

2026



*Sarasota Institute  
of Lifetime Learning*

## What is SILL?

For over 50 years, the **Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning (SILL)** has offered a dynamic lecture series on global issues and cultural enrichment as well as conversations and performances featuring established & emerging musicians.

**12**

Talented  
Musicians

**24**

Expert  
Speakers

**55**

Years of  
Education

## Learn with us

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**Sarasota • Lakewood Ranch • Venice**

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# 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



### ***Our 55th Season!***

Welcome back to another culturally and intellectually stimulating experience, featuring real experts and honest conversations.

Here at SILL, we are extremely proud to bring you lectures on Global Issues, along with a wide selection of musicians on Music Mondays.

**Global Issues:** We again offer a dynamic lineup on global Issues. Returning in 2026 are several distinguished speakers. Dr. David Lampton will explore the pressing question: Are the U.S. and China entering a new Cold War? Robert Jones will address White Christian Nationalism. Ambassador Robert Ford will provide insights into the future of Syria. Dennis Ross will offer his expert analysis on U.S. policy in the Middle East. Among the new speakers this year is Dr. Kenneth Roberts on polarization and democracy in a turbulent Latin America. Dr. Christine McDaniel will examine the implications of new U.S. tariff policies. Dr. Anatoly Temkin will shed light on the transformative power and risks of artificial intelligence. Lt. General Mike Plehn will analyze how wars begin and end. The other speakers will present similarly timely and stimulating lectures.

**Music Mondays:** Meet Joe Holt in Sarasota and Betsy Traba in Venice as they present fascinating conversations and short performances from a wide range of talented musicians. They will include Invoke, a contemporary string quartet, Jake Kwiatkowski on bagpipes, Eden Espinosa, Broadway singer and actress, and Michael Stephen Brown, pianist and composer. As a very special guest, we are honored to host Frederica von Stade, a highly acclaimed lyric mezzo-soprano opera singer of international renown.

**Special Event Speaker:** We are deeply thrilled to announce that General Martin Dempsey, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will speak at the Church of the Palms in Sarasota on

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wednesday, January 28. His topic focuses on Great Power Security Dilemmas: From Economic Competition to Military Confrontation. Tickets are sold separately for this event. We intend to make this type of special event a regular part of our seasons.

**Ticket System:** We will return to a single ticket for season subscribers. Tickets for our special event speakers, such as General Martin Dempsey, will be sold separately on an individual basis.

**Video on Demand:** All three of our programs will be available through video on demand; Music Mondays programs as recorded in Sarasota, as well as our Tuesday and Thursday Global Issues presentations.

**Friends of SILL:** Your significant support of SILL every year is much appreciated and crucial to our success in offering such a superb range of speakers and performers. Please consider continuing your support by contributing 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. To learn more about how you can support our programs, visit [sillsarasota.org](http://sillsarasota.org).

With warm regards,  
Jeff Olesen, *President*



For more information visit our website  
[sillsarasota.org](http://sillsarasota.org)

# GLOBAL ISSUES SERIES I

**JANUARY 6–7**

## ***China's Reordered World Order***

**Dr. Elizabeth Economy** will discuss China's ambitions to reshape the international system to align with its political, economic, and security interests. She will assess its success to date, what challenges it confronts moving forward, and how the United States should best respond.

**JANUARY 13–14**

## ***Russia, America, and Ukraine in 2026:***

### ***Where Do We Go From Here?***

**Amb. Eric Rubin** will analyze Ukraine's ability to survive and keep fighting in the absence of significant U.S. support. He will also address the impacts the war has had on possible outcomes, as well as on U.S. relations with NATO, Europe (particularly the EU), and Russia, including the prospects for regime change in these regions.

**JANUARY 20–21**

## ***Understanding Nutrition in the Brain:***

### ***B12 and Other Nutrients' Role in Neurological Function***

**Dr. Ari Green** will explore the vital role of vitamin B12 and other key nutrients in maintaining neurological function. He will highlight how nutritional deficiencies impact brain health, contributing to neurological disorders, and emphasize the importance of early detection and dietary interventions to support cognitive performance and prevent long-term neurological damage.

**JANUARY 27–28**

## ***The Death of Expertise and the Danger to Democracy***

Why have Americans lost trust in expertise and established knowledge? **Tom Nichols** argues that this collapse of trust, fueled by narcissism and social isolation, has created a political climate among Americans that endangers the health, well-being, and lives of ordinary citizens - and threatens to destabilize American democracy.

**FEBRUARY 3–4**

## ***U.S.-Canada Relations: Friends? Partners? Allies?***

The relationship between the United States and Canada is experiencing turbulence and uncertainty. What are the long-term implications for the bilateral economic and security partnership? Does America First mean America alone? **Dr. Laura Dawson** will share her perspectives on how Americans and Canadians might realign to create a strong and prosperous North America.

**FEBRUARY 10–11**

## ***The Future of Health:***

### ***What's Technology got to do with it?***

**Dr. Christopher Gibbons** will address advances in digital technologies that are reshaping society, promising a future of wealth, health, and prosperity for all. At the same time, chronic disease rates are increasing, epidemics continue unabated, and healthcare is increasingly out of reach for many Americans. Is technology really the future of health?

## **FEBRUARY 17–18**

### **Artificial Intelligence:**

#### ***A Cognitive Revolution Is Upon Us***

In this non-technical talk, **Dr. Anatoly Temkin** will explain AI in simple terms. He will discuss neural networks and machine learning, and explore how AI is changing fields like education, healthcare, and beyond. He will also focus on Generative AI (like ChatGPT) and how these technologies are shaping the future.

## **FEBRUARY 24–25**

### ***This Means War!***

Have you ever wondered how wars start...how they're fought...and how (and why) they end? Please join retired **Lt. Gen. Mike Plehn**, former President of the National Defense University, for this in-depth discussion on the history, theory, and methods of war, ranging from ancient Greece to the current conflict in Ukraine.

## **MARCH 3–4**

### ***U.S.-Mexico Relations In Turbulent Times***

U.S.-Mexico relations are always complicated. However, the Trump Administration has made it even more difficult because of new policies on immigration, trade, and other issues. **Amb. Bárcena Coqui** will analyze the turbulent situation based on her experience with the first Trump Administration and her ongoing consultations on U.S.-Mexico relations.

## **MARCH 10–11**

### ***Understanding Artificial Intelligence***

**John Blevins** will teach us Machine Learning, Deep Learning, Neural Networking, & Artificial Intelligence in a simple, easy-to-understand, educational lecture format. Come prepared to learn. With our new understanding, he'll then explain how AI is impacting our retirement portfolios, as well as the global business community at large.

## **MARCH 17–18**

### ***AI in Healthcare: What Patients Need to Know***

**Brooke McSwain** will provide an overview of the current AI healthcare landscape - the technical, ethical, and legal issues that government and healthcare providers are working on to answer how AI could transform public health systems, including what individuals need to know to be responsible consumers of AI-enabled healthcare.

## **MARCH 24–25**

### ***Will the Levant Finally See Calm?***

New governments in Syria and Lebanon are dealing with tensions with Israel. Elections in Iraq may create a government freer of Iranian influence. Is the Levant turning a corner or are new challenges, and old ones, likely to generate still more war, instability and terrorism? **Amb. Robert Ford** will discuss.

# GLOBAL ISSUES SERIES II

**JANUARY 8–9**

***Polarization and Democracy:***

***Latin America in a Turbulent World Order***

Recent global upheavals pose novel challenges to Latin America, at a time when democracy is under growing pressure in the region due to political polarization, economic inequalities, and criminal violence. **Dr. Kenneth Roberts** will explain how Latin American countries are tackling these domestic problems while renegotiating their international economic and political relations in a rapidly changing world.

**JANUARY 15–16**

***The Atomic Fault Line: U.S.–Iran Rivalry  
and the Nuclear Puzzle in the Middle East***

Join **Dr. Mohsen Milani** for a timely and thought-provoking talk on the enduring puzzle of Iran's nuclear program. Author of *Iran's Rise and Rivalry with the U.S. in the Middle East*, Dr. Milani draws on decades of scholarship and firsthand insight to examine the origins and evolution of the U.S.–Iran nuclear standoff, its regional and global stakes, and the uncertain paths that lie ahead.

**JANUARY 22–23**

***America and China: In a Cold War?***

With economic relations between the U.S. and China deteriorating, are the countries heading to a new Cold War? Trade tensions are escalating; cyber attacks are rumored, and both countries are reinforcing their military. Tariff restrictions on exports of minerals and blacklists are adding to the conflict. **Dr. David Lampton** will elaborate on the current state of affairs and potential remedies.

