Find a Better Me, watercolor
Lingyan "Ilsa" Jiang

Interlochen
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Imagine US:

CELEBRATING AMERICA AT 250

In collaboration with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Imagine US:

CELEBRATING AMERICA AT 250

WELCOME

Dear Friends,

This week, young artists from Interlochen Arts Academy are joining forces with members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and The Philadelphia Orchestra for a historic collaboration—*Imagine US: Celebrating America at 250*. Together, they will share music, movement, and storytelling that explore where we've been, who we are today, and what we might yet become.

For our students, these performances represent much more than an artistic milestone. They embody the ideals we hold most dear at Interlochen: imagination, collaboration, and the belief that the arts have the power to unite and uplift us. As they perform side by side with world-class musicians—many of whom are Interlochen alumni—our students experience the transformative mentorship, shared purpose, and creative discovery that define our community.

Tonight's program features the world premiere of Wynton Marsalis' new cello concerto, performed by Tommy Mesa and commissioned by Interlochen, alongside Reena Esmail's "RE|Member" and a reimagined presentation of Charles Ives's Symphony No. 4 featuring contributions from all seven of our artistic disciplines. These works, born of diverse voices and visions, remind us that America's story has always been one of creativity, dialogue, and hope.

Imagine US also marks the public launch of Interlochen's centennial celebration—a multi-year journey leading to our 100th anniversary in 2028. It's appropriatae that this tour include a stop in Detroit, where the very idea of Interlochen first took root. As we honor a century of artistry and education, we invite you to join us in imagining the next hundred years: a future shaped by the creativity and courage of young artists who help us see the world, and one another, anew.

With gratitude,

Trey Devey
President, Interlochen Center for the Arts

Interlochen
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Imagine US:

CELEBRATING AMERICA AT 250

Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra

Interlochen Arts Academy Choir

Cristian Măcelaru, conductor

Alex Amsel, assistant conductor

featuring guest artist
Tommy Mesa, cello

with the
Interlochen Arts Academy Imagine US Company

Diana Wyenn, creative director

Tuesday, March 10, 2026
7:30 p.m. | Orchestra Hall, Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, Detroit, Michigan

DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

"Imagine" ..... **Sydney Lea Kassekert, cello arr. Wesley Stoker**
Tommy Mesa, cello
Sydney Lea Kassekert, vocals and guitar

Yesterday

Symphony No. 4 ..... **Charles Ives (1874-1954)**
ed. Thomas M. Brodhead

I. Prelude: Maestoso

"An American Original" ..... Quinn De Vecchi
Featuring Tuolumne Bunter, Caroline DeSoto, Chan Jeong, Blaire Johnson, Caleigh Posavac

II. Comedy: Allegretto — With Poonwalee Bunnag, Tuolumne Bunter, Caroline DeSoto, Chan Jeong, Blaire Johnson, Debesh Marquardt, Reese Martin, Jessie Mitnick, Caleigh Posavac

"A Voice" ..... Quinn De Vecchi, Addison Hill, Annabella Thompson, Fiona Yates
Featuring Caroline DeSoto, Addison Hill, Blaire Johnson, Annabella Thompson

III. Fugue: Andante moderato con moto

"Hereafter" ..... Fiona Yates
Featuring Tuolumne Bunter

IV. Finale: Very slowly–Largo maestoso — With Debesh Marquardt, Reese Martin, Jessie Mitnick

Alex Amsel, assistant conductor
With the Interlochen Arts Academy Choir

Symphony No. 4
Composed by Charles Ives
Edited by Thomas M. Brodhead
Presented under license from Associated Music Publishers, Inc., copyright owners.

—INTERMISSION—

Today

"US" ..... Emma Niu, Sadie Schoenfelder, the Imagine US Company
Annie Meyer, guitar
Margaret Morton, drums
DJ Parson, trumpet
Wesley Stoker, double bass

RE|Member ..... **Reena Esmail (b. 1983)**
Julianne Choe, oboe
Reese Martin, dancer

Tomorrow

"A Promise" ..... Addison Hill and the Imagine US Company

Cello Concerto ..... **Wynton Marsalis (b. 1961)**
Tommy Mesa, cello

I. Journey to Freedom
II. Spiritual
III. March Caribe
IV. Ballad and Blues
V. Cake Walk

* * *

POST-SHOW

Join us for a post-show reception featuring additional performances by the Interlochen Arts Academy Jazz Quartet.

LOBBY INSTALLATION

Artwork created by Interlochen's Visual Artists for *Imagine US* is on view before, during, and after the program in the lobby.

* * *

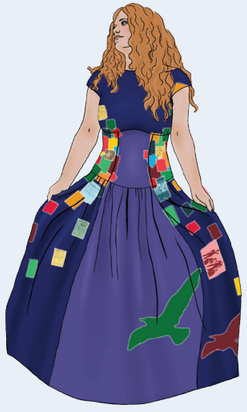
Imagine US started very much like this country. It was an idea that was shared, considered, debated, explored, and ultimately sculpted by many hands. And that sculpting hasn't stopped. As we gather together in this hall to co-create and experience *Imagine US,* we continue the work of creating "a more perfect union."

Since October, I have been working with the twenty-five students who are performing in the show's interludes to create this multidisciplinary, youth-centered artistic reflection on the United States' semiquincentennial that we have the great honor of sharing with you today. These students represent all seven of Interlochen's arts divisions—creative writing, dance, film and new media, interdisciplinary arts, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Inspired by our nation's 250th birthday, we wanted to pause and reflect on the past, honor the contributions of all Americans, and look ahead toward the future we hope to create for the next generation and beyond. This program moves us from **Yesterday** to **Today**, and then looks forward to **Tomorrow** with each chapter anchored respectively by a uniquely American work from the musical canon: Charles Ives's Fourth Symphony; Reena Esmail's "RE|Member"; and Wynton Marsalis' never-before-heard cello concerto.

