

# Artis—Naples

Home of The Baker Museum  
& Naples Philharmonic

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## **For Immediate Release**

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## **ARTIS—NAPLES ANNOUNCES EXTENSION WITH ALEXANDER SHELLEY THROUGH END OF DECADE AND NEW CONTRACT WITH MUSICIANS OF NAPLES PHILHARMONIC THROUGH 2028-29 SEASON**

**Naples, FL (January 22, 2026)** – Artis—Naples today announced an extension of Alexander Shelley’s contract as Sharon and Timothy Ubben Artistic and Music Director until the end of the decade, with an option of further extension, alongside a new three-year collectively bargained agreement with the Musicians of the Naples Philharmonic that runs through the 2028-29 season. Together, the agreements affirm a shared commitment to artistic growth, organizational cooperation and the deepened exploration of the multidisciplinary mission.

“Artis—Naples is an institution defined by artistic ambition and imaginative collaboration,” said Shelley. “Their dedication to providing a boundless spectrum of thought-provoking and captivating multidisciplinary experiences fosters a world-class artistic community in Southwest Florida. Sharing in that commitment, the Naples Philharmonic stands out for its extraordinary artistry and musical purpose. From the very beginning of our work together, I have been struck by the musicians’ openness to exploration and their deep commitment to one another, to the music and to the audiences we serve. Artis—Naples has fostered a culture in which that partnership can flourish, and I am profoundly excited to continue supporting and growing our shared mission in the coming years.”

Now in his second year as Artis—Naples artistic and music director, Shelley’s leadership has already made an indelible impact on the organization’s programs, artistry and community. Since his appointment, Shelley has participated in the hiring or tenure process of 16 current musicians of the Naples Philharmonic, shaping the identity and sound of the orchestra. Through spearheading commissions of new works by leading composers from around the world—such as the recent world premiere of *African Queens* for Symphony Orchestra composed by the seven renowned composers known as the Blacknificent 7 and performed by soprano Karen Slack and this week’s world premiere of Raven Chacon’s *Inscription II*—audiences have experienced the vanguard of classical contemporary voices. As a conductor, Shelley not only provides leadership to the orchestra but also offers audiences his unique insights on programs from stage with eloquence and vision. Beyond the podium, Shelley’s role as artistic and music director extends into the multidisciplinary programming of Artis—Naples, including acting as a partner for the ambitious exhibitions crafted and presented by The Baker Museum, serving as a juror of independent films in the 2024 Naples International Film Festival and forging into eye-opening panel discussions with

contemporary artists such as celebrated Mexican-Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer and bestselling author Margaret Atwood.

“With the palpable excitement and established relationships of the initial chapter in his tenure, Alexander’s impact and presence will continue to expand and usher Artis—Naples’ multidisciplinary mission to new heights,” said CEO and President Kathleen van Bergen. “His chemistry with our musicians, staff and community at large has fostered trust and momentum. He is a natural partner, and this extension reflects our shared commitment to Artis—Naples and continued artistic evolution well into the future.”

This announcement comes with equal excitement as the orchestra’s new collectively bargained agreement is ratified by the musicians of the Naples Philharmonic. This agreement underscores a collaborative and transparent relationship between Artis—Naples and the musicians, supporting long-term artistic growth, organizational stability and the unique creative opportunities available for a multidisciplinary organization led by a visionary artistic leader.

“The new agreement with the Naples Philharmonic reinforces the mutual respect underpinning this partnership, and positions us well for the years ahead,” said van Bergen. “The dedication of the talented musicians of the orchestra continues to open exciting avenues of artistic development, deepen relationships within the community and foster success throughout the organization. We are grateful for their commitment to these shared goals and our enduring, productive relationship.”

The negotiation process took place over several months and reflected a shared focus on long-term stability, artistic planning and the continued strength of the orchestra. Artis—Naples was represented by Kathleen van Bergen and David Filner, executive vice president, artistic operations. The Naples Philharmonic was represented by an elected committee led by committee chair, Marlena Chow Morgan, violin. The members of the committee included John Evans, Principal Timpani; Forrest Johnston, Assistant Principal Trumpet; Natalie Lee, violin; and Lisa Mattson, viola.

“This agreement reflects a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect,” said Chow Morgan. “We value the trust that has been built with Artis—Naples and with Alexander Shelley, and we are confident this next chapter supports the artistic strength of the orchestra and the work we are committed to doing together.”

