

2025



SARASOTA INSTITUTE  
OF LIFETIME LEARNING



THE  
PRESIDENT'S  
INBOX



## GLOBAL ISSUES LECTURE SERIES

*AN INSIDER'S VIEW  
OF TODAY'S WORLD*

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



# LEARNING NEVER ENDS *on the bay.*

Plymouth Harbor on Sarasota Bay is proud of our long-standing support for The Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning (SILL). Whether on our campus, within Sarasota or beyond, we value the pursuit of knowledge and passion for creativity as core components of our entire community.



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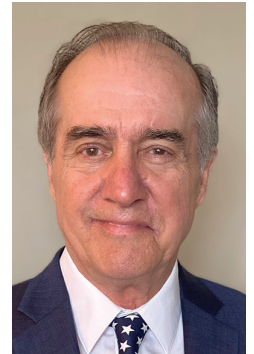


700 John Ringling Blvd. | Sarasota, Florida 34236



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to SILL's 54th season. We are enormously proud to bring you stimulating and engaging lectures on **Global Issues** and the exploration of the wide-ranging careers of musicians on **Music Mondays**.



Our 2025 season will include the President's potential in-box by Charles Lane. We feature Ambassadors Beyrle and Ross on Russia and Israel and the futures of our democracy by Jeremi Suri and foreign policy by Jeremy Shapiro. Jeffrey Moon and Shelley Riggers will discuss China. Immigration and global demographic trends will be addressed by Katherine Donato, Daniel Tichenor, and Toshiko Kaneda. Health and wellness issues will be presented by John Bruno on the brain, and Bob Bunting on climate change. New topics this season include viewpoints on artificial intelligence from Frank Ostroff and Elliot Ackerman and the possibility of war in space by Wendy Whitman Cobb.

**Music Mondays** offerings as assembled by Joseph Holt, are once again superlative. You will hear from piano/instrumental duos including the Aznavoorian sisters, singers such as the singer-pianist duet of Aquila Sol and Jacob Kerzner, Matrick Thorpe, winner of the Artists Series contest in cello, and percussionist Steely Rhoden on steel drums, and our Sarasota orchestra's Hanna Kim and Marcelina Suchocka. You will be intrigued by Amir El Soffar who plays the Shakuhachi (Japanese flute).

Our venues remain the same as last year. In video-on-demand, we will add the **Music Mondays** programs as recorded in Sarasota to offerings of the Thursday Sarasota **Global Issues** presentations. Ticketing will be slightly different this year. For Series and Flex pass tickets delivered via mail or will call, customers will receive one-time use tickets for each event. E-ticket delivery will deliver one ticket that can be used (scanned) for all the events purchased.

Your significant support of SILL this year via the Community Foundation's Giving Challenge is much appreciated. Please consider continuing your support by making an additional contribution as a "Friend of SILL" when you purchase your tickets. We are an "all-volunteer" organization, and every dollar goes to support and improve our programs.

With warm regards,  
Jeff Olesen, *President*

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## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Elliot Ackerman** is the New York Times bestselling author of the novels *2054*, *Halcyon*, *2034*, *Red Dress In Black and White*, *Waiting for Eden*, and *Dark at the Crossing*, also the memoir *The Fifth Act: America's End in Afghanistan*, and *Places and Names: On War, Revolution and Returning*. His books have been nominated for the National Book Award,

the Andrew Carnegie Medal in both fiction and nonfiction, and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize among others. He is a contributing writer at *The Atlantic* and is both a Marine and CIA veteran who served five tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, where he received the Silver Star, the Bronze Star for Valor, and the Purple Heart.

Ackerman holds a B.A. from Tufts University and a Master's degree in international affairs from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He has completed many of the United States military's most challenging special operations training courses and also served as a White House Fellow. Ackerman is currently a Senior Fellow at Yale University's Jackson School of Global Affairs. He serves on the board of the Atlantic Council and is a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

He divides his time between New York City and Washington, D.C.



**Amb. John Beyrle** was elected Chairman of the U.S. Russia Foundation in October 2018. Prior to this, he served as an American diplomat for three decades in a career focused on the Soviet Union and Russia, and Central and Eastern Europe. He served as ambassador to Bulgaria (2005-08), and to Russia (2008-12). During the latter assignment, Amb. Beyrle

helped foster improved U.S.-Russian relations, highlighted by the signing of the New START nuclear arms reduction treaty.

Amb. Beyrle received the Presidential Distinguished Service Award from President Obama, and the Presidential Meritorious Service Award during the administration of George W. Bush. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented him with the Distinguished Service Award, the State Department's highest honor. He retired from the Foreign Service in 2012 as a Career Minister.

Amb. Beyrle holds a bachelor's degree with honors from Grand Valley State University and an M.S. as a Distinguished Graduate from the National War College.

For more information visit our website

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**Dr. John Bruno** is an Emeritus Professor at Ohio State University, specializing in neuroscience, psychology, and psychiatry. Dr. Bruno's research focuses on the neurochemical mechanisms underlying cognitive deficits in aging and neuropsychiatric disorders like Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, and compulsive drug use. His lab uses animal models to

study attentional dysfunctions and cognitive flexibility, aiming to develop effective treatments for these impairments.

Throughout his career, Dr. Bruno has contributed significantly to the field of neuropsychopharmacology, developing translational models to test new pharmacotherapies for cognitive enhancement. His research has provided valuable insights into the causes of cognitive deficits in neuropsychiatric disorders and has influenced the development of potential treatments.

Although retired, Dr. Bruno's contributions to neuroscience continue to influence the field. He remains engaged in research and is recognized for his dedication to advancing our understanding of brain function and cognitive health.

Dr. Bruno received his B.S. in Biology from the University of Pittsburgh and his Ph.D. in Behavioral Neuroscience from Johns Hopkins University.



**Bob Bunting**, a scientist and serial entrepreneur, is the CEO of the Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Center, an organization dedicated to providing information about the impact of global warming. He is also the CEO of Waterstone Strategies, a business consulting firm. He served as CEO of Pathogen Systems, a company that is commercializing

liquid crystal technology, from 2005 to 2011.

Within the academic community, Mr. Bunting was instrumental in the development of the Entrepreneurship Program at the University of Colorado Leeds School of Business where he served on the faculty. Mr. Bunting taught courses in atmospheric science at several colleges and universities.

Since 1988 he has been on the Board of Directors for the Colorado Music Festival. He is presently on the advisory boards of the University of Colorado College of Music and the Deming Center for Entrepreneurship.

Mr. Bunting holds B.S. & M.S. degrees in Atmospheric Science from St. Louis University.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Katharine M. Donato** holds the Donald G. Herzberg Chair in International Migration and is Director of the Institute for the Study of International Migration in the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. Her research addresses questions related to global migration.

Her most recent work includes two articles on the use of organic big data to predict forced migration in *The International Migration* (co-authored with Lisa Singh, Ali Arab, Elizabeth Jacobs, and Nathan Wycoff); and edited volumes on the landscape of U.S. legal migration and refugee integration in Canada, Europe and the United States. Her books include *Refugees, Migration and Global Governance: Negotiating the Global Compacts* (2019, with Elizabeth Ferris), and *Gender and International Migration: From the Slavery Era to the Global Age* (2015, with Donna Gabaccia). She is the Principal Investigator on a project about the assimilation and mobility experiences of U.S. immigrant adults who entered as unaccompanied children. She is also the co-Principal Investigator on a project that examines how environmental conditions affect out-migration from communities in southwestern Bangladesh.

