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InConcert *Full 40-piece chamber orchestra*



**Saturday,
 February 23, 2019
 5:00pm**

The Church of
 St. John the Divine

Brett Mitchell, *Conductor* • **Richard Belcher**, *Cello*

Wojciech Kilar (KEE-lahr)

Orawa

---9 minutes---

POLAND

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (MÖT-zhart)

Symphony #35 in D major, K. 385, "Haffner"

I. Allegro con spirit • II. Andante • III. Menuetto • IV. Presto

---18 minutes---

AUSTRIA

LiveNote

Camille Saint-Saëns (San SAHN)

Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, op. 33

I. Allegro no troppo • II. Allegretto con moto • III. Tempo primo

---19 minutes---

FRANCE

Ethel Smyth (Smīth), arr. Mark Buller

The Wreckers

---9 minutes---

ENGLAND OR GERMANY

Jim Stephenson

ROCOmotive

ROCO WORLD PREMIERE COMMISSION

---15 minutes---

AMERICA

This evening's music will include the pieces above, not necessarily in this order, with a Take 5 (short intermission) and possible surprises.

Horn

Gail Williams

Principal

Wendy & Tim Harris,
Peggy and Calvin Crossley
Chair

Gavin Reed
Beverly & Bill Coit
Chair

Sandor Ostlund

Principal

Leslie & Jack Blanton
Chair

Erik Gronfor

Founding Consortium
Chair

Bass

Gabriela Martinez

Lisa and Rex Wooldridge
Chair

Celeste

Laurie Meister

Founding Consortium
In memory of
Bruce Harrington
Chair

Harp

Rachel Shepard

Janice & Barrett Green,
Lucy & Vic Kormeier,
Warren Dunn
Chair

Melissa Williams

Sharon Ley Lietzow,
Barbara Burger
Chair

Maureen Nelson

Mrs. Clare A. Glassell
Chair

Violin I

Aloysia Friedmann

Violin Consortium

Scott St. John
Concertmaster Consortium

Nathan Williams

Principal

Jeanie Flowers
in loving memory of
Dan Flowers
Chair

Maiko Sasaki

Founding Consortium
Chair

Clarinet

Rebecca Powell Garfield

Kathy & Ed Segner
Chair

Brook Ferguson

Principal

Mary Margaret &
Russell Schulze II
Chair

Flute/Piccolo

Courtenay Vandiver Pereira

Rebecca Upchurch, Heidi and Bilen Ham,
Kate & Malcolm Hawk
Chair

Richard Belcher

Principal

Denman/Newman
Foundation
Chair

Cello

Annamarie Reader

ROWBC
Chair

Shino Hayashi

The Deshpande-Helmer Family
Chair

Kristin Wolfe Jensen

Principal

Sarah & Jeffrey McParland,
in memory of Angeleen McParland
Chair

Nathan Koch

JoAnn & Bob Fry
Chair

Bassoon/ Contra Bassoon

Alecia Lawyer

Principal

Mrs. Paul N. Howell
Chair

Spring Hill

Founding Consortium
Chair

Oboe/English Horn

Lorento Golofeev

Leslie and Jim Loftis
Chair

Katie Carrington

Kit Gwin
Chair

Viola

Suzanne LeFevre

Principal Viola

Susanne & Randall Evans
Chair

Meredith Harris

Martha & Tom Bourne,
Mimi Reed McGehee
Chair

Christina Carroll

Susan Whitfield
Chair

Percussion

George Chase

Diane Simpson, in loving memory
of Don Simpson
Vivie & Chris O'Sullivan
Chair

Joseph Foley

Principal

Lori & Joseph Flowers
Chair

Trumpet

Trombone

Thomas Hulten

Melissa and Mark Hobbs
Chair

Tammy Linn

Founding Consortium
Chair

Ben Grube

Amanda McMillian &
Benjamin Holloway
Chair

Kana Kimura

Ann & Randy Fowler
Chair

Violin II

Rasa Kalesnykaite

Principal

Kerry Lynch & Dean Slocum
Chair

Andrés Gonzalez

Mimi Lloyd
Chair

Mary Reed

Leslye & David Weaver
Chair

Brett Mitchell,
Conductor
Consortium



Photo/Roger Mastroianni

Featured *Artist*

Brett Mitchell, *Conductor*

Hailed for presenting engaging, in-depth explorations of thoughtfully curated programs, **Brett Mitchell** began his tenure as Music Director of the Colorado Symphony in July 2017. Prior to this appointment, he served as the orchestra's Music Director Designate during the 2016-17 season.

