



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Betsy Moss
Phone: 804-833-6838
Email: betsymoss@verizon.net

WILLIAMSBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES FIVE CANDIDATES FOR OPEN MUSIC DIRECTOR POSITION

Symphony's Audience Will Be a Part of Audition Process During 2019-2020 Concert Season

Williamsburg, Va. (May 23, 2019) – After leading the symphony for 15 years as its music director, Janna Hymes finished her tenure with the orchestra at last night's concert. Since she announced her departure last May, over 190 national and international candidates have eagerly applied for the position, with five exceptional candidates from across the country now being finalists.

Each of the five finalists will conduct one of the WSO's Masterworks concerts during the 2019-20 season. After the concert, the audience will be invited to meet the candidate and submit comments through an online or written survey. These comments, along with the feedback of the musicians and other leaders within the symphony organization, will help determine the final candidate.

"For our audience, this is a unique opportunity to participate in the selection of the WSO's next conductor as we enter into a new era of musical excellence," said Jon Krapfl, WSO board member and leader of the search committee. "We feel that each of the five finalists demonstrates the highest level of artistry, vision, versatility and innovation. We are very excited to share their talents with the community and have our audiences join us in the selection process."

The search committee consists of four musicians from the WSO, three of its board members, as well as two representatives from the Williamsburg community. Approximately 7000 hours were spent collectively reviewing resumes, conducting videos and interviewing candidates. The committee looked for candidates with the highest level of artistry, a knowledge of a broad range of repertoire, strong interpersonal and leadership skills, a record of distinguished performance at the

national and/or international level, a marked passion for engaging with audiences and encouraging an interest in innovative programming as well as experience with educational outreach, audience development, and a penchant for collaboration.

Based on this criteria, the Williamsburg Symphony is pleased to announce the five finalists for the Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra's music director position:

James Blachly

James Blachly is a conductor dedicated to artistic excellence and broader accessibility. He currently serves as Music Director of the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra, Experiential Orchestra, and Geneva Light Opera. In his first three seasons with the Johnstown Symphony, the orchestra increased season ticket sales by 43%. With the Experiential Orchestra, he has invited audiences to dance to Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, sit within the orchestra at Lincoln Center, and engage with *Symphonie fantastique* and *Petrushka* with circus choreography. His work to advance the field has recently been highlighted in *Symphony Magazine*. A strong supporter of composers of our time, Mr. Blachly has commissioned and premiered more than 50 new works. Dedicated to music education, he regularly conducts workshops for the New York Philharmonic, and he is the co-founder of Make Music NOLA, a thriving El Sistema-Inspired program in New Orleans. Visit jamesblachly.com for full bio and photo.

Andrés Lopera

One of the most universally celebrated Latin American conductors in the United States, Andrés Lopera recently completed a successful three-year tenure as Assistant Conductor of the Colorado Symphony and is now finishing his first season in the same role with the Columbus Symphony. Lopera has directed intricate performances with principal orchestras such as the Oregon Symphony, Toledo Symphony, New World Symphony, San Antonio Symphony and Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra, as well as summer festivals, including the National Repertory Orchestra and the Youth Orchestra of the Americas. In October 2017, Lopera covered a celebrated series of concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under the direction of Gustavo Dudamel and Carlos Miguel Prieto. Lopera received his Master of Music in Orchestra Conducting from New England Conservatory. Visit andreslopera.com for full bio and photo.

Paul Polivnick

Paul Polivnick is a leading figure on the world stage, having guest conducted over 80 orchestras in Europe, North America and Asia including the remarkable London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, National Orchestra of Lille, France, Vienna Radio Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, and the sumptuous Seoul, Moscow and Los Angeles Philharmonics. He is former Music

Director of the Alabama Symphony and Oberlin Conservatory Orchestras, Associate Principal Conductor of the Milwaukee Symphony, and current Music Director and Conductor Laureate of the New Hampshire Music Festival. He received his training at Juilliard School of Music with degrees in violin performance and conducting. Visit paulpolivnick.com for full bio and photo.

Wesley Schulz

Broadly acclaimed, Wesley Schulz holds the Lucy Moore Ruffin Chair as Associate Conductor of the North Carolina Symphony where he conducts over one hundred concerts annually. Additionally, he is the newly appointed Music Director of the Auburn Symphony Orchestra. Previously, Schulz served as Music Director of the Bainbridge Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Festival Orchestra, and in 2014-2015 Schulz was the Conducting Fellow at the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. Schulz graduated magna cum laude with Bachelor's Degrees in both Percussion Performance and Music Education from Ball State University, followed synchronously by Doctorate & Master's degrees in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Texas at Austin. Visit wesleyschulz.com for full bio and photo.

Steven White

Praised by Opera News as a conductor who "squeezes every drop of excitement and pathos from the score," Steven White is one of North America's premiere conductors of both symphonic and operatic repertoire. Among the many orchestras Maestro White has conducted are the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Moscow Philharmonic, the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, the Utah Symphony Orchestra the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the New World Symphony Orchestra, the Spoleto Festival Orchestra, the Colorado Symphony, the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, and the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. He is currently an Associate and Cover Conductor of the Metropolitan Opera in New York City and Artistic Director of Opera Roanoke.

Each Masterworks concert will also feature a guest artist next season. These guest artists will each give a Masterclass or take part in an educational activity during their stay in the community. See the WSO website for more information.

The Williamsburg Symphony is fortunate that they will hold their entire Masterworks Concert Series at the Williamsburg Community Chapel next season. Each concert will be performed on one night.

About The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra

The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra (WSO) is an acclaimed professional orchestra performing in the heart of Williamsburg, Va. Its vision is to entertain, inspire and educate diverse audiences of all ages through musical excellence. Each season the WSO presents a five concert Masterworks series, a pops series and a family concert. In addition to these performances, the orchestra is dedicated to providing free educational opportunities to students in the community. For more information about The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra, visit williamsburgsymphony.org. Follow on Facebook and Instagram (The Williamsburg Symphony Orchestra) and Twitter (@WMBGSymphony).

###