SPRING PROGRAM

2024 2025 SEASON



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CONCERT ASSOCIATION

With a mission to inspire and enhance community through the performing arts, Anchorage Concert Association brings a broad spectrum of internationally-acclaimed artists from around the world.

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As we come together in this theatre we want to recognize and pay respect to the Dena'ina Athabascan people and the Native Village of Eklutna, on whose traditional lands we are now gathered. We thank and honor the Indigenous peoples of Alaska, past, present, and future as the ones who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.

We take pride in our city which is among the most ethnically diverse cities in the United States. In the spirit of welcoming and in pursuit of our mission, we celebrate our community by presenting a variety of stories and voices on stage.



Yagehli da sh'ida (Hello My Friends).

As the President of the Native Village of Eklutna, it is my honor to welcome you to our ancestral Dena'ina homeland.

I hope that you enjoy the show.

99

AARON LEGGETT

President lative Village of Eklutna

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Hello my friends,



Every story begins with a voice.

Sometimes, it's the voice of a writer sharing wit and wisdom, like David Sedaris. Other times, it's the rhythm of a drum, echoing centuries of tradition, as with Unit Souzou's Taiko. It might be the daring movement of Cirque Kalabanté, blending acrobatics and African culture into a breathtaking tale, or the unexpected

storytelling of Puddles Pity Party, where music and melancholy become something beautifully human.

The events in this program we invite you to listen – to the stories told through laughter in Napoleon Dynamite Live, to the fusion of beats the Hip-Hop Orchestra Experience, and to the quiet insights of a storyteller like Ira Glass, who has spent a lifetime capturing the narratives that shape us.

Storytelling is more than entertainment; it is how we understand one another, how we make sense of the world, and how we stay connected through struggles and triumphs alike. And just as important as the stories themselves is the act of gathering together to hear them. The arts are a space where we come as individuals and leave as a community, where we laugh, reflect, and share in something greater than ourselves.

In a time when so much seeks to divide us, coming together for live performance is a powerful act. It is a reminder that even in our differences, we share the same hopes, the same need for joy, the same longing to be understood. When we listen – to a voice, a drum, a melody, or even a moment of silence – we step into someone else's world and walk alongside them, if only for a little while.

These performances are an invitation – to listen, to reflect, to gather, and to find the connections that bind us together. Thank you for being part of this celebration of storytelling and shared experience. May these performances inspire you, spark conversation, and remind us all of the power of the arts to bring us together.

With gratitude,

JASON HODGES

Executive Director

Anchorage Concert Association

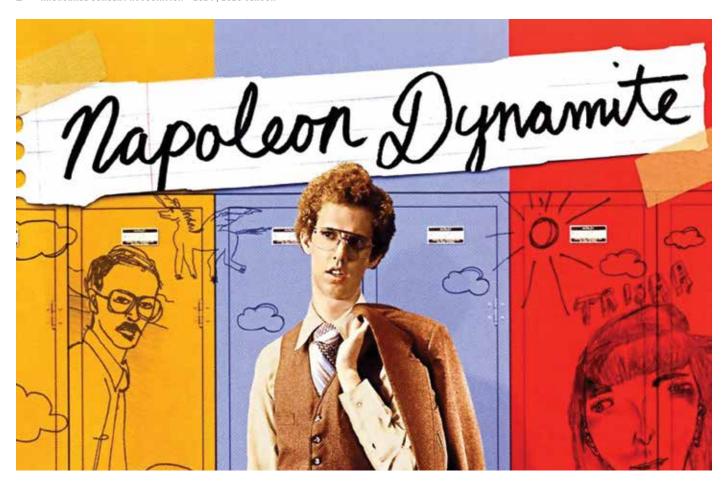
WELCOME!

We welcome and recognize you. We honor your place in our community and your choice to share your time with us and celebrate what we believe to be fundamental – the arts! Our focus on community is part of our core values and continues to help us fulfill our organizational mission: to inspire and enhance community through the performing arts.

Anchorage Concert Association is committed to telling stories that reflect the many aspects of our community with the belief that there is something that we can each take with us. Recognition. Empathy. Joy. And above all, a sense of connection.

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NAPOLEON DYNAMITE LIVE

A very special evening with Jon Heder, Efren Ramirez, and Jon Gries

WHEN

Friday, March 14, 2025 7:00pm Atwood Concert Hall

PERFORMERS

Jon Heder

"Napoleon Dynamite"

Efren Ramirez

"Pedro"

Jon Gries

"Uncle Rico"

Plus a screening of the classic movie

SPONSORED BY

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SPECIAL THANKS TO



ABOUT THE SHOW

The event is BYOT (Bring Your Own Tots)!