**JANUARY 29–30**

***Can Europe Cope with Challenges from East AND West?***

Four generations of Europeans have been able to count on Big Brother America's security, economic, and diplomatic support, particularly in facing down challenges from the Soviet Union and now Russia. **Martin Walker** will explain Europe's effort to stand on its own as an America First partner changes all aspects of the game.

**FEBRUARY 5–6**

***From the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the War in Ukraine:  
What Happened to the "End of History"?***

The Berlin Wall fell 35 years ago, and the world entered a period of remarkable openness and democratic expansion. Now the world seems very different. How did the promises of democracy then lead to the current spread of authoritarianism? **Dr. Jeremi Suri** will explore this history and discuss what comes next.

**FEBRUARY 12–13**

***Putin's Russia - The Man, The People, The War***

Power, in Putin's Russia, is personal. Vladimir Putin's long-standing obsession with Ukraine, and the war he started against it, have had drastic consequences for Ukraine, for Russia, and for the world. **Jill Dougherty** will discuss how Putin rules Russia, his relationship with President Donald Trump, and the future of post-war Russia.

## **FEBRUARY 19–20**

### ***Upending Decades-long U.S. Policies in the Middle East***

U.S. priorities on the Middle East have shifted under the new Administration. Support for Israel and dealings with the Gulf States and Iran are now largely considered in separate channels. **Amb. Dennis Ross** will examine the Administration's transactional approach and suggest how it impacts the prospects for future stability in the region.

## **FEBRUARY 26–27**

### ***Our Struggle for an Honest History:***

#### ***The Deep Roots of White Christian Nationalism***

Is the U.S. a pluralistic democracy, or is it a divinely ordained promised land for European Christians? **Dr. Robert Jones** will discuss these competing visions of the nation that have divided Americans throughout our history: why this paradox survives in the form of white Christian nationalism, which continues to undermine the promise of a pluralistic democracy.

## **MARCH 5–6**

### ***The Promise and Peril of Trump's America First***

Trump's America First is a response to too much globalization, immigration, and war. But Trump has overcorrected with too many tariffs, deportations, and pull-back from a world in need of U.S. leadership. **Dr. Charles Kupchan** asks, "Is there a middle ground? If so, how can a divided America find that middle ground?"

## **MARCH 12–13**

### ***Understanding the Arctic: Beyond the Headlines***

**Dr. Jennifer Spence** will explore the rapidly changing Arctic through the lens of geopolitics, economics, and environmental transformation. She will unpack rising international tensions, new resource and shipping interests, and the urgent impacts of climate change—highlighting what's at stake for the region, its peoples, and the world as the Arctic gains increasing global attention.

## **MARCH 19–20**

### ***New Tariff Policies Upend Decades of the U.S.***

#### ***Approach: How's That Working Out?***

The United States has pursued an open economy on trade and investment for decades. Other countries emulate us, some more than others. President Trump is using tariffs as negotiating leverage. **Dr. Christine McDaniel** will discuss what could be achieved, what could be lost, and what is at stake for the markets.

## **MARCH 26–27**

### ***The Rise and Fall of the Mainstream Media:***

#### ***Reflections of a Recovering Journalist***

The free press once seemed an unshakeable pillar of U.S. democracy. Now, the public has lost confidence in newspapers and TV news, and U.S. political culture is in decline. **Charles Lane** draws on four decades as a print reporter and TV talking head to offer an explanation and reasons for hope.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**John Blevins** specializes in emerging technologies that are disrupting traditional business models. He is an adjunct professor at Cornell Tech in New York City and the Johnson Graduate School of Management in Ithaca. He is a former adjunct professor at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Information and the UCLA Anderson School of Management, serving as Faculty Director of the

Technology Management Center and Faculty Director for the school's executive and joint EMBA degree program with the National University of Singapore.

Blevins speaks at events covering technology-driven market changes and leadership in technology management. His career includes Deloitte Consulting, Microsoft, Oracle, Shell Oil, based in Houston, Dallas, New York, Miami, London, and Los Angeles, where he held a variety of management roles.

Blevins is the founding principal of Navigation Pointe, a technology strategy advisory firm providing consulting, strategy, business development, and board advisory services, including patent protection and executive management support. He guides enterprises in their digital transformation, assists technology-oriented companies with monetization strategies, and advises venture capital/private equity firms in technology-related industry investments. John Blevins has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Alabama and a Master of Business Administration from UCLA Anderson.



**Amb. Martha Bárcena Coqui** is a Mexican diplomat who is a Senior Adviser in the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and served as the first female Ambassador to the United States from Mexico (December 2018 until February 2021). She also served as an ambassador to Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland.

During the first Trump administration, she was a key player in renegotiating the terms of the U.S./Mexico/Canada Agreement, the successor of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Amb. Coqui earned a bachelor's and master's degree from the Universidad Iberoamericana as well as a master's degree from the Diplomatic School of Spain.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Laura Dawson** is one of North America's leading experts in U.S.-Canada economic relations. She leads the Future Borders Coalition, an organization dedicated to business and government cooperation on trade and travel between the U.S. and Canada. In recognition of this work, she received the 2025 King Charles Coronation medal and was named one of Canada's Top 50 Foreign Policy Influencers

by the *Hill Times*.

She is a frequent media commentator and advises governments in both countries. Previously, Dawson was director of the Canada Institute at the Wilson Center in Washington, DC, senior economist at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa, and ran a think tank on government digital transformation for Amazon Web Services. She has taught graduate courses in international economic policy in universities around the world.

At a practical level, she has advised on NAFTA/USMCA trade negotiations, helped to resolve international trade disputes, advanced new initiatives such as border preclearance at airports, and helped launch new digital technologies for secure and efficient movement between countries. Dawson holds a PhD in political science and is married to U.S. Ambassador (ret) Charles Shapiro. They live in Atlanta, GA.



**Jill Dougherty** is an expert on Russia. She is an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University's Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies, and a *CNN* on-air Contributor, commenting on Russia-related issues. She has pursued research on Russia and the media as a fellow at the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government; at the

Woodrow Wilson Center; and at the International Centre for Defense and Security in Tallinn, Estonia. Jill Dougherty served as a *CNN* correspondent for three decades.

Her area of expertise is Russia and the post-Soviet region. She served as *CNN*'s Moscow Bureau Chief for almost a decade.

Other postings include: White House correspondent, Foreign Affairs Correspondent covering U.S. State Department, U.S. Affairs Editor, and Managing Editor *CNN International, Asia-Pacific*, based in Hong Kong.

She is the author of *My Russia: What I Saw Inside the Kremlin*, published in 2024. Her articles, book reviews, and commentary have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Politico*, *Wilson Quarterly*, *Washington Post*, *CNN*, and other publications. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the World Affairs Council.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Elizabeth Economy** is the Hargrove Senior Fellow and Co-Director of the U.S., China, and the World Program at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. From 2021-2023, Economy served as the Senior Advisor for China to the Secretary of Commerce. Economy is an acclaimed expert on Chinese domestic and foreign policy and U.S.-China relations. An award-winning author, her most recent book is *The World According to China* (Polity 2021). She is also the author of *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State* (Oxford 2018), *By All Means Necessary: How China's Resource Quest is Changing the World* (with Michael Levi) (Oxford 2014), and *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future* (Cornell, 2004, 2nd edition 2010).

Economy has published opinion pieces in the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, and *New York Times*, and appears frequently on nationally broadcast television programs, including *Fareed Zakaria GPS*, *PBS News Hour*, and *Bloomberg's Wall Street Week*. She serves on the boards of Swarthmore College, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and is a member of the Aspen Strategy Group and Council on Foreign Relations. She also serves as the East Asia Book Reviewer for *Foreign Affairs*.



**Amb. Robert Ford** is a scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington, DC, where he writes about the Middle East and North Africa. Robert Ford was the U.S. Ambassador to Syria from 2011 to 2014. He received the annual Profile in Courage Award from the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston in 2014 for his staunch defense of human rights in Syria. Ford was the U.S. Ambassador in Algeria from 2006 – 2008,

where he boosted bilateral cooperation in education and the rule of law.

