

THOMAS WILKINS

Principal Guest Conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra

Thomas Wilkins is Music Director of the Omaha Symphony, Resident Conductor of the Detroit Symphony and Principal Guest Conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. He was appointed as Music Director of the Omaha Symphony in 2005, and 2008/09 marks his third season with the orchestra; additionally 2008/09 marks his ninth season as Resident Conductor of the Detroit Symphony. In March of 2008, he was named Principal Guest Conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra for two seasons, making him the first person to hold a title with that ensemble since its founder, John Mauceri, retired after 16 years in 2006. Past positions have included Resident Conductor of the Florida Orchestra (Tampa Bay), and Associate Conductor of the Richmond (VA) Symphony. He served on the music faculties of North Park University (Chicago); the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga and Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

Committed to promoting a life-long enthusiasm for music, Wilkins brings energy and commitment to audiences of all ages. For his significant contribution to the children of Tampa Bay, the Pinellas County Music Educators Association named him 1998 Friend of the Arts and the Hillsborough County Elementary Music Educators recognized him as 1998 Music Educator of the Year. He seeks to cultivate a “vibrant creative imagination” in today’s youth, noting, in a guest editorial in the *Richmond News-Leader*, “Successful education is not that which teaches our children how to get a job. Education is a success when we teach our children to love learning.”

Wilkins has guest conducted orchestras throughout the United States, including the Cleveland Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra; the symphonies of Dallas, Baltimore, Houston, Grand Rapids, New Jersey, Indianapolis, San Antonio and Oregon; the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Louisville Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, DC. As Resident Conductor of the Detroit Symphony, he leads the orchestra in a variety of programs, including Classical, Special Events, Pops, Young People’s and educational concerts. In the 2007/08 season, the DSO awarded Mr. Wilkins the Classical Roots Musical Achievement Award.

Wilkins actively participates in the life of the community as a frequent guest speaker and volunteer for local community organizations and schools. He has served on the board of directors of such organizations as the Center Against Spouse Abuse in Tampa Bay, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Academy Preparatory Center for Education, both in St. Petersburg. Currently he serves as chairman of the board for the Raymond James Charitable Endowment Fund.

A native of Norfolk, VA, Wilkins earned his Bachelor of Music Education degree from the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music in 1978, where he now returns each summer to serve as Orchestral Conductor for that institution's summer performing arts camp. In 1982, he was awarded the Master of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston.

Thomas Wilkins and his wife, Sheri-Lee, have twin daughters, Nicole and Erica.

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