The beloved indie classic *Napoleon Dynamite* was released 20 years ago. Since then, much has changed; but the characters, as enduring as they are endearing, stay in our hearts.

Appealing to the inner-teenager in each of us, the story, and more importantly the dialogue, makes *Napoleon Dynamite* one of the most quoted movies of our time.

Napoleon Dynamite makes us laugh – and laugh hard – over and over again.

This unique evening includes a full screening of *Napoleon Dynamite* followed by a lively, freewheeling, discussion with fan-favorite cast members; Jon Heder (Napoleon Dynamite), Jon Gries (Uncle Rico), and Efren Ramirez (Pedro).



The live show – perfect for the whole family – is a wild and hysterical blend of Q&A, comedy improv, game show, and party, with plenty of audience participation. Come join the fun and help celebrate this wonderful movie classic!

IF YOU LIKE NAPOLEON DYNAMITE LIVE, You might also like:

Puddles Pity Party // April 11 & 12, 2025 Ira Glass // May 3, 2025 An Evening with David Sedaris // May 16, 2025



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UNIT SOUZOU

Twenty-first century Taiko

WHEN

Friday, March 21, 2025 7:30pm Discovery Theatre

PERFORMERS

Sarah Ayako TECHNICAL DIRECTOR Michelle Fujii

Kristy "Aki" Oshiro Toru Watanabe David Wells Vicky Zhan

SPONSORED BY



SPECIAL THANKS TO



ABOUT UNIT SOUZOU

Unit Souzou was founded in 2014 by Co-directors Michelle Fuiii and Toru Watanabe, relentless innovators at the forefront of a growing artistic movement within the Taiko community. 'Souzou' can be written in three ways meaning 'creation,' 'imagination,' or 'noisy,' alluding to a force by which new ideas are born and take shape in the world. Inspired by these words, the mission of Unit Souzou is to build creative, imaginative works while honoring the history and roots of the Taiko art form. The core of Unit Souzou's artistic voice is personal and authentic, sound shaped and inspired by form and by movement. The essence of Unit Souzou is an expressive blend of Taiko and Japanese folk dance, forging new traditions for evolving communities.

ABOUT THE SHOW

Constant State of Otherness is a multilayered performance exploring the impacts of the universal experiences of othering and alienation. Through Taiko, Japanese folk dance, song, and personal story, six performers guide the audience through a four-part journey inspired by experiences of isolation and displacement that come from not having an easy sense of home.

Rooted in ancestral wisdom and survival, Constant State of Otherness resists simplistic translations of language, cultural ways and the complicated emotions that otherness evokes. By allowing their stories to fractally unfold through the resonance of drum, voice, and movement, Unit Souzou offers an invitation to locate our shared longing to belong. **Constant State of Otherness** was co-created by Unit Souzou Ensemble Members – Ian Berve, Michelle Fujii, Kristy Oshiro, Toru Watanabe, David Wells, and Vicky Zhang.

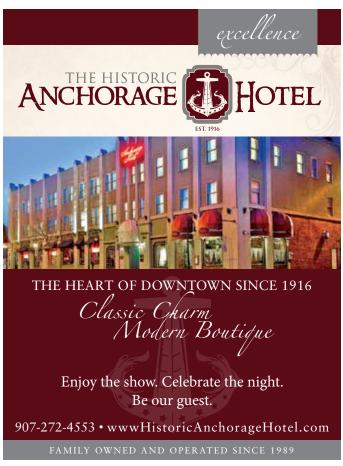
Constant State of Otherness is a National Performance Network/Visual Artist Network (NPN/VAN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by The Myrna Loy in partnership with Caldera Arts, Asian Arts Initiative, Dance Place, Risk Reward, and NPN/VAN. The Creation & Development Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information: www.npnweb.org.

