



COURTESY OF ANNABEL RUSSELL

Symphonia Executive Director Annabel Russell

By Greg Carannante

This month, when The Symphonia performs “Wind,” the third in its element-themed concerts this season, the person responsible for making it all happen won’t be onstage. She’ll be behind the scenes, where she’s been since the highly regarded chamber orchestra was founded almost 20 years ago.

Annabel Russell became The Symphonia’s administrative director in 2004 and its executive director 10 years later. She’d arrived at the Boca Raton-based orchestra with a background that would certainly qualify her as a renaissance woman. Born in England into a Royal Air Force family, she was educated there as well as in Vietnam and Malta. She was a professional ballerina who danced with the Dutch National Ballet. There, she served as a coach who taught Rudolph Nureyev his role, and at the Scottish Theater Ballet, she did the same for Dame Margot Fonteyn.

Russell also studied flamenco in Spain, has crewed on private yachts, managed a yacht club in the Bahamas and is a certified cross-country ski instructor. She has a passion for teaching underserved kids about classical music through The Symphonia’s strings program at the Boys & Girls Club of Delray Beach. She has recently guided the orchestra into a partnership with Boca Helping Hands and the Jewish Community Center, offering both groups up to 20 complimentary tickets to Symphonia concerts.

The “Wind” concert of the orchestra’s “Inspired, Naturally” season series will be at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 26, at Roberts Theater at Saint Andrew’s School in Boca Raton. David Kim, renowned concertmaster of The Philadelphia Orchestra, is principal conductor and violin soloist. He will lead the orchestra in four works, including two by Mozart and the virtuosic *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires* by Astor Piazzolla. For tickets and more info, please visit thesymphonia.org.

Russell is married with two sons and lives in Boca Raton. She took a few moments to respond to our standard set of Quote Unquote questions.

Aside from the weather, what do you enjoy most about South Florida?

Gardening. I love being able to grow things quickly.

Aside from the weather, what do you dislike most about South Florida?

I dislike the way that one town runs into another with no break.

Are you a beach person or a pool person?

Definitely a beach person.

When in your life are you or have you been the happiest?

When I’m out on the ocean with no land in sight.

What do you do when you’re stuck in a traffic jam on I-95?

Listen to Public Radio.

What music are you listening to now?

Whatever suits my mood.

Are you a fan, and if so, of what?

Physicians.

If you had to choose: Beatles or Stones?

Beatles.

What are your social media user names?

I don’t do social media.

Apple or Android?

Android.

Who is your real-life hero or heroine?

My mother.

What car are you driving now?

It’s so unimportant to me but it’s a Nissan of some sort.

If you had to choose: Rocky or Raging Bull?

I don’t want to choose.

What do you like most about yourself?

I don’t give up. It’s in my nature to find solutions.

What places in South Florida do you recommend to guests visiting from out-of-town?

The Keys.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

Perhaps not being so driven about things.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Perhaps always having a glass half-full and staying on the positive side of life.