



BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF MUSIC.

Alhambra Orchestra Newsletter Summer 2026

RECOGNITION AND MILESTONES

We are delighted to announce that the Alhambra Orchestra has been named a finalist for the 2026 American Prize in the Community Orchestra Performance category. Likewise, Daniel Andai has been named a finalist in the Community Orchestra Conducting category.

The American Prize National Nonprofit Competitions in the Performing Arts is the nation's most comprehensive series of contests in the performing arts. The American Prize is designed to recognize and reward outstanding performing artists, directors, ensembles, and composers in the United States at the professional, college/university, community, and high school levels, based on submitted recordings.

Now in its 16th year, The American Prize was founded in 2010 and is awarded annually in numerous areas of the performing arts. Thousands of artists from all 50 states have participated in its competitions, representing hundreds of communities and arts organizations.

We were selected as a finalist based on our recording of the 1812 Overture. This recording is also available on our YouTube channel. We do not yet know when the winners will be announced, but being named a finalist is a tremendous honor.

Also, the Miami-Dade College television crew filmed our June 13 concert and is submitting the production for consideration in the Regional Emmy Awards presented by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. We'll let you know if it receives an award. When the fully edited version is ready, we will make it available to the public.

Finally, we made a big splash on July 5 with the YouTube premiere of our recording of Dvořák's Cello Concerto from our 2025 season finale, featuring soloist Tommy Mesa. The performance received wonderful comments from viewers and is available on our YouTube channel.

Dear Orchestra Members,

I have discovered an AO math axiom: $X + 1 > X + 1$. What?? Yes!

One of the most remarkable truths about this orchestra is that while every individual part is important, the music we play together becomes something far greater than the sum of its parts. How is that possible?

Our amazing Co-Executive Directors, Helen Hauser and Dani Andai, and our Board of Directors are committed to creating an environment where every member can grow, perform, and enjoy playing music together. Forging a great orchestra experience, however, is a shared responsibility. Each of us has the opportunity to make our orchestra even stronger. Come to rehearsals well prepared, make attendance a priority, and support one another. When everyone is ready to rehearse, we make the most of our time together and achieve a higher level of musical excellence.

Your initiative and involvement shapes your own experience and improves everyone else's too. Luz Luque, violin, sends me great pictures of our musicians on concert day. Sara Wigderson and Sophie Hager, cellists, always invite their fans. New member Stuart Lones, trombone, led a sectional one evening. Every effort, large or small, makes a difference.



Violinis **Luz Luque**



Cellist **Sara Wigderson**



Trombonist **Stuart Lones**

Thank you for your dedication and the energy you bring to every rehearsal and performance. We are proud to have you as part of this musical community, and we look forward to another wonderful season of making great music together.

With enthusiasm and delight,

August Neal, President

MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC, CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CONDUCTOR



As we begin another exciting season together, I want to thank each of you for the passion, dedication, and artistry you brought to our performances last year. Every rehearsal, every concert, and every outreach event reflected your commitment to making music at the highest level while serving our community with generosity and purpose.

Our 2025-26 season was one of our most rewarding yet. Together we expanded our educational outreach, welcomed new audiences, collaborated with outstanding community partners, premiered new multimedia programs, and earned national recognition as finalists for The American Prize. These accomplishments belong to every member of this orchestra. They are the result of musicians who care deeply about the music, about one another, and about the audiences we serve.

As we begin our 37th season, my vision remains the same: to continue raising our artistic standard while remaining true to our mission as South Florida's premier community orchestra. This season we will introduce three orchestra workshops that

will allow us to explore ensemble playing in greater depth and refine the musical details that transform a good performance into an unforgettable one. I encourage everyone to embrace these opportunities with curiosity and an open mind. Great orchestras never stop learning.

As always, I ask each of you to arrive prepared, support your colleagues, and bring your very best to every rehearsal. Musical excellence is built one rehearsal at a time through discipline, trust, and a shared commitment to something greater than ourselves.

Thank you for the privilege of making music with you. I am honored to stand on the podium before such a talented and dedicated group of musicians, and I cannot wait to begin another memorable season together.