Prior to joining the Georgetown faculty, she was on the faculty of Vanderbilt and Rice Universities. She holds a Ph.D. from SUNY-Stony Brook.



**Dr. Toshiko Kaneda** joined the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) in 2004. She has 20+ years of experience conducting demographic research and analysis, and communicating population and health issues to policymakers, journalists, and the public. Dr. Kaneda has written more than 70 research and policy communication publications on

a range of topics, including non-communicable diseases, population aging, health care access, reproductive health and family planning, climate adaptation, big data, and digital health. Dr. Kaneda directs data analysis for the World Population Data Sheet and provides technical guidance on demographic and statistical methods within PRB and with external partners. She also directs PRB's U.S. Policy Communications Training Program, which trains U.S. doctoral students to translate scientific research findings for non-scientific audiences, and leads PRB's analytical contribution to the Demographics of African Faculty project in the East Africa Community (DAF-EAC).

Prior to joining PRB, Dr. Kaneda was a Bernard Berelson Fellow at the Population Council in New York City. She holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Charles Kupchan** is Professor of International Affairs in the School of Foreign Service and Government Department at Georgetown University, and Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. From 2014 to 2017, Dr. Kupchan served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European Affairs on the National Security Council in the Obama White House. He was also Director for European Affairs on the National Security Council during the first Clinton administration. His most recent books are *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World* (2020), *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn* (2012), and *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace* (2010).

Dr. Kupchan holds a B.A. from Harvard University and MPhil and DPhil degrees from Oxford University.



**Ellen Laipson** is the Director of the International Security Program at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University and directs the Center for Security Policy Studies. She joined GMU in 2017 after a distinguished 25-year career in government and as President and CEO of the Stimson Center (2002-2015). Her last post in government was Vice Chair of the National Intelligence Council (1997-2002). She also served on the State Department's policy planning staff, and the National Security Council staff, and worked at the Congressional Research Service for more than a decade.

A member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the American Academy of Diplomacy, Ms. Laipson serves on the Advisory Councils of Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Notre Dame's International Security Center, the Center for Climate and Security, and WWF's Oceans Futures. She was a member of the CIA External Advisory Panel from 2006-2009, President Obama's Intelligence Advisory Board from 2009-2013, and the Secretary of State's Foreign Affairs Policy Board from 2011-2014.

Ms. Laipson holds an M.A. from the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, and an A.B. from Cornell University.

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## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Charles Lane** is a deputy opinion editor and columnist at *The Washington Post*. He joined *The Post* in 2000 as an editorial writer, did a stint as *The Post*'s Supreme Court reporter, and then rejoined the editorial board in 2007. Previously, he was an editor and a senior editor of the *New Republic* from 1993 to 1999 and a foreign correspondent for *Newsweek* from 1987 to 1993 where he covered Central America and later Germany.

Mr. Lane is the author of three books on U.S. history and legal affairs and is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He was a Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing in 2009.

Mr. Lane holds a B.A. from Harvard University and a Master of Studies in Law from Yale Law School.



**Dr. Keir Lieber** is a Professor in Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and Department of Government. He served as Director of the Security Studies Program from 2018 to 2022. Dr. Lieber's research and teaching interests include nuclear weapons, deterrence, and strategy; technology and the causes of war; U.S. national security policy; and international relations theory. He is co-author of *The Myth of the Nuclear Revolution: Power Politics in the Atomic Age* (2020); author of *War and the Engineers: The Primacy of Politics over Technology* (2005); and editor of *War, Peace, and International Political Realism*.

Dr. Lieber's articles have appeared in leading scholarly and foreign policy publications, including *International Security*, *Security Studies*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *The Atlantic*. He has been awarded major fellowships from the Brookings Institution, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Council on Foreign Relations, and Smith Richardson Foundation.

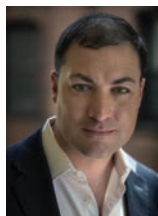
Dr. Lieber received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and his B.A. from the University of Wisconsin.



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## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Sean McFate** is an author and national security strategist. He holds three professorships at Georgetown, the National Defense University, and Syracuse University. Previously, he was a social scientist at RAND and a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council.

Dr. McFate began his career as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division and then became a global private military contractor. He authored *The New Rules of War: How America Can Win – Against Russia, China, and Other Threats* (2020), named a "Book of the Year" by *The Economist*. He also wrote *The Modern Mercenary: Private Armies and What They Mean for World Order* (2015), which *Foreign Affairs* called "essential reading." Additionally, Dr. McFate is a successful novelist, authoring the Tom Locke series.

Dr. McFate holds a B.A. from Brown University, an M.P.P. from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and a Ph.D. in international relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is based in Washington, D.C.



**Dr. Mohsen Milani** is the Executive Director of the Center for Strategic & Diplomatic Studies and Professor of Politics at the University of South Florida. He served as a department chair from 1998 to 2012.

Dr. Milani has written more than sixty academic articles and book chapters. His book, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution*, has been used as required reading in many universities in the U.S., Europe, Japan, Canada, and Iran. His recent publications include "The Ayatollah's Game Plan" (*Foreign Affairs*), "Rouhani's Foreign Policy" (*Foreign Affairs*), "The Rise and Fall of Rafsanjani" (*The Atlantic*), "Meet Me in Baghdad" (*Foreign Affairs*), "Iran's U.S. Policy" (*Foreign Affairs*), and "Iran's policy toward Iraq" (book chapter). He is currently writing a book about Iranian foreign policy. At USF World, he has been conducting a new "Conversation Series on Global Security." Prominent experts have been invited to the program for in-depth conversations with him.

Born in Tehran, Dr. Milani completed his high school and higher education in the U.S. and received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Southern California.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Jeffrey Moon** is President of China Moon Strategies, LLC, a consulting firm he founded in 2017 after leaving the White House, where he served as Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for China Affairs and previously at the National Security Council. His extensive experience in Asia includes ten years working in China since he first visited that country in 1984. During a 21-year career as a U.S. State Department diplomat, he served in Beijing, Chengdu, and Taiwan, and was assigned in Washington, D.C. to the China Desk and the predecessor of the Cyberspace Bureau. After retiring from the Foreign Service, Mr. Moon was Vice President of Asia-Pacific Policy & Government Affairs at Cisco Systems and Vice President of Worldwide Government Relations & Public Policy at Dolby. He was assigned to Beijing, Silicon Valley, and Washington, D.C. in roles focused primarily on business in China.

Mr. Moon began his career as an attorney at the Skadden, Arps law firm in Washington, D.C. He is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and Columbia Law School.



**Frank Ostroff** is a renowned management theorist and consultant, best known for his pioneering work on organizational design and change management. His most influential work is his book, *The Horizontal Organization*, where he presents a compelling alternative to the traditional vertical hierarchy. He argues that horizontal organizations, which focus on processes rather than functions, can significantly improve performance by fostering collaboration and reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies. His ideas have helped many private sector, public sector, and non-profit/ NGO organizations worldwide achieve transformational change.

Mr. Ostroff has also contributed to the academic and professional literature on management. His articles, such as those published in the *Harvard Business Review*, provide insights into effective change management strategies, particularly in the public sector. He emphasizes the importance of aligning organizational structures with mission goals, engaging stakeholders, and maintaining a clear roadmap for change. His contributions have had a lasting impact on how organizations approach structure and change, making him a key figure in modern management theory.

