

# BLACK VIOLIN

## FULL CIRCLE TOUR

APR 30 / COBB GREAT HALL

**Kev Marcus**, Violin

**Wil Baptiste**, Viola/Vocals

**Nat Stokes**, Drums

**Liston Gregory III**, Keys

**DJSPS**, Turntable

Program to be announced from stage.

The performance will run approximately 75 minutes,  
with no intermission.

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## BLACK VIOLIN

Black Violin members **Wil Baptiste** and **Kev Marcus** met on the first day of orchestra class in 1996 at Dillard High School of the Performing Arts in Fort Lauderdale.

Baptiste originally wanted to play saxophone in the band, but the orchestra teacher got him assigned to his class after winning a golf bet with the band instructor.

Classically trained by day, they faithfully put on their headphones and listened to the hottest rap records each night. They went to different colleges—Marcus attended Florida International University and Baptiste went to Florida State—but then reconvened, moved into an apartment together, and started trying to produce other musicians.

They developed an act covering hip-hop songs on their violins, which became popular in local clubs. Two years after sending in a tape to Showtime at the Apollo, they were invited to appear on the show—which they won, and kept winning. They were approached by the manager of Alicia Keys, who asked them to perform with the singer at the Billboard Awards. Other offers followed shortly after. Black Violin toured with Mike Shinoda of Linkin Park, opened for the Wu-Tang Clan, and worked with the likes of Alessia Cara, 2 Chainz, and Lil Wayne. All the while, Black Violin continued touring non-stop playing as many as 200 shows a year, and released two independent, self-financed albums before putting out the acclaimed *Stereotypes* in 2016, followed by 2019's *Take the Stairs*, which was nominated for Best

Contemporary Instrumental Album at the 2020 Grammys.

Black Violin has always been about taking things further, exceeding expectations, challenging conventions. The duo has steadily built a devoted following and a diverse touring base—culminating in such triumphs as two sold-out shows at the Kennedy Center with the National Symphony Orchestra commemorating the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s death, and appearances on the [Today Show](#), [CBS Mornings](#), and [PBS Newshour](#)—while occupying a musical lane that's entirely its own.

Black Violin's work extends far beyond the stage, reaching deep into communities nationwide with numerous free performances for students and hands-on engagement with youth symphonies and community centers. Through collaborations with local and national education programs such as Turnaround Arts, Baptiste and Marcus connect with more than 100,000 students throughout the year, including low-income and Title 1 schools, and adopted Bethune Elementary, in Florida's Broward County (near where they grew up) to initiate an ongoing mentorship program. In 2019, the duo launched the [Black Violin Foundation](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering youth by working with them in their communities to provide access to quality music programs that encourage creativity and innovation.