**John Thomas Dodson**

2881 Peachtree Road NE, #801

Atlanta, GA 30305

734/489.3326

[johnthomasdodson@gmail.com](mailto:johnthomasdodson@gmail.com)

[johnthomasdodson.com](http://johnthomasdodson.com/)

[MindfulnessforPerformers.com](http://mindfulnessforperformers.com/)

[substanceofleadership.com](http://substanceofleadership.com/)

**SUMMARY**

John Thomas Dodson is an American conductor, composer, mindfulness teacher, and public speaker specializing in exploring creativity, leadership and play.

As a musician, John Thomas Dodson brings a wealth of experience to the podium. He has served as music director, principal conductor, and artistic director for numerous orchestras, festivals and arts organizations in the US and abroad. Dodson has guest conducted professional orchestras in world-renowned venues, collaborated in opera and ballet productions, recorded for the Naxos label, and commissioned and premiered over twenty-five new works in Europe, North America and Russia. He is the founding Artistic Director of Conciertos de la Villa de Santo Domingo, where he conducted and presented concerts and educational programs for over a decade in the Renaissance and Baroque Era historic buildings of the Colonial City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. His music is available from Subito Music Distributors.

Currently John Thomas Dodson serves as the Principal Guest Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the oldest community orchestra in Atlanta, Georgia, the Atlanta Community Symphony Orchestra, as it celebrates its 65th season. He continues in his roles as Artistic Director of Conciertos de la Villa de Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic and Music Director of the Lexington Bach Festival in Southeast Michigan. Dodson recently completed a three-year engagement as Principal Conductor of the Cleveland Women’s Orchestra, leading concerts in Severance Hall, and conducting Puccini’s *Manon Lescaut* with the Cleveland Opera.

In the area of mindfulness, John Thomas Dodson has become increasingly interested in helping performers use mindfulness practices to enhance their creativity, overcome mental obstacles and consistently attain high levels of artistry. He was selected to participate in a National Endowment for the Humanities program, studying Buddhist practices in the Himalayas at the College of the Holy Cross with faculty from Holy Cross and Harvard University. Dodson has taken courses in Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction programs at UCLA Mindfulness Awareness Research Center and UMass Memorial Center. He attended numerous silent meditation retreats learning the techniques of Vipassana meditation and is a member of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center. Dodson now leads mindfulness seminars, and workshops internationally in schools, colleges and conservatories, including sessions at Greece’s Thessaloniki State Conservatory, the Dominican Republic's National Conservatory of Music, and in the United States at Oberlin College-Conservatory, Washington College, University of Pennsylvania Kutztown Summer Music Festival and Chopin Academy of Atlanta.

As a public speaker, John Thomas Dodson frequently appears as a presenter at international conferences in the US and abroad. He has spoken at national conferences of the International Conductors Guild and the League of American Orchestras and annually at the Creativity Conference, serving a broad community of creatives in many art forms from across the world.

As an educator, Dodson has worked with students from high school, college and graduate levels. He served on the faculty of the Tennessee Governor’s School for the Arts and numerous summer music festivals and conducted youth orchestras in the United States and Europe. While at the Cleveland Women’s Orchestra, Dodson initiated an internship program and mentored two conducting interns from Oberlin College-Conservatory of Music and Cleveland Institute of Music. In the Dominican Republic, Dodson worked with young musicians in the El Sistema program, as a clinician for the youth orchestra and the National Conservatory of Music’s orchestra. In partnership with Fundácion de la Villa, the Ministry of Culture and the National Conservatory of Music he created an Early Music program, purchasing instruments and hosting Artist Teachers from the United States in the areas of voice, cello, harpsichord, Renaissance lute, Baroque guitar and theorbo. In higher education, Dodson was an Associate Professor of Music at Tennessee Technological University and Adrian College where he received the Newsom Award for Teaching Excellence.

A graduate of Johns Hopkins University, John Thomas Dodson holds a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from the Peabody Conservatory of Music, where he studied under renowned conducting pedagogue Frederik Prausnitz. He continued his studies as a Conducting Fellow at the Aspen Music School with Paul Vermel. Dodson studied composition at Tennessee Technological University with Robert Jager and was mentored in strings by Francis Elliott, a student of Arturo Toscanini’s concertmaster, Mischa Mischakoff. He continued his string mentoring under Ed Meyer, father of the Grammy Award-winning composer and virtuoso bassist, Edgar Meyer. Dodson is a recipient of the Lenawee Arts Award from the Croswell Opera House, the American Symphony Orchestra League’s Sally Parker Education Award, Tennessee Technological University's Outstanding Young Alumnus Award. As a recognition for his commitment to building vibrant arts communities he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, from Siena Heights University.