He leads the orchestra in ten classical subscription weeks per season as well as a wide variety of special programs featuring such guest artists as Renée Fleming, Yo-Yo Ma, and Itzhak Perlman.

Mr. Mitchell is also in consistent demand as a guest conductor. Highlights of his 2018-19 season include subscription debuts with the Minnesota Orchestra and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and return appearances with the orchestras of Cleveland, Dallas, and Indianapolis. Other upcoming and recent guest engagements include the Detroit, Houston, Milwaukee, National, Oregon, and San Antonio symphonies, the Grant Park Festival Orchestra, the Rochester Philharmonic, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Mitchell also regularly collaborates with the world's leading soloists, including Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Rudolf Buchbinder, Kirill Gerstein, James Ehnes, Augustin Hadelich, Leila Josefowicz, and Alisa Weilerstein.

From 2013 to 2017, Mr. Mitchell served on the conducting staff of The Cleveland Orchestra. He joined the orchestra as Assistant Conductor in 2013, and was promoted to Associate Conductor in 2015, becoming the first person to hold that title in over three decades and only the fifth in the orchestra's hundred-year history. In these roles, he led the orchestra in several dozen concerts each season at Severance Hall, Blossom Music Center, and on tour.

From 2007 to 2011, Mr. Mitchell led over one hundred performances as Assistant Conductor of the Houston Symphony. He also held Assistant Conductor posts with the Orchestre National de France, where he worked under Kurt Masur from 2006 to 2009, and the Castleton Festival, where he worked under Lorin Maazel in 2009 and 2010. In 2015, Mr. Mitchell completed a highly successful



In memory of our ROCO friend and advocate by her friends, family, and husband Chuck to support the Conductor's travel.

five-year appointment as Music Director of the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra. As an opera conductor, Mr. Mitchell has served as music director of nearly a dozen productions, principally at his former post as Music Director of the Moores Opera Center in Houston, where he led eight productions from 2010 to 2013. His repertoire spans the core works of Mozart (The Marriage of Figaro and The Magic Flute), Verdi (Rigoletto and Falstaff), and Stravinsky (The Rake's Progress) to contemporary works by Adamo (Little Women), Aldridge (Elmer Gantry), Catán (Il Postino and Salsipuedes), and Hagen (Amelia). As a ballet conductor, Mr. Mitchell most recently led a production of The Nutcracker with the Pennsylvania Ballet in collaboration with The Cleveland Orchestra during the 2016-17 season.

In addition to his work with professional orchestras, Mr. Mitchell is also well known for his affinity for working with and mentoring young musicians aspiring to be professional orchestral players. His tenure as Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra from 2013 to 2017 was highly praised, and included a four-city tour of China in June 2015, marking the orchestra's second international tour and its first to Asia. Mr. Mitchell is regularly invited to work with the highly talented musicians at the Cleveland Institute of Music and the orchestras at this country's high-level training programs, such as the National Repertory Orchestra, Texas Music Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, and Interlochen Center for the Arts.

Born in Seattle in 1979, Mr. Mitchell holds degrees in conducting from the University of Texas at Austin and composition from Western Washington University, which selected him in as its Young Alumnus of the Year in 2014. He also studied at the National Conducting Institute, and was selected by Kurt Masur as a recipient of the inaugural American Friends of the Mendelssohn Foundation Scholarship. Mr. Mitchell was also one of five recipients of the League of American Orchestras' American Conducting Fellowship from 2007 to 2010.

For more information, please visit brettmitchellconductor.com.



Featured *Artist*

Jim Stephenson, *Composer*

Leading American orchestras, instrumentalists, and wind ensembles around the world have performed the music of Chicago based composer **James M. Stephenson**, both to critical acclaim and the delight of audiences.

The Boston Herald raved about “straightforward, unabashedly beautiful sounds,” suggesting “Stephenson deserves to be heard again and again!” A formal sense of melody and tonality characterize his music, each embedded in a contemporary soundscape. These qualities, coupled with the composer’s keen ability to write to each occasion, have led to a steady stream of commissions and ongoing projects.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Riccardo Muti, will give the world premiere of his new bass trombone concerto in June 2019, written for Charles Vernon of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra brass. A second bass trombone concerto received its orchestral premiere with the St. Louis Symphony and soloist Gerry Pagano, in 2017. “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band commissioned a symphony (the composer’s second in this genre) and gave the work its premiere in 2016 at the prestigious Midwest Clinic, and subsequently recorded the work. Additionally, *Compose Yourself!*, Stephenson’s landmark young-audience work has now been performed over 300 times since its creation in 2002, engaging children in New Zealand and Canada and across the U.S. Additional premieres include Carnegie Hall in May, 2017 (Chamber Music Charleston) and in the summer, 2017, a Music Academy of the West premiere of “Martha Uncaged” – with the composer conducting – and a west-coast premiere of his violin concerto at the famed Cabrillo Music Festival. The 2017-18 season will see a new “Low brass concerto” with the Minnesota Orchestra and Osmo Vänskä.