With interludes woven throughout and sometimes embedded within these diverse and dynamic pieces, the students offer us their perspectives, hopes, concerns, and dreams at this important inflection point in U.S. history. Their collective artistry embodies the shared values of the Interlochen community, values that also lie at the heart of the American experience: the wealth that comes from our diverse ideas, cultures, and perspectives (Drawn Here); the strength that lies within both the individual and the community (Solo e Tutti); the freedom to determine our own path and the fortitude to face the challenges we encounter along the way (The Artist's Journey); and the power of imagination as we continue to ask ourselves and one another, "What if?" (Just An Idea...).

— Diana Wyenn, Creative Director
Imagine US



A Design for the Future

The costume design—created by students Annie Bye, Peregrine Schulz, and educator Amanda Livendahl—draws its hues from the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, these goals recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth—all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. Learn more about this shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future, at sdgs.un.org/goals.

"...our gaze turned upward."

Charles Ives had a singular upbringing in music and grew up a singular man and composer. His music stretched from sentimental parlor songs and traditional marches and fugues to the wildest pandemonium ever put on paper. In the process he anticipated most of the innovations of musical modernism: free harmony, polytonality, atonality, polyrhythm, collage, chance effects. Early attempts to classify him ranged from calling him a primitive to a Schoenbergian modernist, but he was none of those things. The best description of Ives's music is *Ivesian*. All these qualities are on epic display in his magnum opus, the Fourth Symphony.

That Ives in his teens was already dealing with prophetic musical materials came from the influence of his remarkable father, George Ives, a town band director in Danbury, CT., who was fascinated by acoustics. Among other experiments George marched two bands past one another playing different pieces, to see what it sounded like as they approached and passed. He had his children sing a song in one key while he accompanied in another. While rearing his son toward a mainstream musical career as an organist (Charlie was a prodigy, a professional church organist from age 14), George told his son something no budding composer in history had ever been told: any harmony at all was acceptable, if you knew what you were doing with it.

That unprecedented gift of freedom, operating on the sensibility of a born creator, kindled Ives's imagination and gave rise to an unprecedented body of work, at once wildly innovative and steeped in American folk and popular traditions. His experiments with the materials of music, rising from his father's but going far beyond, took him away from a mainstream musical career. After four years of conventional musical studies at Yale, Ives made his living as an insurance executive while composing nights and weekends. For some twenty years he worked largely in isolation.

Ives composed the Fourth Symphony largely between 1910 and 1916. "The aesthetic program of the work," he said, "is the searching questions of What? and Why? which the spirit of man asks of life. The three succeeding movements are the diverse answers in which existence replies."

The first movement is a prelude to the journey. It opens with a craggy, surging bass line rising to searing string harmonies, those voices answered by an offstage choir of strings and harp in a gentle phrase hinting at the hymn tune that underlies the whole symphony: "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Most of the first movement is a choral setting of the hymn "Watchman, tell us of the night," evoking the "glory-beaming star" that will end the piece.

Ives called the second movement the *Comedy*. It is based on Hawthorne's comic fantasy "The Celestial Railroad." Ives turned the story into a pandemonic scherzo building to a sort of apocalyptic traffic jam, most of its contending voices echoing ragtime, marches, and hymns. Finally a rip-roaring march breaks out like a half dozen Fourth of July parades at once. Ives said the gentle and beautiful third movement is "an expression of the reaction of life into formalism and ritualism." Unfolding in the old form of a fugue, it builds to a pealing peroration that recalls the first page of the symphony.

The setting of the finale is a mountaintop: "O'er yon mountain's height/ See that glory-beaming star!" It begins with a whispered reminiscence of the symphony's opening. In a remarkable luminous haze of myriad murmuring voices, the music gathers to the mystical coda, the chorus wordlessly intoning the symphony's essential musical and spiritual theme: "Nearer, My God, to Thee." The music seems to evanesce into the stars, still searching.

Charles Ives's Fourth Symphony is a work of universal religion, made from the concrete stuff of everyday music and life but leaving our gaze turned upward. It stands as his greatest achievement, the furthest way station in his own journey toward that vision.

— Jan Swafford, DMA

"…coming together after being separated."

Co-commissioned by the Seattle Symphony and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Reena Esmail's "RE|Member" harkens to the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and the hopeful return to the concert hall after the spring of 2020. The piece begins with an oboe solo that balances tense, frantic energy with a delicate lyricism, drawing listeners in with the melody's ebb and flow before the full orchestra's energetic entrance. This solo, whether pre-recorded or performed live in the hall, is evocative of the confusing emotions surrounding the effects of the pandemic as society transitioned back into a sense of normalcy.

"RE|Member" was conceived as an overture for the opening of the Seattle Symphony's 2020-2021 season, but was not premiered until the opening of the 2021-2022 season after nearly eighteen months of lockdown. Inspired by the likes of the overtures to Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* and Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, Esmail masterfully combines these influences with her own style to create an intense concert opener that speaks to the power of music making, both as an individual and as part of a musical community coming together after being separated.

Esmail, who served as the Seattle Symphony's 2020-2021 Composer in Residence, is the 2020-2025 Los Angeles Master Chorale's Swan Family Artist in Residence in addition to her numerous other accolades ranging from two ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer's Awards to a Fulbright-Nehru grant for studying Hindustani music in India. Expanding her already impressive oeuvre of compositions for a diverse array of ensembles are arrangements of "RE|Member" for concert band as well as oboe duo.

After the poignant opening, the orchestra enters with a fiery fanfare led by the brass section toward a brooding string melody in 7/8 time. The irregular meter, in conjunction with the rhythmic interjections of the trumpets and flowing, ethereal woodwind lines, creates an air of mystique that keeps the listener engaged throughout the work. "RE|Member" finishes by calling back to the introduction, with an oboe duet trading the line back and forth. As the duet goes on the line becomes even longer, with one player sustaining while the other plays the repeated rhythmic figure from the beginning of the piece.