Mr. Ostroff holds a J.D. from Yale Law School, an M.P.P. from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and a B.A. (with High Honors) from UC Berkeley.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Shelley Rigger** is Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Faculty, and Brown Professor of Asian Studies at Davidson University. Her research and writing focus on Taiwanese politics and the relationships between the United States, the People's Republic of China, and Taiwan.

In 2019-2020 she was a Fulbright scholar at National Taiwan University in Taipei, studying the political and social views of Taiwanese youth. She has been a visiting professor at universities in the People's Republic of China: Fudan University (2006) and Shanghai Jiaotong University (2013 & 2015), and a visiting researcher at National Chengchi University in Taiwan in 2005. Dr. Rigger is also a non-resident fellow of the China Policy Institute at Nottingham University and a senior fellow of the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI). She interacts frequently with US government officials, especially in the Taiwan policy field.

Dr. Rigger has written two books for general readers on Taiwan – *Why Taiwan Matters: Small Island, Global Powerhouse* (2011) and *The Tiger Leading the Dragon: How Taiwan Propelled China's Economic Rise* (2021).

Dr. Rigger is a director of The Taiwan Fund, a closed-end investment fund specializing in Taiwan-listed companies. She has a B.A. from Princeton University and a Ph.D. from Harvard University.



**Amb. Dennis Ross** is a counselor and William Davidson Distinguished Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. For more than 12 years he played a leading role in shaping U.S. involvement in the Middle East peace process as the U.S. point man on the peace process in both the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations. Amb. Ross also served two years as special assistant to President Obama and National Security Council Senior Director for the Central Region and a year as special advisor to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Earlier he played a prominent role in U.S. policy towards the former Soviet Union, the unification of Germany, and its integration into NATO. His most recent book, *Be Strong and of Good Courage: How Israel's Most Important Leaders Shaped Its Destiny*, written with his colleague David Makovsky, profiles four Israeli prime ministers who made historic choices. It examines lessons from past decisions to help Israel's leaders address the critical choice they must soon make to avoid becoming a binational state by default.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Amb. Eric Rubin** is currently a senior fellow with the RAND Corporation, the Center for European Policy Analysis, and the American Academy of Diplomacy. He was elected to serve as the President of the American Foreign Service Association after his posting as U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria (2016-2019).

Amb. Rubin retired from the Foreign Service in 2023. He joined the Foreign Service in 1985 after graduating from Yale. In 1994 he served as Deputy Political Counsellor in Kiev, Ukraine. From 1989 to 1991 he worked in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs where he monitored and reported on the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 2001 he was posted to Chiang Mai, Thailand as Consul General. In 2004 he returned to Washington as the director of the Office of Policy Planning and Coordination in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. In 2006 he served as the executive assistant to R. Nicholas Burns, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs at the time. From 2008 to 2011 he served as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow.



**Jeremy Shapiro** is the research director of the European Council on Foreign Relations. His areas of focus include U.S. foreign policy and transatlantic relations.

Mr. Shapiro was previously a fellow with the Project on International Order and Strategy and the Center on the United States and Europe at Brookings, where he edited the Foreign Policy program's blog *Order from Chaos*. Prior to Brookings, he was a member of the U.S. State Department's policy planning staff, where he advised the Secretary of State on U.S. policy in North Africa and the Levant. He was also the senior advisor to Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Gordon, providing strategic guidance on a wide variety of U.S.-European foreign policy issues.

Mr. Shapiro has a B.A. in computer science from Harvard University, a Master's Degree in international relations and international economics from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, and a Ph.D. candidate at M.I.T.



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## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Jeremi Suri** holds the Mack Brown Distinguished Chair for Leadership in Global Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a professor in the University's Department of History and the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs.

Dr. Suri is the author and editor of eleven books on contemporary politics and foreign policy, most recently *Civil War By Other Means: America's Long and Unfinished Fight for Democracy* (2022). His writings appear in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, CNN.com, and other media. Dr. Suri is a popular public lecturer and comments frequently on radio and television news.

Dr. Suri's writing and teaching have received numerous prizes including the President's Associates Teaching Excellence Award from the University of Texas and the Pro Bene Meritis Award for Contributions to the Liberal Arts. Together with his son Zachary, he hosts the weekly podcast "This Is Democracy."

Dr. Suri holds an A.B. in history from Stanford University, an M.A. in history from Ohio University, and a Ph.D. in history from Yale University.



**Amb. John Tefft** is a retired United States diplomat and holds a Distinguished Chair in Diplomacy and Security at the RAND Corporation. He was a career Foreign Service Officer for more than 45 years. He served as U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation from 2014 to 2017, to Ukraine from 2009 to 2013, to Georgia from 2004 to 2009, and to Lithuania from 2000 to 2003. Other assignments included service as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs and as the International Affairs Advisor at the National War College. Amb. Tefft originally retired from the Foreign Service in September 2013 and served as Executive Director of the RAND Corporation's U.S.-Russia Business Leaders Forum until his recall to duty and confirmation as U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation.

Amb. Tefft is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Secretary of State's Distinguished Service Award, the American Foreign Service Association's Lifetime Contributions to Diplomacy Award, and the Diplomacy for Human Rights Award in 2013.

Amb. Tefft holds a B.A. from Marquette University and a Master's degree from Georgetown University.



## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Daniel Tichenor** is the Philip H. Knight Chair of Political Science and Director of the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics at the University of Oregon. An expert on American politics and history, immigration and refugee policy, social movements, and the U.S. Presidency, he has published eight books, more than 80 academic journal articles and book chapters, and numerous popular essays. His books include *Democracy's Child: Young People and the Politics of Control, Leverage, and Agency* (2022), *Rivalry and Reform: Presidents, Social Movements, and the Transformation of American Politics* (2018), *The Politics of International Migration* (2012), and *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control* (2002). His forthcoming book is *Unsettled: Governing Immigration in a Polarized Nation*.

Dr. Tichenor's research awards include the Kammerer Award for the best book on U.S. policy, the Jack Walker Prize, the Parker Follette Award, the Polity Prize, and the Charles Redd Award. He was named to the inaugural class of Andrew Carnegie Fellows for "extraordinary research addressing urgent challenges to U.S. democracy and the international order." Dr. Tichenor holds a Ph.D. in political science from Brandeis University.



**Lina Tori Jan** serves as a Policy Officer at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security and leads the Institute's Afghanistan initiative, Onward for Afghan Women, elevating and supporting Afghan women leaders with opportunities to continue their advocacy. Shaped by her experiences as an Afghan woman raised in Afghanistan, Ms. Tori Jan has worked

around the globe with companies, NGOs, and governments, assisting in their efforts to create a more just society. She also serves on the Board of RefugePoint, an international NGO that supports refugees in more than 30 countries, and as an Advisor to the Oxford Character Project, lending expertise in values-based leadership.

Ms. Tori Jan recently joined the Executive Board of Advisors of the Jepson School of Leadership at the University of Richmond where she graduated with a B.A. in leadership studies and political science in 2020. She attended graduate school as a Jepson Scholar at the University of Oxford, where she earned a master's degree in public policy. Her work has been featured on NBC's *The Today Show*, BBC, ABC, CBS, NPR, and in *The Washington Post*.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Martin Walker** is now in his third successful career, his first being 30 years in journalism for the *Guardian* and United Press International, a second of ten years with think tanks including the World Policy Council, the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, and as Director of the Global Business Policy Council.