The Devil’s Tale (2013), a sequel to Stravinsky’s famous “Soldier’s Tale” has become a highlight of Stephenson’s extensive chamber music output, having already garnered much critical praise for its recent recording

(“a most remarkable work” – Fanfare Magazine) and numerous performances, including at noteworthy venues such as Ravinia and Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center.

James M. Stephenson came late to his full-time composing career, having first earned a degree from the New England Conservatory in trumpet performance, and then going on to perform 17 seasons in the Naples Philharmonic in Florida. As such, the composer is largely self-taught, making his voice truly individual and his life’s work all the more remarkable. Colleagues and friends encouraged his earliest efforts and enthusiasm followed from all directions. As his catalog grew, so did his reputation. That catalog now boasts concertos and sonatas for nearly every instrument, earning him the moniker “The Concerto King” from Chicago Symphony clarinetist John Yeh. The vast majority of those compositions came through commissions by and for major symphony principal players, in Chicago, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Minnesota, Washington DC, St. Louis, Oregon, Milwaukee, and Dallas, among others. A major break came from the Minnesota Commissioning Club, which led to two works (violin concertos) receiving premieres in 2012—by Jennifer Frautschi with the Minnesota Orchestra under Osmo Vänskä and by Alex Kerr with the Rhode Island Philharmonic under Larry Rachleff. Other international soloists for whom Stephenson has composed include saxophonist Branford Marsalis and trumpeter Rex Richardson, whose concerto has been performed on five continents. With such prolific output, Stephenson’s music is well represented in recordings. Nearly all of his solo brass works (over 50) have been professionally recorded, and in total, his extensive catalog for all instruments can be heard on over 30 CDs.

James Stephenson is also a highly sought-after arranger and conductor, rounding out his constantly busy schedule. His arrangements have been performed/recorded/broadcast by virtually every major orchestra in the country, including the Boston Pops, Cincinnati Pops, New York Pops and more. On the podium, Stephenson has led orchestras in Chattanooga, Bozeman, Charleston, Ft. Myers, Modesto, and Wyoming, in addition to numerous concert bands. With the Lake Forest Symphony, near his Illinois home, he has not only conducted but also has served for seven years as Composer-in-Residence.

Jim originally hails from the Greater Chicago area, as does his wife Sally. In 2007 the couple, along with their four children, returned to the region to pursue the life they now share.

Featured *Artist*

Richard Belcher, *Cello*

New Zealand cellist **Richard Belcher** has performed as ROCO's principal cellist since 2008. He is also active as a chamber musician and soloist across the USA and internationally. He is a founding member of the Grammy-nominated Enso String Quartet, which boasts multiple highly acclaimed recordings and regular performances in many of the major concert halls, including Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center of New York, and the Library of Congress.

Richard has appeared at many festivals, including those in France, the UK, Brazil, Australia, Mexico, Canada, and throughout the U.S. He has been involved with many live and pre-recorded radio, TV, and internet broadcasts in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK.

Richard enjoys teaching and has served as Adjunct Faculty at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, and currently is on the faculty at the Interlochen Adult Chamber Music Camp.

Richard moved to the U.S. in 1998 to study with Aldo Parisot at Yale University, and it was there in 1999 that he founded the Enso String Quartet. Other major teachers include Norman Fischer, Marc Johnson, and Alexander Ivashkin.

Richard is married to ROCO violinist, Cecilia Belcher. When possible they enjoy playing chamber music together, and they also recently performed the Brahms Double Concerto together in St Paul, MN. They live in Minneapolis with their young son, Finn.



Buller *Points*

by Mark Buller

Dame Ethel Smyth: *Overture to The Wreckers*

Quick Intro: Written 1902-04; premiered in Leipzig in 1906.

The Music: Bold and colorful, with depictions of storms crashing upon the shore.

The Opera: A poor village subsists on selling what its inhabitants can plunder from ships wrecked on the craggy Cornish coast. But a young fisherman in love with the preacher's wife has been lighting bonfires to warn off approaching ships. Ensuing: all the drama you might imagine following such an exposition, complete with a hell-bent congregation, close escapes, and a cave that fills with water as the tide comes in (a perfect place for a tragic ending).

