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## **CHARLOTTE SYMPHONY NAMES CHRISTOPHER JAMES LEES RESIDENT CONDUCTOR**

**April 13, 2018 | CHARLOTTE, NC**—The Charlotte Symphony has named Christopher James Lees as its newly titled Resident Conductor effective July 1, 2018.

Music Director Christopher Warren-Green appointed Lees as Assistant Conductor of the Charlotte Symphony in the 2016-17 season, and since then, Lees has curated and conducted more than 50 performances a year, not only leading Pops and family series concerts but also the Symphony's popular On Tap series at Charlotte-area breweries, and the Symphony's new traveling series, CSO On the Go.

In the community, he leads Healing Hands performances at area senior care centers and recreation centers, and conducts Link Up, a program of Carnegie Hall, which engages over 3,000 students in the Symphony experience at Belk Theater. He also leads the annual *Nutcracker* collaboration with Charlotte Ballet.

"Anyone who has seen Chris in action at the brewery or worked with him on stage knows that he brings an extraordinary level of energy and artistry to everything he does," says Maestro Warren-Green. "We are thrilled to elevate Chris's role with us so he can fully embed in the Charlotte community."

Only the second American Gustavo Dudamel Conducting Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Lees made his debut with that orchestra in April 2013 and returned for performances in 2015. As a guest conductor, he has performed with the Houston, Detroit, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Kansas City, North Carolina, Toledo, Vermont, Flint, and Portland symphonies, among many others.

Additional conducting engagements have taken him to the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Aspen Philharmonic Orchestra, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, and at the Music in the Mountains Festival & Festival Internacional de Inverno de Campos do Jordão in Brazil.

"I am honored by the creation of this expanded role with the Charlotte Symphony and am tremendously excited to more fully contribute to its mission," says Lees. "I have loved working with the musicians of the CSO, and look forward to even more dynamic and engaging performances together. I am grateful to Maestro Warren-Green for the opportunity to completely immerse in the organization while bringing this stellar music to our community."

A passionate advocate for contemporary music, Lees has premiered more than 150 new works by a diverse range of composers, and collaborated closely with Pulitzer Prize winners John Adams, William Bolcom, John Corigliano, and Caroline Shaw, among others.

Since 2014, Lees has concurrently served as Music Director of the UNC School of the Arts Symphony Orchestra. In this position he has spearheaded cross-disciplinary collaborations across five arts schools: Integrating world premiere choreography into Symphonic Orchestra concerts, producing the first UNCSCA Collage Concert, and conducting the musical components of CP Taylor's 1981 play, *Good*, a piece of fully staged theatre in which the chamber orchestra plays a leading dramatic role.

A native of Washington, D.C., Lees holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Michigan. He and his wife, new music soprano Lindsay Kesselman, will move to Charlotte in June with their son, Rowan.

### **About the Charlotte Symphony**

Founded in 1932, the Charlotte Symphony is a longstanding nonprofit organization committed to delivering exceptional musical experiences that connect and strengthen the Charlotte community. 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 that enriches the human spirit. We employ professional full-time orchestra musicians, support two youth orchestras and a volunteer chorus, and offer significant educational programming aimed at improving underserved sections of our community. The Charlotte Symphony is integral to the Charlotte area, serving its community through music that connects and inspires. [charlottesymphony.org](http://charlottesymphony.org)

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