

Lee M. Wilkins, Violin

Violinist Dr. Lee Murray Wilkins, born in Anchorage, Alaska, returns to Anchorage from Rochester, New York where he held the position of Senior Instructor of Violin and Associate Professor of Violin and String Pedagogy at the Eastman School of Music and performed with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra as violinist and soloist.

Dr. Wilkins' performance career has spanned the globe as a recitalist, soloist, chamber musician and educator. He has served as Concertmaster of many of New York City's finest orchestras. Wilkins' solo performances have been described by the New York Times as "magical" and "elevated to a level of enchantment." He is the recipient of the Eastman School of Music's Jack L. Frank Award for Excellence in Teaching. His former teachers include Ivan Galamian, Dorothy DeLay and Josef Gingold.

A versatile and multi-genre performer, Wilkins has performed for such diverse events as the 350th Anniversary of Harvard University, the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea, the Montreal Comedy Festival's "Juste Pour Rire", Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion" and the PBS Film "Bach to the Future". He has even been spotted performing as soloist with several orchestras on the Musical Saw, Stroh (trumpet) violin and a fishing pole! Wilkins is the creator of "Phil'har-har'monic!" a witty and comical venture into the rarified world of the Symphony Orchestra.

Founder and first violinist of the Hampshire String Quartet, Wilkins toured extensively across North America, Asia and Europe, performing and commissioning new compositions for string quartet. These concerts culminated in a Carnegie Hall debut, recordings with Opus One Records, Musical Heritage Society, CMS, CRI records, as well as concerts at Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall, Symphony Space, the Abraham Goodman House, the 92nd St. "YMHA" and Aldeburgh, England. In addition he became an artist in residence at the Manhattan School of Music, Columbia University and City College of New York. Wilkins' performances have been broadcast on WXXI, WQXR, WNYC, WFUV, KSKA, WNED, WQLN, Bulgarian National Radio, BBC Radio, NPR's "Performance Today", "Morning Pro Musica" and Minnesota Public Radio. He has been a member of the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra since 1982. In 1989, he was a founder of the Chautauqua Chamber Music Society, renowned for its creative and original performances. As a Violin soloist, Wilkins has performed with the Rochester Philharmonic, Shumen, Bulgaria Philharmonic, the Erie Philharmonic, the West Virginia Symphony, the Allegheny Symphony, the Anchorage Symphony, the New York City Symphony, the Peoria Symphony Orchestra, the Fairfield Chamber Orchestra, the Little Orchestra Society, the Alaska Festival of Music, The Chautauqua Symphony, The Chautauqua Chamber Orchestra, the Western New York Chamber Orchestra, the Scranton Bach Festival Orchestra, The June in Buffalo Orchestra, the Fairfield Chamber Orchestra, the Naples Orchestra and Chorus, the Erick Hawkins Dance Company Orchestra, I Musici de Montreal and the EPOCH Chamber Orchestra.

As an educator, Dr. Wilkins has been a full-time Professor of Music at Mercyhurst College, Allegheny College and The Eastman School of Music. He holds a Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees from Indiana University-Bloomington and a Doctorate from SUNY-Stony Brook.

As a composer, Wilkins' full-length comic Ballet, "The Little Mermaid" has been performed by three different Ballet companies since 1993. The Ballet, "Aladdin" has been commissioned by the Central Illinois Ballet. In addition, Wilkins composes and arranges educational, virtuoso and humorous pieces for soloists, symphonies orchestras, school orchestras and chamber groups. One of his arrangements was featured in the 2000 Miss America Pageant.

As a conductor, he has conducted the Erie Philharmonic, the Chautauqua Chamber Orchestra, the Fredonia Chamber Players, the Anchorage Festival of Music Orchestra, the Scranton Bach Festival orchestra, the Western State College orchestra, the Allegheny Symphony, the Mercyhurst College Symphony and Ballet orchestra, the Chautauqua Regional Youth Orchestra, the Jamestown Civic Orchestra and the Pennsylvania All-State High School Orchestra Festival.

Dr. Wilkins performs on a 1771 Ferdinand Gagliano violin made in Naples, Italy.