

# SPOLETO — FESTIVAL USA

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## **Spoletto Festival USA Brings World-Class Artists to Charleston for 49th Performing Arts Festival** *May 23-June 8, 2025*

**February 10, 2025 (Charleston, S.C.)** — Spoleto Festival USA announced today the lineup for its 49th Festival taking place from May 23 to June 8. Charleston's enchanting backdrop sets the stage for more than 120 unforgettable performances, including six world premieres and two U.S. premieres across opera, theater, music, and dance. Tickets are available for purchase beginning February 21 at 10:00am EST at [spoletousa.org](http://spoletousa.org) or by calling 843.579.3100. Festival donors receive pre-sale access, by membership level, beginning February 12; memberships start at \$250 and are available at [spoletousa.org](http://spoletousa.org) or by calling 843.724.1192.

Spoletto Festival USA General Director and CEO Mena Mark Hanna says, "artists dedicate their lives to honing their craft. That dedication, that relentless pursuit of excellence, culminates in the creation of work at the very bleeding edge of human expression. The 2025 Festival is a platform for these extraordinary artists mingling with the most adventurous audiences."

Witness the culmination of a musical journey with Alisa Weilerstein's ***Fragments***. Hailed by *The New York Times* as "a cellist of explosive emotional energy," Weilerstein presents six ambitious solo recitals showcasing newly commissioned works from today's most compelling composers paired with Bach's indelible cello suites. This Spoleto Chamber Music series alumna's visionary project is a "celebration of the really disparate voices in contemporary classical music," and Spoleto is honored to host the inaugural run of the complete cycle, including the world premiere performances of the final two recitals (May 26, May 28, May 29, May 31 at the College of Charleston's Sottile Theatre).

Spoletto Festival USA produces two world premiere opera productions. Benjamin Britten's ***The Turn of The Screw***, a suspenseful tale of a governess battling supernatural forces, features the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra and the acclaimed director of Spoleto's 2023 *Vanessa*, Rodula Gaitanou (May 30, June 1, June 3, June 6 at Dock Street Theatre). A grand concert staging of Jules Massenet's ***Thaïs*** fills the Charleston Gaillard Center (May 23 and May 25) with the combined forces of the Festival Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Music Director Timothy Myers, along with soprano Nicole Heaston, baritone Troy Cook, plus additional cast and dancers.

Two acclaimed companies return to Spoleto with premiere performances. Manual Cinema, last featured at the Festival in 2016, presents the world premiere of ***The 4th Witch***, a haunting reimagining of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, blending shadow puppetry, live-action silhouettes, and captivating music (June 4, June 5, June 6, June 7, June 8 at College of Charleston's Emmett Robinson Theatre). Gravity & Other Myths, the Australian circus troupe renowned for its gravity-defying feats,

returns with the U.S. premiere of **Ten Thousand Hours**, a celebration of dedication and discipline by eight elite acrobats (June 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 at Festival Hall).

Uncover a lost story with the U.S. premiere of **White Box**. This theatrical performance blends dance, music, film, and projection to recount the ill-fated 1897 North Pole expedition of three scientists whose fate remained a mystery for decades. Their story, revealed through a camera and film discovered 33 years later, comes to life on stage (May 29, 30, 31 at College of Charleston's Emmett Robinson Theatre).

Dubbed "the villain of Broadway" by Playbill, Tony Award-nominee and GRAMMY Award-winner Patrick Page delves into the twisted motivations and hidden humanity of Shakespeare's greatest villains in his one-man show, **All The Devils Are Here: How Shakespeare Invented The Villain** (June 5, June 6, June 7, June 8 at College of Charleston's Sottile Theatre). Moving swiftly through the Bard's canon, Page illuminates the playwright's evolving conception of evil by exploring more than a dozen of his wicked creations.

