



KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

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Kansas City Symphony Signs Music Director Michael Stern through 2023, Will Honor Stern with Laureate Title

KANSAS CITY, Mo. | Sept. 9, 2019 — Kansas City Symphony Board Chair Patrick McCown and Executive Director Daniel Beckley are pleased to announce they have renewed Music Director Michael Stern’s contract through the 2022/23 season.

Stern, whose current contract continues through the 2019/20 season, will have served as Kansas City Symphony’s music director for 18 years when the new contract expires — one of the longest tenures for a major American orchestra.

“Without a doubt, the artistic growth of the Kansas City Symphony over the past 15 years is due to the exceptional musical leadership of our Music Director Michael Stern,” McCown says. “We support Michael wholeheartedly, and in turn, he embraces this community season after season and delivers artistically excellent performances. He has not only laid a solid foundation but also provided a springboard for our future. We happily celebrate Michael’s renewal and look forward to many great years ahead.”

Stern says his time with the Symphony has provided some of the most satisfying experiences of his entire career.

“These years with the extraordinary Kansas City Symphony musicians have been a defining period in my life, musically and personally,” Stern says. “It’s a privilege to be onstage making music with them and making the case for music in our community. I’m grateful for the board’s support, thrilled for these next years together and beyond, and incredibly proud of what we’ve achieved together. The orchestra’s artistic level has been transformed, and it continues to soar. We are proud to champion composers of our time and honored to play in one of the greatest halls anywhere. The future of the Kansas City Symphony is limitless.”

Together, Stern and Symphony administration have steered the organization into new heights of artistic excellence. Since joining the Symphony as music director in the 2005/06 season, Stern has appointed 34 full-time, tenure-track musicians (or 43 percent) of the current orchestra roster.

The Symphony presents 14 Classical Series weekends of its 42-week season. With a healthy subscription base and strong single ticket sales, Classical Series concerts average 94 percent sold capacity, and the Symphony continues to see unprecedented financial growth. The orchestra recorded its highest-ever Classical Series ticket revenues in the 2018/19 season.

“Artistically speaking, Michael Stern has propelled the Kansas City Symphony from a regional orchestra to a major national orchestra,” Beckley says. “I’m delighted we are renewing Michael’s contract through the 2022/23 season. We’re working on plans now for new commissions, recordings, broadcast opportunities and other innovative projects to further the art form of orchestral music.”

Stern has decided to step down at the conclusion of the 2022/23 season after much consideration, and he is delighted to accept the Symphony’s offer to continue as music director laureate thereafter. Candidates for Stern’s successor will guest conduct during the 2021/22 season.

“As chair, I will oversee the search, and our audiences will be included in that process,” McCown adds.

Stern envisions an elegant transition — in step with how the Symphony operates.

“In many ways we’re a model among American orchestras, with a culture of artistic integrity, transparency, trust and vision toward the future,” Stern says. “This next transition will happen in that spirit. My heart is with my two growing daughters in Connecticut, but in no small measure, it will always be with Kansas City as well.”

Beckley says he is thankful for Stern’s dedication to the shared goals of the Symphony.

“We’ll keep everyone posted as more details are announced, and in the meantime, we’re celebrating Michael and the wonderful music ahead,” Beckley says. “What we’re doing here is special, meaningful and exciting. Don’t miss out.”

High-resolution photos, b-roll, and reflections of accomplishments available [here](#).

To learn more about the Kansas City Symphony, visit kcsymphony.org.

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