He served in Iraq during the war, where he helped stand up the new Iraqi government after the fall of Saddam Hussein and later helped implement the withdrawal of American forces starting in 2009. He also served in Bahrain, Cameroon, Egypt, Turkey, and Washington. Before joining the diplomatic service, Ford was a teacher with the Peace Corps in Morocco from 1980 – 1982. Ford speaks English, Arabic, and French and appears regularly in U.S., European, and Arabic media; he writes frequently for the London-based *Majalla* news magazine.

He retired from eight years of teaching at Yale University in 2023 and has given guest lectures at universities and colleges around the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Christopher Gibbons** is the Founder and CEO of The Greystone Group, a digital health innovation and healthcare transformation firm he started 15 years ago with colleagues from Johns Hopkins University. Greystone helps clients anticipate the future and develop innovative solutions to improve health outcomes. He is also a visiting Professor at Duke University School of Medicine.

Previously, Dr. Gibbons was an Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins Schools of Medicine and Bloomberg School of Public Health. He was an Associate Director of the Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute and also the Chief Health Innovation Advisor at the Federal Communications Commission's Connect2Health Task Force. Dr. Gibbons now also serves as an advisor to organizations working in the Caribbean and Africa in the areas of digital health governance, biomedical technology, public health response evaluation and improvement, healthcare infrastructure planning, development, and modernization.

Dr. Gibbons attended medical school at the University of Alabama. He then trained in Preventive Medicine, General Surgery, and molecular neuro-oncology basic science at Johns Hopkins before completing a federal health policy fellowship at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) & the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).



**Dr. Ari Green** serves as Chief of the Division of Neuroimmunology and Glial Biology in the Department of Neurology at UCSF. His team comprises more than 20 teams and 200 people investigating Multiple Sclerosis and conditions where brain inflammation drives pathology. Under his leadership, the group has made major breakthroughs in the field while also

training a generation of leaders and caring for thousands of patients at an internationally recognized program. Dr. Green's laboratory is dedicated to the biological validation of potential biomarkers intended to measure progression and repair in MS to help rapidly accelerate the development of new treatments.

His major scientific contributions include directing the first successful phase II clinical trial of a repair agent for MS and recent breakthroughs in using the proteome to understand the sequence of events leading to disease. His lab continues to work on developing and validating biomarkers for neurodegenerative disease.

Dr. Green received a B.A. and B.S. from Miami University, an MD at Duke University, before completing an MCR at UCSF. He completed residency in Neurology, followed by Fellowships in Neuroimmunology and Neuro-ophthalmology at UCSF. He has been the Debbie and Andy Rachleff Distinguished Professor since 2009.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Robert P. Jones** is the president and founder of Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI). He is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Hidden Roots of White Supremacy and the Path to a Shared American Future* (2023), as well as *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*, which won a 2021 American Book Award. He is also the author of *The End of White Christian America*,

which won the 2019 Grawemeyer Award in Religion.

He writes regularly on politics, culture, and religion for *The Atlantic*, *TIME*, *Religion News Service*, and other outlets. He is frequently featured in major national media, including *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *NPR*, *New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*.

Jones holds a Ph.D. in religion from Emory University, an M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a B.S. in computer science and mathematics from Mississippi College. He serves on the national program committee for the American Academy of Religion and is a past member of the editorial boards for the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion and Politics and Religion*, a journal of the American Political Science Association.



**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).

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. David Lampton** is Oksenberg-Rohlen Fellow at Stanford University's Asia-Pacific Research Center (APARC) and Hyman Professor and Director of China Studies Emeritus at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. Having started his academic career at The Ohio State University, Dr. Lampton is a former Chairman of the Asia Foundation, former president of the National Committee

on United States-China Relations, and former Dean of Faculty at SAIS.

Among his other works, he is the author of: *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (2001); *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds* (2008); and *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy* (editor, Stanford University Press, 2001). He received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from Stanford University, where, as an undergraduate student, he was a firefighter. Dr. Lampton has an honorary doctorate from the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Far Eastern Studies. His newest book, *Following the Leader: Ruling China, from Deng Xiaoping to Xi Jinping*, was initially published in January 2014 and was issued in a second edition with a new Preface in 2019.

His current field research focuses on Beijing's effort to build high-speed and other rail lines to Singapore from South China and involves interviews and field research in eight countries. The underlying issue is how to conceive of Chinese power.



**Charles Lane**, non-resident senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, recently completed a 25-year career as a reporter, editor, and columnist for *The Washington Post*, where he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2009. The author of three books on U.S. history and constitutional law, and a frequent panelist on television and radio, he has also been a foreign correspondent in Latin America and Europe, and editor of the

New Republic.

His action against a notorious journalistic fraud at that weekly magazine became the subject of the acclaimed 2003 film, *Shattered Glass*. Since the Post, his writings have appeared in *The Free Press* and *The Wall Street Journal*. His current work at AEI centers on U.S. politics and public policy with an emphasis on the possibilities for reforming the U.S. asylum system.

Mr. Lane lives in the Washington area with his wife, Catarina Bannier; they have three adult children.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Christine McDaniel** is a Senior International Trade Economist at the World Bank. Her research focused on international trade, globalization, and intellectual property rights. She has held several positions in the U.S. government, including Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Treasury Department and senior trade economist in the White House Council of

Economic Advisers, and has worked in the economic offices of the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Trade Representative, and U.S. International Trade Commission.

McDaniel has written for the *Wall Street Journal*, *Politico*, *The Hill*, *The New York Times*, and *Forbes*, among others, and her media appearances include *CNBC*, *CBC*, *BBC*, *Bloomberg*, and *MSNBC*. McDaniel spent three years in Australia as deputy chief economist in Australia's patent office, and has also held positions at Sidley Austin, LLP, a global law firm, and the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

She has published in the areas of international trade, intellectual property, and empirical trade analysis and modeling. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Colorado and received her B.A. in Economics and Japanese Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



**Brooke McSwain** is the Senior National Policy Research Analyst for AI, Digital Health, Public Health Infrastructure, and Stroke/Hypertension at the American Heart Association. She also serves as the policy advisor to the Association's Federal Government Relations department, Center for Telehealth, Center for Health Technology and Innovation, and is a member of the

Association's AI Task Force, leading their national collaborative efforts to develop, deploy, and educate the healthcare workforce on applying ethics frameworks to AI applications.

She is a critical care respiratory therapist and exercise physiologist who worked in Cardiothoracic ICUs and Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation facilities, specializing in heart and lung transplant and LVAD patients. In 2014, she left bedside care to direct inpatient and emergency telehealth efforts at MUSC, and in 2018 transitioned to public policy – specializing in healthcare technology. She was a HIMSS Health Policy Fellow, the Vice Chair of the HIMSS Public Policy Committee, and is currently the Chair of the HIMSS Connected Care Committee.

She earned her B.Sc. from the University of South Carolina in Exercise Science and Biomechanics, an M.Sc. from Northeastern University in Clinical Respiratory Therapy and Organizational Communications, and an M.A. from The Johns Hopkins University in Government and Political Communications.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**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 program, "*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.



**Tom Nichols** is a staff writer at The Atlantic. An expert on international security issues, he taught national security affairs for 25 years at the U.S. Naval War College, as well as at the Harvard Extension School, Dartmouth, and Georgetown. He was a Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and at the Center for Strategic and International Studies

in Washington.

He served on Capitol Hill as personal staff for defense and security affairs to the late Senator John Heinz of Pennsylvania. In 2024, he released the second edition of *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters*, an international best-seller that has been translated into fourteen foreign languages.

He is also the author of *Our Own Worst Enemy: The Assault from Within on Modern Democracy*, which *Publishers Weekly* called "A searing critique of contemporary political culture and the rise of illiberalism on both the right and the left." He is also a five-time undefeated *Jeopardy!* champion and was listed in the *Jeopardy* Hall of Fame after his 1994 appearances as one of the best players of the game. A native of Massachusetts, he lives in Rhode Island.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Lieutenant General Mike Plehn** is a retired 3-star general and former President of National Defense University. With more than 37 years of military service, Mike has flown more than 2000 hours, including 375 combat hours over Somalia, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan. He developed a new radar warning receiver program to protect crews flying over Bosnia.

In 2014, as a leader in the Pentagon, Mike established and led an international donation group that delivered more than fifty C-17 plane-loads of donated arms to Iraq, enabling them to stave off ISIS and leading to the restoration of security across the country. Mike graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy and holds three master's degrees. Mike will discuss how wars start and how they end.