**CONDUCTING POSITIONS (MUSIC DIRECTOR)**

**Conciertos de la Villa de Santo Domingo (**[**conciertosdelavilla.com**](http://www.conciertosdelavilla.com)**)** 2011 – Present

Artistic Director and Co-founder of annual music festival in the Colonial City, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

* conducted professional chamber orchestra, Camerata Colonial, in concerts held in UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Musicians were from New York City Ballet Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Houston Symphony, Mostly Mozart Orchestra, Toledo Symphony, Detroit Opera Orchestra, Lansing Symphony, and faculty from University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Hartt School of Music, DePaul University and others.
* Presented all Bach Brandenburg Concerti performed by the Handel and Haydn Society Orchestra on period instruments in Iglésia Regina Angelorum, a historic Colonial City church built in the same year as that of Bach’s manuscript
* created Early Music Residencies with Teaching Artists specializing in Performance Practices of the Renaissance, Baroque and Classical eras for students of the National Conservatory of Music and Ministry of Culture’s choral ensemble, Coro Koribe
* purchased Early Music instruments (harpsichord, Renaissance Lute, Baroque Guitar, Theorbo from the United State, Spain and France to be donated to the Dominican Republic
* hosted nationally syndicated festival for Public Radio International broadcast on National Public Radio
* engaged guest artists (e.g., Kurt Nikkanen, Paul Silverthorne, Axiom Brass, Handel and Haydn Society)
* developed and conducted nation-wide educational concerts
* created videos of concerts for major corporations to stream to clients
* initiated livestreaming of major concerts from the Dominican Republic, Chicago and New York during COVID Pandemic
* introduced programs for at-risk youth and emerging Dominican musicians including solo recitals, master classes and collaborative musical experiences with festival musicians

**Lexington Bach Festival (**[**lexingtonbachfestival.org**](http://www.lexingtonbachfestival.org) **)** 2015 – Present

Music Director of Music Festival located in Michigan’s Blue Water resort area of Lake Huron

* conduct Festival Orchestra made up of professional musicians from Ohio and Michigan
* engage acclaimed guest artists (e.g., Caroline Goulding, Josefien Stoppelenburg, Andreas Klein, Mark Markham, Duo Sylviio Lute Duet)
* perform repertoire by J.S. Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Boyce, Purcell, Rameau, Mozart, Handel, Beethoven
* initiated relationship with Cleveland Institute of Music faculty members to engage outstanding graduate students for concertmaster position, first violin section and other key positions in the festival orchestra

**Atlanta Community Symphony Orchestra (**[**acsorch.org**](http://acsorch.org/)**)** 2022 - 2023

Principal Guest Conductor and Artistic Advisor

* conduct three concerts with Atlanta’s oldest community orchestra during a post-pandemic reorganization
* collaborate with guest artists (e.g. Piotr Folkert)
* prepare the organization to embark on a search for a new music director

**Cleveland Women’s Orchestra (**[**clevelandwomensorchestra.org**](http://clevelandwomensorchestra.org/)**)** 2019 - 2022

Principal Conductor and Music Advisor of American’s Oldest Women’s Orchestra

a three-year appointment while orchestra implements a music director search process

* conducted orchestra concerts at Maltz Center for the Performing Arts and Severance Hall
* led opera performances with The Cleveland Opera
* collaborated with outstanding guest artists (e.g. Jinjoo Cho, Antonio Pompa-Baldi)

**Birmingham Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra (**[**bbso.org**](http://www.bbso.org)**)** 2013 – 2016

Music Director of professional metropolitan orchestra

* engaged acclaimed guest artists (e.g., Shai Wosner, Janet Sung)
* substantially expanded orchestra's performance venues across Greater Detroit
* initiated collaborations with contemporary composers
* initiated new partnerships with area businesses for onsite performances
* administered annual solo competition
* initiated concert broadcasts on local cable television and radio
* dramatically increased orchestra's educational and community outreach activities

Adrian Symphony Orchestra ([adriansymphony.org](http://www.adriansymphony.org)) 2001- 2015