Musically yours,

Daniel Andai

Artistic Director, Principal Conductor Co-Executive Director

OUR PLANS FOR CONTINUED EXCELLENCE & SUCCESS

Dear Musicians,

Welcome back! We hope you had a great summer. We are still psyched about the terrific year we had in 2025-26.

In addition to the busy season we had already planned, we were invited to provide a small orchestra to inaugurate a chamber music series at St. David's Church in Broward, and Miami-Dade College invited our full ensemble to collaborate in its America 250 production. Both projects, put together on short notice, were highly successful. We also had to self-produce our "Water, Water, Everywhere" multimedia educational concert after the Frost Museum of Science pulled out of the project. Fortunately, our own **Robbie Christian** and **Joy Castro** stepped in with a fantastic script and visuals.

We continued expanding our outreach to youth, as you saw with our "opening act" features, in which school ensembles preceded two of our major concerts. We are also very grateful to our school volunteers who made monthly visits throughout the year. A special shout-out goes to Jackie Alvarez, our most tireless volunteer.

Financially, we had our best year ever, with several significant new donations that will help us navigate the uncertain future facing arts organizations. These generous gifts supplemented the steps we had already taken, including charging a modest admission fee for most concerts and increasing member dues. We've also been pursuing paid performances for corporate and community events.

However, we, along with our peer organizations, remain very concerned about the loss of government support. In addition to federal funding becoming almost nonexistent, we've just learned that Florida's governor vetoed even some of the already bare-bones arts grants approved by the Legislature. We are particularly concerned about the possibility of losing, through property tax cuts, Miami-Dade County's generous support, which has helped sustain us for more than 20 years. Other performing organizations, whose operating costs are even higher, may be affected much more severely.

Please advocate for government support of the arts whenever you have the opportunity. Come what may, we are determined to continue our artistic growth while serving even more people of all ages and backgrounds. If you have fundraising ideas or know of potential donors, please contact a member of the board.

Your hardworking board of member musicians, elected by you, performs countless tasks to manage this organization, some of which are listed below. Congratulations to newly elected Vice President **Joy Castro**, who is joining our officer team, and many thanks to **Joe Yeargin**, our tireless Personnel Chair, who has also served as vice president for the past ten years. Joe will continue his outstanding service as Personnel Manager.

A vital function of the Board is planning for the orchestra to thrive into the future, artistically as well as financially. Artistic Director **Daniel Andai** has proposed exciting ideas for our 37th season, detailed later in this newsletter. For the first time, we will offer three workshops for our own musicians, which will also be open to community players. Additional performances may be added, as happened this past season, but this newsletter reflects the concerts that are currently planned and confirmed.

We are also undertaking a complete redesign of our website, led by our Marketing Director and Web Designer, **Orlando Haddock**. The new site will likely include new email addresses for the orchestra and its officers. Of course, we will let you know when that happens. During the transition, any messages you send us will be forwarded to the appropriate recipient.

We are excited to begin the 2026-27 season!



REPORT ON 2025-2026 SEASON

SEPTEMBER 28, 2025 - "HISPANIC HERITAGE CELEBRATION" - FIU WERTHEIM PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, 7:30 PM. Tickets: \$5 seniors and students, \$10 adults. This popular annual event drew 505 enthusiastic music lovers. The orchestra presented a rarely heard symphony by Juan Arriaga, the "Spanish Mozart," followed by Albéniz's popular Asturias for orchestra, two zarzuela songs plus the beloved anthem Granada performed by young singers from the Manny Perez Studio, Márquez's Danzón No. 2, and the encore that the audience demanded, Guantanamera. The audience of 505 was highly appreciative, providing a lengthy standing ovation.

OCTOBER 8, 2025 - SCHOOL VISIT - MAST ACADEMY, 10 AM. Free admission. At the request of music teacher Claudia Torres, who requested a performance for Hispanic Heritage Month, a wind trio visited a group of about one hundred 9th- through 12th-graders to perform four pieces of characteristically Hispanic classical music and discussed the music as well as their instruments.

