

R.E.M.'s Mike Mills and classical violinist Robert McDuffie
In CHICAGO PREMIERE of *Concerto for Violin, Rock Band, and String*
Orchestra
Featuring Chicago's own Fifth House Ensemble



Robert McDuffie, Mike Mills; credit CAMI

CHICAGO – The Harris Theater for Music and Dance is pleased to present the Chicago premiere of *Concerto for Violin, Rock Band and String Orchestra*, the first-ever classical work composed and performed by **R.E.M. bassist and songwriter Mike Mills**. Mills composed the concerto for his longtime friend and new musical collaborator, **critically acclaimed violinist Robert McDuffie**, with whom Mills has been close since the two grew up together in Macon, GA. The pair will be joined by **Chicago's own Fifth House Ensemble** which has been praised by *The New York Times* for its "conviction, authority and finesse." Full program is below. *Concerto for Violin, Rock Band and String Orchestra* is out now via Orange Mountain Music.

About the piece Mills says, "It is a pleasure and an honor to have composed and to perform this amazing project alongside my old friend Bobby, whose imagination and encouragement got the whole thing off the ground in the first place. I can't wait to see where it takes us."

“Mike has created a beautiful and joyful concerto,” McDuffie adds. “It’s a work that goes straight to your heart, and by the end you’ll want to dance and move to the South. I’m delighted and honored (and a bit nervous!) to be making music and sharing the stage with Mike and his amazing colleagues. It’s going to be an awesome ride.”

Listen to *Concerto* movement “Sonny Side Up” which *Rolling Stone* calls “...a propulsive, upbeat piece full of weeping violin, driving rhythm guitar and an energetic backbeat,” [HERE](#).

The concerto, with orchestration and additional music by David Mallamud, features McDuffie performing on violin; a four-member rock band led by composer Mills (performing on bass and keyboard) with two electric guitarists and a drummer; and a string orchestra. The *Toronto Star* hailed the piece’s world debut as “a winning way to introduce symphony to a new generation.”

Learn more about the project in an interview with Mills over at the *Wall Street Journal* “Speakeasy” blog [HERE](#).

Mike Mills is one of the founding members of R.E.M., the internationally-acclaimed rock band from Athens, GA, and a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. His trademark vocal harmonies and intricate bass lines led fans and critics alike to dub him the band’s “secret weapon.” R.E.M. was formed in 1980 by singer Michael Stipe, guitarist Peter Buck, bassist Mike Mills, and drummer Bill Berry. One of the first popular alternative rock bands, R.E.M. gained early popular attention from its first single, “Radio Free Europe”, in 1981. After three decades of record breaking CD sales, sold-out live performances in the largest rock venues in the world, and induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (2007), R.E.M. amicably disbanded in 2011. Their legacy and fan base remains very strong, demonstrated by over 4.6 million Facebook fans.

Grammy nominated, Juilliard-trained violinist Robert McDuffie enjoys a dynamic and multi-faceted career. While appearing as soloist with the world’s foremost orchestras, he can also be found sharing the stage with Gregg Allman and Chuck Leavell in “Midnight Rider,” with actress/playwright Anna Deavere Smith in Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” or playing Bach for Memphis Jook dancer Lil Buck. Philip Glass dedicated his second violin concerto, “The American Four Seasons,” to McDuffie. He is also the founder of both the Rome Chamber Music Festival in Italy and The Robert McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University in his native city of Macon, Georgia.

Concerto for Violin, Rock Band and String Orchestra full program:

John Adams, *Road Movies*

- I. Relaxed Groove
- II. Meditative
- III. 40% Swing

Philip Glass, *Symphony No.3*

- I. Movement I
- II. Movement II
- III. Movement III
- IV. Movement IV

Mike Mills, *Concerto for Violin, Rock Band, and String Orchestra***

- I. Pour It Like You Mean It
- II. On the Okeefenokee
- III. Sonny Side Up
- IV. Stardancers’ Waltz
- V. Nightswimming

VI. You Can Go Home Again

***Orchestration and additional music by David Mallamud*

All single tickets are available through the Harris Theater Box Office at 205 East Randolph Drive, 312.334.7777, and online at HarrisTheaterChicago.org.

••• All programs, prices, and dates are subject to change •••

Sponsorship

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The Northern Trust Company is the Harris Theater's 2016–2017 season sponsor. United Airlines is the official airline of the Harris Theater. The Theater gratefully acknowledges the Irving Harris Foundation for its leadership support of the Presenting Fund.

About Harris Theater for Music and Dance

The Harris Theater's primary mission is to partner with an array of Chicago's music and dance performing arts organizations to help them build the resources and infrastructure necessary to achieve artistic growth and long-term organizational sustainability. The Harris Theater's original group of 12 resident companies has grown to include 35 diverse organizations. Through these partnerships, the Theater has earned national recognition as a distinctive model for collaboration, performance, and artistic advancement.

Opened on November 8, 2003, the Harris Theater for Music and Dance was the first multi-use performing arts venue to be built in the Chicago downtown area since 1929. Today the Theater continues to host the most diverse offerings of any venue in Chicago, featuring the city's world-renowned music and dance institutions and the Harris Theater Presents series of acclaimed national and international artists and ensembles.

Imagine: The Campaign for Harris Theater, is a \$38.8M comprehensive fundraising effort supporting the Theater's multifaceted mission. The campaign ensures the continued growth and artistic development of the Harris Theater over the next 10 years.

The *Imagine* campaign is led by four transformational gifts: from The Irving Harris Foundation, Joan W. Harris; Alexandra and John Nichols; Chauncey and Marion D. McCormick Family Foundation, Abby McCormick O'Neil and D. Carroll Joynes; Caryn and King Harris, The Harris Family Foundation. Additional leadership gifts supporting programmatic and capital projects have been generously funded by Jay Franke and David Herro, The Crown Family, Jack and Sandra Guthman, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Neisser Family Foundation, The Northern Trust Company, Zell Family Foundation, Laura and Ricardo Rosenkranz, Christine and Glenn Kelly, Jim and Kay Mabie, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and Marilyn and David J. Vitale.

The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust and Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust are the lead underwriters of fundraising for *Imagine: The Campaign for Harris Theater*.

The Harris Theater maintains a commitment to engaging Chicago residents of all ages and communities. Programs like the popular *Eat to the Beat* and *Exelon Family Series* advance access to, and understanding of, the performing arts. The Theater partners with health and human service agencies, K-12 schools, and community arts organizations, providing more than 8,800 underwritten performance tickets through the *Access Tickets Program* since 2009. The Theater also

connects gifted young artists and students to presented artists through master classes, artist talks, and other enrichment activities.

To learn more about the Harris Theater, please visit HarrisTheaterChicago.org. Call the Box Office at 312.334.7777 to request a brochure or additional information.

The Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago's state-of-the art 1,525-seat performance venue, can also be found on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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