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Bruce Sorrell Conductor



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BIOGRAPHY

Acclaimed by critics as “...born to conduct Mozart,” and “...as good as any young conductor I know,” Bruce Sorrell, Music Director and Conductor, is experienced across a broad range of orchestral and operatic repertoire. Sorrell founded the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra in 1987 and the 2007-2008 season marks his 21st with the ensemble. He has recently produced and conducted a recording with the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra and internationally renowned Celtic folk singer and recording artist, Connie Dover.

The Kansas City Star has written “...Bruce Sorrell’s deft conducting showed consistent command in a variety of styles.” Over the past several seasons, he has led highly acclaimed performances of symphonies by Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Not limited to this repertoire, he has conducted works of Britten, Stravinsky, Maxwell-Davies, Zwilich and Locklair, as well as world premieres by Jean Belmont, David Gompper, and Steven Gutheinz. His education concerts have been enthusiastically received by school students and teachers, and he is also a popular pre-concert lecturer and community speaker.

Sorrell has conducted several highly successful collaborations with the Kansas City Chorale, including Handel’s *Messiah*. He has been a frequent guest conductor for the Civic Opera Theater of Kansas City. In partnership with Paul Mesner Puppets, he is co-producing and conducting a series of puppet operas, including *The Mikado*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *The Magic Flute*. Sorrell has been director of choirs at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Kansas City since 1992.

A native of Wichita, Kansas, Sorrell earned his bachelor’s degree in music performance from William Jewell College and studied at Oxford University, England. He earned the Master of Music degree in orchestral conducting from Southern Methodist University in Dallas where he studied with Anshel Brusilow, and did further advanced conducting studies with Frank Shipway in London, England.

CRITICAL ACCLAIM

Reviews from The Kansas City Star (primary reviewers Scott Cantrell and Paul Horsley):

“Most grown-up cities have at least one chamber orchestra that thrives alongside its full-sized symphony, and as Kansas City matures culturally its two orchestral ensembles continue to push ahead. Under the baton of founding music director Bruce Sorrell, the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra performs small-ensemble music with clarity, often on a level comparable to chamber orchestras in much bigger cities...It was plain to hear why the group remains an asset in the community.”

10.02.06

“The Kansas City Chamber Orchestra and conductor Bruce Sorrell have carved a niche in the city’s busy concert life, and for 20 years they have plumbed areas that other ensembles cannot or will not do.”

07.14.07

“Sorrell and his ensemble took the best of our local talent and built something memorable. This was as good as any local performance I’ve heard this season.”

04.27.06

“One often hears of an “orchestra of soloists,” but this is surely one in the flesh. Sorrell deserves high praise for giving his players the freedom to excel while demanding the highest level of musical acumen and involvement from them.”

02.16.05

“...conductor Bruce Sorrell and the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra imbued Beethoven’s Third [Symphony] with a sort of nervous energy, blowing the dust off with quick, neatly styled tempos and a chamber-music approach that renewed one’s aural interest in the composers’ smoldering orchestration. Sorrell gave the Eroica a great deal of meticulous care, coaxing supple sonorities and bending tempos ever so slightly for the tender slow themes. At best, he just let the excellent players do what they do. The result was tasteful and strangely thrilling.”

09.23.02

“When Sorrell connects with a piece, he can sound as good as any young conductor I know.”

12.29.02

“...Bruce Sorrell’s deft conducting showed consistent command in a variety of styles.”

09.29.01

“Bruce Sorrell was born to conduct Mozart. Under his baton Saturday evening, the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra delivered fresh, effervescent accounts of the composer’s ‘Marriage of Figaro’ Overture and ‘Jupiter’ Symphony.”

09.24.96

Bruce Sorrell

“...critics would be in unemployment lines if all concerts were so unrelievedly gratifying as the one presented by the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra...” 05.22.95

“Bruce Sorrell conducted, again proving himself a savvy baroque stylist”. 12.15.94

“Bruce Sorrell is a born Mozartean.” 09.22.94

“Sorrell and company devoted the concert’s second half to Dvorak’s sunny Serenade for strings, and it was a performance of one lovely thing after another...even on records you’d be hard pressed to find a more musically turned performance...” 09.22.94

“To hear the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra together with the Kansas City Chorale on Thursday evening was a dream come true...the two ensembles joined for Haydn’s “Nelson” Mass. This is church music at its most theatrical, and under the baton of Bruce Sorrell...the proceedings fairly crackled with electricity.” 03.12.94

“Conducted by music director Bruce Sorrell, the Chamber Orchestra played with élan and elegance not to be outdone anywhere.” 10.26.93