**Dr. Kenneth Roberts** is the Richard J. Schwartz Professor of Government at Cornell University. He earned his B.A. from Eckerd College and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Stanford University. His teaching and research interests explore the political economy of inequality and crises of democratic representation in Latin America and beyond.

Dr. Roberts' most recent book, *Polarization and Democracy in Latin America: Legacies of the Left Turn* (co-authored with Santiago Anria), is forthcoming from the *University of Chicago Press* in early 2026. He is also the author of *Changing Course in Latin America: Party Systems in the Neoliberal Era and Deepening Democracy? The Modern Left and Social Movements in Chile and Peru*. He is the co-editor, most recently, of *Global Challenges to Democracy: Comparative Perspectives on Backsliding, Autocracy, and Resilience, and Democratic Resilience: Can the United States Withstand Rising Polarization?*

Dr. Roberts has been a visiting scholar at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales in Chile, Universidad Carlos III-Instituto Juan March in Spain, and the Centre on Social Movement Studies in Florence. At Cornell, he has been Director of Latin American Studies and Senior Associate Dean for the Social Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Amb. Dennis Ross** is the counselor and William Davidson Distinguished Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He also teaches at Georgetown University's Center for Jewish Civilization. For more than twelve years, Amb. Ross played a leading role in shaping U.S. involvement in the Middle East peace process, dealing directly with the parties as the U.S. point man on the peace process in both the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations.

He served two and a half years as special assistant to President Obama and National Security Council senior director for the Central Region, spending the first 6 months of the Administration as the special advisor on Iran to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. His newest book is *Statecraft 2.0: What America Needs to Lead in a Multipolar World* (Oxford University Press, March 2025).



**Amb. Eric Rubin** was elected to serve as the President of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) after his recent posting as U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria (2016-2019). He retired from the Foreign Service in 2023.

Joining the Foreign Service in 1985 after graduating from Yale, he started as a political and human rights officer in Honduras (1985-1988). In 1989, he was assigned to the State Department's Operations Center. 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. Next, he served as the security affairs officer for Central and Eastern Europe. He left Washington in 1994 for Kiev, Ukraine, as Deputy Political Counselor. 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.

He is currently a senior fellow with the RAND Corporation, the Center for European Policy Analysis, and the American Academy of Diplomacy.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Jennifer Spence** is the Director of the Arctic Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, with expertise related to sustainable development, international governance, institutional effectiveness, and public policy. Spence has a particular passion for working with Northerners to understand and respond to the

opportunities and challenges facing the Arctic region.

Jennifer Spence currently co-chairs the Arctic Research Cooperation and Diplomacy Research Priority Team for the Fourth International Conference on Arctic Research Planning (ICARP IV), participates as a member of the Climate Expert Group for the Arctic Council's Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, and sits as a member of the Yukon Arctic Security Advisory Council. Spence was the Executive Secretary of the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group from 2019-2023.

Previously, she taught and conducted research at Carleton University and worked for a 2-year term at the United Nations Development Program. She also worked for 18 years with the Government of Canada in senior positions related to resource management, conflict and change management, strategic planning, and leadership development.



**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 LBJ School of Public Affairs. Dr. Suri is the author and editor of eleven books on politics and foreign policy, most recently: *Civil War By Other Means: America's Long and*

*Unfinished Fight for Democracy.*

His writings appear in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *CNN*, and other media. Dr. Suri is a popular public lecturer and comments frequently on radio and television news. His 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.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS



**Dr. Anatoly Temkin** is a professor at Boston University, where he has served in the Computer Science Department at Boston University Metropolitan College for nearly 40 years, including 11 years as department chair. Over his distinguished career, he has taught a variety of theoretical computer science and mathematics courses to undergraduate and graduate students from around the world.

His research focuses on cryptography and artificial intelligence, and he has published extensively on computer security, machine learning, and related educational topics. Dr. Temkin is also the author of two books and has presented his work at numerous international conferences, including as a keynote speaker at several AI conferences in Europe. A highly regarded educator, he has received several awards for teaching excellence and for his innovation work in online course development. Dr. Temkin holds an MA in Mathematics from Moscow University and a Ph.D. in Mathematics from Kazan University.



**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 10 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 7 million books in 19 languages, best known for his Bruno Chief of Police series, some short stories and in recent years *The Bruno Cookbook* written with his wife, Julia, and awarded the Gourmand International Prize as the world's best French cookbook. He is also a Grand Consul of the wines of the Bergerac, and was awarded a gold medal by the French government for his service to tourism.



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Tax-deductible donations to SILL can be added to the "Friends of SILL" line at the bottom of your order form. Donations may also be given to a SILL board member at any lecture or you may mail your check to: SILL Registrar, Box 219, 8499 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34238.

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**Fall 25/Spring 26 Events Calendar**

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<b>OCT 16</b>	<b>SPWAC Book Club</b> <i>Iran's Rise and Revival: with the US in the Middle East</i> Lunch and learn with author Dr. Mohsen M. Milani <i>USP SP Bookstore, 11:30 to 1:30 PM</i>
<b>NOV 6</b>	<b>Corruption, Instability, Terrorism, and Failing States: How Ghost Soldiers Threaten International Security</b> Presentation by Investigative Journalist Jordan Siegel <i>Bayfront Bank Conference Room 2 to 5 PM</i>
<b>DEC 14</b>	<b>And the Show Goes On</b> <i>Jazz from Paris to Shanghai: A World Premier</i> A Global Jazz/Classical Musical Event By Parast/Composer Vince di Muro and Violist Jing Yang <i>Cathedral Church of St. Peter - 5 to 8 PM</i>
<b>FEB 10 &amp; 11</b>	<b>Outer Space: Collaboration &amp; Competition</b> 2/10, 5 to 6 PM Keynote by NASA Astronaut Nicole Stott 2/11, 9 AM to 5 PM Panels, Presentations on Space Diplomacy, Security, the International Aerospace Business <i>USP SP Student Center</i>
<b>MAR 18</b>	<b>SPWAC Book Club</b> <i>The Spy and the State: the History of American Intelligence</i> Lunch and learn with author Dr. Jeffrey Rogg <i>USP SP Bookstore, 11:30 AM</i>
<b>MAR 31</b>	<b>Missing Voices: Music by Jewish Composers Killed in the Holocaust</b> French pianist Desiré Malgouyres and American soprano Lily Arblow present a concert and discussion <i>Cathedral Church of St. Peter - 6 to 7 PM</i>

Membership info, event details and tickets  
[www.spwac.org](http://www.spwac.org)

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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 55 years.

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While the Global Issues and Music Series runs January through March, the SILL Board works throughout the year in preparation for the next season. In many instances, volunteers work directly with the SILL Board members in the area of marketing, public relations, technical support, programming, recruitment, community outreach, and special events.

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

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# SARASOTA

## GLOBAL ISSUES

First United Methodist Church

Tuesday 10:30 am

Thursday 10:30 am

<b>6</b> <i>China's Recorded World Order Elizabeth Economy</i>	<b>8</b> <i>Polarization and Democracy: Latin America in a Turbulent World Order Kenneth Roberts</i>
<b>13</b> <i>Russia, America, and Ukraine in 2026: Where Do We Go From Here? Eric Rubin</i>	<b>15</b> <i>The Atomic Fault Line: U.S.-Iran Rivalry and the Nuclear Puzzle in the Middle East Mohsen Milani</i>
<b>20</b> <i>Understanding Nutrition in the Brain: B12 and Other Nutrients' Role in Neurological Function Ari Green</i>	<b>22</b> <i>America and China: In a Cold War? David Lampton</i>
<b>27</b> <i>The Death of Expertise and the Danger to Democracy Tom Nichols</i>	<b>29</b> <i>Can Europe Cope with Challenges from East AND West? Martin Walker</i>
<b>3</b> <i>U.S.-Canada Relations: Friends? Partners? Allies? Laura Dawson</i>	<b>5</b> <i>From the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the War in Ukraine: What Happened to the "End of History"? Jeremy Suri</i>
<b>10</b> <i>The Future of Health: What's Technology got to do with it? Chris Gibbons</i>	<b>12</b> <i>Putin's Russia - The Man, The People, The War Jill Dougherty</i>
<b>17</b> <i>Artificial Intelligence: A Cognitive Revolution Is Upon Us Anatoly Temkin</i>	<b>19</b> <i>Upending Decades-long U.S. Policies in the Middle East Dennis Ross</i>
<b>24</b> <i>This Means War! Mike Plehn</i>	<b>25</b> <i>Our Struggle for an Honest History: The Deep Roots of White Christian Nationalism Robert Jones</i>
<b>3</b> <i>U.S.-Mexico Relations in Turbulent Times Barcena Coqui</i>	<b>5</b> <i>The Promise and Peril of Trump's America First Charles Kupchan</i>
<b>10</b> <i>Understanding Artificial Intelligence John Blevins</i>	<b>12</b> <i>Understanding the Arctic: Beyond the Headlines Jennifer Spence</i>
<b>17</b> <i>AI in Healthcare: What Patients Need to Know Brooke McSwain</i>	<b>19</b> <i>New Tariff Policies Upend Decades of the U.S. Approach: How's That Working Out? Christine McDaniel</i>
<b>24</b> <i>Will the Levant Finally See Calm? Robert Ford</i>	<b>26</b> <i>The Rise and Fall of the Mainstream Media: Reflections of a Recovering Journalist Charles Lane</i>

