

MARK AGNOR

VIOLINIST CONDUCTOR CONCERTMASTER

Chicago-based violinist and conductor Mark Agnor has led and performed with more than 50 orchestras in 38 countries while on worldwide tours with pop opera group IL Divo and operatic tenor Paul Potts. He has also appeared across the U.S. as electric violin soloist with Mannheim Steamroller in its annual Christmas tours. Mark's successes on stage and podium are built on rigorous classical training and a fearless approach to popular crossover genres. Out of more than two decades of wide-ranging musical adventures, Mark has emerged as an audience favorite, while garnering international recognition for his expressive performance and leadership.

In June of 2006, Mark joined IL Divo as concertmaster for the final segment of their inaugural tour, and was conductor and violin soloist for their entire 2007 world touring season. Impresario Simon Cowell's IL Divo is a quartet of male singers with record sales of more than 22 million and a vast worldwide following. Their arrangements of popular classical and pop songs, featuring a rock band and a 20-piece orchestra, have been called "Pop Opera Crossover." It was Mark's responsibility to see that each of the "local" orchestras achieved seamless coordination with the "backing track" used in performance.

In addition to his onstage performance, Mark's duties included tour preparation of sheet music scores and parts utilizing Finale music notation software, and coordination of day-of-show logistics with orchestra musicians at each show venue.

Mark appears on IL Divo's 2006 DVD "Live at the Greek". He also prepared the performance scores for IL Divo's guest artist appearances on Barbra Streisand's U.S. tour in the fall of that year. In November 2007, Mark presided over an IL Divo performance in Dubai that combined the quartet with the 110-musician Yerevan (Armenia) Philharmonic and the 370-voice National Choir of Armenia – a total of nearly 500 musicians.

In 2008, Mark embarked on a 77-concert world tour as music director for operatic tenor and "Britain's Got Talent" winner Paul Potts. Mark led the show as conductor, except when joining Paul beside the piano as violin soloist. A new guest artist or group was integrated into the show in each different region of the world, performing one selection as a duet with Paul. Guest artists included Natasha Marsh, The Three Graces, Elizabeth Marvelly, Illumina, and Kim Eun Kyung. Preferring the intimacy of theatres to arenas, and without the rock band preferred by IL Divo, Mr. Potts's show was musically more classical, but with a pop sensibility featuring a small onstage orchestra and full orchestral backing track.

Later in the 2008 tour Pott's show incorporated larger forces – in May, Mr. Potts was joined by the 48-piece Prime Philharmonic in Korea. In July, Mark's tenure with the Paul Potts "One Chance" world tour came to a triumphant close in Sweden with three outdoor performances accompanied by full symphony orchestra. The 64-piece "live" orchestra featured members of the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra and violinist Linda Lampenius as guest artist.

Prior to his recent touring career, Mark has had extensive experience across the entire spectrum of classical music from chamber music to orchestral and opera. He has held concertmaster positions with the Sarasota Opera (1991-1997) and The Mantovani Orchestra with whom he toured from 1985-89.

Beginning in the late 90s, Mark recorded and performed with several groups that blend classical music forms with various popular styles. The first of these was Peter Saltzman's Revolution Ensemble – an intriguing 10-piece group consisting of classical string quartet, jazz quartet, rhythm section, and vocals. The Revolution Ensemble was the first of the interesting "cross-over" projects that lured Mark away from traditional classical genres, but Mark's collaboration with Chicago blues harpist Corky Siegel sealed the deal.

From 1999 through 2006, Mark performed internationally with Corky Siegel's Chamber Blues in a unique marriage of blues harp, classical string quartet, and world percussion. During this same period, Mark performed and recorded with Jim Gailloreto's Jazz String Quintet, an ensemble comprised of jazz soprano sax and string quartet. Mark was also a founding member of the Orquestra de Samba, with which he performed on violin, euphonium, percussion and vocals. The ODS is a collaboration by ten Chicago area musicians, with classical, jazz, latin, and Brazilian musical backgrounds, exploring the rich traditions of Brazilian music. Together, these exciting projects comprised the wonderful complementary flavors of this "crossover" love affair.

In Chicago, Mark is frequently sought out to perform with a wide variety of commercial studio recording projects and touring productions, as well as casual engagements and concert performances. As a side musician he has also had the pleasure of performing with Ray Charles, Celine Dion, Josh Groban, Andrea Bocelli, Led Zeppelin, Smokey Robinson, Yes, Earth Wind & Fire, Siegel-Schwall Blues Band, Peter Cetera, Dennis DeYoung, The Moody Blues, Don Henley, Burt Bacharach, Ron Isley, Doobie Brothers, Yanni, Linda Ronstadt, Dionne Warwick, The Pointer Sisters, George Benson, Three Irish Tenors, and others. In addition, he has made many TV appearances on the Oprah Winfrey Show, David Letterman Show, and PBS Soundstage.

Born in Lakewood, Ohio

Lakewood High School 1978

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