

# Sam Pilafian

Sam Piliagian participated in the National Music Camp in Interlochen, MI and was the second tuba player to win the concerto competition. Via his performance at Interlochen, he was awarded scholarships to study at both Dartmouth College and the Tanglewood Music Center. Leonard Bernstein chose Pilafian to perform in the world premier of Bernstein's *Mass* at the opening of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He earned his bachelor's degree in music at the University of Miami in 1972.

Since then, Pilafian performed numerous times in international concerts and recordings.<sup>[2]</sup> He founded the *Empire Brass Quartet* and performed in the Broadway Musicals *Doctor Jazz* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Pilafian was also active in the jazz scene, having played with the Duke Ellington Orchestra and, since 1991, in the duo *Travelin' Light* with guitarist Frank Vignola. With the saxophonist Scott Zimmer, Pilafian also played the music of [Maurice Ravel](#), [Béla Bartók](#), [Thelonious Monk](#), Ornette Coleman, and Captain Beefheart. Pilafian also participated in a Pink Floyd recording.

Pilafian started teaching at Arizona State University in 1994 and later at North Dakota State University in 2017.