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YPSILANTI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OPENS ITS 25th ANNIVERSARY SEASON ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15 AT LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL WITH SPECIAL CONCERT CELEBRATING YPSILANTI'S BICENTENIAL

CONDUCTED BY MUSIC DIRECTOR ADAM C. RICCINTO

Join YSO in celebrating Ypsilanti and 25 years of making music for the community with season opener featuring local jazz great Paul Keller and friends in Keller's Ypsilanti Orchestral Jazz Suite

YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN, September 8, 2026--Music Director Adam C. Riccinto and the Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra (YSO) are returning to the stage to launch their 25th anniversary and celebrate the 200th birthday of its hometown of Ypsilanti. The YSO invites audiences to the Lincoln High School Performing Arts Center on Sunday, October 15 at 3:30 p.m. to hear this special, one-of-a-kind concert program, including musical selections connected to the history of Ypsilanti and celebrating the orchestra's relationship with the city. The concert's highlight is the return of special guest Paul Keller and friends to the orchestra to perform Keller's *Ypsilanti Orchestral Jazz Suite*, composed as a commission for the YSO and premiered by the orchestra in 2010. The concert also includes the YSO-commissioned *Unsung Heroes* for brass and percussion by local composer, musician, and educator Brooke Pierson, as well as *Africa*, a Symphonic Poem for orchestra by African American composer William Grant Still.



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“We can’t think of a better way to kick off YSO’s 25th season than by celebrating our home base of Ypsilanti and honoring the legacy of this rich and historic city,” said Music Director Adam C. Riccinto. “The orchestra will be playing an exceptional program, including jazz artist and composer Paul Keller’s fantastic five-movement *Ypsilanti Orchestral Jazz Suite*, which the Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra premiered back in 2010. We are so thrilled to bring Paul Keller, his ensemble, and this important work back for this event, along with several other meaningful works that will make for a uniquely special musical experience.”

The Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra is proud to present this concert in collaboration with the Ypsilanti Bicentennial Commission, Eastern Michigan University Department of Music and Dance; Lincoln Consolidated Schools; WEMU 89.1; The City of Ypsilanti; and Ypsilanti Township.



About Paul Keller and the Paul Keller Jazz Ensemble

Paul Keller, string bass and composer, has richly earned his moniker The House Bassist for The State Of Michigan as every year he logs many miles performing jazz all over the state - and, really, the USA and the world. Before moving ten years ago into their Saline farmhouse, the Paul Keller family loved living and thriving - for 20 years - in Ypsilanti. Paul is a respected 40-year veteran, jazz master and hero of the Michigan jazz scene. Paul loves playing a variety of styles from traditional jazz of the 1920s and 30s to swing to bebop and beyond. He’s a devoted student of the Great American Songbook. Every Monday night since 1989, Paul has expertly led his 15-piece big band The Paul Keller Orchestra at Zal Gaz Grotto in Ann Arbor. He also performs regularly at ZGG with his trio, quartet and quintet, often with his favorite singer Sarah D’Angelo. Paul’s passion is composing and arranging for his various large and small ensembles. He has recorded and toured the world with Diana Krall, Russell Malone, John and Bucky Pizzarelli and Eddie Higgins. Paul is proud of his work with Detroit jazz legends Tom Saunders, Bess Bonnier, Chuck Robinette, Larry Nozero, Marcus Belgrave and Charlie Gabriel. Since 2010, Mr. Keller has been a valued member of the Wayne State University Jazz Faculty in Detroit, Michigan.



Sarah D'Angelo, clarinet, has collaborated with Paul Keller since 2012. Sarah's fresh and friendly style, soulful delivery and cheerful smile brighten every Paul Keller trio, quartet, quintet, and big band performance. Sarah D'Angelo sings and plays clarinet on four Paul Keller CDs, and is featured prominently on another new Keller Jazz recording soon to be released. Sarah graduated from West Virginia University, then in 2003 earned her Master's Degree in Clarinet Performance from the University of Michigan. Sarah's musical path was abruptly altered when she discovered her enormous gift as a jazz vocalist. She has flourished in her new role and has risen in professional stature to become one of Michigan's favorite jazz singers. With the YSO, Sarah sings not one note, and instead expertly plays her clarinet as the lead voice of the Paul Keller Jazz Ensemble.

Cary Kocher, vibraphonist, has been collaborating with Keller for decades. They played together in high school as members of the 1978-79 Grand Rapids Youth Symphony. Cary graduated from the University of Michigan in 1983 and later earned his Masters Degree from Eastern Michigan University. Cary taught music in the Ann Arbor Schools and at the University of Michigan before his recent retirement. Outside of his jazz world, he plays with the Ann Arbor Symphony and the Detroit Opera.



