

ZOELLNER ARTS CENTER LEHIGH UNIVERSITY



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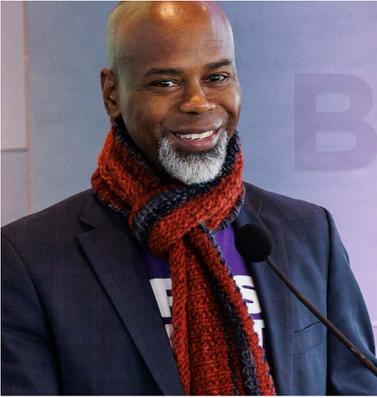


Photo By John Kish IV

DEAR FRIENDS,

It's hard to **believe**, but I've now spent over five years as executive director of Zoellner Arts Center. As I write this, I'm filled with gratitude. What an honor it has been—and continues to be—to come to work each day with a mission to connect our urban, suburban, and rural communities through the arts. Thank you for welcoming me so warmly to the Lehigh Valley and for continuing to walk alongside us on this journey.

This season opens on high notes — with The Bacon Brothers and Morgan Freeman's Symphonic Blues Experience. These

Hollywood heavyweights have also centered music in their award-winning careers. The world-renowned Philharmonia Orchestra, under the prestigious baton of Marin Alsop, will perform stirring works of Tchaikovsky, Bartók, and Prokofiev, filling our hall with beauty and power. Mark Morris Dance Group returns with their signature blend of live music, exquisite movement, and bold fashion—this time set to the music of Burt Bacharach.

We're thrilled to welcome back audience favorites like Postmodern Jukebox and the Vienna Boys Choir, and to continue our commitment to family-centered programming through the Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital Family Series. Our pre-show conversations with Lehigh Valley Health Network health professionals have become a highlight, and we're excited to continue exploring the growing intersection of arts and wellness. Stay tuned for more news on this front.

In the winter and spring, we invite you to experience the electrifying energy of Drum Tao, the return of the moving virtual reality installation *Traveling While Black*, and a celebration of Jane Austen's 250th birthday with a delightful project by The Jane Austen Playlist. The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain will leave you smiling, while The Tallis Scholars—the world's preeminent early music vocal ensemble—will offer a transcendent performance in the beautiful Packer Memorial Church. Finally, we close the season with **the** joyful rhythms of the NYC Ska Orchestra.

Zoellner Arts Center embraces its role as a university-based presenter. We are a space for a community of practice where educators and future makers converge. Student artists, along with the Departments of Music and Theatre and Lehigh University Art Galleries (LUAG), present concerts, plays, and exhibitions that reflect both their talent and the faculty who inspire them.

As always, we're proud to be a space where creativity, community, and connection come together. Thank you for being part of this journey and for making Zoellner Arts Center such a vibrant home for the **arts**.

With gratitude,

Mark Fitzgerald Wilson

Executive Director

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AKROPOLIS REED QUINTET



**ZOELLNER
ARTS CENTER**
LEHIGH UNIVERSITY



2025.2026
SEASON

Zoellner Arts Center receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



Program

Florence Price (1887-1953) – Sonata in E Minor (1932)

II. Andante

I. Andante-Allegro

Derrick Skye (1982) – *A Soulful Nexus* (2023)

I.

II.

III.

IV.

Intermission

Augusta Read Thomas (b. 1964) – *Bebop Riddle IV* (2023)

George Gershwin (1898-1937) – *An American in Paris* (1928)

arr. Raaf Hekkema

Sonata in E Minor

Florence Price's Piano Sonata in E Minor is a groundbreaking work of classical music, though the ways in which it breaks convention while staying true to classical sonata form are sometimes hidden, or carefully imbedded into the piece. Debate or interpretation could answer the question of whether or not the music is more like Antonín Dvořák in how it utilizes traditional cultural songs, or more true to the tradition of Black American songs and dances. For instance there is significant chromaticism and many concerto-like elements such as virtuosic flourishes and pseudo-cadenzas. Ms. Price seems to honor many things, and she commands them to coalesce into a tuneful, rhythmic, and tonally interesting composition that demonstrates her impeccable control of her melodies, rhythms, form, and pacing.

A Soulful Nexus

From the composer: *A Soulful Nexus* is a transcultural classical work that blends elements of Persian classical music with ornamental vocal techniques found in solo Balkan vocal melodies and the groove-based polyrhythms characteristic of electronic dance music. From Persian classical music, the piece uses an E *koron*, which to the Western trained ear may sound like a flat microtonal pitch. However, in Persian classical music, a *koron* is considered its own note, not a microtone between notes. Sonically, this demonstrates how something initially perceived as an imperfection, over time and with change in perspective, can be seen as an aspect of perfection.

