



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY LAUNCHES NEW YOUTH ENSEMBLE
AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH-WEST
LED BY ERIC THOMPSON**

**The Youth Ensemble Will Serve Our Young Musicians, Giving them the Chance to
Perform within an Ensemble for the First Time**

December 9, 2021 | Charlotte, NC – The Charlotte Symphony Orchestra (CSO) announced today that it will launch a new Youth Ensemble, serving musicians around the ages of 8–16, starting in February 2022 at First Baptist Church-West. Led by Eric Thompson, the Charlotte Symphony Youth Ensemble will introduce young musicians to the experience of performing within an ensemble while receiving personalized training from CSO conducting staff and musicians at each rehearsal.

The Youth Ensemble will build out the CSO’s Youth Orchestra program which includes the Youth Philharmonic for intermediate musicians, and the Youth Orchestra for advanced level musicians. It also provides an opportunity for further learning from students who begin in Project Harmony, a free after-school music program, in partnership with Arts+, that serves families who face challenges and seek to provide greater opportunities for their children.

The Ensemble is open to any student who wishes to participate — no audition is required. The CSO offers a sliding scale for Youth Orchestra tuition, so financial status will never be a barrier.

“We know that music can be a powerful tool, both for social transformation and in education – developing in students a life-long love of music, as well as skills that build character, self-confidence, and teamwork.” said Charlotte Symphony President and CEO David Fisk, “We are proud to be able to offer this experience to young musicians as part of the Charlotte Symphony’s mission and I truly believe that with great partners, like Eric Thompson and First Baptist Church-West, the Symphony can play a unique and integral role in encouraging the next generation of orchestral musicians and enthusiasts.”

The [CSO Youth Orchestra Program](#) aims to inspire in students a strong sense of character, discipline, commitment, and community. The ensembles are inclusive, diverse, and accessible to all students, regardless of financial resources. High-quality ensemble training is led by CSO Resident Conductor Christopher James Lees, Youth Philharmonic Interim Conductor Dr. Peter Swanson, Youth Ensemble Conductor Eric Thompson, and professional CSO musicians, who provide a nurturing environment through which young musicians create lasting bonds in music

and friendship. We offer regular performance opportunities throughout the city, including the Belk and Knight theaters, plus access to the CSO's renowned Music Director, Christopher Warren-Green and international visiting artists, such as Joshua Bell. Learn more about the Charlotte Symphony Youth Orchestra Program [here](#).

About the Charlotte Symphony

Celebrating its 90th anniversary in the 2021–22 season, the Charlotte Symphony is committed to uplifting, entertaining, and educating the diverse communities of Charlotte-Mecklenburg and beyond through exceptional musical experiences. Led by internationally renowned Music Director Christopher Warren-Green, the Symphony upholds the highest artistic integrity and takes bold steps to engage the community through music. The CSO employs 62 professional fulltime orchestra musicians, serves three youth orchestras, and offers significant educational programming aimed at serving areas of our community with the greatest need. The Charlotte Symphony plays a leading cultural role in the Charlotte area and aims to serve the community as a civic leader, reflecting and uniting our region through the transformative power of live music.

Eric Thompson is Conductor of the Charlotte Symphony Youth Ensemble, the **Debbie Phillips Chair**

Funding for the Charlotte Symphony Youth Ensemble is provided by **The Symphony Guild of Charlotte, Dunspaugh-Dalton Foundation, and the DF Brungard Foundation.**

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