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Leon Burke, Music Director



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Biography

Leon Burke III began to dedicate his life to music when he began musical studies at age 12. His instruments were piano and organ but he also sang. By age 16 Burke began conducting orchestras. After graduating from John Burroughs School, he entered the Oberlin Conservatory in 1972. Upon graduation with a BM in Composition, he entered the University of Kansas and earned a MM and DMA in Conducting. He has been a Fulbright Fellow in Paraguay.

Dr. Burke has served as Conductor/Music Director of the Lawrence Chamber Players, the Hutchinson Symphony, and the McPherson Symphony. He has also been on the faculties of Baker University, Sterling College, Hutchinson Community College, and Webster University.

Dr. Burke is currently active in the local music scene as the Conductor of the University City Symphony Orchestra and Assistant Conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus. He is the Choir Director at Eliot Unitarian Chapel in Kirkwood. Outside of St. Louis he is the Conductor for the Metropolitan Ballet of Topeka and conducts the Metro East Junior Orchestra in Belleville. He is also an adjunct faculty member at East Central College in Union, MO. By day he is an Environmental Consultant working as a Project Manager with United Infrastructure Corporation.

During the coming season Dr. Burke will present a vocal recital as a tribute to Paul Robeson and conduct a concert of American music in the Czech Republic. As Principal Guest Conductor for the National Orchestra of Paraguay, he will conduct concerts there in July. Burke will be the Music Director for productions of West Side Story and Jekyll and Hyde for Spotlight Theater this summer. He just conducted the Nutcracker Ballet with the Metropolitan Ballet of Topeka and before the holiday season is over, Burke will conduct Amahl and the Night Visitors with the Midwest Lyric Opera in January.