OCTOBER 24, 2025 - "SPOOKY SYMPHONY" - DENNIS C. MOSS CENTER, 7:15 PM AND 8:30 PM. Free admission. As part of the Moss Center's epic Halloween celebration, the Alhambra Orchestra and Greater Miami Youth Symphony presented two side-by-side performances of a kid-friendly program, sponsored by The Children's Trust. Musical selections were backed by images on a large screen. The program included themes from Godzilla, X-Men, The Wizard of Oz, The Addams Family, and The Phantom of the Opera. The conductors, emcee, and musicians were costumed. The two audiences were 845 and 552, for a total of 1,397, about 60% children and teens.

DECEMBER 6, 2025 - "HOLIDAY POPS" - PINECREST GARDENS, 7 PM AND 8 PM. Free with Gardens admission. As part of the Nights of Lights festival, when Pinecrest Gardens opens its brilliantly decorated grounds, the orchestra performed two 30-minute shows of holiday-themed music, including four holiday songs specially arranged for jazz vocalist Lisanne Lyons, a medley of Hanukkah melodies, and two lively Trans-Siberian Orchestra arrangements. Audiences for the two shows totaled 335.

DECEMBER 11, 2025 - HOLIDAY QUARTET AT MIAMI CANCER CENTER - 11 AM. Free admission. The orchestra's in-house string quartet performed a lunchtime serenade in the lobby of the Miami Cancer Center for staff and patients, with a mix of light classical and cheery holiday tunes arranged for string quartet. About 130 people came to enjoy the performance.

NOVEMBER 1-22, 2025 - CONCERTO AND COMPOSITION COMPETITION. The orchestra's 22nd annual concerto competition for middle and high school students accepted online entries with attached videos. A panel of three eminent music educators chose eight finalists, who then appeared live, with their accompanists, before three more judges. Three winners were selected. The orchestra also instituted a composition competition for high school and college composition students, with two composers as judges, and selected a winner. A total of 26 students submitted entries.

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 - CHAMBER MUSIC WORKSHOP. Our 22nd Annual "Be Better with Bergonzi" workshop at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, sponsored in part by Associated Chamber Music Players, involved eight groups and 30 total participants. Players of all ages received a weekend of intensive instruction from eminent faculty members and performed a final recital, open to the public. Three of the groups were entirely made up of teens, and we had two other teen participants. We gave scholarships to nine young players. At the final recital, groups performed a wide range of pieces by Mozart, Chausson, Dvořák, and more. Seventy audience members attended to applaud the 30 participants.

JANUARY 25, 2026 - SOUTH FLORIDA'S GOT TALENT - FIU WERTHEIM PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, 7:30 PM. Tickets: \$5 seniors and students, \$10 adults. The top three winners of the orchestra's concerto competition for young South Florida musicians in middle and high school were featured soloists in

works by Wieniawski, Sammartini, and Beethoven. The winning piece from the orchestra's composition contest for high school and college students was premiered. The concert opened with three short pieces performed by Miami Charter School's student orchestra. Then the adult orchestra took the stage to open with Mozart's rousing Overture to The Marriage of Figaro. An enthusiastic audience of 490 enjoyed this display of local talent, demanding two encores.

MARCH 1, 2026 - SPRING SERENADE - CHAMBER CONCERT AT CORAL GABLES CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, 7:30 PM. Free admission. Dividing itself into smaller ensembles, the orchestra presented a brass quintet version of Elgar's Nimrod, an arrangement of themes from Mozart's The Magic Flute for flute solo with concert band, Elgar's lyrical Serenade for Strings, Mendelssohn's Double Concerto for Violin and Piano, and Copland's rarely heard original version of Appalachian Spring with several eminent guest musicians from the community. A very appreciative audience of 485 filled the church to capacity.

MARCH 13, 2026 - INAUGURATION OF CONCERT SERIES - ST. DAVID'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, FORT LAUDERDALE. The orchestra was commissioned to perform for the opening of a new concert series, which attracted 330 attendees. The repertoire was Elgar's lyrical Serenade for Strings, Mendelssohn's Double Concerto for Violin and Piano, and two vocal pieces featuring church choir members.

