

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MUSIC DIRECTOR KWAMÉ RYAN WINS GRAMMY AWARD FOR BEST OPERA RECORDING

February 1, 2026 | Charlotte, NC – Charlotte Symphony Orchestra Music Director Kwamé Ryan received his first Grammy Award earlier today at the 68th Annual Grammy Awards, winning Best Opera Recording for *Heggie: Intelligence*, recorded with the Houston Grand Opera

With this honor, Maestro Ryan becomes the first Music Director in the Charlotte Symphony’s history to receive a Grammy Award. He attended the awards ceremony in Los Angeles.

“Kwamé Ryan’s Grammy win reflects what audiences in Charlotte experience every time he steps on the podium,” said Charlotte Symphony President & CEO David Fisk. “We are incredibly proud of Kwamé and this well-deserved honor. He brings extraordinary clarity, emotional depth, and purpose to the music, and this recognition underscores the artistic vision shaping the future of the Charlotte Symphony.”

Recorded during the opera’s world premiere in fall 2023 and released in August 2025, *Intelligence* has been critically praised for its dramatic intensity and musical depth. The album features soprano Janai Brugger, who will join Ryan and the Charlotte Symphony for performances on March 27 & 29; mezzo sopranos Jamie Barton and J’Nai Bridges; and the Houston Grand Opera Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Kwamé Ryan.

Maestro Ryan will return to Charlotte to conduct the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra in Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 5 on February 13 and 14 at Belk Theater. The program will also include CSO Spotlight Artist Gabriel Kahane’s *Pattern of the Rail: Six Orchestral Songs* from *Book of Travelers* and Dani Howard’s *Argentum*.

About Kwamé Ryan

Kwamé Ryan is a Grammy Award-winning conductor, currently in his second season as Music Director of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra. Ryan formerly held the position of General Music Director of Freiburg Opera from 1999–2003 and served as Musical and Artistic Director of the Orchestre National Bordeaux-Aquitaine from 2007–13. As a guest conductor in Germany, he has led the Radio Orchestras of Stuttgart and Bavaria, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Staatsoper Saarbrücken, and Staatsoper Stuttgart. While in France, he worked with Opéra de la Bastille, Opéra de Lyon, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Work in the US and the UK has taken him to the Symphony Orchestras of Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, Indianapolis, Atlanta, Houston, Boston Lyric Opera, English National Opera, and the London Philharmonia.

Ryan has been a regular guest of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, the BBC Proms, and Dutch National Opera, at which he has worked with the Residence Orchestra, The Hague, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic. In 2024, he returned to La Monnaie, Brussels, for the revival of Kris De Voort's *The Time of our Singing*, his 2021 premiere of which earned the International Opera Award for World Premiere of the Year.

The 2025–26 season sees returns to Washington National Opera and the New York Philharmonic as well as his debut at the Metropolitan Opera.

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 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 the under-resourced areas of our community. Founded in 1932, the Charlotte Symphony plays a leading cultural role in the Charlotte area and serves the community as a civic leader, reflecting and uniting our region through the transformative power of live music.

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

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