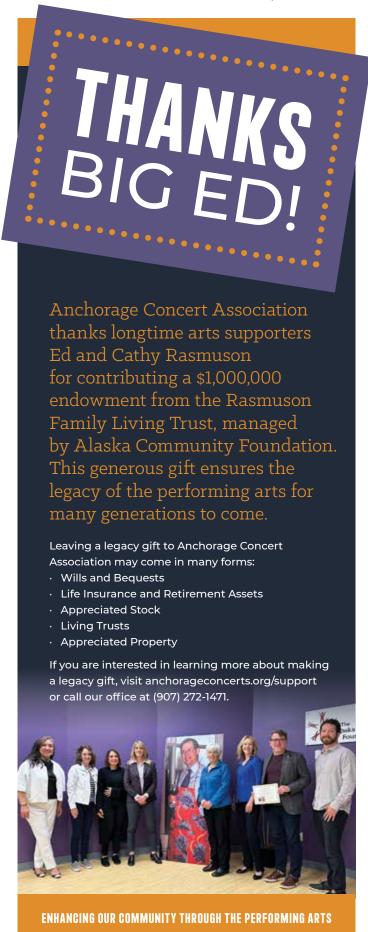
Constant State of Otherness was made possible with funding by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Theater Project, with lead funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and additional support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Puffin Foundation, and the MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Please no photography or filming during the performance.

IF YOU LIKE UNIT SOUZOU, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

Cirque Kalabanté – Afrique en Cirque // March 28 & 29, 2025 Hip-Hop Orchestra Experience // April 19, 2025 An Evening with David Sedaris // May 16, 2025







CIRQUE KALABANTÉ - AFRIQUE EN CIRQUE

The energy and agility of Africa

WHEN

March 28 & 29, 2025 Friday at 7:30pm Saturday at 2:00pm Atwood Concert Hall

SPONSORED BY

Matson.

SPECIAL THANKS TO



ABOUT THE SHOW

Afrique en Cirque is a show by Yamoussa Bangoura, inspired by daily life in Guinea. This performance shares the beauty, youth, and artistry of African culture. A colorful show beyond its scenery, costumes, and staging, it makes any theatre vibrate with energy and represents the strength, agility, and life's joys of young Africans. The audience will see acrobats execute gravity-defying moves and human pyramids, accompanied by the contemporary sounds of live Afro-Jazz, percussion, and kora. Welcome to the universe of Kalabanté Productions, and prepare for an unforgettable journey.

ABOUT KALABANTÉ PRODUCTIONS

Kalabanté Productions was created by Yamoussa Bangoura, a multidisciplinary artist of Guinean origin. Yamoussa's dream was the founding of a school of circus arts, and to direct his own multidisciplinary company specializing in the African arts.

Yamoussa first became interested in the circus arts as a young man growing up in Conakry, Guinea in the 1990s. He studied the circus performers he saw on European TV and practiced on the beach and dirt around his home. He also studied the Nyamakala tradition of circus, practiced by the Fula people of West Africa. He eventually joined Guinea's original circus company, Circus Baobob, with whom he toured Africa and Europe.

In the early 2000s, Yamoussa was recruited to come to Canada with Cirque Eloize, a Montreal-based Canadian cirque company. While in Canada he also performed with Cirque du Soleil and Cavalia (cirque with horses). In 2007 Yamoussa realized his dream and opened his own company, Kalabanté Productions in Montreal, Canada. He recruited many of his extended family members to join the company, including his twin sisters, brothers, and cousins.

The company began doing shows in Quebec, and over the years expanded to all of Canada, the USA, and now performs all over the world. In 2018, Kalabante opened their own studio and school in Montreal, where they offer classes in African dance, cirque, and drumming.

Kalabanté Productions is proud to be able to share their work, achievements, and skills to inspire others and to assist with the humanitarian mission to help the Guinean community from which Yamoussa and many of his company members come.

IF YOU LIKE CIRQUE KALABANTÉ, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

Hip-Hop Orchestra Experience // April 19, 2025 An Evening with David Sedaris // May 16, 2025 Rock the Hill // July 18 & 19, 2025





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PUDDLES PITY PARTY

The sad clown with the golden voice

WHEN

April 11 & 12, 2025 7:30pm Discovery Theatre

PERFORMERS

Puddles

SPECIAL THANKS TO



ABOUT THE SHOW

Puddles Pity Party, the 7-foot sad clown whose golden voice is comparable to rock legends like Tom Jones and Freddie Mercury, has amassed over 900K YouTube subscribers and performed sold out shows around the globe including The Kennedy Center in D.C., San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts, London's Soho Theatre, and a residency at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

Deftly combining melancholy with the absurd, Puddles is a performer's performer, having received endorsements and accolades from musical comedy legends like Weird Al Yankovic, Jack Black, Michael McKean, Drew Carey, Nick Offerman, John C. Reilly, Maynard Keenan, and Paul Reubens.