Spoletto is celebrating the remarkable 19-year tenure of Dr. Joe Miller, esteemed Director of Choral Activities at Spoleto Festival USA, as he concludes his role in June 2025. In addition to two marquee choral concerts by the **Spoletto Festival USA Chorus** at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church (May 29 & 30), Miller will conduct the Festival Chorus and Orchestra in a monumental performance of **Bach's Mass in B Minor** at the Charleston Gaillard Center on June 7. This grand finale is a fitting tribute to his extraordinary Spoleto tenure.

The **Bank of America Chamber Music** series, a cornerstone of the Festival, returns to the Dock Street Theatre for 17 days of musical celebration. Curated by Charles E. and Andrea L. Volpe Director of Chamber Music Paul Wiancko, the series offers a repertoire from classical to contemporary, including original adaptations of music by Ludwig van Beethoven, François Couperin, Johannes Brahms, Samuel Barber, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, Antonio Vivaldi, and many more. Twenty-four renowned musicians, the acclaimed quartet Owls, and a world premiere piece by the 2025 Suzan D. Boyd Composer-in-Residence Mahsa Vahdat highlight this year's program. For the first time, two evening performances will take place at 6:00pm (May 29 & June 4).

Making their Spoleto debut, the famed **Kronos Quartet** will perform at Spoleto on June 2 at the Charleston Music Hall. Renowned innovators who have redefined the string quartet for five decades, the quartet's groundbreaking work addresses pressing global issues like climate change, social justice, and the human condition with unbounded musical ambition. A highlight of the evening is the world premiere of a new piece by Charleston bandleader Charlton Singleton, performed by the quartet with drummer Quentin E. Baxter.

The **Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra** will present three concerts under the baton of Music Director Timothy Myers, in addition to accompanying other Spoleto performances. The May 31 program at the Charleston Gaillard Center features Strauss' Rosenkavalier Suite, the iconic Sibelius violin concerto performed by violinist Alexi Kenney, and pieces by two of today's most intriguing composers, Shawn E. Okpebholo and Samy Moussa. The June 5 program of Mendelssohn's Third Symphony begins with

the lively and colorful Scherzo by Väinö Raitio, and features cellist Inbal Segev performing *DANCE*, a concerto by Anna Clyne written specifically for her. The May 26 program at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church will offer a new intimate experience with works by Arvo Pärt, Missy Mazzoli, and Mozart's 29th Symphony.

The Festival's dance offerings include distinct and captivating companies: Limón Dance Company and Music From The Sole. The **Limón Dance Company** (May 31 and June 1 at Festival Hall), last seen at the Festival in 1982, will perform two selections from their iconic repertoire including *Missa Brevis*, accompanied by the Festival Chorus and organist. Tap dance company Music From The Sole performs their high-energy show *I Didn't Come to Stay* (May 23, 24, 25, 26 at College of Charleston's Emmett Robinson Theatre) exploring the cultural roots of tap dance, tracing its lineage to other Afro-Diasporic forms.

The **Wells Fargo Jazz** series celebrates a vibrant selection of musicians from established masters to rising stars. **Cécile McLorin Salvant** (May 28) will perform jazz standards newly arranged for this project in concert with the Festival Orchestra. This year's jazz artists in residence are pianist **Phillip Golub** and trumpeter **Ambrose Akinmusire**; each artist will perform multiple programs to showcase the breadth of their artistry. **Etienne Charles** returns to Spoleto with his new project Gullah Roots (June 4), a celebration of the rich history of the Gullah Geechee people, accompanied by Charleston-native drummer Quentin E. Baxter. Acclaimed by *The New York Times* as "one of the best bands in jazz," **Vijay Iyer Trio** (Vijay Iyer, Linda May Han Oh, Tyshawn Sorey) push the limits of improvisation and composition at the College of Charleston's Sottile Theater (June 3). An Evening with saxophonist **Branford Marsalis** (June 1) at the Charleston Music Hall will feature works from their forthcoming album *Belonging*.

