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**KWAMÉ RYAN’S FIRST SEASON AS MUSIC DIRECTOR
HERALDS A TRANSFORMATIVE ERA FOR THE
CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

COMMUNITY LEADERS INVEST \$41 MILLION IN THE CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY

**Includes Lead Support from Bank of America, C.D. Spangler Foundation, and
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

**Towards A \$50 Million Comprehensive Campaign To Support the
CSO’s Commitment to Artistic Vitality and Strengthening Communities**

THE 2024–25 SEASON

CLASSICAL: Kwamé Ryan’s Debut Concerts as Music Director

POPS: The Music of Queen, Holiday Pops!, Disco Fever, and Havana Nights

MOVIES: *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, *How to Train Your Dragon*, and *Pirates of the Caribbean*

FAMILY: Four Family Concerts, the Return of Pre-Concert Activities and Musical Games

**Ten CSO Roadshow Performances in Neighborhoods Throughout the Region
Increasing Impact Across Broader Community**

April 3, 2024 | Charlotte, NC – The Charlotte Symphony Orchestra (CSO) announces details for a historic 2024–25 season, heralding a transformative era under the dynamic leadership of its newly-appointed Music Director, Kwamé Ryan. This pivotal chapter is marked by an unwavering commitment to innovation, exceptional and diverse programming, expanded community engagement initiatives, and heightened impact across the broader Charlotte community. To continue to attract exceptional talent and grow programming and community engagement, deep investment is warranted to propel the organization forward.

This year, under the leadership of Hugh L. McColl, Jr. and Brian Moynihan, Chair and CEO of Bank of America, the CSO launched a \$50 million capital campaign to broaden access to more diverse programming for the community. This investment will provide critical operating support and increase the CSO’s endowment to the level of orchestras in Charlotte’s peer cities to foster long-term sustainability. To date, \$41 million has been raised against the \$50 million goal. Lead gifts include \$10 million from Bank of America, \$10 million from the C.D. Spangler Foundation and \$5 million from Knight Foundation. With ongoing, annual support from the broader community in addition to a successful campaign, the Symphony will be more financially sound than at any other time in its history.

“I am thrilled to begin my journey as the Charlotte Symphony’s Music Director next season,” said Music Director Designate Kwamé Ryan. “It’s an honor to join this dynamic and

progressively agile organization, which values preservation, innovation, and education while infusing every expression of its goals with passion and the highest artistic standards. I look forward to spending more time in Charlotte and getting to know this vibrant community, and I extend a warm invitation to both committed supporters and the curious to join us on this exciting musical adventure.”

“The culmination of this historic campaign alongside the arrival of Kwamé Ryan signifies the turning of a new page in the Symphony’s storied history,” said President and CEO David Fisk. “With the support of community leaders who believe in the symphony’s value to our city and region, and share in its innovative vision, we are primed to elevate our artistic excellence, deepen our impact, and chart a course towards realizing our potential as a 21st-century orchestra that truly serves, reflects, and inspires its community.”

THE 2024–25 SEASON

The CSO’s 2024–25 season features an exciting and eclectic range of concerts across the Classical, Pops, Movie, and Family series. Highlights include Kwamé Ryan’s inaugural concerts as Music Director; the return of two former Music Directors: Christopher Warren-Green and Christof Perick; performances of audience favorites like Debussy’s *La Mer*, Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 2, and Brahms’s *A German Requiem*; and a diverse lineup of composers and guest artists — including works by Coleridge-Taylor, Anna Clyne, and Jennifer Higdon; and performances by Afro-Cuban band Mambo Kings, violinist Amaryn Olmeda, and clarinetist Anthony McGill.

THE CLASSICAL SERIES

Music Director Kwamé Ryan’s First Season

In his debut season as Music Director, Kwamé Ryan conducts a wide range of repertoire, featuring a U.S. Premiere, beloved and lesser-known works from the 20th Century, and symphonic cornerstones.

Ryan leads the combined musical forces of the Charlotte Symphony, Charlotte Master Chorale, soprano Janai Brugger, and baritone Alexander Birch Elliott in Brahms’s inspiring and hopeful masterwork, *A German Requiem*. The program, which takes place November 22–23, 2024, opens with *Musica Dolorosa*, a poignant opus by Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks.

Ryan returns March 7–8, 2025, to lead the CSO in Respighi’s vibrant tone poem, *Roman Festivals*, alongside Rachmaninoff’s demanding and expressive Piano Concerto No. 2, featuring acclaimed pianist Louis Schwizgebel. The program opens with the U.S. Premiere of *The Downfall of Gaius Verres* by British composer Adam Walters, much of whose music is infused with the cultural traditions of Trinidad and Tobago, where he and Ryan met and began their now long-standing artistic collaboration.