The recurrence of the various motifs throughout Esmail's work encourages the audience to remember what came before while anticipating the uncertain, ever-changing landscape that follows. "RE|Member" serves as an energetic concert opener that reminds the listener of the hardships and rapid changes that our country has undergone in the past 250 years, the value of the arts in bringing people together, and remembering our history as a nation, and as people.

— Tarren Sexton

"… a vision of an America unified in spirit…"

In the musical genre of "concerto"—a musical form meant to showcase an individual instrument against an entire orchestra—many composers have contributed their perspective and individual signature. From the sheer display of virtuosity in a Paganini violin concerto (the 19th century Italian virtuoso whose technical feats were legendary), to the revolutionary spirit of a Shostakovich cello concerto (the Russian composer known for standing up against an oppressive authoritarian regime which censored his music), every innovation brought to this musical form opened up an even larger universe of exploration. If 18th century composers used the orchestra in a supporting role, and 19th century composers placed the soloist as the hero overcoming great struggles, Wynton Marsalis's approach to the concerto is a combination of all that has come before.

Since our first collaboration a decade ago, I have performed almost the entire symphonic catalog composed by Wynton Marsalis. I have observed how in each composition he has remained focused on telling a narrative of human interaction and connection. His musical language is rooted in the American cultural vernacular, while a closer look at any of his compositions will also present an encyclopaedic documentation of the different styles that make up our American cultural identity.

The Cello Concerto, which was written for cellist and cultural ambassador Yo-Yo Ma, embodies all the themes listed above. Marsalis uses the musical language, which represents different time periods or different places in the history of America, to tell the story of the richness of the American cultural landscape. The first movement, titled Journey to Freedom, is truly a journey through different dance or musical styles, accompanied by the constant, ever present sound of the train. The musical motif of a train whistle or rhythm of the wheels screeching as it arrives in the station represent freedom itself. An important theme which appears in each of the five movements, freedom is also presented in the juxtaposition of the work songs and chorales or hymns that make up the second movement, Spiritual, which ends with an introspective prayer where we find the cello line high above the orchestra, playing harmonic whistle-like tones. The March Caribe third movement is a drastic shift in character. As with all of Marsalis's compositions, we are thrown into a New Orleans style melange of musical forms, from the jubilant Tresillo to the Boogie Woogie or the Rag. Simply beautiful and memorable, the fourth movement—Ballad and Blues—gives the solo line and the orchestra an opportunity to interact in a meaningful way. In the fifth and final movement, Cake Walk, the orchestral musicians are encouraged to play "spiky and dancing." We hear Marsalis's signature writing for the brass with their harmon mutes, "wa wa" playing, creating sounds unique to his style. After several joyful, virtuosic variations on old songs of the American South, the soloist is joined by the entire cello section to create one unified voice that leads to the rousing end.

Wynton Marsalis uses a multitude of American musical forms and styles to make an argument for a cultural identity meant to embrace our unique journey as a country. Never to ignore the troubled past, but always to keep our eyes on the horizon, he gives us a vision of an America unified in spirit, diverse in experiences and rich in values.

— Cristian Măcelaru

Tommy Mesa

Cuban-American cellist Dr. Tommy Mesa has established himself as one of the most charismatic, innovative, and engaging performers of his generation. The recipient of Lincoln Center's 2025 Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Sphinx Organization's 2023 Medal of Excellence, its highest honor, Mesa has appeared as soloist at the Supreme Court of the United States on four occasions and with major orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Indianapolis, Madison, New Jersey, San Antonio, and Santa Barbara, among others. Mesa gave the world premiere of Jessie Montgomery's cello concerto Divided in 2022 and has been the exclusive soloist since, performing at major halls across the United States and Brazil including Miami's New World Center, Nashville's Schermerhorn Center, and Carnegie Hall. His orchestral recording debut of the work was released in July 2023 on Deutsche Grammophon.

In addition to serving as Artist in Residence with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra in the 2024-25 season, orchestral highlights this season include debuts with the Delaware, Glacier, and Rogue Valley Symphony Orchestras as well as the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, a return to the Madison Symphony, and a performance of the rarely heard Lucid Dreams by Canadian composer Jocelyn Morlock with the Windsor Symphony. Last season Mesa celebrated enthusiastic performances with the Calgary and Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestras and the Ann Arbor, Columbus, Greenwich, Knoxville, Quad City, and Reading Symphony Orchestras, among others.

THE ARTISTS

Wynton Marsalis

Wynton Marsalis is a world-renowned trumpeter, bandleader, composer, and a leading advocate of American culture. Born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1961, he is the son of jazz pianist and music educator Ellis Marsalis, Jr. Marsalis started practicing trumpet at age 6. As a child, he played in New Orleans traditional marching bands, funk groups, concert bands, symphonic orchestras, and jazz ensembles. Just one year after moving to New York City to attend The Juilliard School at age 17, Marsalis joined the legendary Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers.

In 1981, Marsalis formed a quintet and began touring worldwide—and he hasn't stopped since. He has rekindled widespread international interest in jazz over the past four decades vis-à-vis performances, recordings, educational programs, books, curricula, and relentless public advocacy.

Marsalis performs and composes across the entire spectrum of jazz; he has written chamber music and symphonic works for revered classical ensembles across the US and abroad. He is continuously inspired to experiment in an ever-widening palette of forms and concepts that constitute some of the most advanced thinking in modern jazz and in American music on the broad scale. His body of original work includes (but is not limited to) over 600 songs and movements, 11 dance scores, 13 suites, four symphonies, two chamber pieces, two string quartets, a jazz oratorio, a fanfare, and concertos for violin, tuba, trumpet, orchestra, and now, cello. In 2026, he will also produce his fifth symphony—inspired by the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Marsalis was appointed Messenger of Peace by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan (2001), awarded The National Medal of Arts (2005), and The National Medal of Humanities (2016). In 2009, France bestowed him with the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor; on his 62nd birthday in October 2023, he was awarded the Praemium Imperiale for Music—Japan's most prestigious prize for the arts. He has received honorary doctorates from 44 of the country's (and world's) top academic institutions including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and Tulane University in his hometown of New Orleans.