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

# VENICE

## GLOBAL ISSUES

Venice Community Center

Tuesday 2:30 pm

Friday 10:00 sm

JANUARY

<b>6</b>	<i>China's Recorded World Order</i> Elizabeth Economy	<b>9</b>	<i>Polarization and Democracy: Latin America in a Turbulent World Order</i> Kenneth Roberts
<b>13</b>	<i>Russia, America, and Ukraine in 2026: Where Do We Go From Here?</i> Eric Rubin	<b>16</b>	<i>The Atomic Fault Line: U.S.–Iran Rivalry and the Nuclear Puzzle in the Middle East</i> Mohsen Milani
<b>20</b>	<i>Understanding Nutrition in the Brain: B12 and Other Nutrients' Role in Neurological Function</i> Ari Green	<b>23</b>	<i>America and China: In a Cold War?</i> David Lampton
<b>27</b>	<i>The Death of Expertise and the Danger to Democracy</i> Tom Nichols	<b>30</b>	<i>Can Europe Cope with Challenges from East AND West?</i> Martin Walker

FEBRUARY

<b>3</b>	<i>U.S.–Canada Relations: Friends? Partners? Allies?</i> Laura Dawson	<b>6</b>	<i>From the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the War in Ukraine: What Happened to the “End of History”?</i> Jeremy Suri
<b>10</b>	<i>The Future of Health: What's Technology got to do with it?</i> Chris Gibbons	<b>13</b>	<i>Putin's Russia - The Man, The People, The War</i> Jill Dougherty
<b>17</b>	<i>Artificial Intelligence: A Cognitive Revolution Is Upon Us</i> Anatoly Temkin	<b>20</b>	<i>Upending Decades-long U.S. Policies in the Middle East</i> Dennis Ross
<b>24</b>	<i>This Means War!</i> Mike Plehn	<b>27</b>	<i>Our Struggle for an Honest History: The Deep Roots of White Christian Nationalism</i> Robert Jones

MARCH

<b>3</b>	<i>U.S.–Mexico Relations in Turbulent Times</i> Barcena Coqui	<b>6</b>	<i>The Promise and Peril of Trump's America First</i> Charles Kupchan
<b>10</b>	<i>Understanding Artificial Intelligence</i> John Blevins	<b>13</b>	<i>Understanding the Arctic: Beyond the Headlines</i> Jennifer Spence
<b>17</b>	<i>AI in Healthcare: What Patients Need to Know</i> Brooke McSwain	<b>20</b>	<i>New Tariff Policies Upend Decades of the U.S. Approach: How's That Working Out?</i> Christine McDaniel
<b>24</b>	<i>Will the Levant Finally See Calm?</i> Robert Ford	<b>27</b>	<i>The Rise and Fall of the Mainstream Media: Reflections of a Recovering Journalist</i> Charles Lane

# LAKWOOD RANCH

## GLOBAL ISSUES

Cornerstone Church

Wednesday 11:00 am

Thursday 5:00 pm

<b>7</b> <i>China's Recorded World Order Elizabeth Economy</i>	<b>8</b> <i>Polarization and Democracy: Latin America in a Turbulent World Order Kenneth Roberts</i>
<b>14</b> <i>Russia, America, and Ukraine in 2026: Where Do We Go From Here? Eric Rubin</i>	<b>15</b> <i>The Atomic Fault Line: U.S.-Iran Rivalry and the Nuclear Puzzle in the Middle East Mohsen Milani</i>
<b>21</b> <i>Understanding Nutrition in the Brain: B12 and Other Nutrients' Role in Neurological Function Ari Green</i>	<b>22</b> <i>America and China: In a Cold War? David Lampton</i>
<b>28</b> <i>The Death of Expertise and the Danger to Democracy Tom Nichols</i>	<b>29</b> <i>Can Europe Cope with Challenges from East AND West? Martin Walker</i>
<b>4</b> <i>U.S.-Canada Relations: Friends? Partners? Allies? Laura Dawson</i>	<b>5</b> <i>From the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the War in Ukraine: What Happened to the "End of History"? Jeremy Suri</i>
<b>11</b> <i>The Future of Health: What's Technology got to do with it? Chris Gibbons</i>	<b>12</b> <i>Putin's Russia - The Man, The People, The War Jill Dougherty</i>
<b>18</b> <i>Artificial Intelligence: A Cognitive Revolution Is Upon Us Anatoly Temkin</i>	<b>19</b> <i>Upending Decades-long U.S. Policies in the Middle East Dennis Ross</i>
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JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

# MUSIC MONDAYS

Sarasota: 10:30 am Church of the Palms  
Venice: 3:00 pm Venice Presbyterian Church

JANUARY

**5** *Richard Dowling*  
Piano

**12** *Federica von Stade*  
Mezzo-Soprano

**19** NO PERFORMANCE  
MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

**26** *Edin Espinosa*  
Broadway Actor and  
Singer

FEBRUARY

**2** *Bobby Nunes and  
Fernando Traba*  
Oboe and Bassoon

**9** *Jake Kwiatkowski*  
Bagpipes

**16** *The Garbage-Men*  
Local Band from Sarasota

**23** *Michael Stephen Brown*  
Composer and Pianist

**2** *Virginia Mims*  
Lyric Coloratura Soprano

**9** *Three and a Half Men*  
Barbershop Quartet

MARCH

**16** *Invoke*  
String Quartet

**23** *Lily and Steven  
Honigberg*  
Violin and Cello

**30** *Robyn Bell, Betsy Traba,  
Joseph Holt*  
Guest Host, Flute, Piano



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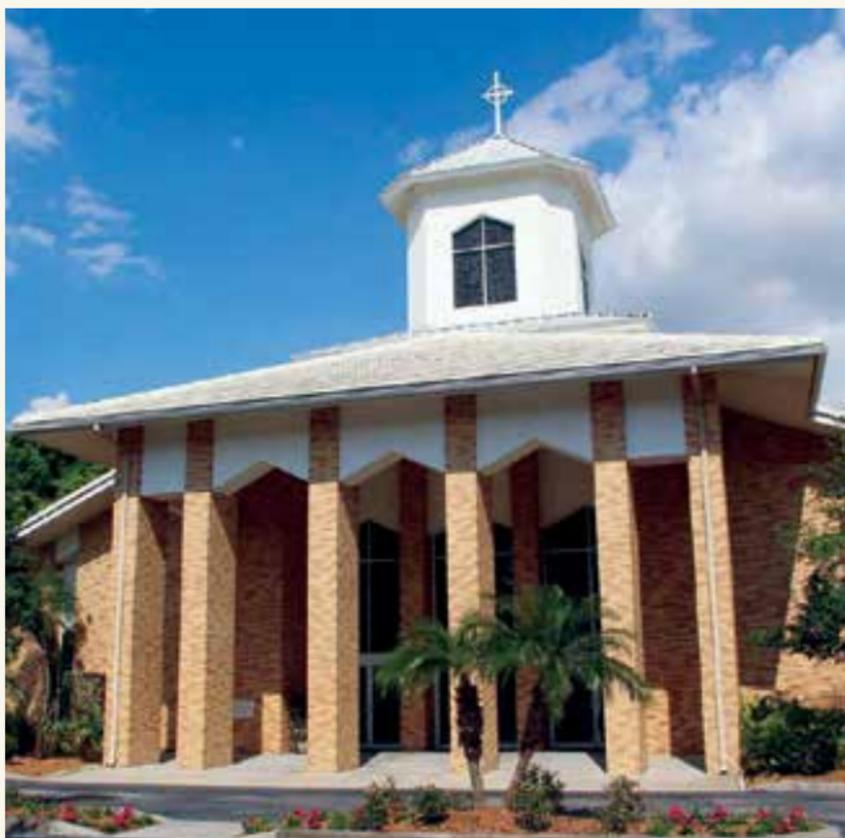
## GLOBAL ISSUES