Fashion icon and entertainer **Isaac Mizrahi** brings his signature wit and irreverence to Spoleto with *I Know Everybody* (June 5 & 7, Charleston Music Hall). A beloved figure in the cabaret scene, Mizrahi's annual residency at the legendary Cafe Carlyle in New York City has become a highly anticipated event. Beyond the Carlyle, Mizrahi has graced the stages of Joe's Pub and The Regency Ballroom, solidifying his reputation as a captivating and sought-after cabaret artist. His shows blend musical theater, pop standards, and insightful social commentary, all delivered with his signature charm.

Spoleto brings audiences closer to the music in the Front Row Series, anchored by magical nights at the historic Cistern Yard at the College of Charleston. This year's headline acts include Charleston-based **Band of Horses** (May 31), Rock and Roll Hall of Famer **Patti Smith** (June 3), Appalachian singer-songwriter **Valerie June** with folk singer and guitarist **Jake Xerxes Fussell** (May 25), Blues and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer **Mavis Staples** (May 30), singer-songwriter **Patterson Hood** (Drive-By Truckers) with newcomer **MJ Lenderman** (May 24), country and folk singer **Lucinda Williams** (June 7), indie rock band **Yo La Tengo** (June 8), Grammy-winning singer **Corinne Bailey Rae** (May 23), and Wilco leader **Jeff Tweedy** (June 6).

This year, the Front Row series expands to new venues for intimate acts on the rise. Spoken word poet **aja monet** (June 2) will be accompanied by a jazz band with special guest Vijay Iyer at Dock Street Theatre. Grammy-winning Pakistani composer and vocalist **Arooj Aftab** will appear at the

Charleston Music Hall (May 29). Indian-inspired party band from Brooklyn **Red Baraat**, fronted by Sunny Jain, will take the stage at the Charleston Music Hall (May 27).

The Festival is proud to once again offer engaging and entertaining performances perfect for families and audiences of all ages. **Polar Bear and Penguin** offers a charming tale of friendship between two iconic animals, in the Festival's second year presenting North Charleston performances (May 31 & June 1, Rose Maree Myers Theatre at Charleston County School of the Arts). Experience the vibrant energy of **Mrs. Krishnan's Party**, from New Zealand-based Indian Ink Theatre Company, where theater, music, and the aromas of delicious cooking fill Mrs. Krishnan's convenience store (June 6-8).

Tickets are available for purchase beginning Feb. 21 at 10:00am EST, with prices starting as low as \$29. There will also be opportunities to save on select shows by signing up for email updates at <https://spoletousa.org/email-signup/>.

A donor pre-sale is available to all donors with an active membership. To become a donor, contact the development office at 843.724.1192 or visit <https://spoletousa.org/support/individual-giving/>.

For more information about Spoleto Festival USA, visit [spoletousa.org](https://spoletousa.org).

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## **FUNDING**

Spoleto Festival USA's 2025 season is generously supported by its Board of Directors, individual donors, and institutional partners. We would like to recognize the following institutional funders who have made commitments at the Founder level and above to make the 49th Festival possible, including: South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism; City of Charleston; BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina; Bank of America; Wells Fargo; Explore Charleston; and South Carolina Arts Commission.

## **SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA**

Spoleto Festival USA was founded in 1977 by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Gian Carlo Menotti, who sought to create an American counterpart to the annual Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, which he had founded in 1958. Now in its 48th year, Spoleto Festival USA is internationally recognized as America's premier performing arts festival. For 17 days and nights each spring, Spoleto Festival USA fills Charleston's historic theaters, churches, and outdoor spaces with performances in opera; theater; dance; and chamber, symphonic, choral, and jazz music. Spoleto's mission is to present programs of the highest artistic caliber while maintaining a dedication to young artists, a commitment to all forms of the performing arts, a passion for contemporary innovation, and an enthusiasm for providing unique performance opportunities for established artists. Beyond its role as a launching pad for young talent, Spoleto also serves as a catalyst for cultural change and has aided in Charleston's flourishing as a top arts and culture destination. The 2025 season takes place from May 23 to June 8 in various locations throughout Charleston. Spoleto Festival USA is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.