

Biography (8/2015)

Aaron Kaplan, conductor and cellist, enjoys a multifaceted musical career with his work as a conductor, musical director, cellist, music educator, and arranger. Aaron earned a master's degree in orchestral conducting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign under the tutelage of Donald Schleicher. He earned his bachelor's degree in cello performance and bachelor's degree in music education with high honors also from the University of Illinois.

Aaron is currently an orchestra director at Glenbrook North and Glenbrook South High Schools in Northbrook and Glenview, IL where he co-teaches the orchestra classes, writes arrangements for the variety shows, and conducts the annual Glenbrook musical. Aaron was previously the interim conductor of the Quad City Youth Symphony Orchestras (2013-14) and music director/conductor for the Sangamon Valley Youth Symphony and Community Orchestra in Springfield, Illinois (2012-2013). In 2013, Aaron stepped in as a last-minute conductor without prior notice for the opening night performance of *The Nutcracker* with Sinfonia da Camera and the Champaign Urbana Ballet. At the University of Illinois, Aaron conducted the University of Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia, Illini Strings, Opera Studio Orchestra, was cover conductor for *The Barber of Seville*, and held a graduate assistantship as the General Manager for the UI Symphony Orchestra. Aaron has continued his conducting studies at workshops in the United States and in Europe with Gustav Meier and Larry Rachleff, and has conducted the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic in the Czech Republic.

A passionate advocate of the American musical theatre, Aaron has been the music director/conductor for nearly 40 musicals including *West Side Story*, *Les Misérables*, *RENT*, *Chess*, *Guys & Dolls*, and *The Producers*. He is currently on the board of directors for the Champaign-Urbana Theatre Company, Highland Park Players, and was the co-founder/co-president of Illini Student Musicals. In 2013, he was invited to conduct the orchestra for the premiere amateur production of *Memphis* at the Illinois All-State High School Theatre Festival. Aaron also conducted the musical productions for the Allerton Barn Festival (Monticello, IL) in both 2013 (*Of Thee I Sing*) and 2014 (*On the Twentieth Century*).

An active cellist, Aaron is currently a member of Sinfonia da Camera and the Heartland Festival Orchestra. He has also performed with the Champaign-Urbana Symphony, Quad City Symphony, and Illinois Symphony Orchestra. Aaron has been featured as a soloist and chamber musician in the *Parisian Salon Concert Series*, *Music in the Loft* and *Mills Breast Cancer Institute* music series as well as the *Young Steinway Concert Series*. He has served as a guest cello and conductor clinician for the East Central Illinois Youth Orchestra, Urbana Chamber Music Workshop, Allerton Chamber Music Symposium, and is on the faculty of Illinois Summer Youth Music and the Chicago Suzuki Institute.

At the University of Illinois, Aaron was the recipient of the Theodore Presser Award in Music, the University of Illinois College of Fine and Applied Arts Talented Student scholarship, three Division Achievement Awards for the String and Music Education divisions, and a graduate teaching assistantship. As a freelance arranger, Aaron has written arrangements and orchestrations for numerous musical ensembles including *Sinfonia da Camera*, musical theatre cabarets, and the Chicago-based band *Marina City*.

Aaron began studying cello at the age of 5 with Holly Compton, and then continued with Blake Brasch, Ani Aznavoorian, and Brandon Vamos, and chamber music with Stefan Milenkovich and the Pacifica Quartet. His conducting mentors include Gustav Meier, Larry Rachleff, and his teacher, Donald Schleicher.