Wynton Marsalis's core beliefs are based on jazz fundamentals: freedom and individual creativity (improvisation); collective action and good manners (swing); and acceptance, gratitude and resilience (the blues). Marsalis believes that music has the power to elevate our quality of life and lead us to a higher level of consciousness.

Marsalis presently serves as Managing and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Director of Jazz Studies at The Juilliard School, and President of the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation.

Reena Esmail

Reena Esmail's music weaves together the traditions of Hindustani and Western classical music, drawing musicians from many perspectives into shared creative spaces.

Esmail divides her attention evenly between orchestral, chamber and choral work. She has written commissions for ensembles including the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Seattle Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony and her music has featured on multiple Grammy-nominated albums, including *The Singing Guitar* by Conspirare, *BRUITS* by Imani Winds, and *Healing Modes* by Brooklyn Rider.

Many of her choral works are published by Oxford University Press, and her piece TaReKiTa has sold over 100,000 copies worldwide.

Her life and music was profiled on Season 3 of PBS Great Performances series *Now Hear This*, as well as *Frame of Mind*, a podcast from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Esmail was the Los Angeles Master Chorale's 2020-2025 Swan Family Artist in Residence, and was Seattle Symphony's 2020-21 Composer-in-Residence. She has been in residence with Tanglewood Music Center (co-Curator – 2023), Spoleto Festival (Chamber Music Composer-in-Residence – 2024) and Marlboro Music Festival (2025 Composer in Residence).

Esmail holds degrees in composition from The Juilliard School (BM'05) and the Yale School of Music (MM'11, MMA'14, DMA'18). Her primary teachers have included Susan Botti, Aaron Jay Kernis, Christopher Theofanidis, Christopher Rouse and Samuel Adler. She received a Fulbright-Nehru grant to study Hindustani music in India. Her Hindustani music teachers include Srimati Lakshmi Shankar and Gaurav Mazumdar, and she currently studies and collaborates with Saili Oak. Her doctoral thesis, entitled *Finding Common Ground: Uniting Practices in Hindustani and Western Art Musicians* explores the methods and challenges of the collaborative process between Hindustani musicians and Western composers.

Esmail is a Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Shastra, a non-profit organization that promotes cross-cultural music connecting musical traditions of India and the West. She resides in her hometown of Los Angeles, California.

Charles Ives

Charles Edward Ives (1874–1954), a composer of the modernist tradition, was widely regarded as one of the first American composers of international renown. He uniquely blended American popular and church music with European art music. Ives was one of the first composers to systematically program experimental music. Although his work was largely overlooked during his lifetime, Ives eventually came to be recognized as an "American Original."

Ives was the son of a musically inclined father who chose to be a bandmaster despite being born into an influential and wealthy family. Although Charles aspired to follow in his father's footsteps and become a composer, he was pragmatic and understood that he could not make a living in music if he wanted to experiment with it. After graduating from Yale, he became a successful insurance executive while continuing to pursue music privately, producing a significant body of work.

"To be American is to take field trips to the prairies, or the rockies, or forest preserves, or Washington D.C. in middle school, to sit criss–cross applesauce and listen to stories of ancestors long since gone, to know the history of the land we walk on and celebrate it. To be American is to not be American, at least not first. We are a hundred other things before we are American because America is not a thing you can be, it is an idea we all celebrate."

— Cam Joyce, Creative Writing major, Barrington, IL

Cristian Măcelaru (IAA 97-99, IAC 98)

Cristian Măcelaru is a GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor widely admired for a rare fusion of interpretive rigor, emotional intelligence, and generosity of spirit. Throughout his career, Măcelaru has demonstrated a profound commitment to strengthening cultural institutions, educating the next generation of artists, and forging meaningful bonds between music and community, while serving as an ambassador for the classical art form worldwide.

Măcelaru is Music Director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestre National de France, Artistic Director of the George Enescu Festival and Competition, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Interlochen Center for the Arts' World Youth Symphony Orchestra, and Music Director and Conductor of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music. He also serves as Distinguished Visiting Artist at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and as Artistic Partner of the WDR Sinfonieorchester in Cologne, where he previously served as Chief Conductor.

Highly sought after as a guest conductor, Măcelaru appears regularly with many of the world's leading orchestras. In Europe, his collaborations have included the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Staatskapelle Berlin, Dresden Staatskapelle, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Sinfonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Wiener Symphoniker, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, and NDR Elbphilharmonie. In North America, he has conducted the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and National Symphony Orchestra, among many others. His operatic work includes acclaimed productions at major houses, including Houston Grand Opera and Opera Națională București.

Across his titled roles, Măcelaru has consistently elevated artistic standards while expanding audience engagement. His leadership is marked by ambitious programming, large-scale collaborations, and a commitment to innovation that bridges tradition with the music of today. A passionate champion of contemporary music, he has commissioned and premiered works by more than 50 composers, including Wynton Marsalis, Tan Dun, Gabriela Lena Frank, Jennifer Higdon, Jake Heggie, Nico Muhly, Sean Shepherd, and Gabriella Smith.

An accomplished recording artist, Măcelaru received a GRAMMY® Award for his Decca Classics recording of Wynton Marsalis's *Violin Concerto* with Nicola Benedetti and the Philadelphia Orchestra. His discography includes critically acclaimed recordings on Deutsche Grammophon, Warner Classics, Naïve Records, Linn Records, and other leading labels, featuring repertoire ranging from Enescu, Ravel, and Saint-Saëns to Bartók, Brahms, Dvořák, and Rachmaninoff. These recordings have received numerous international honors, including Diapason d'Or and Choc Classica distinctions.

Education, accessibility, and audience connection are central to Măcelaru's artistic mission. His work with young musicians spans conducting masterclasses, composer workshops, and mentorship programs across Europe and North America, emphasizing long-standing commitments with his alma maters in Romania and the United States, including Interlochen Arts Academy and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Through his leadership at major festivals and institutions, he has also advanced initiatives supporting diversity, equity, and well-being.

