



Community Arts Program (CAP)

2026 Summer Concert Series

41st Season!

CLAYTON STEPHENSON *

"Not just a remarkable virtuoso, but a poet, a dramatist, and a master story-teller." - Gramophone

Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 7:30 p.m.

Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ



American pianist **Clayton Stephenson's** love for music is immediately apparent in his joyous charisma onstage, expressive power, and natural ease at the instrument. Hailed for "extraordinary narrative and poetic gifts" and interpretations that are "fresh, incisive and characterfully alive" (Gramophone), he is committed to making an impact on the world through his music-making.

Growing up in New York City, Clayton started piano lessons at age seven, and the next year was accepted into The Juilliard School's Music Advancement Program—a full scholarship program for under-represented students—where he lingered to watch student recitals and fell in love with music. He advanced to Juilliard's elite Pre-College at age 10—with the help of his teacher at the time, Beth Nam, who gave him countless extra lessons without charge—to study with Matti Raekallio, Hung-Kuang Chen, and Ernest Barretta. Clayton practiced on a synthesizer at home until he found an old upright piano on the street that an elementary school had thrown away. That would become his practice piano for the next six years, until the Lang Lang Foundation donated a new piano to him when he was 17.

Clayton credits the generous support of community programs with providing him musical inspiration and resources along the way. As he describes it, the "Third Street Music School jump-started my music education; the Young People's Choir taught me phrasing and voicing; Juilliard's Music Advancement Program introduced me to formal and rigorous piano training, which enabled me to get into Juilliard Pre-College; the Morningside Music Bridge validated my talent and elevated my self-confidence; the Boy's Club of New York exposed me to jazz; and the Lang Lang Foundation brought me to stages worldwide and transformed me from a piano student to a young artist."

Recent and upcoming highlights include concertos with the Houston, North Carolina, and Cincinnati Symphonies; festival appearances at Grand Teton, Grant Park, and Tippet Rise; recitals at Washington Performing Arts at the Kennedy Center, Fondation Louis Vuitton, and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall; gala performances with the New York and Las Vegas Philharmonics; and collaborations with violinists Nikki and Timothy Chooi. Clayton also joined the Hartford Symphony Orchestra as 2024–2025 Artist-in-Residence.

Clayton graduated from the Harvard-New England Conservatory (NEC) dual degree program in spring 2023 with a bachelor's degree in economics at Harvard and a master's degree in piano performance at NEC under Wha Kyung Byun. In addition to being the first Black finalist at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2022, he received an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2024, won the inaugural Nina Simone Piano Competition in 2023, and is a 2025 Sphinx Medal of Excellence honoree. Dazzling brilliance awaits, in a Community Arts Program (CAP) 2026 Summer Concert Series evening with Clayton Stephenson!

****Clayton Stephenson will also conduct a FREE 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Friday, August 7 CAP Summer Master Class open to all at Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ.***

Press Contact Person, Phone, and Email

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