



## Jonathon Heyward appointed as the next Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

**American conductor will assume new role as Music Director Designate at the start of the 2022-23 season and become the BSO's 13<sup>th</sup> Music Director in September 2023**



After a comprehensive search lasting almost two years, the **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra** has chosen **Jonathon Heyward** as its **Music Director**. The 29-year-old conductor, who garnered critical acclaim and audience ovations when making his BSO debut in March, is set to commence his initial five-year tenure in September 2023. He will serve as the BSO's Music Director Designate from the start of the 2022-23 season, and work with the orchestra's senior management team to shape a bold long-term artistic strategy. Heyward will spend eight weeks with the BSO in his first year as Music Director, rising to a minimum of eleven weeks in subsequent seasons, and become the only American at present to lead one of his homeland's major orchestras.

"It is a tremendous honour to join the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra at this exciting time in its long and distinguished history," comments Jonathon Heyward. "I believe we have a great opportunity to build on the storied achievements of the orchestra under Marin Alsop's truly inspired leadership, including her founding of the BSO's OrchKids programme, and to explore the many ways in which we can reach the greatest number of people at home and overseas. I am passionate about the power of symphonic music to bring audiences together and to speak to all communities. The Baltimore Symphony's irresistible artistry, energy and

optimism were clear to me from the first moment we rehearsed together earlier this year. We shared a special chemistry then and in the concerts we have given since. I look forward to seeing where that can take us in the years ahead."

Mark Hanson, President & CEO of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, hails the appointment of the organisation's new artistic leader. "Jonathon Heyward is the ideal person to serve as the Baltimore Symphony's next Music Director due to his deep musicianship, warm personality, exceptional communication skills, innate curiosity, and admirable desire to make symphonic music more accessible and relevant," he notes. "Jonathon has already inspired both the orchestra and audiences – his vibrant talent, bold programming, and fervent commitment to community engagement will continue to grow our relationship with the many communities across Maryland. I am thrilled to welcome Jonathon into the BSO family and to partner with someone who shares my optimism about the BSO's future and belief in the importance of sharing live musical performances with as many people as possible."

Following his BSO debut, Heyward was invited to conduct the orchestra's Benefit Concert for Ukraine. The programme included *Hymn - 2001* by Valentyn Silvestrov, who fled his native Kyiv earlier this year to find refuge in Berlin, Brahms's *Tragic Overture* and the finale of Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony. While details of Jonathon Heyward's repertoire plans for the BSO will be announced in the future, his broad artistic intentions include preserving and enhancing the orchestra's unique sound, shaping its programming philosophy and reinforcing its commitment to innovative performance practices.

"Both with his debut in March and again in April with our Benefit Concert for Ukraine, there was an immediate and special connection between Jonathon and the musicians of the BSO," observes Mark Hanson. "Our colleagues in the orchestra greatly appreciate his musicality, enthusiasm, positivity, and listening abilities. All of us on stage and in the audience admire his passion for the symphonic repertoire as well as his belief in the

power of live music to change and improve lives. Jonathon and the entire BSO family are committed to programming compelling and inspirational concerts that demonstrate our shared belief in classical music as a living and evolving artform.”

Jonathon Heyward, born in Charleston, South Carolina, began his musical training as a cellist at the age of ten and started conducting while still at school. He studied conducting at the Boston Conservatory of Music, where he became assistant conductor of the prestigious institution’s opera department and of the Boston Opera Collaborative, and received postgraduate lessons from Sian Edwards at London’s Royal Academy of Music. Before leaving the Academy, he was appointed assistant conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, where he was mentored by Sir Mark Elder, and became Music Director of the Hallé Youth Orchestra. His debut with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain at the 2021 BBC Proms earned five-star reviews and was hailed by British newspaper *The Guardian* as ‘an unforgettable showcase of high-energy collaboration’.

Heyward’s commitment to education and community outreach work deepened during his three years with the Hallé and has flourished since he arrived in post as Chief Conductor of the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie in January 2021. He is equally committed to including new music within his imaginative concert programmes. Those qualities were evident in his Baltimore Symphony Orchestra debut bill, which comprised Hannah Kendall’s *The Spark Catchers*, Beethoven’s Third Piano Concerto and the first ever BSO outing for Shostakovich’s Fifteenth Symphony.

Since its foundation in 1916, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra has been a source of civic pride to Baltimore and a beacon of musical excellence. Its international reputation grew under the distinguished music directorship of Sergiu Comissiona and has been enhanced since by his successors, David Zinman, Yuri Temirkanov and Marin Alsop (2007-21). It has been based at the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall since 1982, legacy of the Ukrainian-born Baltimore businessman and philanthropist Joseph Meyerhoff. The BSO also presents a regular concert series at the Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda, Maryland, as well as performing concerts in the city of Frederick and Chesapeake College. In addition to its critically acclaimed work in the concert hall and on disc, the BSO operates an extensive community outreach programme and various ensembles under the umbrella of the Baltimore Symphony Youth Orchestras.

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