APRIL 26, 2026 - WORLD OF MUSIC - SEASON FINALE - FIU WERTHEIM PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, 7:30 PM. Tickets: \$5 seniors and students, \$10 adults. The concert opened with an appearance by the beginning string class from Whispering Pines Elementary, with whom the orchestra maintains a partnership. As the students and their families took their seats, next came the Concerto for Four Horns. The program then featured FIU faculty violinist Misha Vitenson performing Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4. It concluded with Beethoven's blockbuster Symphony No. 5. An enthusiastic audience of 520, including about 60 children, attended. They demanded five curtain calls and an encore.

JUNE 7, 2026 - WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE - MULTIMEDIA FAMILY CONCERT - FIU WERTHEIM PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, 3 PM. Tickets: \$5 seniors and students, \$10 adults. Backed by a large screen showing videos of oceans, rivers, and sea life, our own Robbie Christian narrated a trip through the South Florida watery landscape while the orchestra performed water-oriented movie themes and classical pieces such as Titanic, The Moldau, The Hebrides Overture, Pirates of the Caribbean, and more. Environmental organizations set up exhibits outside. This educational and entertaining program attracted 420 enthusiastic viewers, mostly families with children.

JUNE 13, 2026 - AMERICA 250 WITH A MIAMI TWIST - MULTIMEDIA FAMILY SHOW - FREEDOM TOWER IN DOWNTOWN MIAMI, 3 PM. Free admission. The orchestra co-produced an America 250 celebration with Miami-Dade College Wolfson Campus, with the script, images, and music selections focusing on U.S. history as experienced in Miami through the years. Musical works included selections from Hooray USA Overture, West Side Story, The Entertainer, Apollo 13, God Bless America, and much more. The event filled the Freedom Tower's ballroom with an appreciative audience of about 390, of all ages. The show was also recorded in full for rebroadcast on the college's own TV station, and the recording has been submitted for consideration in the regional Emmy competition.

MONTHLY SCHOOL VISITS: Orchestra musicians, singly or in small groups, visited beginning string classes at Whispering Pines Elementary and general music classes at R.R. Moton Elementary School throughout the school year, assisting the schools' music teachers with prepared topics, performing, and speaking with students about music careers. A total of about 600 students were served. The Whispering Pines string students opened the orchestra's April concert with a demonstration of what they had learned.

REPERTOIRE SELECTED FOR 2026-27

Advisory Note: We plan our seasons more than a year in advance because we need these details for grant proposals and must reserve venues well ahead of time. However, unforeseen circumstances sometimes require us to change a concert date. Likewise, we occasionally need to revise repertoire because of issues such as obtaining sheet music, personnel changes, public relations considerations, or other logistical factors. The information below reflects our current plans, and we will notify you as soon as possible if any changes become necessary.

LATIN BEATS / HISPANIC HERITAGE

FIU, September 26 (Saturday)

Carmen Suites Nos. 1 & 2 – Bizet
Suite México (1910) – Esperón González
Conga del Fuego Nuevo – Márquez
Gloria Estefan Medley

HALLOWEEN (with GMYS)

Moss Center, October 23 (Friday)

Star Wars Through the Years – John Williams, arr. Stephen Bulla
Men in Black Theme – Danny Elfman
The Lord of the Rings Symphonic Suite – Howard Shore, arr. John Whitney
Ghostbusters – Ray Parker Jr., arr. Paul Campbell
Pokémon Themes – Junichi Masuda, arr. Andrés Llona
Beetlejuice Main Titles – Danny Elfman, arr. Patrick Sheehan
Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl Medley – Klaus Badelt, arr. Ricketts

HOLIDAY CONCERT

Pinecrest Gardens, December 13 (Sunday)

Holiday Medleys
Hanukkah Medley
Feliz Navidad – José Feliciano
El Burrito Sabanero – Hugo Blanco

SOUTH FLORIDA'S GOT TALENT

FIU, February 6 (Saturday)

Dawn on the Moskva River – Mussorgsky
Overture in G Minor, WAB 98 – Bruckner
Three concerto selections featuring competition winners
Premiere of the winning composition

CHAMBER CONCERT: "GO FOR BAROQUE"

Coral Gables Congregational Church, March 7 (Sunday)

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 – J.S. Bach
Concerto for Viola in C Minor – Bach/Casadesus
Violin Concerto in A Minor, BWV 1041 – J.S. Bach
or *The Four Seasons* – Vivaldi
Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 – J.S. Bach
Possible Brass Quintet