“...playing of simply astonishing polish and expressive nuance, music-making on the level of the very best international chamber orchestras...I can’t imagine a more exquisite performance...” 05.11.92

“Bruce Sorrell drew the most exquisite playing from his charges, and the all-Mozart program was delight itself. Literally everything was played with elegance and élan, at a standard that wouldn’t be outdone in any musical capital...an extraordinarily musical young man in our very midst...” 06.10.91

CURRICULUM VITAE

MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR

Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, Kansas City, Missouri **1987 to present**

Founder, Music Director, Conductor, Executive Director

Founded the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra in 1987. Each season has consisted of 5 or 6 concerts with an equal number of educational outreach performances. Acclaimed by critics and audiences for conducting performances of outstanding artistic quality.

- Planned and implemented 21 successful seasons as Music Director.
- Implemented primary fundraising campaign for the first 18 seasons
 - Established base funding relationships with Missouri Arts Council, Kansas Arts Commission, and most major foundation and corporate arts givers in Kansas City, including writing a successful grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.
 - Led organization in budget growth from \$30,000 to \$300,000 in 20 years.
- Produced, conducted, and assisted in mixing “The Holly and the Ivy” with internationally renowned Celtic folk singer, Connie Dover, to be released in 2008.
- Forged many successful collaborations with arts organizations in Kansas City, including the Friends of Chamber Music, The Kansas City Chorale, the UMKC Conservatory of Music, and the Paul Mesner Puppets.
- Established popular educational outreach performances in 2003.
- Managed all aspects of non-profit business administration, including accounting, budgeting, and marketing.
- Recorded concerts for broadcast on local public radio, and on NPR’s Performance Today.
- Appeared as spokesperson in multiple media engagements (newspaper, radio, and television), doing voice work for radio ads.
 - KCPT (Public Television) on-air guest co-host for pledge drives.
 - Frequent guest on KXTR, classical radio.
- Spoke frequently to community groups and delivered popular pre-concert lectures prior to all KCCO performances and for other arts organizations in Kansas City.

Amanti della Musica Chamber Orchestra, Dallas, Texas **1984-85**

Founder, Music Director, Conductor

Series of free concerts and a live broadcast from Dallas Public Radio

GUEST CONDUCTOR

Civic Opera Theater of Kansas City

<i>The Mikado</i>	Gilbert and Sullivan	2004
<i>The Elixir of Love</i>	Donizetti	2002
<i>The Yeomen of the Guard</i>	Gilbert and Sullivan	2001

Guest Conductor – continued

Second Presbyterian Church, Kansas City, Missouri	1999-2004
<i>Requiem</i> Faure	
<i>Requiem</i> Rutter	
<i>St. Paul</i> Mendelssohn	
Kansas City Youth Chamber Orchestra	1997
Conducted specially formed chamber orchestra of 32 high school students in an all-Beethoven concert.	
Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, Missouri	1994, 1995
Annual Messiah “sing-along” with professional soloists and orchestra	
The Liberty Symphony, Liberty, Missouri	1984, 1993
Principal Guest Conductor	
Performances of Mendelssohn’s <i>Elijah</i> , young people’s concerts, and concerto soloist winners.	
Poulenc Festival, Friends of Francis Poulenc, USA	1991-96
Director of instrumental works, conductor, and pianist	

RELATED EXPERIENCE – Kansas City, Missouri

St. Paul’s Episcopal Church	1992 to present
Director of adult and children’s choirs	
One of the main Episcopal churches in Kansas City with a long history of great music.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversee and plan all music by both choirs. Adult choir includes four paid professional singers and 16-20 volunteer parish singers.• Currently producing a recording to be released in 2008.	
Kansas City Young Audiences/Arts Partners	2008
Masterclass rehearsal with high school string orchestras	
Pembroke Hill School	2006
Guest lecturer for 4-week intro to music class	
UMKC Conservatory of Music	2006
Guest lecturer for graduate seminar in Classical Music	
Missouri Arts Council	2003
Panelist for Music Grant review	
Harriman-Jewell Series, William Jewell College	1998
Program annotation	
Johnson County Community College	1991-96
Adjunct Instructor, Introduction to Music Listening (3 hour credit course)	
Nebraska Arts Council	1993-95
Panelist, Basic Support Grant	
Friends of Chamber Music	1993-95
Guest lecturer for pre-concert talks	
Clinician or Adjudicator for the following:	
Emporia (KS) Arts Council, Missouri District Music Festival, William Jewell College, Kansas City Musical Club Scholarship auditions, Youth Symphony of Kansas City	