Music Director of professional regional orchestra

* Co-commisisioned Christopher Theofanidis’s Virtue and led the Michigan premiere
* Conducted Beethoven symphonic cycle in Bärenreiter edition
* collaborated with American composers (e.g. Michael Daugherty, Bright Sheng, Christopher Theofanidis, Robert Jager)
* engaged acclaimed guest soloists (e.g., Philippe Entremont, Cecil Licad, Maria Asteriadou, Adele Anthony, David Aaron Carpenter, Yannis Tsitselikis, Leah Crocetto)
* collaborated with local university and college choruses in repertoire from Handel, Beethoven and Brahms
* introduced new concert-genres and broadened performance venues to increase audience reach
* introduced Carnegie Hall’s Link Up program as part of the creation of an all-ages educational program
* created an artist-based community-engagement program to double donor base
* initiated a two-year Composer in Residence project with Grammy Award Winner, Kenneth Fuchs
* selected for League of American Orchestra’s 3-year Institutional Vision Program mentored by Tom Morris and Lowell Noteboom

Bryan Symphony Orchestra (bryansymphony.org) 1993 – 2001

Music Director of professional per-service symphonic orchestra

* conducted all subscription concerts
* engaged guest artists (e.g., Jan Vogler, Rieko Aizawa, Alan Stepansky, Jerome Ashby)
* annually commissions and premieres of Robert Jager orchestral works later recorded for Naxos
* grew audiences-served to sold-out hall capacity
* two-time recipient of the American Symphony Orchestra League’s Sally Parker Education Award
* created and hosted introduction to programs, *Prelude and Coffee,* for local PBS TV affiliate

Orchestra New York 1990 – 1993

Music Director of Manhattan-based professional per-service chamber orchestra

* Orchestra-in-Residence at St. Luke’s Church
* Featured at Lincoln Center’s Vincent Persichetti Retrospective
* Invited to perform at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall

Coronado Music Festival 1987 - 1990

* Founded summer music program, Coronado Music Festival, in Mt. Lemmon Ski Valley
* Invited orchestral musicians from across the United States for chamber music and orchestra concerts
* Invited guest artists from Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (Allan Vogel, Paul Shure, Bonnie Douglas, Harold Wolf)

Philharmonia Orchestra of Tucson (now the Tucson Youth Symphony) 1985 – 1990

Music Director of community/youth orchestra

* Conducted annual World Premieres by Richard Faith and Camil van Hulse
* Established “for-credit” partnership with Pima Community College’s Department of Music

**DANCE AND OPERA CONDUCTING EXPERIENCE (Selected)**

**Cleveland Opera: Puccini’s Manon Lescaut** 2020

**Yale Opera/New Haven Symphony: Puccini’s Suor Angelica** 2015

**Ballet Theatre of Toledo: Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker** 2006 – 2009

**COVER CONDUCTING**

**St. Louis Symphony:** for Marin Alsop, Ivan Fischer, David Loebel 1990 – 1993

Guest Conducting engagements & COLLABORATIONS

**Thessaloniki Megaro Youth Symphony Orchestra,** Thessaloniki, Greece2023

**Colorado All State Symphony Orchestra,** Fort Collins, Colorado2023

**Longmont Symphony Orchestra,** Longmont, Colorado2021

**Cleveland Opera,** Cleveland, Ohio 2020

**Annapolis Chamber Orchestra**; Annapolis, Maryland 2020

**West Michigan Symphony Orchestra**; Muskegon, Michigan 2013, 2019

**Cleveland Women’s Orchestra** (Memorial Concert for Late Music Director Robert Cronquist) 2019

**Roraima Symphony Orchestra** (Venezuelan Émigré Orchestra); Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic 2017

**New Haven Symphony Orchestra & Yale Opera**, New Haven, Massachusetts 2015

**Sewanee Summer Music Center**; Sewanee, Tennessee 1995 – 1996, 1998, 2013

**Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra**; Bloomfield, Michigan 2010 – 2012

**Athens State Symphony Orchestra**; Athens, Greece 2010

**Firelands Symphony Orchestra;** Huron, Ohio 2009

**Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra**; St. Joseph, Michigan 2007

**Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional of the Dominican Republic**; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic 2006