Patchwork History: Smyth tried for years to secure a premiere of her opera; after striking out time and again, she agreed to a performance in Leipzig, where she had previously studied. The only catch: the company insisted on performing the piece in a poor German translation. On opening night, Smyth was dismayed to find that the conductor had made massive cuts, rendering the opera an "incomprehensible jumble." Despite 16 curtain calls, Smyth was unhappy, and that night she sneaked into the opera house and made off with the score and parts, effectively cancelling the run. The opera, which could now boast a degree of notoriety, was performed next in Prague and London, generally without proper rehearsal time.



Notes for Women: Smyth was a noted suffragette (her 1910 song “The March of the Women” would become a de facto anthem) and was famously bisexual in an era unfriendly to such things. Late in her life she fell in love with Virginia Woolf, who described her own reaction as “like being caught by a giant crab.” Until 2016, Smyth was the only female composer whose opera was performed by the Metropolitan Opera (for *Der Wald*). Despite contemporary critical praise for *The Wreckers*, it has received few performances.

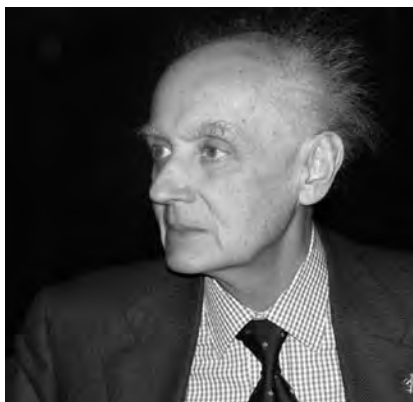
Wreckers Lite: This overture calls for a large orchestra, so ROCO has commissioned yours truly to create a new orchestration. Tonight’s concert features the premiere of this reduced version.

Further Listening: Benjamin Britten’s opera *Peter Grimes*, whose plot is similar. Other unjustly-neglected composers from this time period, including Frederick Austin, Frederick Cowen, Granville Bantock, and York Bowen.

Wojciech Kilar: *Orawa*

Quick Intro: Written in 1986; premiered by the Polska Orkiestra Kameralna in Zakopane, Poland.

Riverrun: *Orawa* is part of a cycle of works by Kilar depicting the Tatra Mountains; the title brings to mind the region on the border of Slovakia and Poland as well as the eponymous river which runs through the area. Much like Smetana’s famous *The Moldau*, *Orawa* can be heard as describing the various landscapes it passes through: mountains, pastures, and the occasional folk dance.



On Screen: You may not recognize his name, but you’ve likely heard Kilar’s music. He’s the composer of the scores to Roman Polanski’s 2002 film *The Pianist* and Francis Ford Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*. The slashing strings and moody motifs that permeate *Orawa* certainly wouldn’t be out of place in a film soundtrack! Toward the end of his life, Kilar shifted gears to focus on writing concert music, though he continued occasional work on film scores.

Motion: Music can sometimes be described in terms of the direction its rhythms seems to suggest; in this way, much of the music from the Classical era (c.f. the Mozart on this program) seems to bubble upward. (Think of the way a Strauss waltz feels: almost weightless, as if it were an evocation of bubbles in a champagne glass.) Some dance-inspired music, particularly that of eastern and central Europe, evinces much more of a downward motion, calling to mind an earthy village dance in a Brueghel painting. There are moments in *Orawa* where you can almost see the heavy footfalls of Polish workers in a 19th-century tavern. Some conductors, incidentally, will show where this motion is: the *ictus* (that point in the air where the beat “lands”) will be either up in the air or heavily down at the waist.

Repetition: While *Orawa* wouldn’t really be classifiable as a minimalist piece of music, it does owe something to that genre. While some listeners tend to dismiss the choice to repeat figures as lazy, composers (and, for that matter, visual artists and choreographers) know the power of repetition. For one, every subsequent change, no matter how small, becomes almost seismic in comparison. Listen to the opening of Wagner’s *Das Rheingold*; we hear that same chord for so long that when it finally gives way, we feel as if we’re suddenly on a different planet.

Further Listening: Ludovico Einaudi; Steve Reich; Bernard Herrmann’s *Psycho* and *Vertigo* scores; Britten’s *Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge*.

Camille Saint-Saëns: *Cello concerto No. 1*

Quick Intro: Written in 1872 for Auguste Tolbecque, premiered at the Paris Conservatoire.