His one-of-a-kind "textured voice laced with melancholy" (*The NY Times*) has been hailed as "operatic" (*The Boston Globe*) and his show both "life-affirming" (*Herald Scotland*) and "hysterically funny" (*LA Weekly*).

Puddles is currently featured in Eric Idle's touring show, singing a duet of "The Galaxy Song." It's their second time collaborating. The first was in 2022 when they performed a duet in Homeward Bound: A Grammy Salute to the Songs of Paul Simon filmed for CBS. Other Puddles TV appearances include a guest spot on the Season 4 finale of ABC's The Conners. He also landed the coveted John Lewis Holiday advert in the UK where his voice was featured in a cover of "All the Small Things" that he recorded with Postmodern Jukebox. Puddles was a quarter

finalist on Season 12 of *America's Got Talent* and appeared on the 2020 season of *AGT The Champions*. In 2024, he toured with Primus, enjoying stage time with the band on a cover of Ronnie James Dio's "Holy Diver" that has since gone viral on YouTube.

2025 has Puddles wrapping up a new album that is scheduled to release late spring. After a UK tour in May, Puddles will perform over 70 dates with the Weird Al Yankovic "Bigger and Weirder Tour." He's also a featured act on Coheed and Cambria's S.S. Neverender Cruise in November.

IF YOU LIKE PUDDLES PITY PARTY, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

Hip-Hop Orchestra Experience // April 19, 2025 An Evening with David Sedaris // May 16, 2025 Rock the Hill // July 18 & 19, 2025







HIP-HOP ORCHESTRA EXPERIENCE

With young musicians from Alaska Youth Orchestras

WHEN

Saturday, April 19, 2025 7:30pm Discovery Theatre

PERFORMERS

Christopher Nicholas JooWan Kim Unity Lewis Lyman Jerome Alexander II Yung Phil

WITH Alaska Youth Orchestras

SPECIAL THANKS TO





ABOUT THE GROUP

Ensemble Mik Nawooj's Hip-Hop Orchestra Experience is part concert, dance party, and club night featuring original music that samples from classical and hip-hop – all presented in an underground setting like the New York scene that birthed hip-hop. Their music uniquely challenges the MCs and classical musicians – pushing the boundaries of both hip-hop and concert music and creating something completely new. The program includes seminal works of Mozart, Bach, and Beethoven, deconstructed and reimagined with funky rhythms and rapid-fire rhymes.

Led by composer/pianist, JooWan Kim, the Hip-Hop Orchestra Experience featuring Ensemble Mik Nawooj (EMN) creates metamusic by sampling principles of hip-hop and classical. Executed with various combinations of resident MCs, a lyric soprano, woodwinds, French horns, strings,

piano, and drums, the music is rigorous, nuanced, accessible, and free from the dogmas of Western European concert music aesthetic. The result is seamless tête-à-tête with "textures swimming through the sound...like the world's fastest ping-pong game" (Pitchfork) and is considered the "cutting edge of hip-hop" (Huffington Post).

After a successful performance of a novelty piece which featured an MC and chamber ensemble, Kim had a profound shift in the direction of his writing. He felt that he found a way out of the stifling contemporary concert music aesthetic in this new way of composition. JooWan crystallized his ideas into Method Sampling, a principle of borrowing or sampling of rationales from related as well as unrelated fields, then reframing them into one's own system.

In 2010, JooWan Kim recruited his best friend from college, Christopher Nicholas to push the project forward in a serious way. Since then, EMN attracted some of the most excellent classical musicians and MCs in the San Francisco Bay Area while gaining national attention from outlets such as BBC, ESPN, *Wall Street Journal*, *Huffington Post*, NPR, *Pitchfork*, NowThis, and more.

CHRISTOPHER NICHOLAS (Executive Director)

Christopher Nicholas received a dual B.M. in Songwriting and Vocal Performance from Berklee College of Music in 2004. He was awarded the prestigious Berklee Achievement Scholarship and received an honorable mention for his original song, "I Write these Words" in the Berklee Songwriting Contest. He was granted the Patsy C. & Fred W. Patterson College of Music Scholarship to the University of North Texas, completing an M.M. in Jazz Studies in 2009. In addition, Nicholas was a featured soloist on the album "In Case you Missed it" with the U.N.T. Jazz Singers directed by Paris Rutherford. In 2010, along with the artistic director, JooWan Kim, Christopher co-founded Ensemble Mik Nawooj (EMN). They ran the organization overseeing many successful campaigns in PR, fundraising, and tours. In 2016, Chris directed the second album campaign with the artistic director resulting in national recognition from Huffington Post, Pitchfork, ESPN, and NFL Super Bowl.

