

About Soulful Symphony

Founded in 2000 by composer and artistic director Darin Atwater, Soulful Symphony is the nation's newest all African-American symphony orchestra. Comprised of 75 musicians and vocalists, Soulful Symphony blends classical, rhythm and blues, jazz and gospel music within a symphonic framework for orchestra.

As a not-for-profit arts organization, Soulful Symphony is dedicated to the preservation of African-American cultural expression and to the presentation of symphonic music. Soulful Symphony is a repository for the exploration of diverse musical expressions: classical, jazz, gospel and popular forms capturing a universal language that gives all cultures common ground.

Biography



Darin Atwater ~ composer, conductor, pianist

Darin Atwater, composer, conductor, pianist, is regarded as one of the leading artists of his generation. His skills in the idioms of classical, jazz and sacred music have earned him a distinguished international reputation.

Born in Washington, D.C., Mr. Atwater began playing the piano at the age of four. By the age of 12, he was directing his own ensemble. After attending Morgan State University where he studied under Dr. Nathan Carter, he continued his studies in composition at the Peabody Institute under Morris Cotel and was selected to represent the department in a masterclass with famed composer John Corigliano.

He made his orchestral debut as both composer and pianist in May 1995 with the National Symphony Orchestra premiering *Maschil* for piano and orchestra. During the winter of 1995 he served as arranger, pianist and musical director for Scala Theatre, touring throughout Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Austria. The following year, the National Symphony along with the Cathedral Choral Arts Society premiered his *Proclamations* for brass, organ, timpani and chorus.

Mr. Atwater has appeared with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, and the American Composers Orchestra. In October of 1997, he served as accompanist for Kathleen Battle along with the National Symphony for the re-opening of the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. In a May 1998 appearance with the Baltimore Symphony, he performed his Piano Concerto and the premiere of his work, *Fanfare for Orchestra*. In June of 1998 Mr. Atwater, welcomed by former President and Mrs. Clinton, performed with the Morgan State University Choir in a celebration of Gospel on the south lawn of the White House. February 2000 marked the premiere of *Song in a Strange Land*, a contemporary exploration of Spirituals that featured Wynton Marsalis, Karen Clark-Sheard, Kim Burrell, and the debut of Soulful Symphony.

In August 2001, Mr. Atwater made his orchestral conducting debut with the Dallas Symphony, conducting his *Tehillah* for Chorus and Orchestra. Most recently he received a commission from Jazz at Lincoln Center with Wynton Marsalis that was premiered at the opening festival of the Rose Theatre in New York. *The New York Times* said, "Mr. Atwater's muscular imagination took the idiom of the jazz orchestra, the manners of the ballad and the gestures of swing, and smartly used them to comment on the words."

As arranger and conductor he records for various labels. His work is represented on recording projects by Donnie McClurkin, Richard Smallwood, Yolanda Adams, Donald Lawrence, Shirley Caesar, and Karen Clark-Sheard among others.

Mr. Atwater is the Founder and Artistic Director of Soulful Symphony, a not-for-profit arts organization dedicated to the preservation of African American cultural expression and to the presentation of symphonic music representative of diverse genres. He has been the subject of stories for Maryland Public Television, *Emerge* magazine, *Upscale*, and was named one of "30 Leaders of the Future" by *Ebony* magazine.

The Soulful Symphony ~ Darin Atwater, *Music Director*

ORCHESTRA

First Violins

Orlando Wells
Phil Payton
Wayman McCoy
Marcia McIntyre
Carlos Baptiste
David Yarborough
Jonathan Jones
Juliet Jones
Edith Yokely
Renee London

Second Violins

Tarah Reynolds
Mariana Green-Hill
David Burnett
Sean-David Cunningham
Chala Yancy
Lerna May Frandsen

Russell Graham

Leonard Brown
Bonita Grier
Michelle Ruiz

Violas

Aundrey Mitchell
Chris Jenkins
Robin Massey
Leslie Delaine
Dawn Smith
Richmond Punch
Sharon Bingham

Cellos

Patrice Jackson
Kenneth Pearson
Ryan Murphy
Richard Brown
Elise Cuffy
Deanna Purdie

Basses

Kalya Okuri
Tony Bellamy
Brian Fountain
Ephraim Woolfolk

Saxophones

Tim Green
James Cheeks
Courtney Nero
Jacob Yofee

Trumpets

Tage Larsen
Chris Royal
Dontae Winslow

Trombones

Brandon Rivera
Christopher Rivera
Isa Robinson

Percussion

Orlando Cotto

Rhythm Section

Chris Dave (Drum Set)
Shedrick Mitchell (Piano)
Darin Atwater (Piano)
Adam Johnson (Electric Bass)
Guy Robinson (Organ)

CHORUS

Sopranos

Shante Carter
Stacy Atwater
Paula Huggins
Melanie Winborn
Mashica Winslow
Aisha Wyatt
Andrea Albert
Ingla Coles

Altos

Cynthia Hardy
Jana Harris
Rochelle Archellus
Tammy Turner
Umeki Neverson
Nicole Wilson
Britney Wright

Tenors

Tim Bradley
John McClure
Jonathan Nelson
Shaun Hoggs
Martellies Warren
Joshua Lay

Bass

Taiwan Norris
Ryan Golson
Anthony Brown