He is now a widely read writer and novelist and has sold seven million books in 19 languages, best known for his Bruno Chief of Police series, some short stories, and in recent years *The Bruno's Cookbook*. Written with his wife, Julia, it was awarded the Gourmand International Prize as the world's best French cookbook. He is also a Grand Consul of the wines of Bergerac and was awarded a gold medal by the French government for his services to tourism.

Mr. Walker is a graduate of Balliol College in Oxford, England.



**Dr. Wendy Whitman Cobb** is a Professor of Strategy and Security Studies at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS). Her research focuses on the political and institutional dynamics of space policy, public opinion on space exploration, and the influence of commerce on potential space conflict. Dr. Whitman Cobb's work has been published in *Space Policy, Astropolitics, Congress and the Presidency, Strategic Studies Quarterly, and The Journal of Political Science Education*. She has published several academic works including a political science textbook, *Political Science Today* (2023), *Privatizing Peace: How Commerce Can Reduce Conflict in Space* (2020), and most recently, *Space Policy for the 21st Century* (2024), a first-of-its-kind space policy textbook co-authored with Derrick Frazier.

Dr. Whitman Cobb received a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Central Florida, both in political science and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Florida.



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# SARASOTA

# VENICE

## GLOBAL ISSUES

## GLOBAL ISSUES

First United Methodist Church  
 Tuesday 10:30 am      Thursday 10:30 am

Venice Community Center  
 Tuesday 2:30 pm      Friday 10:00 am

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

<b>7</b>	<i>Changing American Attitudes on Foreign Policy: A Challenge to Policymakers</i> Jeremy Shapiro	<b>9</b>	<i>Ukraine: Standing Firm with Our Allies to Support Democracy</i> Eric Rubin
<b>14</b>	<i>The President's Inbox</i> Charles Lane	<b>16</b>	<i>Iran: New President, New Policies?</i> Mohsen Milani
<b>21</b>	<i>Climate Change and Health: The Cost of Inaction</i> Bob Bunting	<b>23</b>	<i>Does the West Have a Future?</i> Charles Kupchan
<b>28</b>	<i>Space as a Warfighting Domain</i> Wendy Whitman Cobb	<b>30</b>	<i>Major Challenges for Europe</i> Martin Walker
<b>4</b>	<i>Women's Rights and Leadership in Afghanistan: Struggles and Resilience</i> Lina Tori Jan	<b>6</b>	<i>How Do We Preserve Democracy in the 21st Century?</i> Jeremy Suri
<b>11</b>	<i>The Dark Arts: Ungentlemanly Warfare for Our Time</i> Sean McFate	<b>13</b>	<i>New Faces, New Places: Global Migration in a Complex World</i> Katharine Donato
<b>18</b>	<i>The Current State and Probable Future of Russia</i> John Beyrle	<b>20</b>	<i>Israel at War, the Second Year</i> Dennis Ross
<b>25</b>	<i>Artificial Intelligence: Changing How We Work</i> Frank Ostroff	<b>27</b>	<i>The Next Nuclear War</i> Keir Lieber
<b>4</b>	<i>Artificial Intelligence: Changing the Future of War</i> Elliot Ackerman	<b>6</b>	<i>Population Puzzle: Understanding Global Demographic Changes</i> Toshiko Kaneda
<b>11</b>	<i>The Middle East You Don't Know</i> Ellen Laipson	<b>13</b>	<i>Understanding The Brain</i> John Bruno
<b>18</b>	<i>Chasm: Governing Immigration in a Fractured Nation</i> Daniel Tichenor	<b>20</b>	<i>The U.S. &amp; China: Inseparable Frenemies</i> Jeffrey Moon
<b>25</b>	<i>China's Economic Rise: Where Did it Come From and Where is it Headed?</i> Shelly Rigger	<b>27</b>	<i>Vladimir Putin: In the Tradition of Brutal Russian Autocrats or Unique Leader</i> John Tefft

JANUARY

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# LAKWOOD RANCH

## GLOBAL ISSUES

Cornerstone Church

Wednesday 11:00 am

Thursday 5:00 pm

JANUARY

<b>8</b>	<i>Changing American Attitudes on Foreign Policy: A Challenge to Policymakers</i> Jeremy Shapiro	<b>9</b>	<i>Ukraine: Standing Firm with Our Allies to Support Democracy</i> Eric Rubin
<b>15</b>	<i>The President's Inbox</i> Charles Lane	<b>16</b>	<i>Iran: New President, New Policies?</i> Mohsen Milani
<b>22</b>	<i>Climate Change and Health: The Cost of Inaction</i> Bob Bunting	<b>23</b>	<i>Does the West Have a Future?</i> Charles Kupchan
<b>29</b>	<i>Space as a Warfighting Domain</i> Wendy Whitman Cobb	<b>30</b>	<i>Major Challenges for Europe</i> Martin Walker

FEBRUARY

<b>5</b>	<i>Women's Rights and Leadership in Afghanistan: Struggles and Resilience</i> Lina Tori Jan	<b>6</b>	<i>How Do We Preserve Democracy in the 21st Century?</i> Jeremy Suri
<b>12</b>	<i>The Dark Arts: Ungentlemanly Warfare for Our Time</i> Sean McFate	<b>13</b>	<i>New Faces, New Places: Global Migration in a Complex World</i> Katharine Donato
<b>19</b>	<i>The Current State and Probable Future of Russia</i> John Beyrle	<b>20</b>	<i>Israel at War, the Second Year</i> Dennis Ross
<b>26</b>	<i>Artificial Intelligence: Changing How We Work</i> Frank Ostroff	<b>27</b>	<i>The Next Nuclear War</i> Keir Lieber

MARCH

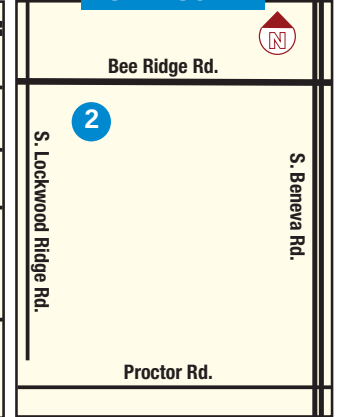
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# SILL PROGRAM LOCATIONS

## SARASOTA



## SARASOTA

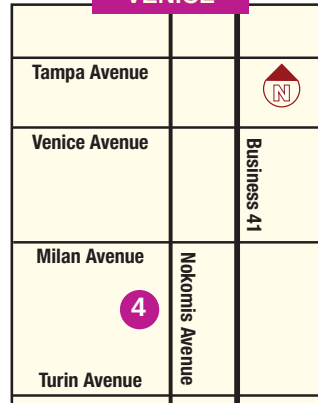


## LAKWOOD RANCH

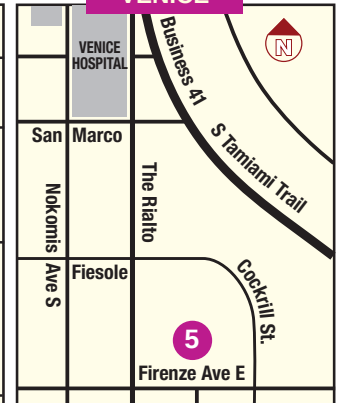


- 1** *First Church*  
104 S. Pineapple Ave
- 2** *Church of the Palms*  
3224 Bee Ridge Rd
- 3** *Cornerstone Church*  
14306 Covenant Way
- 4** *Venice Community Center*  
326 S. Nokomis Ave  
(next to Venice Public Library)
- 5** *Venice Presbyterian Church*  
825 The Rialto  
(south of Venice Hospital)

## VENICE



## VENICE





## 2025 MAIL-IN ORDER FORM – LIVE PERFORMANCES ONLY

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Yes  No  Please include me on your mailing list.