**National Symphony Orchestra of Bashkortostan**; Ufa, Russia 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005

**Omsk State Philharmonic**; Omsk, Russia 1999 - 2005

**Bialystok Symphony Orchestra**; Bialystok, Poland 2002

**Irkutsk Philharmonic**; Irkutsk, Russia 1999

**National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia**; Tomsk, Russia 1999

**Orquesta Sinfónica UANL**; Monterrey, Mexico 1998, 1999

**Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra**; Rochester, New York 1994, 1997

**Colorado Symphony Orchestra** Summer Training Program; Denver, Colorado 1997

**Tucson Symphony Orchestra**; Tucson, Arizona 1989

**Evansville Philharmonic**; Evansville, Indiana 1988

**Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra**; Budapest, Hungary 1987

notable Guest conducting VENUES

**Boettcher Concert Hall,** Denver, Colorado

**Carnegie Hall**, New York, New York

**Eastman Theatre**, Rochester, New York

**Hill Auditorium,** Ann Arbor, Michigan

**Hungarian State Opera House**, Budapest, Hungary

**Lincoln Center**, New York, New York

**Megaron Concert Hall**, Athens, Greece

**National Theatre**, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

**Severance Hall**, Cleveland, Ohio

**Television/radio BROADCASTS**

**Public Radio International/National Public Radio** 2017

**WRCJ Classical Radio,** Detroit, Michigan 2015 - 2017

**Michigan Public Radio,** Muskegon, Michigan 2013, 2019

**West Bloomfield Television,** Bloomfield Township, Michigan 2013 - 2017

**Greece Classical Radio,** Athens, Greece 2010

**Bashkortostan Television,** Ufa, Bashkortostan 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005

**Raíces Radio**, Dominican Republic 2017

**Bialystok Televisio n,** Bialystok, Poland 2002

**UNAL Radio,** Monterrey, Mexico 1998, 1999

**Tennessee Public Television,** Cookeville, Tennessee1991 - 1993

**Hungarian State Radio,** Budapest, Hungary 1987

**RECORDINGS**

**NAXOS Records:** I Dream of Peace: Orchestral Music by Robert Jager 2011

Omsk Philharmonic Orchestra, St. Louis Children’s Choir, Stephanie Winker, Michael Lackey

**ASO:** Vivaldi’s Four Seasons 2007

Janet Sung, Violin; Adrian Symphony Orchestra

**COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY FACULTY TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Adrian College, Associate Professor** 2001 – 2012

• *Ross Newsom Award for Outstanding Teaching*

Courses Taught: Conducting, Form and Analysis, Music History, Orchestration

**Tennessee Technological University, Associate Professor** 1993 – 2001

*• Pan-Hellenic Faculty of the Year Award*

Courses Taught: Conducting, University Orchestra, Music Appreciation

**MINDFULNESS TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Thessaloniki State Conservatory,** Thessaloniki, Greece2023

Mindfulness for Performers: Balancing Awareness & Concentration, Self-Talk: Non-learning verbal loops

**Atlanta Chopin Academy,** Atlanta, Georgia 2022

Introduction to Mindfulness

**University of Pennsylvania Kutztown – Summer Music Festival;** Kutztown, Pennsylvania2020, 2021, 2023

Free to Play: Developing Mindfulness for Performing Artists, Conducting

**Washington College – Department of Music;** Chestertown, Maryland2020

Mindfulness for Musicians Seminar

**Oberlin College – Conservatory of Music;** Oberlin, Ohio2019 – Present

Mindfulness for Musicians, Finding Center

Multi-week online and on-site seminars focusing on concentration, COVID isolation issues,

habit building techniques, addressing anxiety, stage fright & perfectionism

**Dominican Republic National Conservatory of Music** 2018, 2019

Masterclasses with Conservatory Orchestra

Mindfulness for Musicians Seminars

**Huron High School Music Department** 2019

Mindfulness for Musicians Presentation

**ADDITIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Siena Heights University** 2013, 2014

Guest Lecturer

**Tennessee Governor’s School for the Arts;** Murfreesboro, Tennessee 1996 – 2006

Music Faculty: Orchestra, Inter-Disciplinary Education for Artists

**Columbia University;** New York, New York 1993

Guest Lecturer

**Arrangements/Orchestrations**

**Performances** by Detroit Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops, West-Michigan Symphony Orchestra, Adrian Symphony Orchestra, Lexington Bach Festival Orchestra, Cleveland Women’s Orchestra

**Subito Music Distributors** – World-wide representation

**GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE**

**Tennessee Technological University Faculty Senate** 1999 – 2001

**GRANTS ADMINISTRATION EXPERIENCE**

**National Endowment for the Arts: Artists Communities Panel** 1992 – 1993

* Member in 1st year; Appointed Panel Chair for the 2nd year

**ADMINISTRATION EXPERIENCE**

**Tennessee Technological University Performing Arts Series** 1998 – 2001

* Administered campus-wide performing arts series funded through student fees
* Invited a variety of guest artists ranging from a traditional Tibetan music ensemble to the Moscow Chamber Orchestra
* Hosted guest artists, responsible for engaging all performers and managing artist visits