IMAGINATION - 37TH SEASON FINALE

FIU, May 23 (Sunday)

Carnival of the Animals – Saint-Saëns
Scheherazade – Rimsky-Korsakov

IT'S REHEARSAL TIME: Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 7701 SW 76th Ave, Miami, FL 33143. **BRING YOUR MUSIC STAND.**

The Alhambra Orchestra will continue to rehearse at the UU Congregation. **First rehearsal: Wednesday, Aug. 19.**

This is a big space, air conditioned, with plenty of parking. We are very grateful to the clergy, the board and congregation for agreeing to host our rehearsals. Our rehearsals will still be on Wednesday nights at 7:30. We'll probably end at 10, with a break in the middle.

Early arrivals and room setup helpers are highly encouraged.



HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR 2025-26 SEASON



PERFORMANCE AND REHEARSAL SCHEDULE



Please remember that this schedule reflects everything we know about as of this writing. But sometimes there is an unforeseen conflict. There can also be hurricanes or other sorts of disasters. Always read your email from the orchestra so that you know about any changes we have to make. Also check the schedule on our website, which will be kept up to date.

2026

Wed. Aug. 19 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Aug. 26 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Sept. 2 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Sept. 9 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Sept. 16 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Sept. 23 Rehearsal at UUCM

HISPANIC HIGHLIGHTS

FIU: Sat. Sept. 26, 7:30 PM. Confirmed.

Wed. Sept. 30 Orchestra Seminar/Workshop at UUCM
Wed. Oct. 7 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Oct. 14 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Oct. 21 Rehearsal at UUCM
Thurs. Oct. 22 Dress Rehearsal at Moss Center

SPOOKY SYMPHONY WITH GMYS

Moss Center: Fri. Oct. 23. Confirmed. Sponsored by The Children's Trust.

(Concerto & Composition Competition entries due Sun. Nov. 1.)

Wed. Oct. 28 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Nov. 4 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Nov. 11 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Nov. 18 Rehearsal at UUCM
(Concerto Competition Live Finals: Sun. Nov. 22, Encore Academy.)

Wed. Nov. 25 NO REHEARSAL – Thanksgiving Eve
Wed. Dec. 2 Rehearsal at UUCM (possibly holiday party)
Wed. Dec. 9 Rehearsal at UUCM

HOLIDAY CONCERT

Pinecrest Gardens: Sun. Dec. 13. Tentative.

Wed. Dec. 16 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Dec. 23 NO REHEARSAL – Winter Break
Wed. Dec. 30 NO REHEARSAL – Winter Break

2027

Wed. Jan. 6 Rehearsal at UUCM

CHAMBER MUSIC WORKSHOP

University of Miami: Jan. 8-10

Wed. Jan. 13 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Jan. 20 Rehearsal at UUCM with soloists
Wed. Jan. 27 Rehearsal at UUCM with soloists
Wed. Feb. 3 Rehearsal at UUCM with soloists

SOUTH FLORIDA'S GOT TALENT

FIU: Sat. Feb. 6, 7:30 PM. Confirmed.

Wed. Feb. 10 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Feb. 17 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Feb. 24 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Mar. 3 Rehearsal at UUCM

GO FOR BAROQUE (Chamber Concert)

Coral Gables Congregational Church: Sun. Mar. 7. Confirmed.
Sponsored by Howard and Miriam Stone and the City of Coral Gables.
(Possible repeat performance at a second venue.)

Wed. Mar. 10 Orchestra Seminar/Workshop at UUCM
Wed. Mar. 17 Orchestra Seminar/Workshop at UUCM
Wed. Mar. 24 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Mar. 31 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Apr. 7 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. Apr. 14 Rehearsal at UUCM

Wed. Apr. 21 NO REHEARSAL – First Night of Passover

Wed. Apr. 28 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. May 5 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. May 12 Rehearsal at UUCM
Wed. May 19 Rehearsal at UUCM

IMAGINATION - 37TH SEASON FINALE

FIU: Sun. May 23, 7:30 PM. Confirmed.

