Matthew Abernathy:
Known for his refined musicianship, impassioned performances, and collaborative leadership, Matthew Abernathy is making his mark as one of America's most promising young conductors. He is the Associate Director of Choirs at the University of Michigan where he leads the internationally acclaimed Michigan Men's Glee Club and teaches in the School of Music, Theatre & Dance.
In 2024, Abernathy was named the Grand Prize winner of the MidAmerica International Choral Conducting Competition and will make his Carnegie Hall debut in June 2026. Additionally, he distinguished himself as a semifinalist and the only American admitted to the 2022 Fosco Corti International Competition for Choral Conductors in Turin, Italy, selected from over 60 international applicants.

Prior to his appointment at the University of Michigan, Abernathy served as Artistic Director of the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay (Principal Chorus for The Florida Orchestra) where he led a 140-voice symphonic chorus that performed major choral-orchestral works. Under his direction, the chorus continued its legacy of supporting living composers by commissioning composers including Jerod Tate, Nico Gutierrez, Natalie Draper, Joan Szymko, and others. He further oversaw a comprehensive community engagement program reaching all ages throughout Tampa Bay.

Dr. Abernathy is a devoted pedagogue and champion for music education and art-making at all ages. He was the Director of Choral Studies at the University of Tampa where he conducted Chamber Singers, Camerata, and taught the undergraduate Aural Skills sequence. He has also held faculty positions at the University of St. Thomas and the University of Minnesota. His academic research focuses on aural skills and musicianship (particularly as it pertains to training conductors), and leadership for conductors; a topic on which he has presented at the ACDA Southern Conference. From 2016-2022, Abernathy was on staff at Minnesota Opera where he has served as Music Director of their youth opera program Project Opera, Children's Chorus Director, and Guest Chorus Master. Prior engagements also include work as the Chorus Master for the Lakes Area Music Festival and regular work as an Assistant Conductor/Section Leader with the Minnesota Chorale, including for their recording of Mahler *Symphony No. 8* (BIS Records) with Minnesota Orchestra.

Other notable conducting appearances include The Florida Orchestra, St. Pete Baroque, Wintergreen Music Festival, Bach Society of Minnesota, Dakota Valley Symphony Chorus, Oratorio Society of Minnesota, Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, The Summer Singers, Opera MODO, Arbor Opera Theater, 113 Composer Collective, and the Norfolk Chamber Choir. He has prepared choruses for conductors including Michael Francis, Chelsea Gallo, Steven Mercurio, Michael Christie, Christian Reif, Osmo Vänskä, Jonathan Brandani, Nicholas Kraemer, and many others.

Dr. Abernathy has furthered his studies at the Medomak Conductors Retreat, Chorus America Conducting Academy, and Norfolk Chamber Choir Workshop. He has been lucky to work with many amazing musicians who have greatly influenced him, and counts among his mentors Kathy Saltzman Romey, Jerry Blackstone, Duain Wolfe, Matthew Mehaffey, Eugene Rogers, Erin Freeman, and Kenneth Kiesler. He holds degrees from the University of Minnesota, University of Michigan, Crane School of Music (SUNY Potsdam), and Onondaga Community College.