The agreement includes more than 13% in salary increases over the term of the agreement, with base salary for non-principal positions increasing to over \$81,000 by the end of this term. Also included are the addition of two new positions in the orchestra and novel language outlining the creation of recordings for dance and film.

“The artistic and music director and the Naples Philharmonic are central to the multidisciplinary mission of Artis—Naples and to the artistic landscape of Southwest Florida,” said Heidi Miller, chair of the Artis—Naples Board of Directors. “Alexander’s leadership has enlivened our halls and cultural campus in extraordinary ways, and there is clear, mutual respect and admiration between him and the orchestra. These new agreements represent a meaningful catalyst for the growth of Artis—Naples, enabling thoughtful planning and positioning for immense success in the years to come.”

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#### **ARTIS—NAPLES**

Artis—Naples, home of The Baker Museum and Naples Philharmonic, creates and presents world-class visual and performing arts. Through our multidisciplinary offerings, we inspire, educate and entertain to engage and enrich the growing and diversifying community.

## **KIMBERLY K. QUERREY and LOUIS A. SIMPSON CULTURAL CAMPUS**

Led by CEO and President Kathleen van Bergen and Artistic and Music Director Alexander Shelley, Artis—Naples offers more than 800 performing and visual arts experiences annually across its 8.5-acre Kimberly K. Querrey and Louis A. Simpson Cultural Campus and throughout the community.

Artis—Naples welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year for a broad array of artistic and educational opportunities perfect for audiences of all backgrounds and interests. The cultural campus is home to five buildings, including two performance halls (Frances Pew Hayes Hall and Myra J. Daniels Pavilion), The Baker Museum, the Toni Stabile Education Building and the Kohan Administration Building.

## **NAPLES PHILHARMONIC**

The Naples Philharmonic has long been recognized as one of the cornerstones of Southwest Florida's arts community. As part of Artis—Naples, the Naples Philharmonic performs more than 140 orchestral and chamber music concerts, as well as opera and ballet, education, community and special event concerts annually between September and June in the 1,477-seat Hayes Hall, the 283-seat Daniels Pavilion and around Southwest Florida. The Naples Philharmonic has enjoyed a history of working with world-class music directors. Following a successful inaugural season in 2024-25, Alexander Shelley commenced his second season as artistic and music director in 2025-26 and recently extended his contract through the end of the decade. Renowned violinist James Ehnes continues as artistic partner through the 2025-26 season, working with Naples Philharmonic musicians in a variety of settings with a focus on inspiring and embodying a high level of artistry. Podium leadership also includes Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly, celebrating 16 years in this role in the 2025-26 season and bringing pops performances that celebrate music across genres.

## **THE BAKER MUSEUM**

The Baker Museum is the foremost fine art museum in Southwest Florida, presenting an ambitious slate of exhibitions annually to complement installations of works from its permanent collection. Comprising more than 3,000 objects, the museum's broad holdings of 20th- and 21st-century art reflect particular strengths in modern art of the United States and Mexico. The Baker Museum's collection demonstrates the generosity and commitment of area collectors, including significant gifts from the collection of the late Olga Hirshhorn.

In 2025, The Baker Museum was accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the highest national recognition for museums in the United States, affirming the museum's commitment to excellence, accountability and public service.

With more than two decades of collecting and exhibiting, the museum is committed to the stewardship and scholarship of its collections and to fostering inspiring and transformative experiences with the visual arts. At the same time, The Baker Museum partners with the world's leading arts institutions to make extraordinary exhibitions accessible to the Southwest Florida community—including recently the National Portrait Gallery, London and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. In 2020, Artis—Naples celebrated the renovation and expansion of The Baker Museum and adjoining Norris Garden, designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism, which created new spaces for multidisciplinary exploration and social interaction.

## **EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY**

In addition to creating and presenting visual and performing arts, Artis—Naples provides robust education and community activities for students of all ages in Collier and Lee counties. Each season, thousands of Collier County Public School students interact with Artis—Naples education programming, both on our cultural campus and in their classrooms. Beyond our commitment to youth education, the

Lifelong Learning program provides informative lectures and study opportunities for adults seeking to engage more deeply with the arts.

The Friends of Artis—Naples, comprised of more than 3,500 donor households, offers activities, travel experiences and events designed to foster a deeper relationship between patrons and the arts.

In 2017, Artis—Naples acquired the Naples International Film Festival (NIFF), expanding its film offerings and providing a platform for the festival's continued excellence and growth. In 2023, the festival's 15th anniversary year, NIFF was named one of *MovieMaker* Magazine's "20 Great Film Festivals in Vacation Destinations."

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