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CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY NAMES VIOLINIST/COMPOSER MARK O'CONNOR ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

December 7, 2016 | CHARLOTTE, NC – The Charlotte Symphony has named Grammy Award-winning violinist, composer, and educator Mark O'Connor as its first artist-in-residence.

O'Connor, 55, is credited with composing the first full-length orchestral concerto featuring American fiddling, *The Fiddle Concerto*, a product of his cross-genre artistic style. The Charlotte Symphony featured a performance of the piece in the 1990s. He also established *An American School of String Playing* with his *O'Connor Method*, which teaches orchestra and solo repertoire of American classics with emphasis on creativity, improvisation, and cultural diversity.

"I look forward to working closely with the Charlotte Symphony, its fans and supporters, as we band together to create new opportunities for the orchestra and for music in Charlotte and North Carolina," says O'Connor.

A product of American folk tradition and classical music, O'Connor credits his musical journey in large part to folk fiddler Benny Thomasson and French jazz violinist and improviser Stephane Grappelli. It was at the intersection of these two musical styles that O'Connor began crafting his own musical approach.



The residency is effective through the 2017-2018 season and includes annual performances across three of the Charlotte Symphony's core series – Classical, altsounds, and Pops – as well as an artistic partnership with Music Director Christopher Warren-Green.

"This is a big win for the Charlotte Symphony and our entire surrounding music community," says Charlotte Symphony President and CEO Mary A. Deissler. "There are many synergies between Mark's style and the Charlotte Symphony mission, and we are really excited to partner with such a high-caliber musician."

O'Connor relocated to Charlotte from New York City in 2016 to be closer to family. He also tours with family members Maggie O'Connor, fiddle; Forrest O'Connor, mandolin and vocals; and Kate Lee, fiddle and vocals, as the O'Connor Band. The band received its first Grammy nomination this week for Best Bluegrass Album.

O'Connor and his wife Maggie also will be involved in the Symphony's education initiatives, including master classes, workshops, and pre- or post-concert talks.

About the Charlotte Symphony

Founded in 1932 and led by internationally renowned Music Director Christopher Warren-Green, the Charlotte Symphony is a non-profit organization that serves the community through music that educates, entertains, and enriches the human spirit. We are musicians, music teachers, and music lovers. We put violins in the hands of Charlotte's children and actively nurture the next generation with our music education and outreach programs. The Charlotte Symphony is a cornerstone of the cultural community, unifying people and adding value to their lives through music.

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