Central to *A Soulful Nexus* is the use of the melodic framework *Gushé Shekaste* from Persian classical music, which includes the E *koron*. *Shekaste* translated means “broken,” due to the relationship between the main tetrachord and auxiliary notes of this melodic framework. Throughout the piece, *Morakab-Navazie* is used to move between *Gushé Shekaste* and *Darâmad Dastgâh-e Mahur* and *Dastgâh-e Râstpanjgâh*. The fourth movement in particular is inspired by Afro-Persian music from Southern Iran. From Balkan music, the piece uses mordents and fragmented motivic phrasing often used by solo vocalists in Bulgarian women’s choir music. From electronic dance music, *A Soulful Nexus* uses cyclical, groove-based polyrhythms to accompany instrumental solos. The title *A Soulful Nexus* serves as an invitation for listeners and performers to trace the intricate pathways of these musical idioms interwoven throughout the composition.”

A Soulful Nexus has been made possible by the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program, with generous funding provided by The Mellon Foundation.

Bebop Riddle IV

Program notes provided by Augusta Read Thomas:

Bebop Riddle IV was inspired by the vibrant, dazzling technique, flair, spirit for adventure, and musicality of the Akropolis Reed Quintet. When composing, playing, and hearing *Bebop Riddle IV* the virtuosity, flexibility, and energy of superstar jazz artists leaps to ear and mind. These forces, when intersected with other specific musical perfumes, formulate a unique sonic palette. Thomas says, “I love how music talks with music.” Imagine the pointillistic intricacy and contrapuntal, conversational interlocking-lines of J.S. Bach’s keyboard music crisscrossed with Bill-Evans-and-Thelonious-Monk-like harmonies, then further overlapped with the energy of bebop’s fast tempo, rapid chord changes, mood shifts, rhythmic invention, and instrumental flair. Thomas braids these auras (there are no musical quotes in the composition) into a personal, nuanced amalgam that captures the spirit of improvisation, at turns whimsical, soulful, vivacious, reflective, and animated. Thomas says, “There is a lifeforce when one musician speaks in music with another. Even if from time to time one musician is silent, there is still an animated spirit and energy.” She writes on her score, “Full of spirit; Enthusiastic inner-life for each note, line, and hocket.” This refined composition is an 8-minute conversation between wind players as well as a conversation between composer and some of her musical idols. Thomas is composing a series of “Bebop Riddles” all of which are completely independent, unique works.

Bebop Riddle IV was made possible with generous support from Dick Niemi. Dedicated with admiration and gratitude to Akropolis Reed Quintet and Dick Niemi.

An American in Paris

In *An American in Paris*, George Gershwin aimed to create one of his more serious works despite his natural affinity for frivolity.

He consulted Ravel about this conundrum, who wisely instructed that if Gershwin was making more money than Ravel (which he was), he shouldn't change how he writes his music. He sought advice from Nadia Boulanger, the great teacher of Aaron Copland and others. She also wisely suggested to Gershwin try to be no one but Gershwin. And so, using complex motivic development which is constantly modulating and changing form, Gershwin manages to create his most accessible, but simultaneously most complex piece of music. Among the challenges Dutch saxophonist Raaf Hekkema faced in arranging the work was how to convey these ideas with only five instruments. Hekkema brilliantly takes a smaller color palette and combines the instruments to create more textural possibilities than the listener could ever predict. In ways, while Gershwin's orchestration maximizes the orchestra's capabilities, the listener might find Gershwin's ideas even easier to deduce in the chamber music format. The continually repeating and evolving motives make for a challenging but thrilling performance which Akropolis is delighted to bring to the stage.

Biography

Founded in 2009, the GRAMMY® Award-winning Akropolis Reed Quintet is “a sonically daring ensemble who specializes in performing new works with charisma and integrity” (*BBC Music Magazine*). Five reed players and entrepreneurs unbounded by limits or categorization, the quintet boasts a “collective voice driven by real excitement and a sense of adventure.” (*The Wire*), and has graced the Classical Billboard Charts with each of their last three albums, including #2 in April, 2024. Winner of seven national chamber music prizes including the 2014 Fischhoff Gold Medal, Akropolis is known for performing “works that brilliantly exploit their unique instrumentation” (*Gramophone*).