**The Yard, A Colony for Performing Artists** 1990 - 1993

Administrative Director of residency programs supporting modern dance

* Worked with Paul Taylor, Bessie Schönberg and Patricia Nanon in hosting multi-week residencies for choreographers and dance companies on Martha’s Vineyard each summer, followed by a season at the Joyce Theatre in New York.
* Successfully wrote grant proposals to the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and numerous private foundations in the New York City area to support programs.
* Managed office and production staff, organized artists’ housing, and was responsible for all performances.
* Worked with Artistic Director, Board of Directors and Advisory Board members in support of The Yard’s mission

**INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS**

**The Creativity Conference Featured Speaker,** 2020 – Present

Featured Speaker, Music Panel Chair, Writers’ Panel for an annual international gathering of creatives from the fields of music, film, photography, literature, theater, dance and visual arts

*Invited to speak at Reykjavik, Iceland Conference in August of 2023*

* The Mind at Play: Getting Free
* Becoming an Explorer: The Virtues of Getting Intentionally Lost
* Falling Up the Mountain: Using Failure Points to Ascend

**League of American Orchestras National Conference** 2012 – 2014

Session Leader for Conducting Groups

* Building Artistic Communities
* Budgeting for Music Directors
* Programming for Music Directors

**League of American Orchestras Essentials of Orchestra Management** 2012

Presenter

* Building Artistic Communities – a new model

**Conductors Guild International Conference** 2012 –2013

Presenter

* Contemporary Music Programming: Commissioning new works

**American Symphony Orchestra League National Conference** 1995

Panelist/Presenter

* Contemporary Music Programming: Commissioning new works

**CONSULTING EXPERIENCE (Selected)**

**Cleveland Women’s Orchestra** 2019 – Present

* Board of Directors: Policies on Conflict of Interest, Board Member Agreement, Confidentiality, Best Practices, Task Forces – Orchestra Handbook, New members, Conductor Search
* Manager: Best Practices, Venue Selections, Grants

**Stanislav Consulting** 2015 – 2017

* Created Substance of Leadership: Practicing Internal Transformation – a humanities-based corporate leadership development program for emerging leaders (substanceofleadership.com)

**Muncie Symphony Orchestra** 2011 – 2012

* Board of Directors: Visioning, Best Practices, Board Development, Season design, Audience Development
* Executive Director: Best Practices, Financial Development

**Firelands Symphony Orchestra** 2010 – 2012

* Board of Directors: Visioning, Best Practices, Board Development, Audience Development
* Executive Director: Best Practices, Financial Development, Season Planning, New Venue Selections

**Awards & Honors**

**Siena Heights University**: Doctor of Humane Letters *honoris causa*: 2016

**United States House of Representatives** Congressional Record of the 114th Congress 2015

**State of Michigan**: Representative Nancy Jenkins; Senator Dale Zorn and Governor Rick Snyder

Recognition for impact on the cultural life of Southeast Michigan

**Croswell Opera House**: *Lenawee Arts Award*, for leadership in the arts 2008

**Tennessee Technological University**: Outstanding Young Alumnus Award 1988

**Budapest Philharmonic**: *Inclusion in Golden Book* (Commemorating concerts of the highest quality)1987

**Education**

**Aspen Music School** 1983

Conducting with Paul Vermel

**Peabody Conservatory of Music of the Johns Hopkins University** 1983Master of Music: Orchestral Conducting (*Summa cum laude*)

Conducting with Frederik Prausnitz

Piano with Nancy Roldan

**Tennessee Technological University** 1981Bachelor of Science: Music Education (*cum laude*)

Conducting with James Wattenbarger

Composition with Robert Jager

Trumpet with Kim Dunnick and Howard Brahmstedt

Piano with Patricia Brahmstedt

Violin with Francis Elliott

**Mannes School of Music:** Conducting Workshop with Sergiu Commissiona, Michael Charry

**University of Southern California:** Conducting Workshop with Daniel Lewis and Harold Farberman

**MINDFULNESS STUDIES**

**Personal Coaching and Retreat Programs**

* John Roadhouse (Tibetan Practice: Trungpa Rinpoche) 2005 - 7
* Dhamma Pakasa (Vipassana Practice: S.N. Goenka) 2012 - 2016
* Robert Rosenbaum (Zen Practice: Shunryu Suzuki) 2020 - Present

**National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar** 2009 **College of the Holy Cross**: Buddhist Traditions in the Himalayas with Dr. Todd T. Lewis

**UCLA: Mindfulness Awareness Research Center** 2020

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Course

**Massachusetts Memorial Center for Mindfulness** 2020

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Course

**Atlanta Soto Zen Center** 2020 - Present

Zen Book Studies with Mark Adams