Born in Timișoara, Romania, Măcelaru moved to the United States at age 17 to attend Interlochen Arts Camp and Arts Academy. He studied at the University of Miami and Rice University, and further refined his craft at the Tanglewood Music Center and Aspen Music Festival. His conducting career gained early prominence when he stepped in for Pierre Boulez with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He is a recipient of both the Solti Emerging Conductor Award and the Solti Conducting Award.

Alex Amsel

Alex Amsel is an Argentinian-Mexican conductor who has established himself as a compelling presence on both orchestral and operatic podiums, and as a dedicated music educator committed to serving communities of all ages. Guided by a belief in music's power to foster empathy, dialogue, and social connection, Amsel seeks to integrate music into the fabric of each community he serves.

In the 2025–2026 season, Amsel joins the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra as Assistant Conductor. He made his CSO debut leading a sold-out Día de los Muertos program, which he curated to celebrate cultural tradition through symphonic music, marking the beginning of an ongoing relationship with the orchestra.

Amsel gained international recognition following a nationally televised performance at the George Enescu Competition in Romania. He served as Resident Conductor of Houston Grand Opera during the 2022–2023 season, conducting Verdi's *La traviata* and the world premiere of Jeremy Howard Beck's *Another City*, and has held conducting appointments with Cincinnati Opera in 2024 and 2025.

Following successful seasons as Associate Conductor of The Phoenix Symphony, Amsel returns as Guest Conductor for fifteen performances in 2025-2026, leading subscription, film, education, and community concerts. He founded, curates, and conducts the sold-out Chamber Orchestra Subscription Series. He also served on the Artistic Advisory Committee and Patron Experience Taskforce and was elected Board Co-Chair of the Young Professionals Board.

Previously, Amsel spent three seasons as Assistant Conductor of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, appointed by Robert Spano. A multi-year participant at the Aspen Music Festival and Conducting Academy, he worked closely with Robert Spano and returned in 2022 as faculty and Assistant Conductor. He currently serves as Cover Conductor for Cristian Măcelaru with the Orchestre National de France and is joining Interlochen Center for the Arts on tour for a co-conducted program with Măcelaru.

Education and contemporary music remain central to Amsel's artistic mission. Highly sought after as both conductor and educator, Amsel has appeared at the Aspen Music Festival, National Repertory Orchestra, Interlochen Arts Academy, and Round. Top Music Festival. He has reshaped Phoenix Symphony education programs to center underrepresented composers and is an advocate for living composers including Gabriela Lena Frank, Carlos Simon, Jessie Montgomery, and Eleanor Alberga. He was selected as an Associate at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music under Cristian Măcelaru and has led recordings of world premieres at Peabody Conservatory and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music.

Amsel completed his Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting at Peabody Conservatory as a Graduate Assistant to Marin Alsop and holds degrees from New England Conservatory and The University of Texas at Austin.

photo by Owen Scarlett

Diana Wyenn

Diana Wyenn is an acclaimed director, choreographer, dramaturg, and creative producer. Working across theater, opera, contemporary music, dance, and film, her interdisciplinary practice explores themes of trauma and healing, equity and disability justice, environmental responsibility, and civic engagement through collaborative forms.

Known for developing new work and transforming personal experience into incisive, socially conscious art, Wyenn's professional highlights include: the World Health Organization presenting her award-winning autobiographical solo performance *Blood/Sugar*, which confronts the shame, stigma, and misinformation surrounding diabetes; developing and directing the premiere of composer Theodosia Roussos's debut opera *Polymnia*, a multigenerational work rooted in Roussos's family history and resilience in the wake of genocide; and choreographing more than 100 young singers from the Los Angeles Children's Chorus and LAUSD's Hoover Street Elementary School Chorus for the LA Philharmonic's U.S. premiere of Andrew Norman's *A Trip to the Moon* at Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Her directing and choreographic work has been presented by leading organizations in the U.S. and Europe, including Center Theatre Group, LA Phil, LA Opera, Roundabout Theatre Company, Disney, Beth Morrison Projects, National Sawdust, Detroit Opera, MOCA, LACMA, Malmö Opera, Interlochen Arts Academy, New West Symphony, BroadStage, IAMA Theatre Company, Boston Court Pasadena, Synchromy, UCLA, CalTech, ASU Gammage, Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth, and Yale's International Festival of Arts & Ideas. Wyenn's work has received support from the National Endowment for the Arts, National Arts and Disability Center, Center for Cultural Innovation, and the California Arts Council, among others. She has also revived and associate directed operas by David Lang, Meredith Monk, Missy Mazzoli, and Richard Danielpour for directors Elkhanah Pulitzer, Yuval Sharon, Tom Morris, and Peter Kazaras.

In 2017, Wyenn and her spouse, professional skateboarder-turned-music-video director Laban Pheidias, co-founded Plain Wood Productions, for which she directed and produced the premieres of new operas Roussos' *Polymnia* and Lionelle Hamanaka and Daniel Kessner's *The Camp*, and produced the international tour of Cassils's *Human Measure* as well as music videos garnering millions of views for artists who include Satyricon and American Idol's Alejandro Aranda. Additional film credits include choreographing Tova Katz's *Spit Me Out* and performing in Taylor Mac's *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*.

Committed to education and mentorship for the new generation of artists, Wyenn is a frequent guest lecturer and has taught at UCLA, Pomona College, and Cal Poly Pomona. She received her BFA with honors from New York University, receiving the Founder's Day Award. Wyenn currently lives in Los Angeles where she serves as Co-Artistic Director of Ammunition Theatre Company and on the CalRx Insulin Patient Advisory Council.