Bruce Sorrell

EDUCATION

- London, England** **1985-86**
Post-graduate studies with renowned conductor Frank Shipway in London. Shipway conducts and records professionally throughout Europe and was mentored by Herbert von Karajan.
- Southern Methodist University, Meadows School of the Arts**
Master of Music, orchestral conducting **1985**
Mentored by Anshel Brusilow, former Music Director/Conductor of the Dallas Symphony; former concertmaster, Philadelphia Orchestra
- William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri**
Bachelor of Science, piano performance and music theory **1983**
Summa cum Laude
- Oxford University, Oxford, England**
Junior Year Abroad **1981-82**
Lived and studied at Regent's Park College, Oxford University
In-depth studies in music history and the plays of Shakespeare

AWARDS

- Citation for Achievement**, William Jewell College **2000**
Highest alumni award; honored for accomplishments and contributions in the arts
- National Arts Associate**, Kansas City Alumnae of Sigma Alpha Iota **2000**
- Kansas City Musical Club Award** **1997**
In recognition of outstanding contributions to the cultural life of Kansas City
- Young Artist Career Development Grant**, **1983-1985**
Artistic Achievement, and Dean's Scholarships, Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University
- National Merit Scholarship**, William Jewell College **1979-83**

REPERTOIRE

ARENSKY

Variations on a Theme by Tchaikovsky

BACH, J.S.

Complete Brandenburg Concerti

Complete Suites

Selected Concerti, and Sinfonias

Cantatas 51, 54, 82, 140, 211

BARBER

Adagio for Strings

Capricorn Concerto

BEETHOVEN

Symphonies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7

Violin Concerto

Piano Concerti 1, 3, 5

'Triple' Concerto

Overture from 'The Creatures of Prometheus'

BRITTEN

Lachrymae

Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge

Nocturne

Les Illuminations

A Simple Symphony

CHOPIN

Piano Concerti Nos. 1 and 2

COPLAND

Appalachian Spring (original version)

Nonet

A Quiet City

Eight Poems of Emily Dickinson

DVORAK

Serenades op. 22 and op. 44

Czech Suite

ELGAR

Serenade for Strings

FAURE

Pavane, Op. 50

FINZI

Eclogue (piano soloist)

FRANCAIX

Bruce Sorrell

L'Horloge de Flore (The Flower Clock)

GOUNOD

Petite Symphonie

HANDEL

Gloria

Water and Fireworks Music

Selected overtures and Concerti grosso

Selected Concerti

HAYDN

Symphonies 7, 43, 44, 48, 94

Cello Concerto in D

HINDEMITH

Concerto for Organ

HOLST

St. Paul's Suite

MAXWELL-DAVIES

Ojai Festival Overture

MENDELSSOHN

Violin Concerto in E minor

Symphony No. 3

Scherzo and Nocturne from "A Midsummer Nights Dream"

The Hebrides Overture (Fingal's Cave)

MOZART

Symphonies 17, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41

Serenades 6, 10, 11, 12

Eine kleine Nachtmusik

Sinfonia Concertante

Overtures to Cosi fan tutte, Le nozze de Figaro, Don Giovanni

PERGOLESI

Stabat Mater

PROKOFIEV

Peter and the Wolf

Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor

PURCELL

Instrumental music from 'The Fairy Queen'

ROSSINI

Overture to La scala di seta

SCHUBERT

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat major

STRAVINSKY

Concerto in E-flat 'Dumbarton Oaks'

TCHAIKOVSKY

Serenade in C, Op. 48

VIVALDI

The Four Seasons

Selected concerti

WAGNER

Siegfried Idyll

WALTON

Bruce Sorrell

Two piece for strings from Henry V
WARLOCK
Capriol Suite

World Premieres:

BELMONT, Jean
Remembrance (KCCO commission)
Stances (KCCO commission)
GOMPPER, David
Flip
GRANT, James
Viola Concerto
GUTHEINZ, Steven
Songs of Travel (KCCO commission)

Opera and Choral/Orchestral:

BACH, J.S.
Magnificat
Christmas Oratorio, Parts I and VI
BRITTEN
Saint Nicolas
DONIZETTI
L'Elisir d'Amore
GILBERT & SULLIVAN
The Mikado
The Yeomen of the Guard
HANDEL
Messiah
HAYDN
'Lord Nelson' Mass
HUMPERDINCK
Hansel and Gretel
MOZART
Cosi fan tutte
'Coronation' Mass
VIVALDI
Gloria

Bruce Sorrell

REFERENCES

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Scott Cantrell

Bruce Sorrell

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