SIMPLE WAYS TO HELP BUILD ENGAGEMENT & MOMENTUM

Your talent brings our music to life and your voice can help carry our mission even further into the community. Every interaction helps build a stronger connection between the orchestra and the vibrant community we serve. Here are a few great ways to get involved:

1. Add Us to Your Bio:

Include the Alhambra Orchestra in your social media bios or professional websites. A small but powerful gesture that builds visibility.

2. Recommend Us to Local Schools & Organizations:

Suggest our concerts and outreach to music teachers, student groups, community centers, or churches.

3. Leave a Review:

Leave a positive review or testimonial on our Facebook page or Google listing to help build credibility and online presence.

4. Share Your Story:

Tell your followers why you're proud to be part of the orchestra and what it means to you personally.

5. Invite Someone New to Each Concert:

Challenge yourself to bring a new friend, neighbor, or colleague to each concert and introduce them to the music.

6. Record a Short Video Message:

Record a 30-second video on your phone sharing excitement for an upcoming performance or your love for orchestral music and share it!

7. Nominate Us for Community Calendars:

Submit our events to free listings like local media calendars, event sites, bulletin boards, or community groups.

8. Volunteer or Join a Committee:

Offer time or expertise to help with outreach, fundraising, or event greeting, even small tasks go a long way.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING US SHINE AND CARRY ON OUR MISSION!



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS ORCHESTRA



We are thrilled to have many new members joining us this year. Your enthusiasm helps us continue to grow and improve. Whether you are new to the orchestra or a returning member, we want everyone to understand the history and purpose of what we do.

We are a true community orchestra, which means our musicians are local residents, we feature local soloists, and we seek to serve our community through music. In some small towns, a community orchestra is the only presenter of live classical concerts. In large cities like ours, it complements the offerings of permanent and touring professional orchestras.

In the populous, sprawling Miami-Dade metropolitan area, it is difficult, and often cost-prohibitive, for many of our residents to experience the excellent classical music performances the region has to offer. Yet there is a tremendous demand for accessible concerts, especially when so many of our neighbors are struggling economically. That's our niche.

We particularly seek to reach seniors, families with children, and underserved populations while encouraging music education for people of all ages. At the same time, we won't let the term community orchestra limit our artistic ambitions. We want to see how good we can become, regardless of how we are structured or what we are called. Continuing artistic improvement is one of our guiding principles.

We are proud of projects such as our annual youth concerto competition, our annual chamber music workshop for players of all ages, our yearly Halloween family concert, "Spooky Symphony," our partnership with Whispering Pines Elementary School, and our annual chamber music concert. We serve adult musicians by providing mentoring and performance opportunities for our members, and each weekly rehearsal is a learning experience.

The orchestra presents major symphonies, concertos featuring eminent local soloists, pops concerts, chamber performances, opera, Broadway selections, and children's concerts. We also maintain an informal program of hospital visits, school visits, and community center performances by small ensembles.

We are a self-governing, independent, musician-run organization. Most of our performers are volunteers, and most administrative responsibilities are handled by volunteers as well. As a result, the Alhambra Orchestra is able to accomplish all of these projects on a budget that is a fraction of what many other orchestras require. This allows us to offer a full season of free or modestly priced events.

The orchestra was founded in 1990 by Dr. Leo Walz, then a graduate student, who handled all of the administrative duties while also serving as conductor during the organization's early years. He incorporated it as a nonprofit organization in 1995 under the name **Alhambra Music, Inc.** The name Alhambra was chosen because the orchestra's first home was in a now-demolished church on Alhambra Circle in Coral Gables.

Since 2000, the Alhambra Orchestra has been governed by an elected board of member musicians. Over the years, it has formed lasting partnerships with other arts organizations, performance venues, and educational institutions, becoming an important part of South Florida's cultural community. Today, it serves more than **5,500 audience members each year.**

The orchestra's can-do attitude is exemplified by projects such as our innovative use of videos and small-ensemble performances during the COVID pandemic, as well as multimedia productions such as "Water, Water, Everywhere" and "America 250 with a Miami Twist," both presented this past June. We continue to strengthen our own ensemble while providing memorable cultural experiences for our community.

