

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**KWAMÉ RYAN EXTENDS TENURE AS MUSIC DIRECTOR
OF THE CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
THROUGH 100TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON IN 2032**

September 8, 2026 | Charlotte, NC – The Charlotte Symphony Orchestra (CSO) announced today that Grammy Award-winning Music Director Kwamé Ryan will extend his tenure with the Orchestra through its 100th anniversary season in 2031–32. The four-year contract extension comes as Ryan and the CSO enter their third season together, building on a strong artistic partnership and a shared vision for the Orchestra’s future.

“I am thrilled to be extending my commitment to the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra for four more years,” said Kwamé Ryan. “From the very beginning, I felt a special bond with this Orchestra. The musicians and the entire CSO family have created an environment where artistic curiosity and collective ambition flourish. Charlotte has truly become my second home, and I have great affection for the warm, vibrant community the Orchestra serves. I look forward to the journey ahead — to the music we will make, the stories we will tell, and the shared experiences that will continue to shape the Charlotte Symphony’s future.”

Since Ryan’s tenure began in 2024, the CSO has earned growing national attention for its dynamic performances, artistic innovation, and deepening connections with audiences and the Charlotte community. The Orchestra returned to national broadcasts through American Public Media’s *Performance Today*, completed its \$50 million Comprehensive Campaign, made national headlines as the first orchestra to commission a Sonic Logo, expanded its commitment to presenting works by living composers, and introduced new initiatives including the Spotlight Artist Series and in-the-round CSO 360 concerts.

Ryan has made high-profile debuts with major American institutions including The Metropolitan Opera, Washington National Opera, and the New York Philharmonic, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic to follow this season, further establishing his profile on the international stage. In Charlotte, Ryan has embraced opportunities to connect with audiences, including conducting the CSO’s July 4 concert at Truist Field, which drew more than 20,000 people across the sold-out stadium and Romare Bearden Park, where the performance was broadcast.

In February 2026, Ryan won the Grammy Award in the Best Opera Recording category for Houston Grand Opera’s recording of Jake Heggie’s *Intelligence*, expressing appreciation for the Charlotte Symphony’s support from the Grammy stage.

“The chemistry between Kwamé and our musicians is extraordinary, and we’re seeing the results of that partnership both onstage and in the way our community is connecting with the Orchestra,” said Board Chair Ulrike Miles and President & CEO David Fisk. “Kwamé brings an incredible sense of creative energy, collaboration, and possibility to the Charlotte Symphony. Extending his tenure now allows us to confidently build on that foundation as we look ahead to our 100th anniversary.”

“Over the past two seasons, Kwamé has challenged us artistically while fostering a strong sense of collaboration and trust among the musicians,” said Principal Horn Byron Johns and Principal Harp Andrea Mumm Trammell, musician representatives on the Board of Directors. “We’re thrilled to continue this partnership and excited for all that we’ll create together in the years ahead.”

Ryan will open the Charlotte Symphony’s 2026–27 Classical Series on October 9 and 10, 2026, leading the Orchestra in Levi Taylor’s *One Foot After The Other*; Barber’s Piano Concerto, featuring pianist Orion Weiss; and Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*.

About the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra

The Charlotte Symphony Orchestra (CSO) is one of the premier music organizations in the Southeastern United States and the oldest continuously operating symphony orchestra in the Carolinas. As Charlotte's most active performing arts group, the CSO presents around 175 concerts each season, reaching more than 160,000 music lovers. The CSO is committed to its mission of igniting the human spirit through the passion and unifying power of live symphonic music. Led by Grammy Award-winning Music Director Kwamé Ryan, the CSO employs 65 professional full-time orchestra musicians, fosters four youth orchestras, and offers significant educational support aimed at serving under-resourced areas of our community. Founded in 1932, the Charlotte Symphony plays a leading cultural role in the Charlotte area and remains committed to the belief that music, accessible to all, enriches and unites our city.

About Kwamé Ryan

Kwamé Ryan is a Grammy Award-winning conductor, currently in his third season as Music Director of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra. Born in Canada and educated in Trinidad and Tobago and the UK, Ryan formerly held the position of General Music Director of Freiburg Opera, Germany, from 1999 to 2003, and served as Musical and Artistic Director of the Orchestre National Bordeaux-Aquitaine, France, from 2007 to 2013.

As a guest conductor in Germany, he has conducted the Radio Orchestras of Stuttgart and Bavaria, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Staatsoper Saarbrücken, and Staatsoper Stuttgart. While in France, he has worked at Opéra Bastille, Opéra National de Lyon, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Work in the US and the UK has taken him to the symphony orchestras of New York, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Indianapolis, Atlanta, Houston, the Boston Lyric Opera, English National Opera, the London Philharmonia, and the BBC Proms. He is a regular guest with Washington National Opera and Dutch National Opera.

A recipient of international awards for outstanding work in the field of music education, Ryan has served as Director of Trinidad and Tobago's Academy for the Performing Arts and Musical Director of the National Youth Orchestra of France, where he was made a Knight in the French State's prestigious Order of Arts and Letters. Under his musical direction, La Monnaie's 2021 production of Kris Defoort's *The Time of Our Singing* was named World Premiere of the Year at the International Opera Awards, and Houston Grand Opera's recording of Jake Heggie's *Intelligence* was awarded the 2026 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.

The 2026–27 season sees his debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Milwaukee Symphony as well as returns to Dutch National Opera and the Cincinnati Symphony.

*Hi-res photography is available in the Charlotte Symphony's [newsroom](#).
or by contacting Deirdre Roddin at droddin@charlottesymphony.org*