist Bruce Henry, lays out this connection through concerts, informances, educator trainings, workshops, and residencies. An interdisciplinary program, Evolution provides recipients a thorough overview of African American music from 1619 to today.

An award-winning vocalist and speaker, Bruce is in the midst of an inspiring year-long residency centered on the Evolution of African American Music. His work in our community has included school-based programs at Central Middle School and other local schools. His residency will conclude with a performance on April 29, 2023 with wcfssymphony, local vocalist Felicia Smith-Nalls, and the Northern Iowa Youth Orchestra.

This packet contains educator and chaperone information about the orchestra and brief background on the composers we will be featuring. Feel free to utilize these concepts in combination with your own content and methods to orient students during the weeks preceding the concert.

Audio and detailed information about the concert repertoire is at our website (please enter the address as it appears below):

<https://wcfssymphony.org/youth-concerts>

Thank you for including the wcfssymphony Youth Concerts in your plans for this year! We look forward to seeing you and your students on March 28. If you have any questions, please contact wcfssymphony Operations and Education Manager Alex Lafrenz at alafrenz@wcfssymphony.org or (319) 272-3373.

Jason Weinberger
Artistic Director and Conductor

Table of Contents

1. **Unit One: Concert Preparation – p. 4**

Basic Concert Courtesy

The Concert Experience

2. **Unit Two: Some Basics about the Orchestra – p. 6**

What is an orchestra?

How is an orchestra organized?

The conductor's role

Seating Chart of the Orchestra

3. **Unit Three: Composers on the 2023 Youth Concerts – p. 10**

Florence Price

Scott Joplin

William Grant Still

J Dilla

Traditional (no specific composer)

4. **wcfsymphony Education Information and Supporters – p. 13**

Unit One: Concert Preparation and Expectations

Basic Concert Courtesy

In order to ensure everyone's comfort and enjoyment at the performance, we ask that all teachers, chaperones, and students observe the following guidelines:

1. Upon arrival at the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center, quickly and quietly follow the instructions of the ushers. They will get you to your seats and return you to your buses after the concert.
2. No food, drink, chewing gum, cameras, audio or video equipment is allowed inside the concert hall. Please turn OFF all cell phones and electronic devices.
3. Chaperones are responsible for the conduct of their students and should plan to sit among the students rather than on an aisle or next to another adult. We recommend at least one chaperone for every 15-20 students. Students should know in advance that they will be required to sit quietly in their seats for an extended period of time. The concert should last 45-50 minutes.
4. Students should visit the restrooms before the concert begins. It is not possible for students to do this during the performance without disturbing others. However, if an emergency occurs, please notify an usher. An adult must accompany the student to the restroom and then back to the concert hall.
5. Talking during the performance is a distraction to the orchestra members, the music director, soloist, and fellow audience members. Please refrain from conversation while the orchestra is on stage.

What to expect from the concert experience

1. When you enter the concert hall, an usher will direct you to your seats. Remove your coat and get settled. Soft talking is permissible before the concertmaster enters the stage. You will see members of the orchestra come on stage to warm up before the performance begins.

2. The last orchestra member to come on the stage is the concertmaster. This person is the “first chair” violinist and is considered a leading member of the orchestra. You may applaud when the concertmaster comes on stage. This moment is considered the true beginning of the concert.

3. The concertmaster signals to the first oboe to play the pitch “A”. The brass instruments tune to that pitch first, then the woodwinds, and finally the strings. Please be quiet during this process.

4. When Jason comes on stage, the orchestra stands. It is appropriate to applaud at this time. Jason will bow to the audience and then turn to the orchestra to begin. From this point on the audience is expected to be attentive, quiet, and involved listeners.

5. Applause is the most appreciated response to express your thanks to the performers and the conductor for their work. In a youth concert setting it is common for the orchestra to play shortened selections of the music and it is fine to clap between selections. If you are unsure of when to applaud, watch an usher, a chaperone, or someone else who has been to a symphony concert before and follow their lead.