First United Methodist Church



## MUSIC MONDAYS

Church of the Palms



# VENICE VENUES

## GLOBAL ISSUES

Venice Community Center



## MUSIC MONDAYS

Venice Presbyterian Church



## LAKWOOD RANCH VENUES

### GLOBAL ISSUES Cornerstone Church



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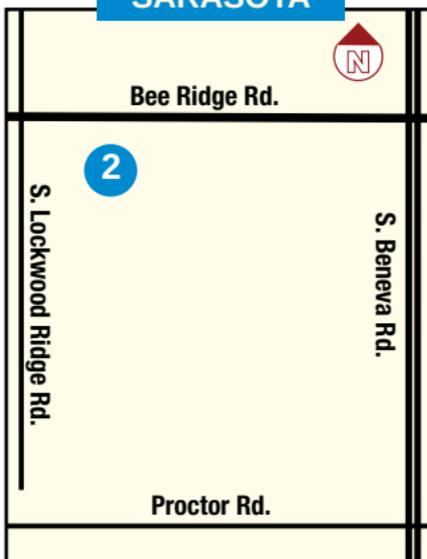
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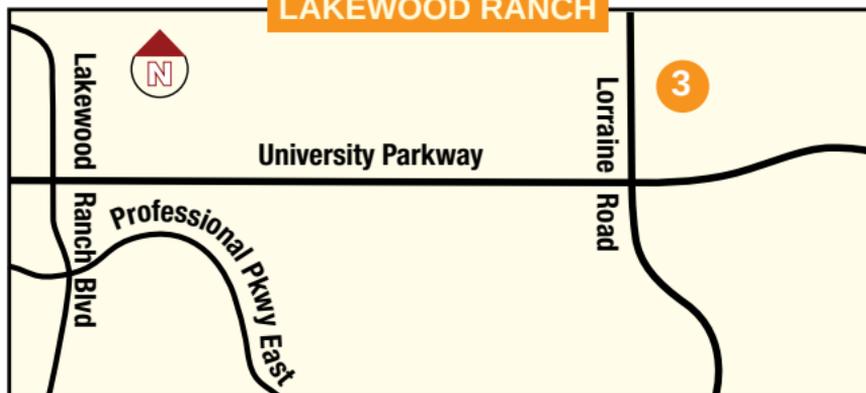
## SARASOTA



## 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



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**JOEL SARTORE**  
PHOTOGRAPHER AND  
CONSERVATIONIST



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**MASTERWORKS 3:**  
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**JAN 30-31**

**POPS 1:**  
ON BROADWAY: DEFYING GRAVITY

**FEB 12-15**

**MASTERWORKS 4:**  
VARIATIONS ON AMERICA

**FEB 27-MAR 1**

**MASTERWORKS 5:**  
RITE OF SPRING

**MAR 13-14**

**POPS 2:**  
WHEN THE SAINTS GO  
MARCHING TO

**MAR 19-22**

**MASTERWORKS 6:**  
BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH

**APR 17-19**

**MASTERWORKS 7:**  
BERNSTEIN AND MAHLER

**APR 24-25**

**POPS 3:**  
BOND AND BEYOND

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# Venice Theatre

**SCAN CODE**  
for show/concert/event  
schedule, info & TICKETS



**2025-2026  
SEASON**

**TICKETS: VeniceTheatre.org**

**QUESTIONS: 941.488.1115**

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**How Low Can You Go?, November 13**

**Morning Song, December 18**

**Mike Block Trio, January 6**

**Trumpet Talk, January 22**

**James Ehnes and Friends, February 10**

**ArcoStrum, March 5**

**Invoke, March 17**

**Lasting Impressions, April 5 & 6**

**Voice of the Cello, April 21**

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Sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; The Exchange; and the Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues.

## OVERVIEW

We look forward to gathering again and engaging in a fascinating musical experience that is unique to Sarasota and Venice. Featuring a wide variety of musicians from around the United States, **Music Mondays** features lively conversation interspersed with musical performance that entertains and delights. Musicians create an aural landscape, painting a picture



or suggesting an emotion through sound that is exceptional in the arts. In this series of 12 musical conversations, experience the unique world of the musicians, hearing their story, their thoughts, and creative insight alongside the magic they create while performing. Each session promises insight into the panoply of musical artistry, whether through a traditional classical medium or more contemporary, popular, and even cutting-edge genres. The kaleidoscope of musical instruments featured includes piano, strings, voice, bagpipes, and even instruments constructed out of everyday garbage. Who knew that a box of Frosted Mini Wheats could become a guitar? Check out the complete list of offerings for the upcoming season for details.

I am thrilled that we are featuring one of America's foremost mezzo-sopranos in this year's season. Frederica von Stade has thrilled audiences for decades, widely regarded as the pre-eminent lyric mezzo-soprano of her generation. She has performed in major concert halls and operatic stages throughout the world and is featured in over 100 recordings. She is most associated with the music of Mozart and Rossini – Cherubino from *The Marriage of Figaro* is one of her signature roles, recognized as one of the finest in the world. This legend of the operatic world graces our program with her fascinating history and stories of an exceptional career.

As a special end-of-season session, we feature our hosts who guide us through these musical conversations, offering our audience a chance to get to know them and their musical artistry with a special guest host, Robyn Bell. Betsy Traba, co-host for **Music Mondays**, and I look forward to this engaging session; the energy onstage will be electric for this final **Music Mondays** session of the season.

Joseph Holt  
Producer and Host

# MUSIC MONDAYS

## SARASOTA

10:30 am – Church of the Palms

## VENICE

3:00 pm – Venice Presbyterian Church

### JANUARY 5

#### *Richard Dowling, Piano*

Hailed by the *New York Times* as an “especially impressive fine pianist”, **Richard Dowling** appears regularly across the United States and throughout the world in orchestral performances, solo recitals, and chamber music collaborations. Richard will offer a program devoted to Scott Joplin and George Gershwin.

### JANUARY 12

#### *Frederica von Stade, Mezzo-Soprano*

**Frederica von Stade**, best known for her work in opera, is also a recitalist and concert artist, and has recorded more than a hundred albums and videos. She is widely regarded as the pre-eminent lyric mezzo-soprano of her generation. This program will offer a retrospective of her wide-ranging career through commentary and historic videos.

### JANUARY 26

#### *Eden Espinosa, Broadway Actor and Singer*

**Eden Espinosa** was nominated for both the Tony and Drama League awards for her stunning performance as Tamara De Lempicka in the Broadway production of *Lempicka*. Espinosa is warmly recognized for her critically acclaimed and iconic portrayals of Elphaba in *Wicked*. Eden will offer the audience a view into the world of Broadway.

### FEBRUARY 2

#### *Bobby Nunes and Fernando Traba, Oboe and Bassoon*

A native of Phoenix, Arizona, **Bobby Nunes** has served as the Principal Oboe of the Sarasota Orchestra since 2023 and was recently named Principal Oboe of the Des Moines Metro Opera. A native of Mexico City, **Fernando Traba** has served as Principal Bassoon of the Sarasota Orchestra since 1992. Both musicians perform on instruments that are the only principal double-reed instruments in the orchestra.

### FEBRUARY 9

#### *Jake Kwiatkowski, Bagpipes*

When he was five years old, **Jake Kwiatkowski's** parents knew something was off. He was carrying a fanny pack under his arm, and they didn't know why. After some investigation, they discovered he was pretending it was a set of bagpipes. Jake brings his talents as one of the only professional bagpipe performers in Western New York.

### FEBRUARY 16

#### *The Garbage-Men, Local Band from Sarasota*

**The Garbage-Men** is a band from Sarasota who have been sharing sustainability and creativity with the local community, playing music on their unique DIY recycled instruments! From simple trash, these young musicians have crafted instruments and have performed on *CNN* and *PBS*.

