

Marlon Daniel

Full Biography

Born in Chicago, Marlon Daniel is recognized as one of the most dynamic and versatile conductors of his generation. Praised by the Chicago Sun-Times as “a natural and enormous talent” and described as “fabulous and exceptional” by Pravda, he has captivated audiences worldwide with his artistry, interpretative depth, and commanding stage presence. A laureate of the 2018 Bucharest Symphony Orchestra International Conducting Competition, Daniel has performed in many of the world’s most prestigious concert halls, including Carnegie Hall in New York, Queen Elizabeth Hall in London and the Rudolfinum in Prague.

A highly sought-after conductor, his engagements have included collaborations with renowned orchestras across Europe, North and South America, and the Caribbean. Daniel has led acclaimed performances with ensembles such as the Chineke! Junior Orchestra, Havana Lyceum Orchestra, Sofia Sinfonietta, and the Tatarstan National Symphony Orchestra, where he conducted the Russian premiere of William Grant Still’s Afro-American Symphony. In 2016, he made history as the first African American to conduct the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Cuba in its sixty-five-year history.

Daniel is recognized as the world's foremost authority on the life and music of Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges; he is also a champion of the music of William Grant Still and a dedicated advocate for under-represented and contemporary composers. He has premiered works by Adolphus Hailstork, Giya Kancheli, Libby Larsen, Arturo Márquez, Nkeiru Okoye, Fred Onovwerosuoke, Hampson Sisler, Eino Tamberg, and Pulitzer Prize winners Tania León and George Walker, among others. A recipient of the Yvar Mikhashoff Trust for New Music Award, his performances have consistently been lauded for their musical insight and technical precision.

Educated in both the United States and Europe, Daniel studied at the Manhattan School of Music and the Prague Academy, earning additional diplomas from the Conservatoire Américain de Fontainebleau in France and the Centro de Estudios Musicales Isaac Albéniz in Spain. His conducting teachers include Jiří Bělohlávek, David Gilbert, Tomáš Koutník, Miriam Němcová, and Jorma Panula, with whom he maintains a close association. He has also received artistic guidance from Sir Colin Davis, Zubin Mehta, Iván Fischer at the Beethovenfest Bonn and Sir Simon Rattle at the Berliner Philharmonie.

Daniel’s work extends beyond the podium, encompassing significant contributions as an artistic leader, educator, and mentor. He has served as inaugural Music Director of the

Colour of Music Festival, Associate Conductor of the Praga Sinfonietta, Principal Guest Conductor of the Pazardzhik Symphony Orchestra, Guest Conductor of La Orquesta Filarmónica Municipal de Guayaquil (Ecuador), Guest Conductor of the Sinfónica EAFIT (Colombia), Guest Conductor of Tatarstan National Symphony Orchestra (Russia), Associate Conductor of the Florida Grand Opera and Guest Conductor of the Teatro Lírico Nacional de Cuba.

His dedication to education and diversity in the arts is evident in his academic roles and leadership initiatives. He has been a guest lecturer with Tafelmusik, Opera America, the Lunigiana International Music Festival, and at institutions such as College of Charleston, Columbia University, Rutgers University and Yale University, as well as Drew University and Fordham University, where he served on the faculty as Director of Orchestral Ensembles. He has been a panelist for Opera America and the Sphinx Organization's SphinxConnect Conference and led projects such as the Diversity in Classical Music Project at Columbia University.

An accomplished opera conductor, Daniel has demonstrated expertise in the operatic repertoire, working with distinguished singers and stage directors across major productions. He is a former Associate Conductor of the Florida Grand Opera, former Assistant Conductor of the National Opera and Ballet of Bulgaria (Sofia) and a panelist and adjudicator for Opera America and is the founder of the Opera Discovery Project, alongside the opera faculty of the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) in Cuba, which provides professional training for emerging artists. Currently, he is a roster of conductors for the Chicago Summer Opera.

He has collaborated with acclaimed artists such as Ifetayo Ali, Rachel Barton-Pine, Yuriy Bekker, J'Nai Bridges, Janinah Burnett, Solomon Howard, Eleomar Cuello, Savion Glover, Solomon Howard, Charlotta Huldt, Michelle Johnson, Sami Junnonen, Koh Gabriel Kameda, Julian Milkis, Magali Léger, Kristin Lewis, Norm Lewis, Chauncey Packer, Limmie Pulliam, Phylicia Rashād, Chita Rivera, Eric Silberger, Karen Slack, Russell Thomas, Cicely Tyson and Deborah Voigt.

Daniel is currently the Artistic and Music Director of the Festival International de Musique Saint-Georges, Artistic Director of Festival Mahogany, Music Director of Ensemble du Monde, and Founder and Music Director of the All Caribbean Youth Orchestra (ACYO). In 2024, he was appointed Artistic Director and Conductor of the Universität Münster Musikhochschule Orchester. His recent projects include a feature on Sony Entertainment's popular podcast *They Did That!* and a new recording entitled *Total Tango: Music of Astor Piazzolla* with the Havana Lyceum Orchestra. He is also a voting member of the Recording Academy (GRAMMYS).

A passionate advocate for classical music's transformative power, Daniel continues to shape musical landscapes through his artistry and leadership. In 2025 he worked as the Music Curator of Guillon Lethière Exhibition for Mémorial ACTe and Musée du Louvre. This upcoming Season 2026/27 he will make débuts with the Chicago Philharmonic, the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra and the upcoming new Marvel Cinematic Universe Black Panther Opera.

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