Interlochen Center for the Arts

Since establishing the nation's first music camp in 1928, Interlochen Center for the Arts has been a destination for young artists to transform passion and potential into purpose. Founded in northwest Michigan on the belief that the arts are essential to a vibrant, democratic society, Interlochen has grown into one of the world's leading arts education and cultural institutions—while remaining rooted in the idea that creative excellence and human development are inseparable.

Located on a 1,200-acre campus between two lakes, Interlochen is a true artist's retreat: a place where students, educators, and artists from around the globe live, learn, and create together. Each year, Interlochen serves more than 3,400 students through its renowned summer Interlochen Arts Camp; educates 580 students at Interlochen Arts Academy, a fine arts boarding high school; and reaches learners of all ages through Interlochen Online and a wide range of adult and lifelong learning programs. Students study creative writing, music, theatre, dance, visual arts, film and new media, and interdisciplinary arts in an immersive environment designed to hone craft, foster collaboration, and nurture curiosity.

Interlochen's impact extends far beyond campus. Its alumni include leaders across every artistic discipline—musicians in the nation's major orchestras, Tony-winning Broadway performers, bestselling authors, filmmakers, visual artists, and dancers with the world's most prestigious companies. Just as notably, Interlochen alumni apply creative thinking in fields such as medicine, law, education, science, and public service, including leadership roles at NASA and in classrooms around the world.

As Interlochen enters its second century, it has been shaped by extraordinary artists and educators and has collaborated with many of the world's most influential creative voices. In recognition of its national and global impact, Interlochen Center for the Arts is a recipient of the National Medal of Arts. Today, Interlochen also operates two 24-hour, listener-supported public radio services and presents more than 600 performances annually by students, faculty, and world-renowned guest artists.

Guided by the enduring belief that the arts have the power to connect, challenge, and uplift, Interlochen continues to inspire generations of artists—and audiences—around the world.

Unravel - ceramic, glaze and wire
Peregrine Schulz

The Magnolias were Umbilical
Clementine Huck

Bliss- Acrylic on canvas and wood
Sadie Mason

FIND MORE BEYOND THE PERFORMANCE

Deepen your experience by heading to **interlochen.org/imagine** where you'll find an interactive, curated array of artworks—paintings, sculptures, music, poetry, and more—inspired by America at 250 and created by Interlochen Arts Academy students to mark this historic occasion.

Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra

A recipient of The American Prize, the Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra is recognized as one of America's finest high school orchestras. Under the direction of Leslie B. Dunner, the orchestra performs an advanced repertoire encompassing symphonies, concertos, and contemporary works. For the *Imagine US* tour, the orchestra is guest conducted by Interlochen alumnus Cristian Măcelaru, one of today's leading conductors and a champion of orchestral music on the international stage.

The orchestra has appeared at Carnegie Hall, David Geffen Hall, and the New World Center, and has premiered works by Reena Esmail, Ash Fure, and Hannah Lash, among many others. Deeply committed to interdisciplinary creation, the ensemble collaborates regularly with the six other arts divisions within Interlochen Arts Academy, reflecting the institution's belief in artistic connection and creative exploration across disciplines.

Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra alumni occupy positions in leading orchestras around the world, including principal positions with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and The Cleveland Orchestra, among others.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We stand here on our precious Earth. We acknowledge being on the land of Indigenous people, and in acknowledging Indigenous peoples in a place, we also acknowledge their stories, histories and continued place in these lands. We honor the traditional, and ancestral territory of many Indigenous nations who have stewarded this land for generations, from time immemorial. We pay our respects and give thanks to the past, present, and future traditional stewards of this land. We encourage intentional education to learn more. www.ncai.org

INTERLOCHEN ARTS ACADEMY ORCHESTRA

Cristian Măcelaru, conductor Alex Amsel, assistant conductor
Tyler Castellanos, manager Jenna Richey and Dylan Rosenthal, librarians

VIOLIN
Phoebe Bruchman, Texas
Olivia Chan, Taiwan
Benjamin Chu, Taiwan
Riley Downing, Calif.
Tessa Duncan, Canada
Vincent Guo, N.J.
Jad Ibrahim, Syria
Shannon Kanemaru, Hawaii
Seohyeon Kim, South Korea
Miuccia Li, China
Aria Liu, China
Helen Liu, China
Gretchen Lowe, Ind.
William Maeda, Ill.
Greyson Mayer, Pa.
Kenry Mejia, Mass.
Malika Prasad, Ill.
Isabel Rojas Gonzalez, Costa Rica
Annabelle Simboli, N.Y.
Alice Song, Canada
Stella Taylor Pires, Mich.
Liam Toney, W. Va.
Liliko Ueda, Hawaii
Nicole Wang, Taiwan
Alex Workman, N.C.
Chloe Yan, Wash.
Hongrun Zhu, China
Jasper Zou, China

VIOLA
Tristan Chaffee, Ohio
Jack Decker, Texas
Callie Kleinman, N.M.
Michael Lam, Hong Kong
Mason McMurrey, Texas
Alex Prodan, Okla.
Ben Stern, Wis.
Fritz Thomann, Minn.

CELLO
Zoey Auston, Calif.
Liam Burk, Mich.
Hao Dang, China
Claire Fohrer, Calif.
Willa Hansen-Kohn, Pa.
Grace Lee, Canada
Anni Lopez, Wis.
Caleb Ryu, N.Y.
Yizhen Shao, China
Amanda Sun, Kan.
Charlotte Wildenberg, Mont.

DOUBLE BASS
Jordan Archer, Ga.
Xiye Chen, China
Shelcy Dilone, Mass.
Brody Hahn, Ill.
Yusef Henry, Ga.
Annen Johnson, Mo.
Chelsea Kang, Wis.
Zichen Zhang, China

FLUTE
Elisha Chiu, Texas (piccolo)
Cici Sun, China
Ivan Zhang, Md.

OBOE
Julianne Choe, Texas
Olivia Jang, South Korea
Bohan Bobby Yang, Australia

CLARINET
Sabin Caval, Romania
Aiden Fawcett, Fla.
Kaden Prichard, Ore.