Complete reverse side of this form and mail it with your check payable to:

SILL Registrar  
 Box 219  
 8499 S. Tamiami Trail  
 Sarasota, FL 34238

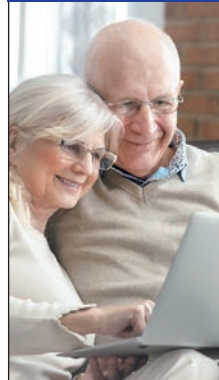
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Sarasota: 10:30 am Church of the Palms  
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JANUARY	6	<i>Aznavorian Duo</i> Cello and Piano Duo	13	<i>Celil Refik Kaya</i> Guitar
	20	<i>Aquila Soll/Jacob Kerzner</i> Broadway Singer and Pianist	27	<i>Ravon "Steely" Rhoden</i> Steel Drums
FEBRUARY	3	<i>Matrick Thorpe</i> Cello (Artist Series Concerts Winner-Local)	10	<i>Dave Bennett</i> Clarinet
	17	<i>Charles Lazarus/David Cherwien</i> Trumpet and Organ	24	<i>Living by the Stream</i> Violin Soprano and Guitar
MARCH	3	<i>James Nyoraku Schlefer</i> Shakuhachi (Japanese flute)	10	<i>Hanna Kim/ Marcelina Suchocka</i> Percussionists from the Sarasota Orchestra
	17	<i>Michelle Johnson</i> Soprano (Sarasota Opera)	24	<i>Ivory &amp; Gold®</i> Flute and Piano



From 1980 to 1992, **Craig Kennedy** worked for the Joyce Foundation, a Chicago philanthropy, and served as its president for six years. From 1995 to 2014, Kennedy was the president of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), an American organization devoted to transatlantic cooperation. GMF undertook many new initiatives in the Balkans, Black Sea region, and elsewhere during his tenure.

Since 2014, Kennedy has worked as a consultant to for-profit and nonprofit entities. He also served on the board of First Solar, the largest American maker of solar panels, and several nonprofit boards.



A native of New York City, **Jeff Olesen** has lived in Sarasota since 2012 after retiring as a Senior Foreign Service Officer of the U.S. Department of State. He served several two-to-four-year postings including Guadalajara, Mexico; Abu Dhabi, UAE, Lahore, Pakistan, Washington, DC; Budapest, Hungary; Almaty, Kazakhstan; Athens, Greece; Vienna, Austria and Miami, FL. Since retiring he has done several short two-to-four-month tours in Luxembourg, Vienna, and in Turkey in Adana, Ankara, and Istanbul.

Jeff graduated from Cornell University with a B.A. in History and Government in 1970. He earned an M.B.A. in Finance from West Virginia University in 1978. Before joining the Foreign Service, he worked for 17 years in the private sector, working in retailing for seven years with Montgomery Ward and then in finance working with Merrill Lynch, Smith Barney, and his firm, Olesen, Houser and Associates.

Jeff has remained active in retirement serving on the Boards and as President of the Sarasota-Manatee chapters of the United Nations Association of the U.S.A., the Cornell Club, and the Sarasota Chorus of the Keys. He is currently President of SILL.

## LECTURES USING CONVERSATION FORMAT

For our 2025 program year, three lectures will use the conversation format with well-qualified board members:

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**Mar. 27-28 - Amb. John Tefft with Michael Boorstein**

We hope you enjoy this format.



**Michael A. Boorstein**, a native of Bethesda, Maryland, served 35 years as a Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State, working abroad at seven diplomatic posts in Europe, Africa, East Asia, and Latin America; and four years as a senior United Nations official with the Pan American Health Organization.

A resident of Longboat Key since 2017, Michael has been active in the community. He is a board member of the Foreign Service Retirees Association of Florida (FSRA). He just completed a term as co-president of Temple Beth Israel on Longboat Key. He is currently vice president of SILL.

He has a BA in Psychology from Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin, and an MBA from The George Washington University.



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The listing is for donations received between 8/1/23 and 7/31/24.

Although space constraints only allow acknowledgment of contributions at and above the \$50 level in this booklet, all contributions are gratefully appreciated.

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Volunteer support is critical to SILL being in a position to continue offering the Global Issues and Music Series that audiences have enjoyed over the past 53 years.

For every lecture a full complement of volunteers is required to ensure everything runs smoothly. They include the parking facilitators, ushers, greeters, ticket sales and/or logistics administrators, as well as others.

While the Global Issues and Music Series run January through March, the SILL Board works throughout the year in preparation for the next season.

If you have the interest and desire to join the many volunteers who are already involved, and wish to learn more, please contact:

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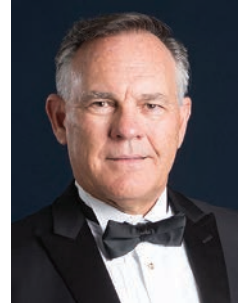


*Illustration by Zoe Hansen*



## OVERVIEW

Welcome to the *Music Mondays* 2025 season! As the artistic counterpart to the *Global Issues* programs presented by Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning, the musical journey this season features a host of duo performers as well as a couple of unusual instruments. Musical performance is an ephemeral art that caresses



our ears and touches our souls in unique and individual ways. We all experience the joy of music, allowing it to bathe us in the poetry of sound, yet we all react to this art form through our own perception and acceptance. The unusual aspect of this program is that we also incorporate a musical conversation with invited artists, giving us insight into their lives and musical activities. Invariably, musicians also participate in a variety of endeavors that are extra-musical or they incorporate their performance into social programs that enhance and better their communities. And, as is typically the case, musicians have diverse thoughts about their role in society, how they fit into our era, and what meaning they can bring to our lives. Each of our artists this season has a story to tell, and the experience is illuminating; their performances are frequently scintillating.

Instead of highlighting any one performer or group of sessions, I encourage you to explore each one of these musical artists through our brochure. With the modern era internet, you can also read more about them and even hear many of their performances through websites that will whet your appetite for their appearance in Sarasota and Venice. I can promise that the live experience will be even more fascinating and entertaining. You'll also see that the tradition of engaging artists from a variety of disciplines, backgrounds, and diversities along with some exceptional local talent will be featured.

Betsy Hudson Traba, co-host for these programs, and I are thrilled to present the 2025 season of *Music Mondays* and look forward to seeing you and engaging with you in the coming year.

*Joseph Holt*



## MUSIC MONDAYS

Musical Conversations

### SARASOTA

10:30 am – Church of the Palms

### VENICE

3:00 pm – Venice Presbyterian Church

#### – JANUARY 6 –

##### *Aznavoorian Duo, Cello and Piano Duo*

The Aznavoorian Duo, sisters **Ani** (cellist) and **Marta** (pianist), had their first public performance at the ages of 4 and 8 at their Armenian church in Evanston, IL. They won First Prize in the Illinois Bell Young Performers Competition, resulting in a live performance with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on PBS.

