

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA *of* NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Ethan Lolley Artistic Director



 **SONOVA**

Fourteenth Season
2025–2026



Program Notes

In the spring of 1961, as the story goes, Stan Kenton "fired" his saxophone section and replaced them with four mellophoniums (a bell-front version of the French horn) and a tuba, creating the all-brass jazz sound that defined his album *from the creative world of stan kenton comes ... A Merry Christmas!* SONOVA doesn't have any saxophones to fire, but we do have French horns (mellophoniums are rarely played these days as they are almost impossible to play in tune) and a tuba—so we're able to recreate Kenton's Christmas sound without taking such drastic measures.

Kenton's *A Merry Christmas!*, arranged by Ralph Carmichael and Stan Kenton, has been hailed as a "polyphonic masterpiece that is at once progressive and traditional ... featuring Kenton's idiosyncratic style of arranging piercing trumpets over a wooly blanket of trombones and mellophones." It's bold, angular, beautiful music that blends complex classical harmony with Basie-style swing. In that (holiday) spirit, we've paired Kenton's charts with Count Basie's take on "Jingle Bells," along with a few carols arranged in the smooth, iconic style of Glenn Miller. Consider it your passport to a mid-century modern afternoon of holiday tunes, minus the cigarette smoke and rotary phones.

We're also excited to feature a vocalist for "The Christmas Song," performed in the style of Ella Fitzgerald's definitive recording—because no holiday program in this era's musical language would feel complete without it. And, of course, it wouldn't be a SONOVA holiday concert if we didn't end with Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride."

Thank you to SONOVA's brass and percussion musicians for their hard work, to the rest of SONOVA who have helped behind the scenes, and to Josh Head for his arranging and trumpeting assistance. And thank you for joining us as SONOVA's brass ensemble ushers in the holiday season the best way we know how: with brass music ... an entire concert of brass music!

Michael Thompson, Associate Music Director

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Acknowledgments

SONOVA would like to recognize its sponsors this season:

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Jeanne Faubell	Ana Tkabladze
Jeffrey Miller Menzin	Kristi Perry

Community Advisory Council

SONOVA is proud to recognize the dedicated members of our Community Advisory Council, whose expertise and passion for the arts help shape the future of our orchestra.

Their involvement ensures that we continue to thrive, innovate, and reach new audiences.

2025-2026

Community Advisory Council Members

Joe Luquire.....	<i>Development</i>
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We are immensely grateful to these committee members for their leadership and dedication. Their efforts play a vital role in helping SONOVA fulfill its mission of bringing the joy of symphonic music to everyone.

100
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SONOVA is supported, in part, by the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA), which receives support from the Virginia General Assembly.



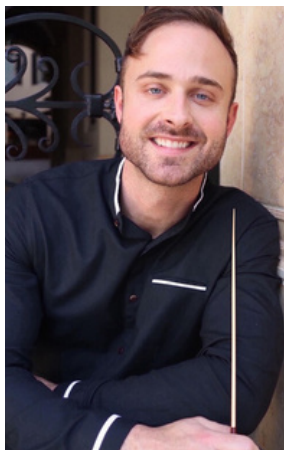
Associate Music Director

Michael Thompson, a native Oregonian, is the Associate Music Director and Co-Principal Trumpet of the Symphony Orchestra of Northern Virginia (SONOVA) and the Associate Music Director of the National Football League's Washington Commanders Marching Band (WCMB). As SONOVA's Associate Conductor, Michael frequently directs rehearsals and brass and percussion sectionals, has conducted numerous Holiday Concerts (2015, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2025), and leads SONOVA's Brass Quintet. With the WCMB, Michael leads musical rehearsals and conducts the band on the field and in the stands during Commanders' home games. He also creates custom arrangements and orchestrations for SONOVA, WCMB, and numerous other ensembles across the country.



Michael studied trumpet performance and music at the University of Oregon where he was the Musical Director of the elite, nationally-performing Green Garter Band, an audition-only, full-tuition scholarship ensemble. While at the University of Oregon, Michael was also the trumpet section leader of the Oregon Symphonic Band and the Oregon Athletic Bands, including the Oregon Marching Band where he received the Director's Choice Award in 2004 and was named Outstanding Band Member in 2005 and 2006. Before that, Michael attended Grammy Award-winning South Salem High School in Salem, Oregon where he was the Head Drum Major of the Marching Band, earning High Drum Major at the 2001 University of Oregon Festival of Bands. Michael was also a member of the South Salem High School Full Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band, and Choir and, as a senior, was the recipient of the prestigious John Philip Sousa and Louis Armstrong awards.