BASSOON
Damián Carrasco, Texas
Ryan Crawford, Calif.
Adam Weekes, S.C.

SAXOPHONE
Brianna Tang, N.Y.

HORN
Isabella Craig, Texas
Leland Evans, Texas
Mason Murphy, Texas
Tatum Tschetter, Fla.
Jak Miguel Vargas, Texas

TRUMPET
Claire Beaird, Texas
Alexander Flores, Bolivia
Sera Hendrey, Va.
Yuxi Liu, China
Ethan Savage, Wash.
Madi Turrentine, Texas

TROMBONE
Jason Ji, China
Chanon Limjerajarus, Thailand
Lucas Martin, Mich.

BASS TROMBONE
Bruno Peña, Texas

TUBA
Tim Cranston, Texas

PERCUSSION
Jesse Tyler Brown, Ohio
Jonah Hilles, Mont.
Carlos Montenegro, Fla.
Joel Moss, Alaska
William Tao, China
Leslie Yang, Va.
Lucas Young, Calif.

HARP
Kelly Chen, China
Yeva Shifrin, Mich.

SOLO PIANO
Kieran Alston, Hawaii

PIANO FOUR HANDS
Helen Nguyen, Vietnam
Maggie Zhao, China

ORGAN
Francis Segger, Conn.

The musicians are listed alphabetically within their section.

INTERLOCHEN ARTS ACADEMY CHOIR

W. Carter Smith, conductor Steven Berlanga, guest conductor Ya-Ju Chuang, rehearsal piano
Troy Burnett, manager Jenna Richey and Dylan Rosenthal, librarians

Elena Amado, Del.
Rowan Barber, Pa.
Neve Bruno, Vt.
Romeo Caterino, Mich.
Emma Grace Coon, Miss.
Victoria Deckard, Ind.
Artemis Edel, N.Y.
Vivian Furtaw, Mich.
Daria Gutmann, N.Y.
Kai Hanna, D.C.
Alex Harstad, Fla.
Soren Hillesland, Calif.
Izzy Hormel, Texas
Yoyo Jiang, China
Ashlin Johnson, Mich.
Hudson Kardish, Ill.
Alicia Ko, Hong Kong
Jayla Leland, Ohio
Sarah Qistina Lim Siow Jin, Malaysia
Hannah Messineo, Idaho
William Murray, Mich.
Ivy Park, N.Y.
Jaden Salii, Calif.
Eva Lalie Sautter, Mich.
Sophia Stabenow, Ill.
Viraj Tathavadekar, Mich.
James C. Teti, N.J.
Belle Thommen, Mich.
Chase Willson, Mich.
Alexander Zampedri, Pa.
Steven Berlanga °
Troy Burnett °
Tyler Castellanos °
Ty Chiko °
Chris Glassman °

° Denotes Faculty/Staff Member

"Music is a language, because no matter what country I'm in, I know that if I approach some musicians and try to play with them, even if I don't know their language, it can be achieved."
— Mauricio Garcia (IAA 25), Classical-Performance - Trumpet, Estado de Puebla, Mexico

IMAGINE US COMPANY

Creative Writing
Quinn De Vecchi, Colo.
Addison Hill, Mich.
Fiona Yates, Pa.

Dance
Debesh Marquardt, Mich.
Reese Martin, Mich.
Jessie Mitnick, N.Y.

Film & New Media
Ramiro Neto, Brazil
Emma Niu, Mass.
Sadie Schoenfelder, Wash.

Interdisciplinary Arts
Poonwalee Bunnag, Thailand
Caleigh Posavac, Tenn.
Annabella Thompson, Mich.

Jazz
Annie Meyer, Conn.
Margaret Morton, N.C.
DJ Parson, N.Y.
Wesley Stoker, N.M.

Singer-Songwriter
Sydney Lea Kassekert, Mass.

Theatre
Tuolumne Bunter, Calif.
Annie Bye, Mich.
Caroline DeSoto, Pa.
Chan Jeong, South Korea
Blaire Johnson, Mich.

Visual Arts
Clementine Huck, Mo.
Sadie Mason, N.C.
Peregrine Schulz, Wis.

Imagine US is a multidisciplinary performance inspired by the 250th birthday of the United States and the music of American composers Charles Ives, Reena Esmail, and Wynton Marsalis.

Created by Diana Wyenn in collaboration with Interlochen Arts Academy
Written by Quinn De Vecchi, Addison Hill, Annabella Thompson, and Fiona Yates
Performances by Poonwalee Bunnag, Tuolumne Bunter, Annie Bye, Caroline DeSoto, Chan Jeong, Blaire Johnson, Debesh Marquardt, Reese Martin, Jessie Mitnick, Caleigh Posavac, and Annabella Thompson
Visuals and Animation by Poonwalee Bunnag, Clementine Huck, Yuki Izumihara, Sadie Mason, Ramiro Neto, Peregrine Schulz, Steven Speciale, and Cat Vintimilla
Films by Emma Niu and Sadie Schoenfelder
Music by Sydney Lea Kassekert, Annie Meyer, Margaret Morton, DJ Parson, and Wesley Stoker
Costumes by Annie Bye, Peregrine Schulz, and Amanda Lifvendahl

"Art should sometimes make us uncomfortable or push us outside of our comfort zones, because that's when we truly begin to understand its depth. I also believe this idea connects to the American values of facing challenges and encouraging individual thought."
—Miranda Wang, Creative Writing, Beijing, China

ADDITIONAL STUDENT CONTRIBUTORS

Animation
Theo Entrekin, Mich.
Zerzy Lambert, Mich.
Aria Lauzzana, Mich.
Aymie Lee, Mich.
Ramiro Neto, Brazil
Mayer Peters, Ill.
Ben Poulin, Mich.
Diego Rocha-Morgan, Minn.
Fredric Schiller, Minn.
Liam Schramm, Mich.
Zoey Wu, Nev.
Kitty Yang, China

Creative Writing
Addie Sparks, Wash.
Alexander Stillwell, Mich.