JOOWAN KIM (Artistic Director)

At the age of 20, Korean born composer JooWan Kim moved to the U.S. and began his formal study in composition. During this time, Kim also trained in Zen meditation and Sundo, a Korean Taoist internal alchemy under the tutelage of Venerable Hyunoong Sunim for seven years. JooWan still maintains his daily practice.

UNITY LEWIS (Resident MC)

Unity Lewis began making music, performing, drawing, painting, and sculpting at the age of three. He started seriously recording music and founded his first rap group in Los Angeles when he was 13. In the Fall of 2000, Unity moved to the Bay Area where he completed his bachelor's degree in fine arts at the California College of the Arts. Since 2001, Unity has taught Hip-Hop and art in public schools across the Bay Area and on the island of Guam, where the local legislature awarded a resolution for his contribution to students' lives in 2005. For over 20 years now, Unity has been creating, releasing, and performing his own music full time as well as curating art exhibits in addition to continuing his growth as an art educator. Lewis has collaborated with artists such as Dead Prez, Sly Stone, George Clinton, Oscar Brown Jr., Umar Bin Hassan of The Last Poets, and more. As a visual artist and curator he has exhibited and been featured in publications alongside Jacob Lawrence, Elizabeth Catlett, Hank Willis Thomas, Betye Saar, Samella Lewis, and many others.

LYMAN JEROME ALEXANDER II (Drums)

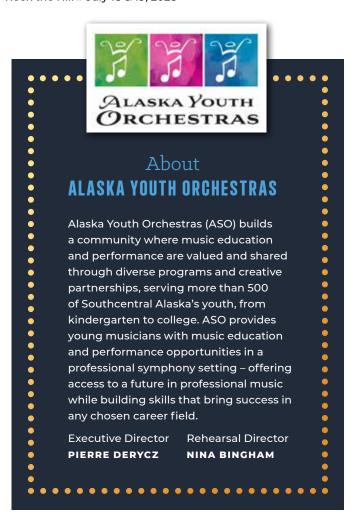
Lyman Jerome Alexander II started playing drums for EMN in 2012 and is the longest tenured musician of the group. His drumming roots goes back to gospel music where Alexander honed his craft playing for church services. Lyman continued his training at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA. Alexander's impeccable sense of ensemble playing matches well with the entirely orchestral instrumentation of EMN and helps generating the naturalness of the sound that is uncommon when juxtaposing classical instruments with the drum set. He is an avid gamer.

YUNG PHIL (Turf Dancer)

Oakland native Phillip Mays, aka Yung Phil, is a pioneer of turf dancing, a form of street dancing with roots in Oakland, California. He has collaborated with many well-known hiphop artists, including Lil Jon, E-40, G-Eazy, YG, Jack Harlow, DJ Snake, Tyga, and Quavo, performing alongside them on tour and in music videos. Yung Phil was featured on BBC, NPR, Dance Magazine, Men's Health Magazine, Kendrick Lamar's Super Bowl halftime show, and more.

IF YOU LIKE HIP-HOP ORCHESTRA EXPERIENCE, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

Ira Glass // May 3, 2025 An Evening with David Sedaris // May 16, 2025 Rock the Hill // July 18 & 19, 2025





IRA GLASS

Seven Things I've Learned

WHEN

Saturday, May 3, 2025 7:30pm Atwood Concert Hall

PERFORMERS

Ira Glass

SPONSORED BY



SPECIAL THANKS TO



ABOUT THE SHOW

Ira Glass is the host and creator of the public radio program *This American Life*. The show is heard each week by over 5 million listeners on public radio stations and podcast.

Glass began his career as an intern at National Public Radio's network headquarters in Washington, DC in 1978, when he was 19 years old. He put This American Life on the air in 1995. He also served as an editor for the groundbreaking podcasts Serial, S-Town, and Nice White Parents. Under Glass's editorial direction, This American Life has won the highest honors for broadcasting and journalistic excellence, including seven Peabody awards and the first Pulitzer Prize ever awarded for audio journalism.

In 2021 *This American Life* episode 'The Giant Pool of Money' was inducted into the Library of Congress's National Recording Registry, the first podcast ever so honored.