Joining the CSO with a busy slate of prior conducting engagements and the Orchestra’s 2024–25 programming significantly advanced, Ryan’s initial appearances will offer audiences just a taste

of his unique programming style and artistic inspiration, with a view to his full artistic leadership of the 2025–26 season.

Returning Maestros

Former CSO Music Director **Christof Perick** returns March 21–22, 2025, to lead the Charlotte Symphony in a thrilling evening of Wagner, showcasing highlights from the composer’s most beloved operas.

Conductor Laureate **Christopher Warren-Green** leads the CSO in Bernstein’s Symphonic Suite from *On the Waterfront* and Rachmaninoff’s *Symphonic Dances* for the Classical series finale. Warren-Green is joined by acclaimed clarinetist **Anthony McGill** for Copland’s lyrical and jazz-inspired Clarinet Concerto, May 16–18, 2025.

Other Season Highlights

- The 2024–25 season opens with a performance of Tchaikovsky’s sweeping Piano Concerto No. 1 featuring pianist **Chaeyoung Park**, October 25–26, 2024. The program, led by **Joana Carneiro**, also includes Bartók’s beloved Concerto for Orchestra and Anna Clyne’s *This Midnight Hour*, a work inspired by poetry from Charles Baudelaire and Juan Ramón Jiménez.
- **Concertmaster Calin Ovidiu Lupanu** performs Mendelssohn’s Double Concerto with pianist Phillip Bush, January 31–February 1, 2025. The program also includes Farrenc’s Overture No. 2 and R. Schumann’s “Spring” Symphony, led by conductor **Akiko Fujimoto**.
- Violinist **Amaryn Olmeda** joins the CSO and conductor **Anthony Parnter** to perform Mendelssohn’s majestic Violin Concerto in E minor on a program also featuring Coleridge-Taylor’s Ballade in A minor and Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 9, November 8–10, 2024.
- Led by **Jeri Lynne Johnson**, pianist **Orion Weiss** bridges the Baroque and Classical eras with performances of Bach’s Harpsichord Concerto No. 6 and Stravinsky’s Concerto for Piano and Winds alongside Mozart’s electrifying Symphony No. 25, January 10–12, 2025.
- Pianist **Olga Kern** performs R. Schumann’s uplifting Piano Concerto on a program also featuring Elgar’s evocative *Enigma Variations* led by **Ruth Reinhardt**, February 14–15, 2025.
- Bass Virtuoso **Edgar Meyer** returns to the Charlotte Symphony to perform Bottesini’s Concerto for Double Bass No. 2 and Meyer’s own Double Bass Concerto No. 1, April 4–5, 2025. The program, led by **Andre Raphel**, also includes Jennifer Higdon’s *blue cathedral* and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 8.
- Cellist **Andrea Casarrubios** performs her work, *MIRAGE*, led by Resident Conductor **Christopher James Lees**, in a colorful and impressionistic program culminating in Debussy’s *La Mer*, April 25–26, 2025.

Sunday Matinee performances will return for the 2024–25 season, including Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 9 (November 10, 2024), Handel’s Messiah (December 15, 2024), Bach and Mozart (January 12, 2025), and Bernstein and Copland (May 18, 2025). Classical series Sunday Matinee concerts are free for children ages 6–12.

POPS AND MOVIES

The 2024–25 season of the Sandra and Leon Levine Pops Series opens with **The Music of Queen**, celebrating one of the greatest rock bands of all time with a high-energy performance by vocalist MiG Ayesa (November 1–2, 2024). The magic of the holiday season comes to life with the Symphony’s beloved annual tradition, **Holiday Pops!** (December 5–7, 2024). **Disco Fever** brings the magic of the 70’s airwaves to Charlotte with hits including “It’s Raining Men,” “We Are Family,” “Stayin’ Alive,” and more (January 17–18, 2025). In the series finale, star soprano Camille Zamora and Afro-Cuban band Mambo Kings bring a sultry and passionate evening of Latin music to the Charlotte Symphony with **Havana Nights** (February 21–22, 2025).