Composed of the same five members that brought about its founding at the University of Michigan, they are the first ensemble to receive the University's Paul M. Boylan Alumni Award. Akropolis delivers 120 concerts and educational events worldwide each year at luminary series including Tanglewood, Bravo! Vail, University Musical Society, Chamber Music Northwest, and more. Having premiered and commissioned more than 200 works by living artists and composers, they are pioneers and champions of a new genre of classical music—the reed quintet.

Akropolis became the first ever GRAMMY® winning reed quintet with their 2024 album, *Are We Dreaming the Same Dream?*, in collaboration with Pascal Le Boeuf and Christian Euman, taking home Best Instrumental Composition for the track “Strands” at the 67th Grammy Awards held in February 2025. Live performances of *Are We Dreaming the Same Dream?* include University Musical Society, Chamber Music Corvallis at the PRAX Center, and the Williams Center for the Arts. Reflecting the influences of Geri Allen, Dave Brubeck, Charles Mingus and Leonard Bernstein (all of whom explored themes of American unity or disunity), the project probes the idea that diverse strands of experience, more than one unified “dream,” are what define America.

The quintet's previous album, *Hymns for Private Use* (Bright Shiny Things, 2022) ranked in the top 10 on the Classical Billboard Charts, drawing glowing reviews from critics. Featuring works by Nico Muhly and Annika Socolofsky, plus collaborations with seven small business owners, the album was praised by *Textura* for both its “resplendent” musical selections and the “exquisite playing” of the quintet.

Experimenters and creators at their core, the five artists of Akropolis are routinely lauded for their boldness and innovative spirit. As *The Wire* commented: “There’s nothing tentative in their approach, and

that extends to their programming of multifariously challenging and imaginative new works.” Akropolis has collaborated with poets, a metal fabricator, dancers, small business owners, string quartets, pop vocalists, and others from all walks of life.

The quintet is also known for powerful collaborations with youth and others within its Detroit community. Certified as a 510(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Akropolis is the recipient of the 2015 Fiscoff Educator Award, as well as eight grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. The ensemble runs a Michigan-based summer festival called Together We Sound and an annual, school year-long music composition residencies at Cass Tech, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Detroit School of Arts high schools. Each year, Akropolis visits each high school around 20 times throughout the year, helping students compose new works which Akropolis premieres and records, publishing each work on YouTube. Since 2017, Akropolis has helped over 60 Detroit students write pieces of music.

Beginning in 2022 through a partnership with the Bay View Music Festival, the longest continuously operating chamber music festival in the United States, Akropolis runs a 10-day Chamber Music Institute focused on artist training and mentorship in Petoskey, MI. The Akropolis Chamber Music Institute (ACMI) welcomes 18 instrumentals and composers each summer to perform and record new works side-by-side with Akropolis, helping launch the careers of early career artists through mentorship and collaboration.

Described as “pure gold” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Akropolis Reed Quintet performs worldwide and is represented exclusively by Ariel Artists.

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This list recognizes gifts received between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Gifts made after these dates will be updated in January and July on our digital recognition list found at zoellnerartscenter.org/support.

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THE UKULELE ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN



FRI APR 10 | 7:30PM

A worldwide phenomenon, they have won legions of fans with their quicksilver arrangements (spanning pop to classical) and dry British humor. Featuring only ukuleles of various sizes and registers—the rock-star strummers have played for members of the British Royal Family, for the Houses of Parliament in London, and for millions of international television and online viewers. They’ve sold out twice at Carnegie Hall, The Royal Albert Hall in London, the Sydney Opera House and much more. Founded by George Hinchliffe and Kitty Lux, they are best known for playing versions of famous rock songs and film themes, sometimes changing these to subvert the audience’s expectations, serving up a hilarious “soup of contrasts.”

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INFORMATION

CAN'T MAKE IT? EXCHANGE OR DONATE YOUR TICKETS.

Contact us before the show to either **exchange** for another event, or convert the value of your tickets to a charitable contribution to Zoellner Arts Center. Subscribers and Friends may exchange for free, just \$1 per ticket for all others. Patrons are responsible for any difference in ticket price, exchanges must occur within event category (e.g., Music Dept. ticket for Music Dept. ticket). Excludes rental events. No refunds.

PARKING IS FREE in the garage attached to the center for all Presenting Series, Lehigh University Music Dept. and Dept. of Theatre events (excluding some weekday morning events, Christmas Vespers in Packer Chapel and Dolce in Lamberton Hall). Please note, there may be a parking charge for non-Zoellner sponsored events.