## FEBRUARY 23

### *Michael Stephen Brown, Composer and Pianist*

**Michael Stephen Brown** is a composer and pianist hailed by the *New York Times* as “one of the leading figures in the current renaissance of performer-composers.” Currently, he is composing *The Magical Carnival*, a fantastical journey for chamber ensemble, co-commissioned by four U.S. organizations, including Sarasota’s La Musica and The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

## MARCH 2

### *Virginia Mims, Lyric Coloratura Soprano*

**Virginia Mims** is an American lyric coloratura soprano recognized for her expressive stage presence, vocal agility, and interpretive depth. Her vast repertoire encompasses opera, art song, oratorio, and musical theatre. In the 2025–2026 season, Virginia will return to Sarasota Opera for *Così fan tutte* and *La bohème*, both under the baton of Victor DeRenzi.

## MARCH 9

### *Three and a Half Men, Barbershop Quartet*

**Three and a Half Men** is a dynamic vocal quartet from Central Florida that brings a variety of musical styles to the scene. With backgrounds in barbershop, doo-wop, vocal jazz, and gospel music, the quartet enjoys a diverse repertoire and delivery. They appear as headliners for the Chorus of the Keys concert in Sarasota on March 7, 2026.

## MARCH 16

### *Invoke, String Quartet*

Described as “...not anything but everything: Classical, Folk, Bluegrass, Americana, and a sound yet to be termed seamlessly merged into a perfect one”, **Invoke** strives to successfully dodge even the most valiant attempts at genre classification. Their ongoing commissioning project, *American Postcards*, asks composers to pick a time and place in American history and tell its story through the group’s unique artistry.

## MARCH 23

### *Lily and Steven Honigberg, Violin and Cello*

A violin virtuoso, fiddler, and composer raised in Washington, DC, LA-based **Lily Honigberg** seamlessly weaves together a rich tapestry of Irish fiddle, classical, and contemporary improvisation in the music of singer-songwriters, rappers, and artists. **Steven Honigberg** was hired under the leadership of Mstislav Rostropovich to become a member of the National Symphony Orchestra. For a decade, Mr. Honigberg was Director of the Chamber Music series at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

## MARCH 30

### *Betsy Traba, Joseph Holt, and Robyn Bell*

#### *Flute, Piano and Guest Host*

**Betsy Hudson Traba** and **Joseph Holt** turn the tables during this final Music Mondays program, becoming the guest musicians instead of hosting the event. Betsy is principal flute with the Sarasota Orchestra in addition to providing program notes for their performances. Joseph Holt is a pianist and conductor, formerly with The U.S. Army Band in Washington, DC, and most recently Artistic Director of the Choral Artists of Sarasota. Joining them is guest host **Robyn Bell**, conductor of the Sarasota Pops and creator of the Suncoast Culture Club podcast.

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



### **Richard Dowling, Piano**

Hailed by the *New York Times* as an “especially impressive fine pianist,”

**Richard Dowling** appears regularly across the United States and throughout the world in orchestral performances, solo recitals, and chamber music collaborations. Audiences have acclaimed him for his elegant and charismatic style of pianism,

which earns him frequent return engagements. He has received reviews that praise him as a “master of creating beautiful sounds with impeccable control of colors and textures,” as “a musician with something to say, the skill to say it and the magnetic power to make you want to listen,” and for giving “a superb recital that left the audience craving for more at the end.” On April 1, 2017, the exact centennial date of Scott Joplin’s death in New York City, Richard Dowling became the first pianist in history to perform publicly the complete cycle of the master ragtime composer’s piano works (in a pair of sold-out recitals in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall) - nearly four hours of music, all from memory.



### **Frederica von Stade, Mezzo-Soprano**

**Frederica von Stade**, best known for her work in opera, is also a recitalist and concert artist, and has recorded more than a hundred albums and videos. She is especially associated with operas by Mozart and Rossini. She is widely regarded as the pre-eminent lyric mezzo-soprano of her generation. The highlights

of her performing life include singing in Washington, DC, for Presidents Nixon, Carter, Reagan, and George H. W. Bush, starring in a gala staged in honor of the 1992 Winter Olympics, and participating in a televised concert led by Leonard Slatkin to mourn those murdered in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Described by the *New York Times* as “one of America’s finest artists and singers,” Frederica von Stade continues to be extolled as one of the music world’s most beloved figures. Known to family, friends, and fans by her nickname “Flicka,” the mezzo-soprano has enriched the world of classical music for four and a half decades. Though she retired from full-time performances in 2010, she continues to make special appearances in concert and opera.

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



**Eden Espinosa,**  
*Broadway Actor and Singer*

**Eden Espinosa** was nominated for both the Tony and Drama League awards for her stunning performance as Tamara De Lempicka in the Broadway production of *Lempicka*. Variety raved, “Espinosa, starring in the title role, brings both luminosity and strength to her powerful performance...”. Eden’s career as an actress and singer has spanned two decades on stage and screen. Espinosa is warmly recognized for her critically acclaimed and iconic portrayals of Elphaba in *Wicked*. Eden’s passions have also extended to the development of new works, stemming from her early years originating the title role of the now cult favorite *Brooklyn the Musical* on Broadway, to more recently starring in Michael John LaChiusa’s *The Gardens of Anuncia* at Lincoln Center. On television, Eden can currently be seen guest-starring on *Brilliant Minds* (NBC), *The Equalizer* (CBS), and *FBI: Most Wanted* (CBS). Eden, an in-demand voice-over artist, was nominated for an Emmy Award for her work as The Queen of Hearts in Disney’s *Alice’s Wonderland Bakery*.



**Bobby Nunes,**  
*Oboe and*  
**Fernando Traba,**  
*Bassoon*

A native of Phoenix, Arizona, **Bobby Nunes** has served as the Principal Oboe of the Sarasota Orchestra since 2023 and was recently named Principal Oboe of the Des Moines Metro Opera. He earned a bachelor’s degree from The Juilliard School, winning the Juilliard Oboe Concerto Competition, and completed his professional studies certificate at The Colburn School in Los Angeles. Bobby was a member of the New York String Orchestra Seminar in Carnegie Hall and was awarded fellowships for study at the Tanglewood Music Center, Music Academy of the West, and Aspen Music Festival.

A native of Mexico City, **Fernando Traba** has served as Principal Bassoon of the Sarasota Orchestra since 1992. Fernando earned his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Cleveland Institute of Music as a student of George Goslee, Principal Bassoon of the Cleveland Orchestra, and an Advanced Certificate from the Juilliard School where he studied with Judith LeClaire (New York Philharmonic) and Stephen Maxim (Metropolitan Opera Orchestra). Both Bobby and Fernando perform as part of the double-reed society of musicians.

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



### **Jake Kwiatkowski, Bagpipes**

When he was five years old, **Jake Kwiatkowski's** parents knew something was off. He was carrying a fanny pack under his arm, and they didn't know why. After some investigation, they discovered he was pretending it was a set of bagpipes. They found him a teacher, and he's been a bagpiper since. Jake has traveled the

United States, Canada, and Scotland to compete, perform, and educate. He was a founding member of the Feadan Or Pipe Band in Rochester, New York, before competing with the world-championship-winning 78th Fraser Highlanders in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He recently returned to Feadan Or as the Pipe Major of one of their competition groups. Jake is the only full-time bagpiper in Western New York and performs as The Rochester Bagpiper. He teaches both privately and as a faculty member at The Hochstein School of Music. He performs for both private and public events and engages with the community by playing pipes at local schools, festivals, and parks. He holds a BA in History and Philosophy and an MS in Global Business and Leadership from Nazareth University.



### **The Garbage-Men, Popular Band**

**The Garbage-Men** is a band from Sarasota, Florida who have been sharing sustainability and creativity with the local community, playing music on their

unique DIY recycled instruments! The group was founded in 2010 at Pine View School in Osprey when Jack Berry wanted to make himself a guitar after hearing his dad sing Beatles songs around the house. He had no woodworking tools or traditional luthier materials experience, so he improvised and used what was lying around the house and in the trash. He brought his first homemade Frosted Mini Wheats guitar to his middle school to show his teachers and friends. Inspired by the enthusiasm and sustainability projects of their environmental science teacher, Mr. Yotsuda, they had the idea to make a full band out of trash. They have performed on *CNN*, in Times Square, *America's Got Talent*, and their *PBS* special with Jack Perkins won an Emmy. Recently, they've been putting the finishing touches on their brand new original musical "Stop Making Trash!" which is a collection of songs composed around the theme of recycling and creative sustainability.

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



### **Michael Stephen Brown,** *Piano and Composer*

**Michael Stephen Brown** is a composer and pianist hailed by the *New York Times* as “one of the leading figures in the current renaissance of performer-composers.”