Quick Outline: As with all traditional concertos, this is cast in a fast-slow-fast sequence. Unlike traditional concertos, Saint-Saëns eschews the typical three-movement structure, preferring one continuous movement, much like Franz Liszt's sort-of-one-movement Piano Concerto No. 2. Whereas a traditional concerto would begin with an orchestral introduction sans soloist, here the cellist enters almost right away with a flurry of cascading notes.

Did you know: Saint-Saëns was one of the first famous composers to write a film score, for the single-reel 1908 *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise*.

Hair up, hair down: Saint-Saëns is today best known for his fun, carefree *Carnival of the Animals* and the comically faux-evil *Danse macabre*. But he could write more "serious" music as well: listen to his Études for piano and his works for organ. That said, much of his music falls in between these two extremes, and his concertos are prime examples. Perhaps this "middle-ground" approach comes from Saint-Saëns' lifelong goal of furthering French music. Which brings us to:

Franco vs. Prussian: As Wagner-mania spread across Europe, Saint-Saëns worked hard to create opportunities for younger French composers and to maintain a place for the uniquely "French" sound. His cause was furthered by, of all things, the Franco-Prussian War, which ossified anti-German sentiment. French composers didn't like the stereotypical furrowed-brow seriousness of Teutonic music, nor the Germans' steady march to weaken traditional tonality. Saint-Saëns was no troglodyte, but his commitment to tradition led some



composers to later brand him a reactionary (note that he died in 1921, as expressionism was gaining a serious foothold across Europe).

Further Listening: The music of Saint-Saëns' student Gabriel Fauré, as well as the latter's student, Maurice Ravel: trace the musical lineage. Also listen to Saint-Saëns' other concertos, notably the five for piano.

Thank you to Glen Rosenbaum for use of his model train video and to G&G Model Shop for their train display.

Jim Stephenson: *ROCOmotive*



Quick Intro: A series of vignettes evoking model trains. "Traignettes."

Father and Son: "In doing research for this project, I decided to revisit my youth, and to actually go retrieve the model train from my father's basement; we had spent a bit of time putting one together at one point. I reconstructed the train in my basement, now with the help of both my father, and MY son, and after some initial trouble, was able to get it running again, which subsequently inspired the music for this piece.... My only model-training was with my father when I was younger, and that wasn't for very long. But even so, this piece allowed me a trip down memory lane, and the ability to capture some personal nostalgia. Even just going to get the trains and tracks from my dad's house was a chance to visit with my dad, and relive some of our past. He later came to my house to help get it working, for me and my son. So it was a multi-generational bonding project!!"

Tracking the percussion: Keep an ear out for the many uses of model train track as played by the percussion!.



WORDplay: This title, which immortalizes ROCO, is par for the course for Stephenson. Other similarly-titled works include: *BasSOON It Will Be Christmas*, which is exactly what it sounds like; a Concerto for Cell Phone; and *Diaper Rag*.

Further Listening: For train-inspired music: Honegger's Pacific 231; Villa-Lobos' *The Little Train of the Caipira*; Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*; Pierre Schaeffer's *Etude aux Chemins de fer*.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Symphony No. 35 'Haffner'*

Quick Intro: Written in 1782; performed the following year at the Vienna Burgtheater (the Imperial Court Theater). Commissioned by the Haffner

family, of the Viennese upper crust; they had previously commissioned a serenade for orchestra.

Format: As we'd expect from a Mozart symphony, the piece is in four movements: a fast opener, a slow response, a sprightly dance, and a spirited finale.

On second thought: The Haffner family so loved their first commission from Mozart that they asked for a second such piece. Mozart quickly completed the new work but was somewhat unsatisfied with it; during its composition he'd been "up to [his] eyes in work" and so had written it in haste. Several months later, he returned to the score, having in the meantime wholly forgotten it, and found himself delighted. He deleted a movement and revised the orchestration, then conducted the premiere of the new symphony.

Serenades vs. symphony: For the last few centuries composers have been creating new musical forms, then immediately straining against those same formal strictures. Whereas today a symphony can be broadly defined as a multi-movement (or not) piece for

orchestra (or not – see Glenn Branca's 13th symphony for 100 electric guitars), during Mozart's lifetime a symphony was a four-movement affair whose movements themselves followed specific parameters. Serenades, on the other hand, were orchestral works cast in multiple movements, sometimes more than four; Mozart's most famous is the evergreen *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. So in retrospect the difference is small, but to Mozart a capital-S "Symphony" would carry more weight than a lighter serenade. In the case of this symphony, since there are only minor differences between the symphony and its serenade predecessor, that differentiation is minor indeed.