Adam Mosley, piano, studied in North Carolina and Tennessee, where his mentor Alex Graham lured him to Mackinac Island's Grand Hotel for several seasons of post-graduate work. Adam has amazing technical facility, a clever musical wit, remarkable ears and photographic memory. His tremendous musical gifts are belied by an "aw-shucks" humility on and offstage. You're sure to notice the influence of Errol Garner, Oscar Peterson, Nat "King" Cole and George Shearing in his virtuosic playing.

Doug Horn, alto saxophone is a veteran master jazz multi-saxophonist and flutist. Mr. Horn recently retired from the Ann Arbor Public Schools, where he served 26 years teaching instrumental music. Doug enjoys playing American Songbook favorites and Jazz Classics in the styles of Swing, Bebop, Latin, Ballads, and Caribbean. Doug has also been spotted having a ball on stage with local rock band Salmagundi.

Jonathan Blanchette is respected, young drummer and educator from Ypsilanti. After graduating from Berklee College of Music in 2019, Blanchette moved back to SE Michigan to start his career as a professional musician. Jonathan's swinging jazz rhythms and overall good feeling propel and enhance the Ypsilanti Orchestral Jazz Suite. Jonathan's noble calling is to convey emotion and meaning, through music, to assist people in everyday life



Paul Keller's *Ypsilanti Orchestral Jazz Suite* was commissioned and premiered by the YSO in 2010. Composed for jazz band and full symphony orchestra with narration, the work celebrates Paul Keller's hometown of Ypsilanti and consists of five movements depicting the city's heritage: "Woodruff's Grove," the original name of the first 1823 settlement in the Ypsilanti area along the Huron River; "Ypsilanti Underground," dedicated to Ypsilanti's important Civil War connection to the Underground Railroad; "The Real McCoy," dedicated to Elijah McCoy, 1880s Ypsilanti resident and an important African/American inventor of automatic oil systems for locomotives, as well as the folding ironing board; "Willow Run and The Great Migration," depicting the World War II era and the northern migration of southerners seeking work in auto factories retooled for wartime production; and "Downtown To Depot Town," a reference to Michigan Avenue and Depot Town, the resilience of the community, and the future of Ypsilanti.

Unsung Heros by Brooke Pierson was commissioned and premiered by the YSO in 2019. *Unsung Heroes* is an optimistic and hopeful fanfare for orchestral brass and percussion, with some Copland qualities to it that reflects the optimism of American music. The work is scored for orchestral brass, including trumpets, horns, trombone, tuba, and percussion. Since its premiere, it has become a popular work, with recent performances by the West Point Band Brass and other highly regarded ensembles.

Brooke Pierson (b. 1987) is a multi-award winning composer, multiple ASCAP+ Award Recipient, conductor, and teacher of the year nominated educator located in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He serves as the Department Chair and Music Director of Band and Orchestra at the Washtenaw International High School and Middle Academy. He studied at Michigan State University and previously taught in the Lansing and Okemos Public Schools. Brooke's music has been performed throughout the United States and abroad by groups such as the West Point Band, the Dallas Winds, the Appalachian Wind Ensemble, and the Banda Musicale Città di Seriate, as well as renowned solo and chamber musicians including Craig Knox (Pittsburgh Symphony).

Africa by American composer **William Grant Still** (1895-1978) is a symphonic poem in three movements, originally scored for chamber orchestra and later revised as a full symphonic work. The work was dedicated to and premiered by French flautist Georges Barrère in New York in 1930, but was never published during Still's lifetime. The three movements—"Land of Peace," "Land of Romance," and "Land of Superstition"—explore the composer's race and cultural heritage in richly-scored and evocative melodies and instrumental colors. In a letter to Barrère, Still said the work depicted "the Africa of my imagination," portraying the land of his ancestors "based largely on its folklore. . . not the Africa of reality, but an Africa mirrored in fancy, and radiantly ideal."

The YSO will perform on Sunday, October 15 at 3:30 p.m. at Lincoln High School's Performing Arts Center, 7425 Willis Road, Ypsilanti, MI, 48197. Tickets are \$12/adults, \$6/students/seniors/children and \$30/family and can be purchased at the door or online at [A2Tix.com](https://www.a2tix.com).

The Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra (YSO) is proud of its unique and significant cultural contribution to the Ypsilanti area. The YSO's mission is "to share our passion for music through innovative programming, creative collaboration, and arts advocacy," and to "actively contribute to the music appreciation and education of our musicians, organizational members and audience." Led by Founder and Music Director Adam C. Riccinto, the Symphony marks its 24th anniversary with the 2022-23 season.

More information about the Ypsilanti Symphony Orchestra can be found at www.ypsilantisymphony.org, on Instagram [@ypsilantisymphony](https://www.instagram.com/ypsilantisymphony), on TikTok [@ypsilantisymphony](https://www.tiktok.com/@ypsilantisymphony), on our youtube_channel [@ypsilantisymphonyorchestra194](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ypsilantisymphony).

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