



**Jack Price**  
**Managing Director**

220 West Pershing  
Phoenix, AZ 85029

e-mail:  
[jp@pricerubin.com](mailto:jp@pricerubin.com)

phone:  
1-800-848-3360

fax:  
1-888-439-1186

web site:  
[www.pricerubin.com](http://www.pricerubin.com)

# **PHILIP SIMMONS**

## **CONDUCTOR**



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## BIOGRAPHY

Conductor, guitarist, and composer Philip Simmons is Artistic Director of American Music Festivals, Founder and Music Director of the Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra, and Orchestra Director at Lake Forest Academy, a private boarding school on Chicago's North Shore.

On July 4, 2004 Mr. Simmons guest conducted the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra in a sold-out concert of American music closing the Philharmonia's season, an incredible honor for a young American conductor. His debut in Saint Petersburg's Philharmonic Hall was in 1998, when he initiated a new tradition of sharing American music with Russian audiences on our Independence Day. The next summer Mr. Simmons conducted the Russian State Symphony (the former U.S.S.R. Symphony) at the Moscow Conservatory in a concert which was broadcast across the entire country on Russia's Kultura channel. In 2000 he recorded his first CD with the Yaroslavl Philharmonic featuring his composition "Impressions of Saint Petersburg", dedicated to Maestro Yuri Temirkanov.

Actively involved with the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, Mr. Simmons was chosen to participate in the "Chicago Days in Moscow" Festival (May 2001) leading the Orchestra of the Kremlin Theater. In Russia he is Principal Guest Conductor of the Chamber Orchestra in Sochi, and previously was an Associate Conductor with the Orchestra of the Hermitage Theater. Mr. Simmons has conducted concerts with the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Chamber Orchestras and in the Russian cities of Novgorod, Kaliningrad, and Petrozavadosk. A frequent performer in the Czech Republic, he has led the South Bohemia Chamber Philharmonic, Hradec Kralove Philharmonic, West Bohemia Symphony, Prague Collegium Orchestra (St. Nicholas Church), the Czech Youth Music Camp Orchestra, and the Razgrad Symphony (Bulgaria). He will guest conduct a program of Czech and American Music in June 2006 with the Prague Symphony Orchestra, in Smetana Hall.

In the U.S., Mr. Simmons past positions include Orchestra Director at Northeastern Illinois University and Music Director of both the Russian-American Chamber Orchestra of Chicago and the Lake Shore Symphony. He has instituted and participated in numerous programs of educational and community outreach throughout the area. With American Music Festivals he has served as Music Director of the Glenview Symphony, Lake Bluff Sinfonietta, and the Community Players of Chicago Orchestra. He has also conducted the Chicago Youth Symphony, Classical Symphony, Protégé Philharmonic, Skokie Valley Symphony, Waukegan Symphony, West Suburban Symphony, La Porte Symphony (IN), and the Perrysburg Symphony (OH).

Among the artists Mr. Simmons has performed with are William Warfield, Lukas Foss, the Three Russian Tenors, Wendy Warner, Radoslav Kvapil, Anya Makarova, David Schrader, Sam Magad, Charles Pikler, Rachel Barton Pine, and the Maxwell Street Klezmer Band (at Chicago Symphony Center). For the last four seasons he has conducted on the Chicago Silent Summer Film Festival with organist Dennis James. In 2002, collaborating with bass-baritone Andrew Schultze and Ars Musica Chicago, he conducted the Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra on a CD recording of the music of Alexander Tcherepnin.

Mr. Simmons received his degrees in Music Composition from DePaul University. He previously was Program Director for the Chicago Composer's Forum, and currently is a member of the Wilmette Fine Arts Commission. In 1989 he attended the conducting seminar at Tanglewood

(the last year it was coached by Leonard Bernstein) and later master classes and competitions in Russia, Hungary, France, Italy, Romania, Poland, and Canada. This fall he will participate in a master class organized by the Camerata Berlin led by Gennady Rozhdestvensky with the Thuringen Philharmonie (Germany). His previous conducting teachers include Gustav Meier, Yuri Siminov, Ravil Martinov, Elizabeth Green, Michael Morgan, and Alexander Politchuk.

As a guitarist, Mr. Simmons has performed as soloist with several orchestras under his direction, as well as with the Civic Chamber Orchestra and DePaul University Wind Ensemble. This upcoming season he will be soloist with the North Shore Chamber Orchestra (Evanston, IL), and appear in recital with flutist Michele McGovern at the Chicago Cultural Center. Additionally, he hosted a monthly program on Glenview Cable Television called "Meet the Maestro".

## **CRITICAL ACCLAIM**

“The (Saint Petersburg) Philharmonic and I wish to acknowledge the efforts on behalf of cultural exchange between Russia and the United States made by American Music Festivals, under the artistic leadership of Philip Simmons.” Yuri Temirkanov

“He is an excellent musician with a secure baton technique and an unusually fine artistic temperament. I recommend him highly.” William Warfield

“He makes good music happen. I believe a good career is awaiting him. The music world needs someone like Philip Simmons.” Lukas Foss