LET'S STAY IN CONTACT

When the Alhambra Orchestra began in 1990, founder Dr. Leo Walz managed everything, as well as conducting. After a few seasons, Dr. Walz incorporated the entity as the non-profit Alhambra Music, Inc., in 1995, so that it became eligible for government grants and could request tax deductible donations.

In 2000, governance was assumed by an elected board of directors, who were all member musicians. As befits a mature organization of our size, we are slowly transitioning away from all-volunteer management, but still using musicians to do our administrative jobs. Board members and other volunteers still handle most of the behind-the-scenes tasks needed to present a full season of high-quality concerts.

MANAGEMENT CONTACTS

We communicate with our member musicians by email and sometimes by phone, so please be sure that Joe Yeargin and August Neal have your accurate contact information, and that our general email address music@alhambraorchestra.org is in your contact list so important info doesn't end up in Spam. This may become particularly important during hurricane season. We also post our schedule on our website. Additionally, you should obtain contact information for your section leader in case you have to be absent unexpectedly, or have some other question.

Any schedule changes, such as a cancellation for storm warnings, will be sent by email and posted on the website. You can also contact an officer or board member, listed below.

MEET THE LEADERSHIP & YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Daniel Andai, Artistic Director, Co-Executive Director
dandai@alhambraorchestra.org

Helen Hauser, Co-Executive Director, grantwriter hhauser@alhambraorchestra.org

August Neal, Board President aneal@alhambraorchestra.org

Joy Castro, Vice President, Fundraising Committee jcastro@alhambraorchestra.org

Sophia Camejo, Secretary, Competition Committee scamejo912@gmail.com

Janet Copeland, Treasurer treasurer@alhambraorchestra.org

Kelvin Clavelo, Board Member, Fundraising and Competition Committee
kclavelo@yahoo.com

Barbara Tria, Board Member, Venue Liaison, Stage Manager
facilities@alhambraorchestra.org

Joe Yeargin, Board Member, Personnel Manager Jyeargin40@gmail.com

Pamela Yen, Board Member, Social Director, Costume Designer
pamelayen82@gmail.com

Matt Leone, Board Member, Videographer leonecreative@mac.com

Carol Naveira-Nicholson, Board Member, Librarian, Education Coordinator
librarian@alhambraorchestra.org

Ruth Smith, Board Member, Workshop Committee ruthruth@alumni.unc.edu

Francisco Jimenez, Board Member, Fundraising Committee fjimenez1117@gmail.com

Seth Patterson, Board Member, School Liaison smpatter@samford.edu

BE SURE TO FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Our website, AlhambraOrchestra.org, will have our schedule and general information about the orchestra. We also have an orchestra email, music@AlhambraOrchestra.org, and our voicemail, (305) 668-9260, will eventually be answered but they are not monitored 24/7.

Please be sure to visit our social media channels and subscribe to them.

 facebook.com/Alhambra-Orchestra

 instagram.com/alhambraorchestra

 linkedin.com/organization-guest/company/alhambra-orchestra

 youtube.com/c/AlhambraOrchestraMiami



OUR SPECIAL MUSICAL PROJECTS

This will be the 23rd year for our annual **Ray Millette Memorial Concerto Competition**. It began after we held a memorial ceremony for one of our original members, and, to our surprise, people donated money at the event. We decided to use the funds as seed money to begin a concerto competition for local middle school and high school students from four Southeast Florida counties. The top three winners receive cash prizes and the opportunity to perform as soloists with our orchestra.

Over the years, our competition has attracted a host of truly outstanding young musicians who have gone on to prestigious colleges and conservatories. One of our early success stories is cellist Tommy Mesa, who graduated from Juilliard, won the Sphinx Competition, and now has a stellar career as a soloist and recitalist. We were proud to present him as the soloist for our 2025 season finale.

The initial round of the competition is conducted online. Students submit recordings, and three local music educators serve as judges. The top contestants are invited to perform live with their accompanists before three new judges, who select the top three winners to appear as soloists in our **“South Florida’s Got Talent”** concert. Last year we added a composition category and performed the winning work at the same concert. Invitations are sent to local teachers, music schools, college preparatory programs, former competitors, and, for the composition category, university programs.