GROUPS SAVE UP TO 15% Just buy 10 or more tickets to a performance. Orders incur a one-time per-performance fee of \$6 per group order in lieu of per-ticket fees.

TAXES AND FEES

Single tickets ordered by phone or online carry fees ranging from \$2.25-\$8.50 per ticket. Tickets purchased in-person may carry fees of up to 50 cents per ticket. The City of Bethlehem Amusement tax is 5% on tickets above \$10, with a cap of \$2 per ticket. Additional delivery charges may apply, check online for details.

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HOUSE NOTES

Concessions: Food and beverage service will likely be limited. Check the “Know Before You Go” email sent to ticket holders the week of the show. Be sure to give Ticket Services your email.

Please silence all mobile devices upon entering the theatre.

To leave theatres during performances, use the rear doors, if you are able, to minimize disruption of performance.

Late seating occurs at suitable intervals. While waiting, you may watch performance on lobby monitors.

Lost & Found: Contact Ticket Services. Not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Families with Children:

We welcome children of all ages to our Family Series shows. For performances not listed as Family Series in our brochure, we recommend that attendees be ages four and over. Everyone entering the theatre must have a ticket, and sit quietly in a seat throughout the performance. There are closed-circuit monitors in the lobby which supervised children may use to watch performances if they need a break.

Accessible seating can be requested when purchasing tickets. Accessible parking is on levels 1 and 3 in the parking garage.

Free assistive-listening devices are available through Ticket Services for amplified performances.

Free Sensory Kits are available to checkout, please inquire at the box office or with an usher.

Questions about your tickets?

Contact Ticket Services:

Phone: 610-758-2787 ext. 0
Email: inzactix@lehigh.edu

Box Office Hours:

TUE 12-6; WED-FRI 12-5
For ticketed events: SAT 2 hours prior to curtain, 90 mins. all other days.

All programs and artists are subject to change. In the event of a cancellation or material change, we will make every effort to contact all ticket holders. We must reserve the right to make any changes whatsoever in the event owing to any unforeseen or unavoidable cause or to cancel the event for any reason beyond our control without being liable to pay any ticket holder compensation for damages other than a ticket of comparable value to an event (based on availability).

Video recording or photography may occur for this performance that might include images of audience members. Your attendance at today’s performance grants permission for further usage of such images.

ZOELLNER ARTS CENTER

at LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

2026 SPRING SEASON AT A GLANCE



DRUM TAO	FRI JAN 23
JAZZ FACULTY	FRI JAN 30
BUGS FAMILY SERIES 	SUN FEB 1
SANGJARU	THU FEB 5
NEW YORK JAZZ REPERTORY ORCHESTRA	SAT FEB 7
LUVME	SUN FEB 8
TRAVELING WHILE BLACK	SELECT DATES FEB-APR
AKROPOLIS REED QUINTET	SAT FEB 14
THE JANE AUSTEN PLAYLIST	SUN FEB 15
<i>THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST</i>	FEB 20 - 28
PHILHARMONIC	FRI FEB 20, SAT FEB 21
JAZZ REPERTORY ORCHESTRA	SAT FEB 28
GRIMMZ FAIRY TALES FAMILY SERIES 	SUN MAR 1
DOLCE TREBLE CHOIR	THU MAR 5
DIRTY DANCING IN CONCERT	FRI MAR 6
TOMMY DORSEY ORCHESTRA	SUN MAR 22
CHOIR, DOLCE AND GLEE CLUB	FRI MAR 27, SAT MAR 28
CLICK, CLACK, MOO FAMILY SERIES 	SUN MAR 29
THE UKULELE ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN	FRI APR 10
<i>INTO THE WOODS</i>	APR 10 - 18
THE TALLIS SCHOLARS	SAT APR 11
COMPAGNIE MULTICORPS / MARCEL GBEFFA	FRI APR 17
STUDENT JAZZ CONCERT	SUN APR 19
PHILHARMONIC.....	FRI APR 24, SAT APR 25
SYMPHONIC BAND.....	SUN APR 26
CHORAL ARTS.....	FRI MAY 1, SAT MAY 2
WIND ENSEMBLE	SUN MAY 3
NYC SKA ORCHESTRA	FRI MAY 15

KEY: **PRESENTING SERIES** | **MUSIC DEPARTMENT** | **DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE**