IF YOU LIKE IRA GLASS, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE:

An Evening with David Sedaris // May 16, 2025 Rock the Hill // July 18 & 19, 2025



6 July 31, 2025

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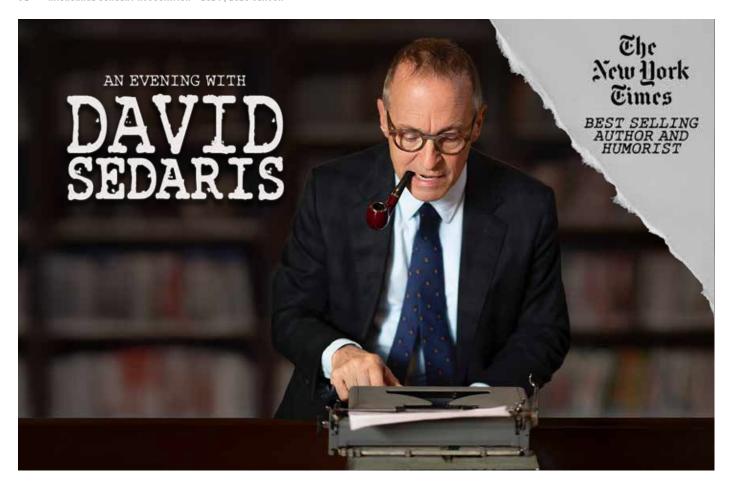
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AN EVENING WITH DAVID SEDARIS

Best selling author and humorist

WHEN

Friday, May 16, 2025 7:30pm Atwood Concert Hall

PERFORMERS

David Sedaris

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ABOUT THE SHOW

David Sedaris, America's best-selling humorist and social satirist, returns following publication of his most recent book of short stories, *Happy Go Lucky*, and his first ever children's book, *Pretty Ugly*. In his customary sartorial and humorous manner, David will make you laugh and think in equal measures, with all new, unpublished stories and commentary.

The reading will be accompanied by a pre and post-show book signing.

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Rock the Hill // July 18 & 19, 2025







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SUPPORT THE EXPERIENCE

The arts need you! As a nonprofit organization, we depend on donations to sustain and grow our mission year after year. Your tax-deductible contribution makes it possible to bring quality artists to our community, and provide opportunities for all Alaskans to experience the arts. We sincerely appreciate your generosity and your consideration of a gift to Anchorage Concert Association.

DONOR BENEFITS

By giving to Anchorage Concert Association, you join with hundreds of Alaskan supporters to enlighten and entertain more than 60,000 patrons every year. In addition to recognition in our printed programs, your support can give you access to private house concerts, special events, ambassador tickets, and other surprises throughout the season. Learn more about individual donor recognition and benefits at anchorageconcerts.org.

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Invitation to private house concerts	ALL	ALL	ALL	ONE	V		
Ambassador tickets to select performances	X				A.		
Subscription renewal concierge service	X					-	B.
Customized VIP experiences	X				A STATE OF THE STA	m	
Anchorage Concert Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or	ganization four	nded in 1950.					WILL S



ABOUT THE VENUE

LATECOMERS If you are late you will be seated during an appropriate break in the performance, as determined by the artist, ushers, and venue staff.

CAMERAS AND RECORDING EQUIPMENT Each artist has their own rules about photos at their shows. Photographic or recording devices are not permitted at most shows. When photos or videos are allowed, please make sure to keep your brightness down and flash off so that you don't disturb the artist or those around you.

ALARMS AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES Please silence all electronic devices including digital watch alarms before the event begins. Please refrain from using all devices with illuminated screens.

SMOKING Smoking is prohibited within 20 feet of each entrance to an enclosed area by Anchorage ordinance (AO 2006-86(S)).

BOTTLED WATER ONLY Water purchased from the concessionaire or vending machines is permitted in the theatres. All other food and beverages are not allowed inside the theatres.

RESTROOMS Restrooms are located on the Street and Orchestra Levels in the Carr-Gottstein Lobby. In the Harrison Lobby, they are located on all levels. Baby changing tables are located in restrooms on Street Level of the Lorene Harrison Lobby and Orchestra Level of the Carr-Gottstein Lobby.

ASSISTANCE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED Headphones are available at the house manager station in each lobby on the Orchestra Level. Ask venue staff for directions.

EMERGENCY EXITS There are numerous, convenient, and clearly marked emergency exits from all areas of the Performing Arts Center. Note the nearest exit as you take your seat. In case of emergency, the ushers will direct an orderly exit.

FIRST AID Contact the nearest usher.

THE CREW Productions at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts employ members of I.A.T.S.E. Local 918.

For additional information go to ALASKAPAC.ORG

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