#### – JANUARY 13 –

##### *Celil Refik Kaya, Guitar*

Since his concert debut at the age of 6, Turkish American guitarist and composer **Dr. Celil Refik Kaya** has received high promised accolades from an early age. Dr. Kaya is currently the Coordinator of Guitar Studies at New Jersey City University and Kean University.

#### – JANUARY 20 –

##### *Aquila Sol and Jacob Kerzner, Broadway Singer and Pianist*

**Aquila Sol**, soprano, is a Senior studying for her BFA in Musical Theatre at the University of Michigan with a minor in Performing Arts Management & Entrepreneurship. **Jacob Kerzner**, pianist, is the Associate Editor for the George and Ira Gershwin Critical Edition at the University of Michigan.

#### – JANUARY 27 –

##### *Ravon “Steely” Rhoden, Steel Drums*

**Ravon Rhoden** steel drum performer, has established himself as one of the most innovative and vital voices in modern reggae. Born and raised in Montego Bay, Jamaica, his music pays tribute to legends like Bob Marley and Dennis Brown while pushing the genre into bold new territory.

#### – FEBRUARY 3 –

##### *Matrick Thorpe, Cello (Artist Series Concerts Winner)*

**Matrick Thorpe** is a 17-year-old contemporary/classical cellist from Sarasota, Florida, where he attends Pine View School for the Gifted. While studying classical with cellist Ann Alton, he has received several performance scholarships and awards, the most recent from the Artist Series Suncoast Competition.

#### – FEBRUARY 10 –

##### *Dave Bennett, Clarinet*

**Dave Bennett** jazz clarinet, doesn't fit the mold. You may not find even one other clarinet virtuoso who breaks from his Swing Era repertoire to sing rockabilly hits while accompanying himself at the piano or electric guitar. He's also a songwriter - his first rock album is "Nowhere Fast".

## SARASOTA and VENICE PROGRAMS

#### – FEBRUARY 17 –

##### *Charles Lazarus and David Cherwien, Trumpet and Organ*

**Charles Lazarus**, trumpeter, is a multi-faceted performer who has charted a unique course over his career including tenures in several of the best-known brass ensembles in the world. **David Cherwien**, former Artistic Director of the National Lutheran Choir, is a nationally known conductor, composer, and organist.

#### – FEBRUARY 24 –

##### *Living by the Stream, Violin, Soprano and Guitar*

*Living by the Stream*, a father-daughter duo of **Sarah Dowell**, violin, and **Steve Dowell**, guitar, creates a new and unique musical style entirely its own by harnessing the tones of violin, guitar, and vocals into a colorful amalgam of sound imbued with joy and wonder.

#### – MARCH 3 –

##### *James Nyoraku Schlefer, Shakuhachi (Japanese flute)*

**James Nyoraku Schlefer** is a Grand Master of the shakuhachi and one of only a handful of non-Japanese artists to have achieved this rank. He is a professor of World music courses at New York City College of Technology (CUNY). He is an artist in residence at The Hermitage Artist Retreat.

#### – MARCH 10 –

##### *Hanna Kim and Marcelina Suchocka, Percussionists from the Sarasota Orchestra*

**Hanna Kim** joined the Sarasota Orchestra as Section Percussionist in October 2023. She earned her Bachelor of Music Performance degree from The Juilliard School. Born in Bialystok, Poland, **Marcelina Suchocka** is the Principal Percussionist for the Sarasota Orchestra and the Britt Festival Orchestra.

#### – MARCH 17 –

##### *Michelle Johnson, Soprano (Sarasota Opera)*

**Michelle Johnson**, a soprano of extraordinary talent and acclaim, has captivated audiences worldwide with her mesmerizing performances. As a Grand Prize Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, she has been hailed by critics as “a clear audience favorite,” lauded for her impeccable breath control and velvety voice.

#### – MARCH 24 –

##### *Ivory & Gold®, Flute and Piano*

Ivory & Gold® duo consists of **Anne Barnhart** (flute and vocals) and **Jeff Barnhart** (piano and vocals) and was formed in 2001 to perform at the prestigious annual Jazz Festival in Sun Valley, Idaho. Subsequently, Ivory & Gold® has been invited to appear in hundreds of venues from coast to coast.

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



### **Aznavoorian Duo,** *Cello and Piano Duo*

The Aznavoorian Duo, sisters **Ani** (cellist) and **Marta** (pianist) had their first public performance at the ages of 4 and 8 at their Armenian church in Evanston IL. They won First Prize in the Illinois

Bell Young Performers Competition, resulting in a live performance with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra on PBS. Since then, they have toured France, Armenia, and Finland, performed at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, and presented countless programs in their hometown of Chicago including a major fundraiser for the Armenian earthquake in 1988. This season, the Aznavoorian Duo embarks on a tour of California, and the Seattle Chamber Music Society presents them in a winter residency.

The Aznavoorian Sisters went on to win the National Foundation for the Arts Award, leading to their appointment as Presidential Scholars in the Arts and performances at The Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. and at The White House, where **Ani** met President Bill Clinton and **Marta** met President George H. W. Bush. Marta and Ani work with many programs to help create musical training pathways for students from traditionally under-represented backgrounds. They created the Keynote Foundation, which aims to fund these students and help them achieve their full musical potential.



### **Dr. Cecil Refik Kaya,** *Guitar*

Since his concert debut at the age of 6, Turkish American guitarist and composer **Dr. Celil Refik Kaya** has received high accolades from an early age, being the youngest to win First Prize in the 2012 JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Concerto Competition, prizewinner of international guitar competitions from Europe and throughout the United States. In 2017 he was awarded "Rising Young Musician of the Year" by the Donizetti Classical Music Awards in Istanbul and a prestigious fellowship from Harvard University's Dumbarton Oaks.

Dr. Kaya has performed in concert halls and festivals, giving solo performances at Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw, The Frick Collection Museum in NYC New York Guitar Seminar Festival, Round Top Festival, Brevard Music Festival, Raritan River Music Festival and Ankara International Music Festival, and numerous radio broadcasts and concert performances throughout the United States and Europe. As a concert soloist, he has collaborated with professional orchestras such as the Buffalo Philharmonic, Virginia Symphony, Presidential Symphony Orchestra in Turkey, Istanbul State Symphony, Hilton Head Symphony, Brevard Festival Orchestra, Lake Placid Sinfonietta, Bilkent Symphony, and many others and has gained great artistic recognition internationally.

Dr. Kaya is currently the Coordinator of Guitar Studies at New Jersey City University and Kean University.

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



### **Aquila Sol and Jacob Kerzner,** *Broadway Singer and Pianist*

**Aquila Sol**, soprano, is a Senior studying for her BFA in Musical Theatre at the University of Michigan with a minor in Performing Arts

Management & Entrepreneurship. She is originally from Carlsbad, CA, where her life in the theatre began at age 9. Since moving to Ann Arbor, she has been in University Productions such as *Bernarda Alba*, *Rent*, and *Guys & Dolls*, and worked on new pieces that are currently in development such as *Marian* (Eleanor Roosevelt), *Siluetas*, and Gavin Creel's *Loud Nite*. She has spent her summers performing at The Encore Theatre in *42nd Street* and *Oklahoma!*

**Jacob Kerzner**, pianist, is the Associate Editor for the George and Ira Gershwin Critical Edition at the University of Michigan, where they are editing the forthcoming volumes *La, La, Lucille*, George's first full Broadway show including recently rediscovered songs and orchestration, and *Of Thee I Sing*, the first "musical play" to win a Pulitzer Prize. Recent productions include *Pipe Dream* (Berkshire Theatre Group), *Sweet Charity* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), *Tribute: Simon & Garfunkel* (The Encore), *The Falling and the Rising* (Opera Memphis), *Oklahoma!* (St. Ann's Warehouse), *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* (The Mundy) and *Hadestown* (The Citadel Theatre).