Helen Hauser and Sophia Camejo serve as our competition committee, so please contact them if you would like to help. We will need volunteers at the final round to welcome competitors, greet their families, and usher participants in and out of the warm-up rooms.

This will also be the 23rd year for our annual **“Be Better with Bergonzi” Chamber Music Workshop**. It began after a popular adult music workshop in St. Petersburg discontinued its Florida programs, leaving local musicians disappointed that there were no other chamber music workshops within hundreds of miles. Alhambra Orchestra members Jody Atwood, Bob Gavilo, and Helen Hauser asked the University of Miami’s in-house string quartet whether they would be interested in coaching amateur musicians and received an enthusiastic response.

The original Bergonzi Quartet no longer performs together, but three of its original members have continued coaching at our workshop. We take over the Frost School of Music for a January weekend (when UM students are on winter break), with 6 to 10 ensembles of amateur and student musicians. Fees are quite modest because UM donates the classroom space, and scholarships are available for adults. Participants work closely with their coaches and perform in a recital on Sunday afternoon. This year, the workshop will be held January 8-10, 2027. Contact Ruth Smith or Helen Hauser if you are interested.

We provide monthly visits to the music classes at two elementary schools and visit other schools by arrangement with music teachers who request our performances. To encourage school music ensembles, we invite them to open our major concerts so our audiences can see the impact of music education. Contact Carol Naveira Nicholson if you would like to help with this project. This year we will also invite local student and community orchestra musicians to attend the three seminars that will be held on Wednesday evenings.

MONEY MATTERS - DUES ARE DUE



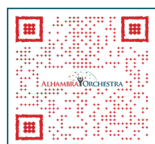
Like any other performing group, we need to pay for rehearsal and performance venue rentals, insurance, music copyright and rental fees, publicity (yes, even for a free or nearly free concert, you have to publicize it in order to attract audiences), artist compensation for our section leaders, artistic director, soloists, and workshop coaches, and all the incidental expenses of running a nonprofit organization. This amounts to about **\$145,000** in cash expenses for each of our recent, very active performing seasons.

We have been funded by government grants, several local foundations, and individual donations. But, as mentioned above, in the current climate, government funding is expected to decline significantly

for our 2026-27 season and into the foreseeable future. We have to adapt to a new reality.

We have always asked our member musicians to help cover operating costs by paying a modest annual membership fee. **Our dues are \$200 per year.** Those who are able are encouraged to make an additional tax-deductible donation above these very modest dues. The basic dues amount works out to about \$5 for each time you come to enjoy the benefit of working with our terrific conductor and congenial musicians.

IT'S TIME: PLEASE PAY YOUR \$200 DUES



If possible, please pay your dues prior to or at the first rehearsal so we can begin the season with a cash cushion to carry us until grant funding arrives. You may give a check or cash to our **treasurer, Janet Copeland**.

Our preferred methods of payment are **Venmo** (@Alhambra-Orchestra) or **Zelle** using the email address treasurer@alhambraorchestra.org. We are a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, so if you donate above your dues, we can provide a receipt for your contribution for tax purposes.

Full-time students are exempt from paying dues. Anyone who has difficulty paying the \$200 annual dues is welcome to have a confidential conversation with our treasurer, Janet Copeland, who can reduce the amount or arrange a convenient installment plan. Thank you for your support!

It has long been our preference to present free concerts. However, we are a large orchestra that requires large venues, and those venues come at a significant cost. As a result, we must charge a modest admission fee for most of our events.

This coming season, our three concerts at FIU will be ticketed at \$5 for students and seniors and \$10 for adults. We are still able to offer free admission to Spooky Symphony and our chamber concert, and our performance at Pinecrest Gardens is included with Gardens admission.

We will once again use Eventbrite to sell tickets, and we encourage all of our members to help spread the word and invite friends and family to attend. Of course, if you can recommend a donor or sponsor, or if you have a great fundraising idea, please contact one of our officers or board members.

Zelle with email: treasurer@alhambraorchestra.org

Check or Mail: 5794 SW 40th Street, PMB 189 Miami, FL 33155



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visit us at

AlhambraOrchestra.org



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