From timeless classics to supernatural swashbucklers, the Charlotte Symphony’s 2024–25 Movie series brings to life legendary music scores, live to film, for the ultimate “surround-sound” experience. The series features **The Wizard of Oz in Concert** (September 27–28, 2024), presented as part of the CharlOz Festival; **The Muppet Christmas Carol in Concert** (November 29–30, 2024); **How to Train Your Dragon in Concert** (March 14–15, 2025); and **Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl in Concert** (June 6–7, 2025).

FAMILY AND EDUCATION

The Charlotte Symphony believes that music plays a vital role in lifelong learning and is committed to nurturing a passion for orchestral music in Charlotte through diverse educational programming and excellent instruction.

The 2024–25 season presents four one-hour concerts designed for children 4–9 years of age. Returning this season, each event includes pre-concert hands-on activities, storytelling, and musical games in the lobby of the Knight Theater. The series includes **The Composer is Dead**, Lemony Snicket’s whimsical murder mystery brought to life by your CSO and Grey Seal Puppets (November 16, 2024). A family-friendly performance of **Holiday Pops!** features beloved seasonal classics, sing-alongs, and snowfall (December 7, 2024). Step back in time to 1920s New York City as a newspaper boy encounters the legendary composer George Gershwin, embarking on a journey through the city’s vibrant music scene with **Gershwin’s Magic Key** (January 18, 2025). Come along with your CSO for the final concert of the series to discover the songs and stories of Charlotte with **Our Musical Neighborhood** (February 22, 2025).

In the 2024–25 season, The Charlotte Symphony continues to offer **Pre-Concert Talks** before every Classical concert — free of charge for ticketholders. Resident Conductor Christopher James Lees, or a guest conductor or artist, will lead a discussion about the evening’s repertoire and composers, allowing concertgoers to feel more connected to the in-concert experience. Learn more [here](#).

The **Charlotte Symphony’s three Youth Orchestras** offer extraordinary music education to the youth of Charlotte. The ensembles are inclusive, diverse, and accessible to all students, regardless of financial resources. High-quality ensemble training is led by Charlotte Symphony Resident Conductor Christopher James Lees, Youth Philharmonic Co-Conductor Katie Ebert,

Youth Ensemble Conductor & Youth Philharmonic Co-Conductor Eric Thompson, and the Charlotte Symphony musicians. Learn more [here](#).

Project Harmony, a tuition-free, after-school music program, continues in the 2023–24 season. A powerful program serving Title I schools and families in under-resourced Charlotte communities, Project Harmony provides free instruments and ensemble music training to its students. Together with Arts+, the CSO serves students grades 2–5 in four Charlotte community-based sites in the Montclaire, West Sugar Creek, West Boulevard, and Winterfield neighborhoods. Learn more [here](#).

IN THE COMMUNITY

CSO Roadshow, the Charlotte Symphony’s new traveling concert series brings pop-up music experiences to neighborhoods across the region with ten performances in the 2024–25 season. Details to be announced at a later date. Visit charlottesymphony.org/csoroadshow for more information.

The Charlotte Symphony continues to bring music to the community through programs like **Music for All**, which allows members of the Charlotte community on public assistance to attend most CSO concerts for \$1 per ticket and **Healing Hands**, a program that sends orchestra musicians to perform in area hospitals, senior care centers, and community centers to enrich the lives of patients, residents, and caregivers.

You can also find the CSO out in the community at your local brewery for **On Tap**, the popular series featuring an intimate orchestra experience within the laid-back environment of a neighborhood brewery. (Details for the 2024–25 On Tap series to be announced at a later date)

In the 2024–25 season, the CSO will continue to strengthen and expand its community partnerships through a variety of programs and services, including in area churches, schools, community centers, and higher education.

GENERAL INFORMATION

A complete listing of concerts for the Charlotte Symphony’s 2024–25 season can be found [here](#).

Subscriptions for the Classical, Pops, Family, and Movie series go on sale today, April 3, 2024. Individual tickets for all performances will go on sale to the public later this summer. For more information visit charlottesymphony.org.

About the Charlotte Symphony

One of the premier music organizations in the Southeastern United States and the oldest operating symphony orchestra in the Carolinas, the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra (CSO) connects with more than 130,000 music lovers each year through its lively season of concerts, broadcasts, community events, and robust educational programs. The CSO is committed to its mission of uplifting, entertaining, and educating the diverse communities of Charlotte-Mecklenburg and beyond through exceptional musical experiences. The CSO employs 65

professional full-time orchestra musicians, fosters three 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.

ALL PROGRAMS AND ARTISTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The Classical Series is presented by **Bank of America**

The Pops Series is presented by **Sandra and Leon Levine**

The Family Series is presented by **Domtar.**

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