Artistic Director



Ethan Lolley, an Alabama native, is an accomplished conductor, clinician, and music director. He holds his graduate degree in music education with a conducting emphasis in instrumental and choral conducting from Auburn University. He has led music ensembles as a collegiate and Drum Corps International drum major, youth and symphony orchestra conductor, and music director for children's theatre, adult mainstage regional theatrical productions, and as a professional opera conductor. Ethan also serves as a Florida public schools music and conducting clinician, providing professional development in conducting and ensemble performance for new music teachers, as well as adjudicating bands, orchestras, and choirs for state performance assessment. In 2015, he founded Drum Major Innovations, an educational institution that offers conducting clinics, camps, and competitions for aspiring drum majors and student conductors. He currently serves as an instructor for the Macy's Great American Marching Band, a select ensemble of the country's top high school musicians who perform in the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Ethan has performed professionally with Universal Orlando Resort, Disney Cruise Line, and The Walt Disney World Resort as an Actors' Equity vocalist. He is currently a principal performer for Walt Disney World's longest running show on property, The Hoop Dee Doo Musical Revue. He was formally the music director of the CFCArts Young Artists Orchestra in Orlando, Florida, as well as an associate conductor for the CFCArts Symphony Orchestra, the nation's largest community orchestra with over 240 musicians.

To read Ethan's full bio, visit sonovamusic.org/music-director.

The Brass Ensemble

French Horn

Libby Doughty
Deanne de Lima
Dave McCullough
Patrick Walker

Trumpet

Chris Andersen
Josh Head
Jeff Menzin
Michael Suskin
Michael Thompson

Trombone

William Gamache
Ian Giles
Matthew Libby
Travis Low

Tuba

Jason Bongard

Piano

Paige Rammelkamp

Bass

Zack Williams

Timpani

David Constantine

Drum Set

Shawn Mitchell

Percussion

Will Egger
Matt Hughes
Carson Pomeroy



Brassy Jazzy Christmas

Sunday, December 14, 2025 | Lee Center Kauffman Auditorium
Michael Thompson, Associate Music Director

Holiday Fanfare	arr. Michael J. Miller
Angels We Have Heard on High	Francois-Auguste Gevaert arr. Ralph Carmichael
Adeste Fideles (O Come, All Ye Faithful)	John Reading arr. Stan Kenton
Jingle Bells	James Lord Pierpont arr. Ernie Wilkins
O Tannenbaum	arr. Ralph Carmichael
The Holly and the Ivy	arr. Ralph Carmichael
The Christmas Song Lena Seikaly, Vocalist	Robert Wells and Mel Tormé arr. Myles Collins
Santa Claus is Coming to Town	John Frederick Coots and Haven Gillespie arr. Dave Wolpe
O, Holy Night	Adolphe Adam arr. Ralph Carmichael
<i>Nutcracker Suite</i>	Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky arr. Frank Comstock adapted by Jim Martin
<i>Intermission</i>	
Good King Wenceslas	arr. Ralph Carmichael
Winter Wonderland	Felix Bernard arr. Dave Barduhn
Christmas Time is Here	Vince Guaraldi arr. David Pugh
All I Want for Christmas is You	Mariah Carey and Walter Afanasieff
Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas Lena Seikaly, Vocalist	Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane arr. John La Barbera
Sleigh Ride	Leroy Anderson

About the Symphony



SONOVA began in 2011 as a small, government-funded orchestra in Arlington County, Virginia, founded by Jeffrey Sean Dokken and a group of committed musicians, some of whom continue to play in the orchestra today. SONOVA is now a semi-professional orchestra dedicated to providing high quality, innovative musical experiences at affordable prices and is excited to begin its journey and new growth under Maestro Ethan Lolley.

Our home theater is the beautiful George Washington Masonic National Memorial Theater. Over the years, SONOVA has been invited to perform throughout the Mid-Atlantic region with arts organizations as wide ranging as renaissance choirs, tap dance companies, symphonic choirs, Broadway artists, and various community arts organizations. Additionally, SONOVA has performed at such venues as Arlington's Spectrum Theater, the Grand Opera House in Wilmington, Delaware, the historic Church of the Reformation in Washington, D.C., the White House, Colonial Williamsburg's historic Bruton Parish, the Atlas Performing Arts Center, and the Ernst Community Cultural Center.

SONOVA routinely performs with world-class guest artists, conductors, and musicians. SONOVA has been joined onstage by world-renowned soloists and conductors Jorge Saade-Scaff, Sofya Gulyak, Juan Carlos Escudero, and Jacqueline Fontaine-Isaac.

SONOVA also places special importance on collaborations and both American and world premieres. Since its inception, SONOVA has given premieres of works by Brian Wilbur Grundstrom, Peter Rauch, Paul Leavitt, Michael Ream, William Burdett, Jeremy Smith, and Simon Royer.



2025 – 2026 Season

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The Board would like to thank you for supporting SONOVA. We would also like to thank the Alexandria City Public Schools, the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, Northern Virginia Community College, Bishop Ireton High School, and the City of Alexandria.

SONOVA is grateful to the time and talents of the volunteers that support the orchestra, including lighting designer Christina Giles, arranger and orchestrator Josh Head, our percussion instrument-moving team, and our concert-day volunteers.



2025–2026 Season

SONOVA Staff

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