Further Listening: All of the major works from the last decade of Mozart's life are worth hearing, since as the composer's voice matured, his music takes on a sort of gravity, an otherworldliness. Listen particularly to the late piano concertos and the symphonies after the *Haffner*. Then compare to Beethoven's first three symphonies to see the torch passed on, and wonder how Mozart's music might have sounded had he lived a few more decades into the 19th century.



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"Attitude of Gratitude"

Memories of rock dominoes, Crazy Eights, chess, ping pong, Candy Land...
and our family gathered and verbally jousting to throw each other off...

laughter and popcorn and time together.

Thank you, family, for endless inspiration. Every aspect of ROCO has your touch.

---The ROCO Team---

2018-2019

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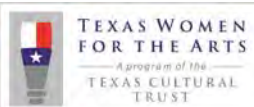
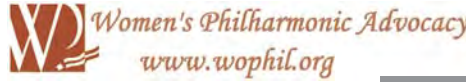
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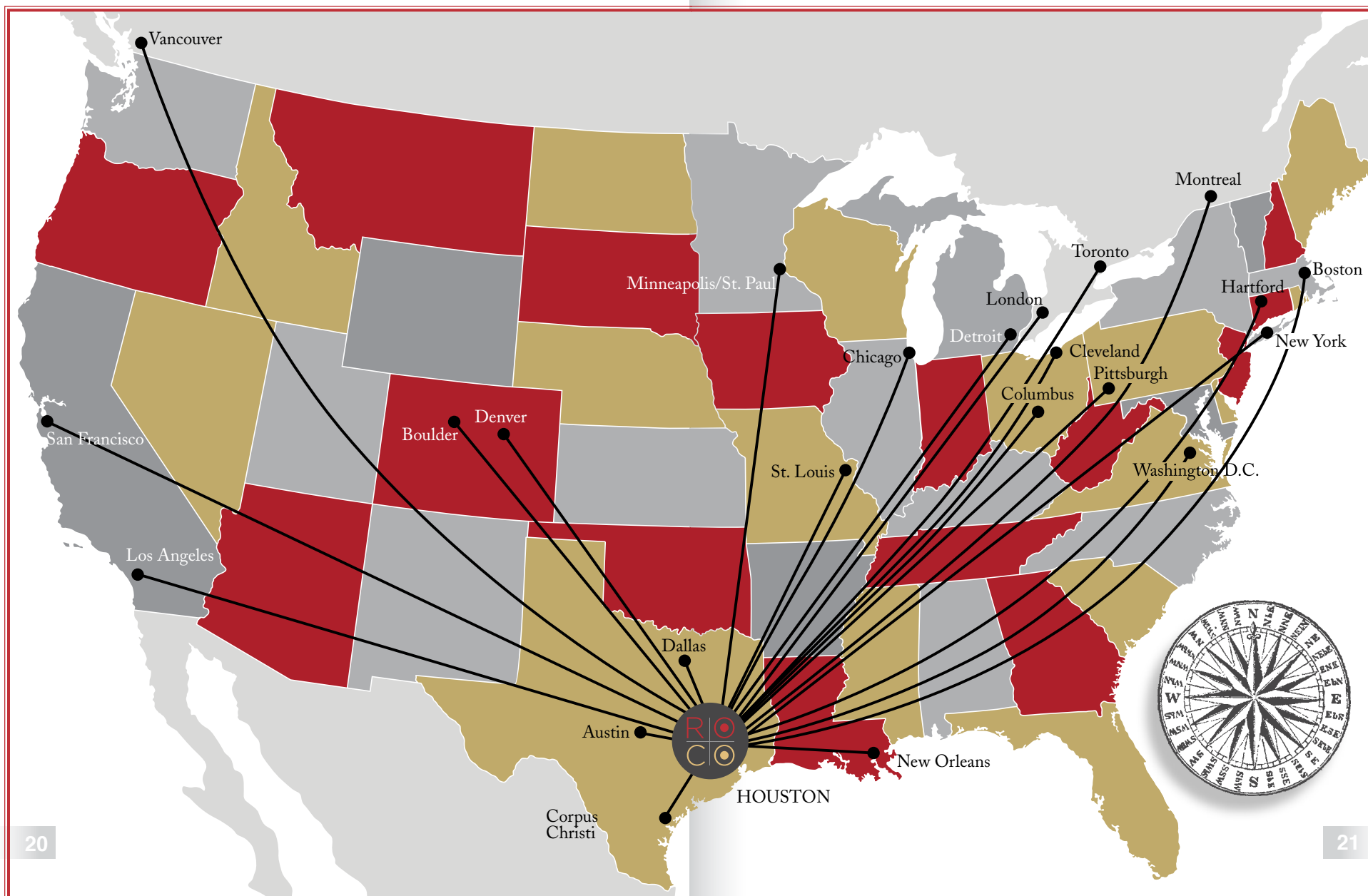


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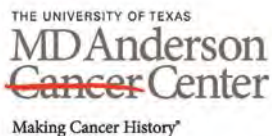
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honors
Jason Stephens

JASON STEPHENS is a graduate of Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas, where he received a Bachelor's of Music in 2003. He has been working as the orchestra librarian with the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra (ROCO) since its first season (2006-present). In addition to his duties with ROCO, he works for the Houston Public Library as manager for System Services.