A 2025 MacDowell Fellow, 2024 Yaddo Artist, and winner of Lincoln Center’s Emerging Artist Award and an Avery Fisher

Career Grant, Michael performs internationally and receives commissions from orchestras, soloists, and festivals around the world. Recent highlights include a recital at Alice Tully Hall for CMS, collaborations with cellist Nicholas Canellakis and violinists Pinchas Zukerman, Kristin Lee, and Arnaud Sussmann, and an Asia recital tour. Currently, he is composing *The Magical Carnival*, a fantastical journey for chamber ensemble, co-commissioned by four U.S. organizations, including Sarasota’s La Musica and The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. “My musical life began at the age of two as I danced in front of the TV to the songs of Raffi. By age three, I had listened to Billy Joel’s *Piano Man* so many times that I wore out the cassette tape. At four, I realized I wanted to be the reincarnation of Mozart, so I embarked upon a life of exploration, some isolation, but mostly pure and utter joy.”



### **Virginia Mims,** *Lyric Coloratura Soprano*

**Virginia Mims** is a soprano recognized for her vibrant stage presence and versatile vocal artistry. Her operatic repertoire includes Musetta and Mimì (*La Bohème*), Despina and Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*),

Mary Bailey (*It’s A Wonderful Life* by Jake Heggie), Violetta (*La Traviata*), Manon (*Manon*), Blumenmädchen (*Parsifal*), Zemfira (*Aleko*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*). She has performed with companies and festivals such as Sarasota Opera, Aspen Music Festival, Indiana University Opera Theater, Brevard Music Center, the Sachsenwald Forum in Germany, and the International Meistersinger Akademie. Critics have praised her as a “splendid and resourceful singing-actor” and noted her “delightful” interpretations and stylistic finesse, particularly in roles like Susanna.

Ms. Mims appeared at Carnegie Hall as the soprano soloist in Taylor Scott Davis’ *Magnificat* and Vivaldi’s *Magnificat* with the New England Symphonic Ensemble.

Ms. Mims holds both Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in voice from Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music. In the 2025–2026 season, Virginia will return to Sarasota Opera for *Così fan tutte* and *La Bohème*, both under the baton of Victor DeRenzi. 45

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



### *Three and a Half Men, Barbershop Quartet*

**Three and a Half Men** is a dynamic vocal quartet from Central Florida that brings a variety of musical styles to the scene. With

backgrounds in barbershop, doo-wop, vocal jazz, and gospel music, the quartet enjoys a diverse repertoire and delivery. That said, Three and a Half Men is honored to be the 2024 Barbershop Harmony Society International Quartet Champions and 2023 Sunshine District Champions. Always looking for ways to enjoy harmony, the group is thrilled to have the opportunity to share its music any chance they get. Please check them out on Facebook @Three and a Half Men and on Instagram @3.5men.qt. From their name, you might wonder where the other 'half' went. Don't worry, they are wondering the same thing! The members of Three and a Half Men are Joseph De Rosa, Josh Szolomayer, Tony De Rosa, and Chris Keough. They appear as headliners for Sarasota's Chorus of the Keys concert in Sarasota on March 7, 2026.



### *Invoke, String Quartet*

Described as "...not anything but everything: Classical, Folk, Bluegrass, Americana, and a sound yet to be termed seamlessly merged into a perfect one" (David Srebnik, SiriusXM Classical

Producer), **Invoke** strives to successfully dodge even the most valiant attempts at genre classification. The multi-instrumental quartet encompasses traditions from across America, including bluegrass, Appalachian fiddle tunes, jazz, and minimalism. Fueled by their passion for storytelling, Invoke weaves all of these styles together to form a unique contemporary repertoire, featuring original works composed by and for the group.

Invoke was the Young Professional String Quartet in Residence at the University of Texas at Austin from 2016-2018. In 2018, Invoke was named a winner of the Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition in New York, NY. They also received First Prize at the M-Prize International Chamber Arts competition in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and First Prize in the Coltman Competition in Austin, Texas. Invoke is strongly committed to championing diverse American voices through commissioning and highlighting new music. Invoke's ongoing commissioning project, entitled American Postcards, asks composers to pick a time and place in American history and tell its story through the group's unique artistry.

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



**Lily Honigberg, Violin and Steven Honigberg, Cello**

A violin virtuoso, fiddler, and composer raised in Washington, DC, LA-based **Lily Honigberg** seamlessly weaves together a rich tapestry of Irish fiddle, classical, and

contemporary improvisation in the music of singer-songwriters, rappers, and artists. Raised in a family of professional musicians, Lily dedicated herself to music at a young age. As a teenager, she studied at the Interlochen Arts Academy, and went on to complete a Master's degree in Contemporary Improvisation from the New England Conservatory.

**Steven Honigberg**, cellist, was hired under the leadership of Mstislav Rostropovich to become a member of the National Symphony Orchestra. For a decade, Mr. Honigberg was Director of the Chamber Music series at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, with six remarkable recordings emerging from the series. For 20 summers, Honigberg was also principal cellist and chamber music director in Sun Valley, Idaho, where he was featured as soloist in major works for cello and orchestra as soloist.



For more information visit our website  
[sillsarasota.org](http://sillsarasota.org)

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS



Guest Host **Robyn Bell** with **Betsy Hudson Traba**, Flute and **Joseph Holt**, Piano

**Dr. Robyn L. Bell** has been the conductor and artistic director of the Sarasota Pops Orchestra in Sarasota, Florida, since 2011. While on faculty at State College of Florida (SCF) in Bradenton from 2009 to 2022, she served as the Music Program Manager, Director of Instrumental Studies, and Professor of Music, conducting the Symphonic Band and Bradenton Symphony Orchestra, while also teaching classes in music theory and appreciation. In addition to her responsibilities with the Pops and SCF, Dr. Bell has also served as the conductor of the Sarasota Orchestra Youth Symphony, guest conductor of the Venice Symphony, and conductor of the Monarch Brass, a brass ensemble comprised of international professional women brass players. In the summer of 2020, Dr. Bell founded the Suncoast Culture Club podcast, a weekly podcast that highlights the cultural arts people, organizations, and events in the culturally rich area of Sarasota and Bradenton, Florida.

**Betsy Hudson Traba** has served as Principal Flutist of the Sarasota Orchestra since 1993. Prior to that, she served as Principal Flutist of the Hofer Symphoniker in Hof, Germany. A native of Mentor, Ohio, she studied with William Hebert and Jeffrey Khaner while earning a Bachelor of Music degree from Baldwin-Wallace College, followed by a Master of Music degree earned at the Manhattan School of Music as a student of Julius Baker. Ms. Traba has been heard frequently as a soloist locally, including guest artist performances with the La Musica International Chamber Music Festival, Artists Series of Sarasota, EnsembleNEWSRQ, and in multiple performances with the Sarasota Orchestra. From 2008-2018, she performed at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in Santa Cruz, CA. Since 2019, she has been engaged to write program notes for Sarasota Orchestra and serves as a moderator in Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning's popular Music Mondays series.

## ABOUT OUR ARTISTS

**Dr. Joseph Holt** has enjoyed a wide-ranging musical career as conductor, pianist, chamber music performer, arts administrator, educator, and arranger. He is the producer and host for Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning's Music Monday programs. He served as Artistic Director for the Choral Artists of Sarasota for the past sixteen years, presenting a series of engaging choral concerts in the Sarasota area. He also served as Director of Artist Programs for seven years for the Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota, annually engaging emerging and established musicians to perform in Sarasota, Florida. Prior to moving to Sarasota, Dr. Holt served more than twenty years as principal pianist with The United States Army Chorus in Washington, DC, performing for U.S. presidents, dignitaries from around the world, and military officials. He also held the position of Associate Music Director for The Choral Arts Society of Washington for fifteen years, performing at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and on international tours to Europe and South America.

# SEASON 41

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Vasily Petrenko, Music Director  
Jan 19, 2026, 7:30 pm  
Van Wezel



**THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA**

Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Music Director | Feb 16, 2026  
7:30 pm | Van Wezel



**DANISH STRING QUARTET**

Feb 24, 2026, 7:30 pm  
Riverview Performing Arts Center



**PIANIST ALEXANDER MALOFEEV**

March 10, 2026, 7:30 pm  
Riverview Performing Arts Center



**JOSHUA BELL & THE ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS**

March 15, 2026, 7:30 pm  
Van Wezel

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Kim-Godfrey, soprano, and  
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**2/11/2026: Duo Beaux Arts:  
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**3/18/2026: Pianist Jonathan  
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