



Kansas City Symphony announces Jun Iwasaki as its new Concertmaster beginning with 2022/23 Season

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - May 19, 2022 — The Kansas City Symphony has chosen its next concertmaster. Violinist Jun Iwasaki will join the orchestra in September 2022. Currently the concertmaster of the Nashville Symphony, Iwasaki was selected from a group of highly qualified candidates at the conclusion of a careful search.

“I am both honored and excited to be named the next concertmaster of the Kansas City Symphony,” said Iwasaki. “I truly look forward to getting to know both the Kansas City Symphony organization and the city itself as I take on my new role.”

A graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music’s prestigious Concertmaster Academy, Iwasaki has been hailed for his combination of dazzling technique and lyrical musicianship. In a review of Iwasaki’s performance at the Mimir Chamber Music Festival, the Fort Worth Star Telegram called him “the magician of the evening. He could reach into his violin and pull out bouquets of sound, then reach behind your ear and touch your soul.”

Music Director Michael Stern is thrilled that Iwasaki is joining the Kansas City Symphony as the new concertmaster. “This journey was an involved one for two reasons. The first was the terrible interruption imposed on us by the pandemic — what we hoped would be an expedited timeline was unavoidably delayed by two years. More significantly, we had the privilege of working with an impressive number of uniquely gifted violinists. We were lucky to have such an array of artistry to consider, and we went through the process with great deliberation and care. I believe we have found a superb concertmaster in Jun, and I am convinced that he is going to be a huge contributor to the Kansas City Symphony’s ongoing success. He is a marvelous violinist, a compelling and natural musician with proven experience, and a generous colleague. Above all, he will bring great leadership not only in his role on stage, but as a force for music and the arts, and for our Symphony, throughout the community. I am so happy he will be with us to conclude our season this year for our performances of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, even though he will formally assume his duties at the start of next season. I welcome him, his wife Paige and their two children Taiga and Kenta to our Kansas City family, and I look forward to the inspired musical road ahead.”

“I am most delighted to welcome Jun to the orchestra,” said Executive Director Danny Beckley. “His extensive leadership experience will be invaluable as we innovate and advance in artistic service to Kansas City. I am convinced that Jun is the right person to help lead our ambitions and to help our efforts to expand community engagement robustly with symphonic music.”

Iwasaki was appointed concertmaster of the Nashville Symphony by Music Director Giancarlo Guerrero at the beginning of the 2011/12 season. Maestro Guerrero extends his best wishes to Iwasaki. “I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Jun. He has been a valued partner in bringing the Nashville Symphony to ever higher artistic ground and has made a great contribution to the Symphony and to the Nashville community both artistically and professionally. I wish Jun and his family great success in Kansas City.”

Prior to joining the Nashville Symphony, Iwasaki served as concertmaster of the Oregon Symphony from 2007 to 2011. Throughout his career, he has appeared with numerous orchestras throughout Europe and the U.S., including the Blossom Festival Orchestra, Cleveland Pops Orchestra, the Atlanta and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras, Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon Portugal, and the Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra. In addition, he has served as concertmaster of the Asian Artists and Concerts Orchestra (AAC), guest concertmaster of the Santa Barbara Symphony in 2010, and guest concertmaster of the National Arts Center Orchestra in Ottawa in 2006.

Jun has won numerous First and Grand Prize performance awards, including First Prize in 2005's Japanese American Association Competition and the Coleman Chamber Music Competition.

Kansas City Symphony patrons will have a chance to hear Jun Iwasaki when he joins the orchestra in the final subscription concerts of the season in programs featuring Beethoven's 9th Symphony. He will be formally welcomed as the new concertmaster of the Kansas City Symphony when he joins the orchestra at the "Royal Gala: Let's Have a Ball" (the annual Symphony Ball) on Saturday, September 10, 2022.



Photo credit: Robby Klein

About the Kansas City Symphony

Founded in 1982, the Kansas City Symphony has established itself as a major force in the cultural life of the community. Praised for performances of uncompromising standard, the orchestra is the largest in the region and enjoys a national reputation under the artistic leadership of Music Director Michael Stern. The Symphony performs more than 130 concerts each year, reaching more than 250,000 community members. The Symphony welcomes guests of international acclaim as part of its Classical and Pops series and serves as the orchestra for the Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

Complementing its full schedule of concerts, the Symphony enriches the lives of Kansas City residents by providing music education opportunities for children and adults, such as KinderKonzerts, Young People's Concerts, an instrument petting zoo and concert comments. The Mobile Music Box, a popup stage created by the Symphony during the COVID-19 pandemic, reaches thousands of audience members each season with dozens of chamber music concerts throughout the Kansas City metro area.

The Symphony has released nine highly praised CDs to date with Reference Recordings. The latest release features one-movement symphonies by Samuel Barber, Jean Sibelius and Alexander Scriabin. The Symphony and Michael Stern also have recorded for the Naxos label. Kansas City's new classical music radio station, 91.9 ClassicalKC, broadcasts Kansas City Symphony performances each week. For more information on the Symphony, please visit kcsymphony.org.