### **Ravon "Steely" Rhoden,** *Steel Drums*

**Ravon Rhoden**, steel drum performer, has established himself as one of the most innovative and vital voices in modern reggae. Born and raised in Montego Bay, Jamaica, his music pays tribute to legends like Bob Marley and Dennis Brown while pushing the genre into bold new territory. He is the first major reggae artist to accompany his vocals on the steel drum, an instrument that gives him his signature sound.

Along with his band 'The Steely Experience,' he delivers unforgettable performances that will appeal to music lovers of all kinds. He is also the founder of Steely Records, which provides a wide variety of services for like-minded artists. With a steady stream of new content expected this year and beyond, Ravon Rhoden is poised to become one of the biggest names in reggae.



### **Matrick Thorpe,** *Cello (Artist Series Concerts Winner)*

**Matrick Thorpe** is a 17-year-old contemporary/classical cellist from Sarasota, Florida, where he attends Pine View School for the Gifted. While studying classical with cellist Ann Alton, he has received several performance scholarships and awards, most recently including the Sarasota Music Club/Artists Series competition, Clazz

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS

International Music Festival in Italy, Winold Chamber Festival, Vero Beach International Music Festival and Cello Akademie Rutesheim in Germany as well as being awarded Superior with Distinction for the Florida State MPA. Equally as passionate about contemporary and world music, Matrick participates in a variety of workshops, virtually and in person.

His irrepressible love for music has led him to performing in orchestras, ensembles, studios, and stages in 23 countries. While he loves performing locally with the Pine View Orchestra, Strings Con Brio, and The Pops, one of his real passions is in street performance, believing that music should be shared with everyone. You can watch Matrick's TEDx speech "Lessons Learned in the Pursuit of Music" online on YouTube's TEDx Talks.



### *Dave Bennett, Clarinet*

**Dave Bennett**, jazz clarinet, doesn't fit the mold. For starters, you don't find many jazz clarinet players who name Alice Cooper, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Chris Isaak among their influences. You won't find many musicians who are equally conversant with the music of Benny Goodman (the "King of Swing") and Roy Orbison ("The Soul of Rock and Roll"). In fact, you may not find even one other clarinet virtuoso

who breaks from his Swing Era repertoire to sing rockabilly hits while accompanying himself at the piano or electric guitar.

Dave began his national touring career at the age of 14. He has been a featured soloist at Carnegie Hall with The New York Pops and has been featured with 35 other US and Canadian orchestras. Some of his annual appearances include The Elkhart Jazz Festival, The Suncoast Classic Jazz Festival, The Arizona Classic Jazz Festival, The Sacramento Hot Jazz Jubilee, The Clambake Music Festival, and The Redwood Coast Music Festival.

During the isolation of the pandemic, fate steered Dave's time off the road into a bold new direction. A songwriter stepped forward. "Nowhere Fast", his first full-length rock album is a deep, soul-searching joyride through the back streets of his mind.



### *Charles Lazarus and David Chervien, Trumpet and Organ*

**Charles Lazarus**, trumpeter, is a multi-faceted performer who has charted a unique course over his career including tenures in

several of the best-known brass ensembles in the world, including Canadian Brass, Dallas Brass, Meridian Arts Ensemble, and the Minnesota Orchestra. As a soloist, composer, and bandleader, Lazarus has created four original crossover orchestral shows featuring him as a soloist with his jazz ensemble: "A Night in the Tropics", "American

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS

Riffs", "Fly Me to the Moon", and most recently "The New American Songbook" featuring the Grammy Awarding winning family quintet, The Steeles.

**David Chervien**, former Artistic Director of the National Lutheran Choir, is a nationally known conductor, composer, and organist. Recognized for his contributions to the field of church music and liturgy, he is in demand as a clinician and hymn festival leader across the country. David serves as Cantor at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, a parish known for its passion for traditional liturgy and creative, high-quality music. A prolific composer, Chervien has published more than 150 works for both chorus and organ. Chervien composed 25 new works for the National Lutheran Choir during his 21-year tenure with the prestigious organization.



### *Living by the Stream, Violin, Soprano and Guitar*

Living by the Stream, a father-daughter duo of **Sarah Dowell**, violin, and **Steve Dowell**, guitar, creates a new and unique musical style entirely its own

by harnessing the tones of violin, guitar, and vocals into a colorful amalgam of sound imbued with joy and wonder.

The duo first started its musical journey in the early 2000s when father and daughter stepped onto a stage at the Michigan State Fair. From there, the family team hit the ground running. Performing around the local community at churches, cafes, concert series, festivals, and more, it was soon evident that Steve and Sarah were sharing more than just their music - they were in pursuit of a calling to touch hearts and inspire others along the way.

Sarah graduated Magna Cum Laude with a B.M. in violin performance from Grand Valley State University. Steve has been a guitarist just short of his entire life. Influenced by many music styles and guitarists during that time, his musical ear remains piqued for sensing and creating special and unique musical expressions he can infuse into the sound art he paints with his guitar. In his early years, he studied the piano, his first instrument, and studied the coronet soon after that.



### *James Nyoraku Schlefer, Shakuhachi (Japanese flute)*

**James Nyoraku Schlefer** is a Grand Master of the shakuhachi and one of only a handful of non-Japanese artists to have achieved this rank. He received the Dai-Shi-Han (Grand Master) certificate in 2001, and his second Shi-Han certificate in 2008, from the Mujuan Dojo in Kyoto. Schlefer first encountered the shakuhachi



## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS

in 1979, while working towards a career as a flute player and pursuing an advanced degree in musicology. Today he is considered by his colleagues to be one of the most influential Western practitioners of this distinctive art form. Known to his students as Nyoraku sensei, Schlefer established his own dojo in NYC in 1996. He also taught shakuhachi at Columbia University for 10 years, is a professor of World music courses at New York City College of Technology (CUNY), and performs and lectures at colleges and universities throughout the United States. As a composer, Schlefer has written multiple chamber and orchestral works combining Japanese and Western instruments as well as numerous pieces solely for traditional Japanese instruments. His programming for Kyo-Shin-An Arts has also been recognized with two CMA/ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming (2013 and 2016). He was recognized by Musical America Worldwide as one of their "30 Top Professionals and Key Influencers."

Mr. Schlefer is a resident artist at the Hermitage Artist Retreat on Manasota Key, Florida.



**Hanna Kim  
and Marcelina  
Suchocka,**  
Percussionists  
from the Sarasota  
Orchestra

**Hanna Kim** joined the Sarasota Orchestra as Section Percussionist in October 2023. Prior to

this appointment, she was a freelance musician based in Pittsburgh. She performed with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, New World Symphony, and Chamber Orchestra of Pittsburgh.

