

Parker Nelson is a leader in reinventing the capacities of classical music on the stage, in the classroom, and beyond. As a soloist, chamber musician, orchestral musician, and educator, Parker actively works with communities both home and abroad to continually expand the cultural, educational, and artistic reach of the 21st century horn player.

Parker is a dynamic soloist and consistently creates new concert programs to highlight his wealth of original arrangements and commissioned works. With works ranging from Bach and Dvořák to Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder, no genre of music is off limits. Parker frequently collaborates with both established and up-and-coming composers such as Karalyn Schubring, Sergio Delgado, Brittany J. Green, and Aaron Houston. By no means shy of the traditional, Parker has also been a featured soloist in series programs at universities and with orchestras around the country.

As a chamber musician, Parker continues his love of breaking musical boundaries as a founding member of Chicago's Black Moon Trio, a concert organization that presents innovative programs including collaborations with authors, museums, and environmental agencies, in addition to conventional performing arts venues. Parker was also an integral member of the now retired chamber music group, Fifth House Ensemble where he designed and performed in educational partnerships with the incarcerated and underserved youth and audience-interactive video game concerts.

Parker also continues to play frequently with orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra, Racine Symphony Orchestra, among many others. Awarded a fellowship to the Tanglewood Music Festival in 2014, Parker has studied with members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and performed under such prolific conductors as Andris Nelsons, Charles Dutoit, Leonard Slatkin, Stephane Denève, Marcelo Lehninger, and Stephan Asbury. Never content with limiting his performance to the classical genre, Parker has also engaged with artists such as Pete Townshend, Eddie Vedder, Billy Idol, "Weird Al" Yankovic, and The Beach Boys.

Parker is an active educator, currently serving as horn instructor at Highland Park High School in Highland Park, Illinois and New Trier Township High School in Winnetka, Illinois. Parker has previously accepted positions of High Brass Instructor for the Ravinia Festival's El Sistema program and Educational Programming Coordinator for Fifth House Ensemble. You can find Parker facilitating workshops and performances at Northwestern University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Indiana University, University of Texas - Austin, and Michigan State University, amongst numerous others. Parker also has experience as a faculty member at the Fresh Inc Festival and is always interested in new opportunities to teach at any level.

Parker received a Master of Music degree with distinction in Horn Performance from DePaul University, and received a Bachelor of Music degree from Boston University. Parker's primary instructors have been soloist and chamber musician, Eric Ruske; James Smelser, Second Horn of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; and Dale Clevenger, former Principal Horn of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.