Jason has also been with the Houston Pride Band as a bassoonist (2005), artistic director (2006-2011, 2014-2015), assistant director (2011-2014) and percussionist (2011-present). In his time with the Houston Pride Band, he has also been a guest conductor for the Oak Lawn Symphonic Band in Dallas, Texas and for Gay Games VIII in Cologne, Germany. Jason also performs with the Houston Civic Symphony as 2nd bassoonist and serves as their orchestra librarian (2009-present).

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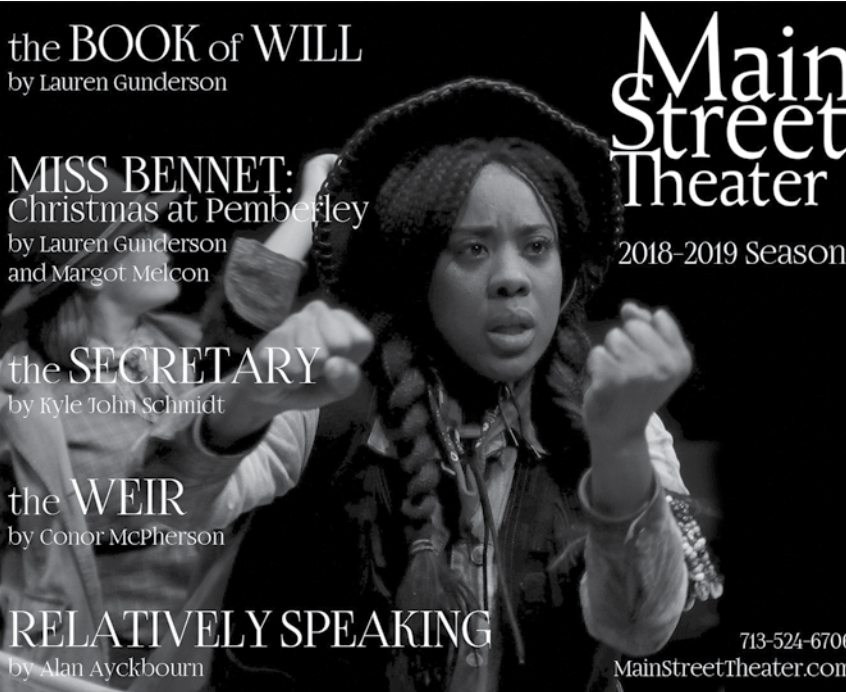
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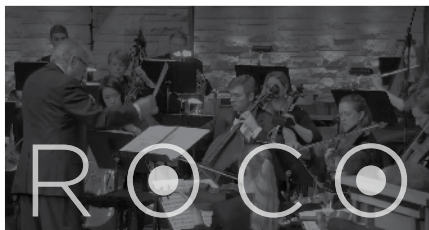
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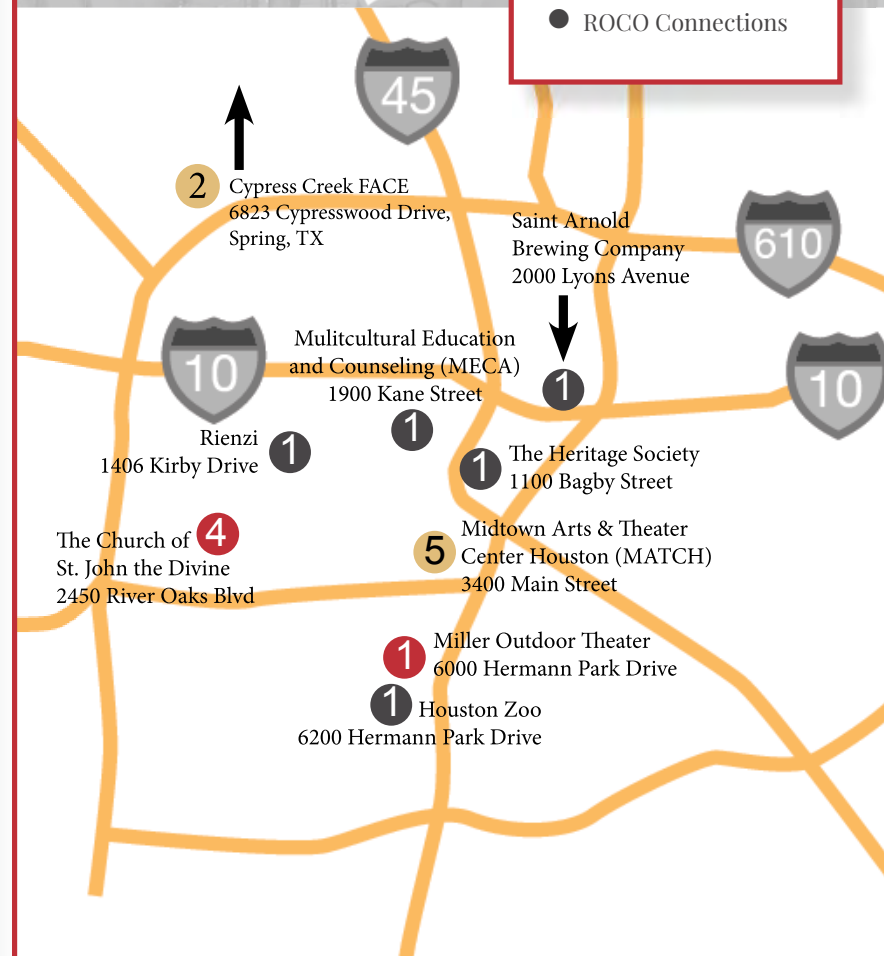
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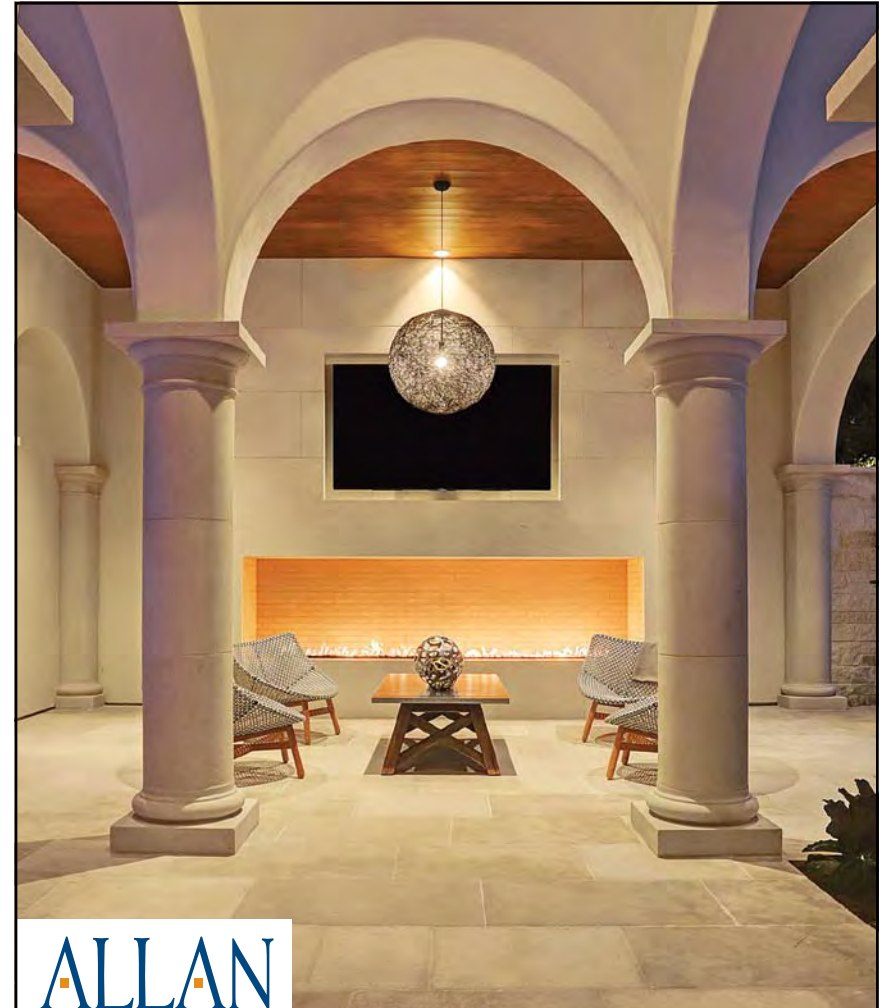


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