

WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR, MICHAEL BUTTERMAN

A resounding win for The WSO, a triumphant victory for the local arts community.

Williamsburg, Va. (February 15, 2022) – The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra’s Executive Director, Carolyn Keurajian, announced today that Michael Butterman has been appointed as the organization’s new Music Director. This news marks the highly anticipated conclusion of the extensive search, spanning two seasons. Butterman assumes the title of Music Director in July and will conduct concerts beginning in September of the 2022-2023 season, succeeding Janna Hymes, who ended her tenure as Music Director in May of 2019.

Elated, WSO Board President, Ron Monark, said, “We are extremely pleased to announce the end of the Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra’s search for a new Music Director. When we began this process by appointing a Search Committee in January 2019, we were surprised when we received 194 applications for the position. The tireless work of the Search Committee, spending over 7,000 hours reviewing resumes and concert videos and interviewing candidates, led to a robust schedule for auditions during the 2019-2020 season. With in-person concerts interrupted by Covid, we were 18 months without a live concert. Thankfully, we resumed our audition process in the Fall of 2021, and today, The WSO Board of Trustees, on the recommendation of the Search Committee, is proud to announce that Michael Butterman, has been appointed the new Music Director!”

“The signing of Butterman is considered a real coup by the symphony. The new music director is a very experienced and well-known conductor who has conducted several major orchestras in the United States and has significantly enhanced the stature of orchestras for whom he has served as music director,” remarked Search Committee Chair, Jon Krapfl.

He is best known for his acclaimed work as Music Director of the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra, and as the Music Director of the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra. Most recently, he completed a 19-year association with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra as Principal Conductor for Education and Community Engagement and a 15-year tenure with the Jacksonville Symphony as Associate and then as Resident Conductor. He is also the longtime Music Director of the Pennsylvania Philharmonic, an orchestra uniquely focused on music education.

He has enjoyed national prominence, including an invitation to bring the Boulder Philharmonic to open the Kennedy Center’s inaugural SHIFT Festival of American Orchestras in 2017, in recognition of the organization’s artistic excellence and innovative approach to audience engagement.

As a guest conductor, Mr. Butterman has led many of the country’s preeminent ensembles, including the Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony, Detroit Symphony, and Houston Symphony.

Mr. Butterman grew up in Northern Virginia and earned two degrees at the University of Virginia before pursuing doctoral studies in conducting at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. He was also a conducting fellow at Tanglewood, studying with Seiji Ozawa and Robert Spano.

Making his mark as a model for conductors of today, Michael Butterman is noted for a commitment to creative artistry, innovative programming, and community engagement. His talent for fostering a sense of connection between an orchestra and its local community through bold collaborations and site-specific programming is exceptional.

When receiving the news of this announcement, Butterman remarked, “I’m so pleased to be joining The Williamsburg Symphony team. Together, I look forward to bringing the transformative power of great music to everyone in the community. I was immediately impressed by the musicianship and collegial spirit that I felt from The WSO musicians. There is a wonderful culture at the organization—a mutually supportive relationship between the board, Carolyn, and the musicians that presents all the necessary ingredients for artistic success and maximum impact in the community. I can’t wait to get started!”

As one of today’s leading symphonic conductors, Butterman hopes to establish initiatives that expand the depth and range of The WSO’s repertoire and offerings. Each season, in addition to five Masterworks concerts, the audience will enjoy a selection of specialty concerts, seasonal performances, and collaborative efforts with other community organizations. “Michael’s versatility, impressive experience, as well as his effective communication skills, make him the ideal choice to lead The Williamsburg Symphony into the next era and make a profound impact on the Greater Williamsburg arts community. We are a good team, and both believe in the power of music to uplift and strengthen our community,” Keurajian added.

Jon Krapfl, noted “The Search Committee was instructed to find a music director who could take us to the next level. We are more than proud that we have done that with the appointment of Michael Butterman.”

An opportunity for members of the press and special guests to attend an exclusive Meet & Greet with the Music Director will be announced later this spring. The 2022-23 season schedule and subscription renewals will follow.

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About The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra

The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra is a professional orchestra based in Williamsburg, Virginia. Now in its 37th season, the orchestra offers a five-concert Masterworks series, Pops concerts, and a series of educational initiatives. The orchestra is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. For immediate comment, contact: Carolyn Keurajian at 201-218-8114 or carolyn@williamsburgsymphony.org. For Michael Butterman’s bio and approved images, visit williamsburgsymphony.org/press/approved-press-images.