Music Production & Engineering
Patrick Ao, China
Veer Brackenbury, Mich.
Connor Delbridge, Mich.
Noelle Hughes, Okla.
Luca Paganis, Ill.
Oliver Ramsdell, N.Y.
Jasper Scott, Va.
Jules Sohn, South Korea
Yilin Wang, China

Visual Arts
Artwork on tour
Alex Adams, Wyo.
James Addis, Calif.
Olivia Broadrick, Texas
Caroline Daniels, Mich.
Charlotte Gray, Tenn.
Bridget Han, South Korea
Hazel Hansen, N.Y.
Clementine Huck, Mo.
Ilsa Jiang, China
Sofia Kormilitsyna, Hong Kong
Asher Lasky, Calif.
Katherine Liu, Mich.
Sadie Mason, N.C.
Hana Nishi, Ill.
Anya Penherski, Ala.
Stella Bleu Signorelli, Mexico
Peggy Wang, China
Anni Zhou, China

Visual Arts
Artwork on website
Alex Adams, Wyo.
James Addis, Calif.
Shea Bellezza, Vt.
Caroline Daniels, Mich.
Jackson Davis, Mich.
Serena Dugan, N.Y.
Charlotte Gray, Tenn.
Emily Guo, Va.
Bridget Han, South Korea
Hazel Hansen, N.Y.
Clementine Huck, Mo.
Ilsa Jiang, China
Kitty Jiang, Hong Kong
Sofia Kormilitsyna, Hong Kong
Asher Lasky, Calif.
Olivia Lee, South Korea
Katherine Liu, Mich.
Stella Martin, D.C.
Sadie Mason, N.C.
Ella Méndez, Conn.
Margaret Moise, Canada
Lila Mosberger, Colo.
Hana Nishi, Ill.
Anya Penherski, Ala.
MunibaNur Ritman Oke, Wash.
Peregrine Schulz, Wis.
Zion Wallace, Md.
Peggy Wang, China
Yi Xie, China
Eva Yang, Hong Kong
Anni Zhou, China
Julie Zhu, Hong Kong

INTERLOCHEN ARTS ACADEMY DIRECTORS AND FACULTY ADVISORS

William Church | Director of Theatre
Conor Fagan | Visual Arts Faculty Advisor
Chris Glassman | Director of Jazz and Faculty Advisor
Courtney Kaiser-Sandler | Director of Songwriting and Faculty Advisor
Karyna McGlynn | Director of Creative Writing and Faculty Advisor
Laura Mittelstaedt | Theatre Faculty Advisor
Michael Mittelstaedt | Director of Film & New Media and Faculty Advisor
Joseph Morrissey | Director of Dance
Megan Rivkin | Creative Writing Faculty Advisor
Clyde Sheets | Director of Interdisciplinary Arts and Faculty Advisor
Patty Smith | Director of Visual Arts and Faculty Advisor
Steven Speciale | Interdisciplinary Arts Faculty Advisor
Eric Stomberg | Director of Music
Leslie Williams | Dance Faculty Advisor
Briana Yarhouse | Director of Animation and Faculty Advisor

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Diana Wyenn | Creative Director
Camille Colatosti | Provost of Interlochen Center for the Arts
Brent Wrobel | Executive Director of Interlochen Presents
Jeffery Block | Associate Director of Presents
Robert Cracknell | Live Audio Engineer
Michael Culler | Senior Recording Engineer
Nicklas Casella | Lighting Designer
Yuki Izumihara | Projection Designer
Steven Speciale | Additional Projection Animation Design
Amanda Lifvendahl | Costume Shop Supervisor
Heather Kaatz | Stage Manager
Christine Roberts | Guest Artist Relations

DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Personnel Manager, Clare Valenti

VIOLIN 1
Hai-Xin Wu
Greg Staples+
Eun Lee

VIOLIN 2
Jiamin Wang
Alex Volkov
Hong-Yi Mo

VIOLA
Hang Su

CELLO
Jeremy Crosmer+

DOUBLE BASS
Chris Hamlen

BASSOON
Cornelia Sommer

HORN
Patrick Walle

TROMBONE
David Binder

PERCUSSION
Joe Becker

HARP
Alyssa Katahara*+

*Interlochen Arts Academy alum**
Interlochen Arts Camp alum+

Please visit the 3rd floor of the Max and Marjorie Fisher Music Center to view our exhibition for our 25th anniversary of the Classical Roots program.

Interlochen gratefully acknowledges the sponsors and donors who provided gifts of $5,000 or more in support for this remarkable experience for our students:

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Mi-Eun Kim and Nam Hoon Kang
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and the many donors who made gifts in honor of Ken Fischer's 80th birthday.

Interlochen
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Interlochen's Centennial Celebration Starts Now!

Since 1928, Interlochen has brought together the world's most talented young artists and distinguished faculty, shaping generations of creative leaders in the arts. Now, we invite you to join us for an unforgettable centennial celebration on campus and across the country.

Celebrate With Us on Campus

Shirley Young Distinguished Artist Series Renée Fleming	SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2026
Academy Reunion Weekend 2026	FRIDAY, OCT. 16 - SUNDAY, OCT. 18, 2026
Interlochen Arts Camp Centennial Collage	SUNDAY, JULY 11, 2027
Interlochen Arts Camp 100th Les Préludes	SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, 2027
Centennial Celebration Orchestra	SATURDAY, JULY 1, 2028
Academy Reunion Weekend 2028	FRIDAY, OCT. 13- SUNDAY, OCT. 15, 2028

Celebrate With Us Across The Country

As part of our centennial, Interlochen students from multiple arts disciplines will bring their work to communities nationwide over the next several years, including another major multidisciplinary tour in 2028.

Learn more about Interlochen's 100 years of artistic achievement and community, explore our history, find events, browse centennial merchandise, and support the next generation of young artists with a gift on the official centennial page: **interlochen.org/centennial**.

Interlochen

interlochen.org