Unit Two: Orchestra Basics

What is an orchestra?

An orchestra is an instrumental ensemble, usually fairly large, with string, brass, woodwind and percussion sections. This ensemble is led by a conductor or music director. A smaller ensemble of about thirty or fewer players including strings, some winds and brass, and possibly timpani is called a chamber orchestra. Another type of small ensemble that consists of only string players is a string orchestra. The word symphony and orchestra have the same basic meaning.

The orchestra that students will see and hear in March is a product of the 19th century, when a variety of factors including industrial production of wind and brass instruments and an increasing formalization of the conductor's role encouraged an explosion in the size and diversity of orchestral forces.

How is an orchestra organized?

Among the instrument families (string, woodwind, brass, and percussion) and within each group of instruments there is a generally accepted hierarchy. Every instrumental group (or section) has a principal player who is responsible for leading their group and playing orchestral solos. The violins are distinctive in that they are divided into two groups, the first violins and the second violins, and each has its own principal. The first chair first violinist is the concertmaster and leader of the full string section.

The principal trombone is considered the leader of the low brass section, while the principal trumpet is generally considered the leader of the entire brass section. Similarly, the principal oboe is considered the leader of the woodwind section and is the player to whom the orchestra tunes. The horn, while technically a brass instrument, often acts in the role of both woodwind and brass. Many sections also have an assistant principal, or in the case of the first violins, an assistant concertmaster, who plays the section part but is also “on call” to replace the concertmaster in his or her absence.

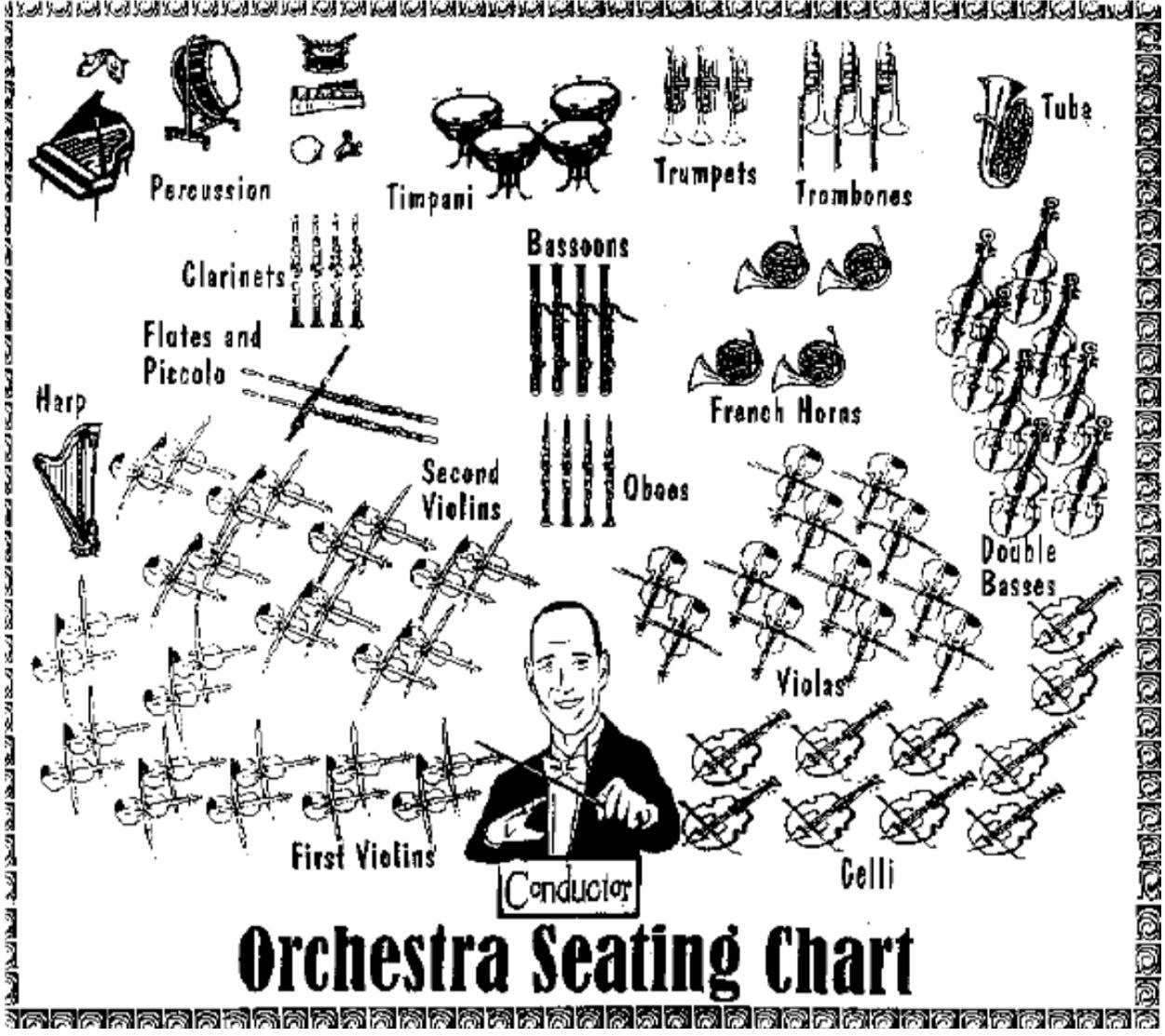
A section string player plays unison with the rest of the section, except in the case of divided (divisi) parts, where upper and lower parts in the music are often assigned to “outside” (nearer the audience) and “inside” players. Where a solo part is called for in a string section, the section principal plays that part. Section wind and brass players generally play an individually unique part. Section percussionists play parts assigned to them by the principal percussionist.