She earned her Bachelor of Music Performance degree from The Juilliard School where she studied with Daniel Druckman, her Master of Music degree from Temple University under the tutelage of Alan Abel and Christopher Deviney, and her Artist Diploma from Curtis Institute of Music as a student of Don Liuzzi, Eric Millstein, and Robert Van Sice.

Born in Bialystok, Poland, **Marcelina Suchocka** is the Principal Percussionist for the Sarasota Orchestra and the Britt Festival Orchestra. Marcelina enjoys a diverse career spanning orchestral, chamber, new music, and solo playing. She was a fellow at the New World Symphony and has performed as an extra/substitute percussionist with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, and the Utah Symphony.

Most recently Marcelina has spent summers as a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, Pacific Music Festival, the Music Academy of the West, National Repertory Orchestra, and Spoleto Festival.

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



**Michelle Johnson,**  
*Soprano (Sarasota Opera)*

**Michelle Johnson**, a soprano of extraordinary talent and acclaim, has captivated audiences worldwide with her mesmerizing performances. As a Grand Prize Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, she has been hailed by critics as "a clear audience favorite," lauded for her impeccable breath control and velvety voice that effortlessly transports listeners into a realm of musical splendor.

Ms. Johnson has also made a name for herself as one of the most in-demand Aida's in the opera world today, performing Verdi's tragic heroine with Glimmerglass Music Festival, Opera Santa Barbara, Opera Columbus, Knoxville Opera, Opera Idaho, and Sarasota Opera, among others. A favorite of many houses, past opera credits include Madame Lidoine in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Leonora in *Il trovatore*, Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West*, Élisabeth de Valois in *Don Carlos*, the title role in *Manon Lescaut*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, the title role in *Suor Angelica*, Zemfira in *Aleko*, Leonora in *Oberto*, the Countess in *Capriccio*, and Alice Ford in *Falstaff*. Adept in verismo repertoire as well, Ms. Johnson performed the title roles in the rarely performed *Sakuntala* and *Fedora* with Teatro Grattacielo.



**Ivory & Gold®,**  
*Flute and Piano*

Ivory & Gold® duo consists of **Anne Barnhart** (flute and vocals) and **Jeff Barnhart** (piano and vocals) and was formed in 2001 to perform at the prestigious annual Jazz Festival in Sun Valley,

Idaho. Subsequently, Ivory & Gold® has been invited to appear in hundreds of venues from coast to coast, including The Tempe Center for the Arts, The Kerr Cultural Arts Center in Phoenix, AZ, The Tulsa Performing Arts Center, New Hampshire's Wolfboro Friends of Music Concert Series, Music on the Divide in Georgetown, CA and an annual concert at the Reutlinger-Brune Victorian Palace in San Francisco, to name but a few.

Individually, Anne and Jeff could not have come from more disparate musical backgrounds. Anne is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in music. Jeff is a highly regarded pianist, vocalist, arranger, bandleader, recording artist, composer, pedagogue, and entertainer. He began his professional career at age 14 performing throughout New England at jazz clubs and restaurants, both as a soloist and with ensembles. He earned a double Bachelor's degree in Music and English (Summa Cum Laude) from Connecticut College.

**Chanticleer Holiday Concert**

Dec 3, 2024, 7:30 pm

Sarasota Opera House

An all-new program of classic Renaissance and holiday favorites.

**Pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet**

Jan 15, 2025, 7:30 pm

Riverview Performing Arts Center

Debussy's Preludes Books I and II.

**Cleveland Orchestra**

Kahchun Wong, conductor

Sayaka Shoji, violin

Jan 26, 2025, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel

*Pictures at an Exhibition.***Czech National Symphony Orchestra**

Steven Mercurio, Music Director

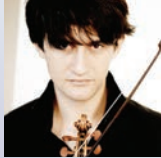
Maxim Lando, piano

Feb 13, 2025, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel

*Dvořák's New World Symphony***An Evening with Yo-Yo Ma**

Feb 27, 2025, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel

Music and stories about a life in music.

**Vivaldi Four Seasons**

Les Arts Florissants

Théotime Langlois de Swarte, violin

March 14, 2025, 7:30 pm | Riverview

Performing Arts Center

**National Symphony Orchestra**

Gianandrea Noseda, Music

Director | Hilary Hahn, violin

March 24, 2025, 7:30 pm | Van Wezel

*Beethoven's Fifth Symphony*

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## Talent Unveiled Season 29

**Violinist to the Stars**Caroline Campbell, violin  
with Joseph Holt, pianoJanuary 14 • 5:30 pm performance  
followed by dinner

Plantation Golf &amp; Country Club

Caroline Campbell is one of the most sought-after classical crossover artists performing today, having shared the stage with the likes of Barbra Streisand, Beyoncé, Michael Bublé, Paul McCartney, Andrea Bocelli, and Sting. This program includes music from *West Side Story* and Sting.**Imani Winds**

February 11 • 7:30 pm

Church of the Palms

2024 Grammy Award winner in the classical compendium category, Imani Winds has led both a revolution and evolution of the wind quintet through their dynamic playing and adventurous programming.

**Horns of Plenty**

Hugo Bliss and Scott Sanders, horns

with Joseph Holt, piano

March 13 • 11 am performance followed by lunch  
Sarasota Yacht Club

Sarasota Orchestra's co-principal horn Hugo Bliss is joined by a fellow superstar, Milwaukee Symphony's hornist Scott Sanders. Together with Joseph Holt, they offer a remarkable program that includes Beethoven's mighty sextet for two horns and string quartet.

ArtistSeriesConcerts.org • (941) 306-1202

This project is supported in part by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, The Exchange, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, the Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues, and the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

# Faith + Society SPEAKER SERIES

Join us and these nationally recognized thought leaders as they share their stories and explore issues surrounding faith and spirituality. Events are free and open to all.



## DR. CLAYBORNE CARSON

February 6, 2025 • 6:30 pm  
Sanctuary

Dr. Carson is the founding director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute and the Martin Luther King Papers Project, which has meticulously edited and published Dr. King's papers. He also directs The World House Project.

## EUGENE CHO

March 6, 2025 • 6:30 pm  
Sanctuary

Eugene is the President/CEO of Bread for the World and Bread Institute, a non-partisan Christian advocacy organization urging both national and global decision makers to help end hunger.



## SPECIAL MUSIC EVENTS

### PIANO DEDICATION

February 22, 2025 • 3 pm • Sanctuary

Dr. Jonathan Spivey and Rev. Genevieve Beauchamp will present a two-piano concert performance. Tickets will be available at the front office and via the church's website.

### SARASOTA CHOIR FESTIVAL

March 2, 2025 • 4 pm • Sanctuary

Contact Rev. Genevieve Beauchamp:  
gbeauchamp@churchofthepalms.org

### NOONTIME CONCERTS

Performances in 2025

Details coming soon! Visit our website for updates on our Noontime Concert series.



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YooBin Lee, viola

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RAVEL'S BOLERO

JAN 24-25 POPS 1:  
KINGS OF SOUL

JAN 30-FEB 2 MASTERWORKS 4:  
HEROIC SPIRIT

FEB 21-23 MASTERWORKS 5:  
MELTING POT OF MUSIC

FEB 28-MAR 1 POPS 2:  
3 DIVAS FROM BROADWAY

MAR 6-9 MASTERWORKS 6:  
THE PLANETS

APR 4-6 MASTERWORKS 7:  
GRAND TREASURES

APR 18-19 POPS 3:  
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