

HERB SMITH

Conductor Herb Smith is widely known in both the classical and jazz worlds as an exciting performer who inspires musicians and audiences wherever he goes. Whether he is performing, conducting, teaching or composing, Herb's expression of music draws from his multifaceted and dynamic musical experiences from around the world.

Voted "Best Instrumentalist" of Rochester 2022 by City Magazine, Herb currently holds the third trumpet position in the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and the principal trumpet position in the Gateways Festival Orchestra which made their Carnegie Hall debut in April 2022. Herb also serves as principal trumpet in the Gateways Brass Collective, a nationally touring professional brass quintet, sponsored by Conn-Selmer. Being a highly sought after lead trumpeter has afforded Herb the opportunity to play with such notable musicians as Jeff Beck, Aretha Franklin, Natalie Cole, the O'Jays, Johnny Mathis, and Doc Severinsen, to name but a few. He has been a frequent guest soloist with the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Rochester Philharmonic.

Herb's Freedom Trio (composed of trumpet played through electronics, bass and drums) can be seen in performances around the country. This funky, eclectic group, a frequent guest at the Rochester International Jazz Festival, offers its "idiosyncratic yet charming melodies" (City Magazine) in concerts and festivals around the world.

As a composer, Herb has been commissioned by brass ensembles, high school choirs, jazz ensembles and trumpet ensembles in addition to writing for his jazz trio and the Gateways Brass Collective. Herb's "The Twelve Tones of Christmas," composed for trumpet, piano and voice, premiered in Carnegie Hall in 2008. Tony Award winning choreographer Garth Fagan commissioned Herb to write a ballet for his Children's Ensemble. The resulting forty minute, six part work ranged across many styles, including reggae, classical, jazz and funk.

Herb is a regular guest conductor with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. He frequently conducts the Symphoria orchestra based in Syracuse, NY and currently directs the Eastman Youth Jazz Ensemble. He also guest conducts for All-State and All-County Bands, Orchestras and Jazz Ensembles all across New York State. Herb recently conducted and curated a Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Brass performance of Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" at a Black Lives Matter rally and a concert honoring Harriet Tubman. This performance united the City of Rochester, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and neighborhood churches in honor of Tubman's bicentennial celebration.

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Herb is a trumpet instructor at the Eastman Community Music School. He also leads masterclasses and offers lectures on trumpet technique, endurance and sound production. From universities to elementary schools, Herb is frequently invited to serve as teacher, teaching artist and clinician. He co-founded Herb's City Trumpets, a program that mentors and teaches trumpet to Black students aged 8 to 17, in partnership with the Rochester City School District.

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