

# Artis—Naples

*Home of The Baker Museum  
and the Naples Philharmonic*

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## **BRANDON ROBERTSON NAMED DIRECTOR OF ARTIS—NAPLES NAPLES PHILHARMONIC YOUTH JAZZ ORCHESTRA**

**Naples, FL (May 4, 2023)** — Artis—Naples is pleased to announce the appointment of Emmy-nominated music director, bassist, educator and composer Brandon Robertson as director of its Naples Philharmonic Youth Jazz Orchestra.

“We are thrilled to welcome Brandon Robertson to Artis—Naples as the leader of our Naples Philharmonic Youth Jazz Orchestra,” said Kathleen van Bergen, CEO and president of Artis—Naples. “Brandon brings a wealth of experience as an active performer, educator and mentor with great perspective on jazz as a living, evolving art form that honors its past while pushing the boundaries of its future. We know he will inspire this next generation of young musicians, and we look forward to working with him!”

She continued, “We are also deeply grateful to Lew Del Gatto for his leadership and mentorship of these young musicians as interim director this past season, following the untimely death of the ensemble’s founder and longtime leader, Dan Miller. Lew’s expertise and guiding hand were exactly what the students needed during this time of transition, and we appreciate how generous he was with his time and attention.”

Robertson added, “I am delighted and honored to become the newest director of the Naples Philharmonic Youth Jazz Orchestra. My sole objective is to continue cultivating a thriving musical environment for students to grow in this wonderful music we play called JAZZ. I am dedicated and committed to seeing this program prosper for years to come. In honor of my great friend, the late Dan Miller, I want to cherish his memories of this ensemble by ensuring the students remember his legacy and teachings. I look forward to working with the wonderful Artis—Naples staff and learning more about this incredible organization. To the greater Southwest Florida area, thank you in advance for your continued support of jazz education!”

A prominent bandleader, Robertson has engaged in numerous U.S. tours with his band, headlining at some of the top jazz venues in the country, such as The Palladium, Blues Alley, The Jazz Kitchen, The BOP STOP, The Jazz Estate, The Side Door, Twins Jazz, Velvet Note and many others. He has also appeared with notable acts such as the legendary Count Basie Orchestra led by director Scotty Barnhart, Jason Marsalis, Marcus Roberts, Leroy Jones, Charlie McCoy, Greg Tardy and Marcus Printup, and he has toured 22 countries in Europe, traveling from the Mediterranean to the capital of Iceland.

In addition, Robertson has been a featured performer and bandleader at jazz festivals around the country, including headline appearances in Jacksonville, Tampa Bay, Clearwater, Savannah, Miami and many other cities.

Robertson is currently the recipient of the John & Dorothy Guigon Endowed Directorship of Jazz Studies at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) in Fort Myers, Florida. He is an honorary member of the Kappa Kappa Psi Mu Upsilon Chapter at Florida Gulf Coast University. Robertson was nominated for an Emmy Award for best documentary for educational collegiate programs featuring the FGCU Jazz Ensemble.

Marking its eighth season in 2022-23, the Naples Philharmonic Youth Jazz Orchestra is composed of more than two dozen high school students from Lee and Collier counties in Southwest Florida. As members of the NPYJO, these talented students learn jazz techniques and style in a big band setting by blending with the other players, focusing on the swing feel and improvising by playing music written by the masters of the idiom, including Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and others. The NPYJO performs three concerts each season on Artis—Naples Kimberly K. Querrey and Louis A. Simpson Cultural Campus.

Robertson assumes his new post in the fall of 2023.

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### **ARTIS—NAPLES**

Home of The Baker Museum and the Naples Philharmonic, Artis—Naples is unique among cultural institutions nationwide, equally dedicated to both the visual and performing arts featuring artists of global distinction.

### **KIMBERLY K. QUERREY and LOUIS A. SIMPSON CULTURAL CAMPUS**

Led by CEO and President Kathleen van Bergen and, beginning in the 2024-25 season, Sharon and Timothy Ubben Artistic and Music Director Alexander Shelley, Artis—Naples offers more than 800 paid and free events annually across its 8.5-acre Kimberly K. Querrey and Louis A. Simpson Cultural Campus. Artis—Naples welcomes thousands of visitors each year for a broad array of artistic and educational opportunities perfect for audiences of all backgrounds and interests. The cultural campus is home to five buildings, including two performance halls (Frances Pew Hayes Hall and Myra J. Daniels Pavilion), The Baker Museum, the Toni Stabile Education Building and the Kohan Administration Building.

### **NAPLES PHILHARMONIC**

The Naples Philharmonic has long been recognized as one of the cornerstones of Southwest Florida's arts community. As part of Artis—Naples, the Naples Philharmonic performs more than 140 orchestral and chamber music concerts, as well as opera and ballet, education, community and special event concerts annually between September and June in the 1,477-seat Hayes Hall, the 283-seat Daniels Pavilion and around the Southwest Florida region. The Naples Philharmonic has enjoyed a history of working with world-class music directors, and recently announced the appointment of Artistic and Music Director Alexander Shelley, who assumes the role of Artistic and Music Director Designate through the 2023-24 season. Renowned violinist James Ehnes continues as Artistic Partner through the 2023-24 season, working with Naples Philharmonic musicians in a variety of settings with a focus on inspiring and embodying a high level of artistry. Podium leadership includes Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly, celebrating 14 years in this role in the 2023-24 season and bringing pops performances that celebrate music in its many forms. In 2017, conductor Radu Paponiu was named assistant conductor of the Naples Philharmonic and director of the Naples Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, and in 2019 he was promoted to associate conductor. Alvin Ho joined the artistic team as assistant conductor of the Naples Philharmonic at the start of the 2022-23 season.

### **THE BAKER MUSEUM**

The Baker Museum is one of the foremost fine art museums in Southwest Florida. The museum hosts several traveling exhibitions annually to complement installations of works from its permanent collection. Comprising more than 4,000 objects, the museum's broad holdings of 20th- and 21st-century art reflect the generosity and commitment of area collectors. Of

particular strength are The Baker Museum’s collections of American and Mexican modern art, including significant gifts from the collection of Olga Hirshhorn.

With more than two decades of collecting and exhibiting, the museum is dedicated to stewardship and scholarship from both its growing permanent collection and outside sources. At the same time, The Baker Museum seeks out the best traveling exhibitions from the leading arts institutions in the world—including recently the National Portrait Gallery, London and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation—to enrich the Southwest Florida community. In 2020, Artis—Naples celebrated the opening of an 18,000-square-foot expansion of The Baker Museum, designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism, that created new spaces for multidisciplinary exploration and social interaction.

#### **EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY**

In addition to creating and presenting visual and performing arts, Artis—Naples provides robust education and community activities for students of all ages in Collier and southern Lee counties. Each season thousands of Collier County Public Schools interact with Artis—Naples education programming both on its cultural campus and in their classrooms. The Lifelong Learning program provides engaging lectures and study opportunities for adults seeking to engage more deeply with the arts.

The Friends of Artis—Naples, with more than 3,400 donor households, offers activities, travel experiences and events geared toward creating a deeper relationship between patrons and the arts.

In 2017, Artis—Naples acquired the Naples International Film Festival (NIFF), expanding its film offerings and providing a platform for the festival’s continued excellence and growth. In 2019, NIFF was named one of *MovieMaker* Magazine’s “Top 25 Coolest Film Festivals in the World,” and 2023 marks the 15th anniversary.

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