

## NA'ZIR MCFADDEN – Conductor



American conductor **Na'Zir McFadden** is known for connecting audiences through dynamic, expressive performances that honour tradition while embracing fresh perspectives. Celebrated for his “great conducting technique and energetic podium presence” (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*), his interpretations are praised for their “rhythmic vitality and naturally expressive nuances” (*Boston Classical Review*). McFadden brings a new dimension to the classics and actively supports contemporary and underrepresented voices in today’s orchestral landscape.

He recently served as Assistant Conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of the Detroit Symphony Youth Orchestra from 2022-2025. In Detroit, he worked closely with DSO Music Director Jader Bignamini as well as guest artists Sir Donald Runnicles, Osmo Vänskä, Leonard Slatkin, Jessie Montgomery, Billy Childs, Anna Clyne, Awadagin Pratt, and Steven Banks.

This summer, he returns to Tanglewood to conduct two performances. First, he leads the Boston University Tanglewood Institute Young Artists Orchestra in a program featuring works by Price and Shostakovich. He will then share the podium with Elim Chan and Keith Lockhart for the annual *Tanglewood on Parade* concert in the Koussevitzky Music Shed. Following his Tanglewood appearances, he will make his European debut with the Dresdner Philharmonie and returns to the Philadelphia Ballet to conduct select performances of George Balanchine’s *The Nutcracker*.

Na’Zir’s commitment to education and community engagement work deepened during his tenure, while conducting programs across all of the DSO concert series. He fostered cross-genre collaborations and built meaningful partnerships with schools, local organizations, and cultural institutions – ensuring that the orchestra is not only heard but felt throughout the city.

At just 25 years old, career highlights have included debuts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony Orchestra, Ann Arbor Symphony

Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, and Philadelphia Ballet. Additionally, McFadden led a recording project with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, featuring Hilary Hahn as soloist.

In 2024, McFadden was a Conducting Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, where he was mentored by BSO Music Director Andris Nelsons, Gustavo Dudamel, Alan Gilbert, Thomas Wilkins, and Dima Slobodeniouk. As a fellow, he conducted the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in numerous performances, including a successful last-minute step-in to conduct Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony in Ozawa Hall.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Na'Zir began his musical training as a clarinetist at the age of nine and started conducting while still at school. He studied conducting with Paul Bryan of the Curtis Institute of Music and later at DePaul University with Cliff Colnot. In 2020, he became the Robert L. Poster Conducting Apprentice of the New York Youth Symphony and was also appointed the inaugural Apprentice Conductor of the Philadelphia Ballet, with whom he maintains a close relationship.

With a leadership style that is both passionate and inclusive, Na'Zir McFadden continues to redefine what it means to be a 21st-century conductor – one whose impact extends far beyond the downbeat.

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