What is the conductor's role?

A modern orchestra is led by a conductor, although early orchestras often used the concertmaster or the keyboard (continuo) player for this role. Some modern chamber orchestras also don't use conductors, particularly smaller orchestras and those specializing in historically accurate performances of Baroque music and earlier repertoire.

The conductor follows a printed score. The score is a "map" of the piece, consisting of all the lines of music for each instrument stacked from the top to the bottom of the page. The lines of music in a typical orchestral score begin at the top with the woodwinds (from highest to lowest instrument) then go down the page with the brass, percussion, and finally the strings at the bottom. The conductor has to study the score and be able to "read" all these lines at the same time!

The job of a conductor is to guide the players through the music as indicated in the score. The conductor moves his/her hands, arms, and body in specific ways to keep the orchestra moving together and to provide gestures to the musicians to show them how the piece should be played. Musicians call this the "interpretation" of the piece. These indications can include the basic pulse or beat of the piece, dynamic changes (loud or soft), tempo changes (faster or slower), reminders to a musician that their solo is coming soon, and guidance for certain shapes and colors within the music. Some conductors use a baton (a long stick) to help show all these indications, but others prefer to use their hands alone.



Orchestra Seating Chart

Unit Three: Composers on the 2023 Youth Concerts

Audio and detailed information about the concert repertoire is at our website (please enter the address as it appears below):

<https://wcfSymphony.org/youth-concerts>

Florence Price (1887-1953) was the first female Black composer to be performed by a major American symphony orchestra and in the course of her career she composed over 300 works. Her music languished in obscurity for decades until 2009, when a substantial collection of her music was found in her abandoned summer home. Her music is now being performed regularly around the world, a recognition of her singular achievement and the start of a much-needed corrective to the lack of diverse perspective in traditional orchestral programming.

Scott Joplin (1868-1917) is among America's earliest and most notable Black composers and is known primarily for his achievements in composing piano rags. Ragtime developed around the turn of the 20th century and drew upon a wide variety of influences including folk and minstrel styles, popular dances, marches, and European classical music. The style had a major influence on the development of jazz music in the first decades of the 20th century.

