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Note: Images are available in the [online media gallery](#).

## SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

2019

PRESS RELEASE

# Spoletto Festival USA's Annual Auction to Take Place at Highly Anticipated Hotel Bennett

A night of sparkle to benefit the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra

Friday, February 8, 6:00pm | Hotel Bennett, 404 King Street  
An online auction begins February 4 at [spoletoauction.com](http://spoletoauction.com)

**January 15, 2019 (Charleston, South Carolina)** — Spoleto Festival USA's Annual Auction will take place on Friday, February 8, at the highly anticipated Hotel Bennett—Charleston's newest luxury hotel set to open this month. Guests will have an unprecedented opportunity to experience the hotel's fine dining and sparkling interiors all while supporting the young artists of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra. The festive evening begins at 6:00pm and will include a cocktail reception, a dinner prepared by Hotel Bennett's Executive Chef Michael Sichel and Executive Banquet Chef Bob Gibson, dancing, a live auction, and a performance by Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra member Shannon Fitzhenry. Event tickets are available online at [spoletoauction.com](http://spoletoauction.com) or by calling 843.720.1114.

The Annual Auction benefits the **Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra**, one of the country's most prestigious ensembles for young professional musicians—and one that is consistently lauded in the press. Writes Charleston's *Post and Courier*: "We should count ourselves fortunate to have such a fantastic ensemble available to us." In 2019, more than 90 instrumentalists will make up the ensemble; the Orchestra is assembled anew each year following a series of nationwide auditions. The Festival's Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy handpicks each musician for his and her artistry and versatility. This year, the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra will play Richard Strauss's 1905 operatic masterpiece, *Salome*, as well as selections from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* orchestral suites and Shostakovich's fifth symphony. Other season highlights include Fanny Mendelssohn's Overture in C, Stravinsky's "Dumbarton Oaks" Concerto in E-flat, and three film scores by Michael Gordon in a program titled City Symphonies.

Auction guests will have the opportunity to bid on sponsorships of Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra members (starting at \$500) for their residency during the 2019 season. Funds raised help offset the cost of musicians' housing and travel. Other live auction items will include a stay in London with roundtrip airfare on British Airways; a Viking River Cruise for two; tickets to the PGA Masters; and "Music and Martinis," an exclusive private concert for 50 guests with a lively bar provided by Vince Gilmore, food prepared by Cru Catering, and glorious entertainment curated by Geoff Nuttall—this year celebrating his 10th anniversary as the Bank of America Chamber Music director and host.

On display at Hotel Bennett during the Annual Auction will be more than 20 works for art, generously donated by private collectors, gallery owners, and artists. The works are available through the Festival's online auction (at spoletoauction.com) from February 4 to 18. The online auction also features unique experiences, luxury goods, and fun Charleston items. Orchestra sponsorships are available online as well.

For those interested in viewing the art prior to the Annual Auction, the pieces will hang in the gallery of luxury design collective Fritz Porter (located at 701 East Bay St.) beginning Thursday, January 17. The public is invited to toast the occasion during a preview party from 6:00pm to 8:00pm on opening night January 17; bubbly and light hors d'oeuvres from Hamby Catering & Events will be served. The work will remain at Fritz Porter until January 30.

Spoleto Festival USA works closely with donors, including artists and galleries, to ensure the terms of donations are transparent and mutually agreed upon. One-hundred percent of the funds raised from the silent and live auctions is allocated to the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra. Spoleto Festival USA is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.

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## Spoleto Festival USA

Founded in 1977, Spoleto Festival USA is an annual 17-day performing arts festival in Charleston, SC, that presents leading artists in classical and popular music, opera, jazz, dance, and theater. The 2019 season takes place May 24 to June 9 in various locations on the downtown peninsula, including the historic Dock Street Theatre and the Charleston Gaillard Center. Spoleto Festival USA is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.

### Artistic Leadership

**Nigel Redden**, Spoleto Festival USA General Director | [Bio](#)

**John Kennedy**, Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities | [Bio](#)

**Joe Miller**, Director of Choral Activities | [Bio](#)

**Geoff Nuttall**, The Charles E. and Andrea L. Volpe Director of Chamber Music | [Bio](#)

## Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra

Assembled anew each year through nationwide auditions, the Festival's resident ensemble (more than 90 musicians in 2019) accompanies each season's opera selections and symphonic concerts. Smaller ensembles participate in choral, chamber, and contemporary music performances. The Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra works closely with Resident Conductor and Director Orchestral Activities John Kennedy as well as guest conductors and composers. Learn more [here](#).

## Venues

Dock Street Theatre | 135 Church St.

Charleston Gaillard Center | 95 Calhoun St.

Memminger Auditorium | 56 Beaufain St.

Woolfe Street Playhouse | 34 Woolfe St.

Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston | 54 St. Philip St.

Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston | 54 St. Philip St.

College of Charleston Cistern Yard | 66 George St.

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church | 405 King St.

Riverfront Park | 1061 Everglades Ave., North Charleston

Charleston Library Society | 164 King St.

City Hall | 80 Broad St.

## Tickets

**Tickets are on sale** to the general public beginning January 16 at 10:00am online at [spoletousa.org](http://spoletousa.org) and by phone at 843.579.3100.

**In-person box office operations** will be located at Charleston Gaillard Center beginning April 30.

Tickets may be purchased Monday through Sunday, 9:00am to 5:00pm.

**Go Spoletto! hotel-and-ticket packages** are available in partnership with eight Charleston hotels:

Ansonborough Inn, The Beach Club at Charleston Harbor Resort & Marina, Belmond Charleston Place, The Dewberry, Francis Marion Hotel, Hyatt House Charleston-Historic District, Hyatt Place Charleston-Historic District, and The Vendue. Guests can book a room with one of the Festival hotel partners and receive a code to purchase a range of specially priced performance tickets. For more information, visit [spoletousa.org/gospoleto](http://spoletousa.org/gospoleto).

**Festival gift certificates** can be purchased in any amount and used towards performance tickets, merchandise such as Festival posters, or charitable contributions to Spoleto Festival USA. To purchase gift certificates, order online at [spoletousa.org](http://spoletousa.org) or by phone at 843.579.3100.

## Images

A selection of high resolution images can be found in Spoleto Festival USA's [online gallery](#).

For more information, visit the [press room](#).