William Grant Still (1895-1978) is often considered to be the greatest Black orchestral composer our country has heard, and the breadth and quality of his work certainly qualifies him for that honor. Still racked up many firsts among African American classical musicians and was also widely connected to other artists associated with the Harlem Renaissance.

James Yancey (1974-2006) performed and produced under a variety of names including **Jay Dee** and **J Dilla**, alongside the who's who of conscious hip-hop including A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Common, Slum Village, Jaylib and many others. His two decades of work, particularly his beat-making, is now widely viewed as among the most important in the history of hip hop and by extension African American music.

Traditional (no composer) When a piece lists "Traditional" or "Folk" as the composer, this typically means that the words, melody, or chords of the song have no known composer. Instead, these have been passed down through the years, even decades and centuries, from generation to generation. These songs are often changed and transformed over the years, but they still retain much of the original character and meaning of the first "known" or "recorded" version of the song. To be considered a "Traditional" or "Folk" song, there are certain characteristics they often have:

- Passed from generation to generation through oral tradition.
- The songs are related to a national or regional culture.
- They often commemorate historical or personal events.
- They have often been performed over a long period of time, usually for several generations.

Spirituals are a key form of early African American folk music and were one of the important artistic methods used by slaves and ex-slaves to express their situations. Spirituals encompass sing songs, work songs, and plantation songs and ultimately evolved into both the secular blues tradition and church gospel music.

wcfsymphony Education Information and Supporters

While the most visible aspect of our educational programming is our Youth Concert presentation, we have so much more to offer young listeners - and as an educator you have access to much of it!

Our educational programming primarily focuses on five different programs:

1. Music Lab Concerts – For over three decades wcfsymphony’s Lollipops concert have been inspiring the Cedar Valley’s youngest audiences. With a new emphasis on interactivity and creativity we are proud to introduce a fresh incarnation of these community concerts: Music Lab! Music Lab continues as an annual series of free concerts for kids featuring small ensembles from all genres of music. Our beloved Instrument Petting Zoo is a part of all Music Lab events, inviting young listeners to continue each concert’s musical presentation with hands-on instrument exploration.
2. Instrument Petting Zoos – Kids receive hands-on experience with instruments from various families of the orchestra and have a whole lot of fun in the process! The Instrument Petting Zoo appears at all Music Lab Concerts, select wcfsymphony concerts, events throughout the community, and by appointment at schools and childcare centers in the Cedar Valley.
3. The Young Artist Concert Competition is an annual opportunity for high-performing music students from the state of Iowa. The competition is held in Davis Hall at the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center on the University of Northern Iowa campus, Cedar Falls. Students of piano, strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion are encouraged to participate.

4. School Visits – Each year, we set up school visits with both wcfSymphony Artistic Director Jason Weinberger as well as small ensembles made up of symphony musicians. We try to schedule Jason on 8-12 visits a year. Our Ensembles in Schools (EIS) program involves three different ensembles visiting 4 schools each throughout the year to perform and teach in an informal setting.
5. Youth Concerts - Our Youth Concerts inspire 4,000 4th-6th graders each spring and serve schools from an 8-county radius. These free concerts feature the full orchestra in creative and interactive programs.

None of these educational programs would be possible without the generous support we receive from organizations, non-profits, and individuals within the community. wcfSymphony educational programs are made possible by generous grants from the R.J. McElroy Trust, Guernsey Charitable Foundation, Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa, the wcfSymphony Education Committee, Martha Kroese, anonymous, Wells Fargo, The Cedar Falls Community Foundation's Kathryn Ray Fund for the Cedar Falls Public Library, and Steve and Terri Jackson Family Fund.

If you would like more information about any of these programs and how you can get access for your students, please feel free to reach out:

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