

\*\*\*\*\* Embargoed until Tues, May 9 at 11am ET \*\*\*\*\*

For immediate release

Contact Glenn Petry (212) 625 2038  
[gpetry@21cmediagroup.com](mailto:gpetry@21cmediagroup.com)

## Matthias Pintscher Is Named Fifth Music Director of Kansas City Symphony, Starting 2024–25



*Matthias Pintscher (photo: Franck Ferville)*

(May 2023) — The [Kansas City Symphony \(KCS\)](#) is thrilled to announce the appointment of German-born conductor-composer **Matthias Pintscher** – “one of Europe’s leading lights” (*Washington Post*) – as its fifth **Music Director**. Now completing his tenth and final season as Music Director of Ensemble Intercontemporain, the world’s foremost contemporary music ensemble, Pintscher will succeed present incumbent Michael Stern in fall 2024, for an initial term of **five seasons**.

The appointment concludes an exhaustive two-year search that saw the orchestra consider a multitude of guest conductors for the post. Among them were several strong contenders. However, once Pintscher made his KCS debut this past March, there was no debate. He was offered the post just days after his first appearance with the orchestra, because of the powerful, galvanic connection that sparked between them. In works by Ravel, Scriabin and Ligeti, this special rapport communicated to audiences and critics alike. The program prompted standing ovations and a five-star review from *Bachtrack*, which praised the conductor's "**keen musical intelligence, palpable verve and energy, as well as an impeccable command of timing.**" In Ravel, the reviewer continued:

"Pintscher was excellent at creating the dreamlike sonic landscape, teasing out the lyricism, and at relishing the big-sounding discomforts, and I got the sense, especially during the epic ending, that he was enjoying every moment."

**Danny Beckley**, President & CEO of the Kansas City Symphony, describes the collaboration as a "**dream synergy.**" He explains:

"The Kansas City Symphony first saw Matthias Pintscher on the podium on a Wednesday. The following Monday, I called to ask him to be our next Music Director! That's how electric their rapport was from the first. We are committed to making orchestral music more appealing to a far wider audience, and I think Matthias can really help make that happen. The audiences attracted to his concerts were already the most diverse I've seen, with respect to age, race and degree of familiarity with classical music. Rooted in the sonic wonderland of Boulez, Matthias's ear has been refined through his many compositions and his conducting of the world's foremost orchestras. Just imagine applying his rich concept of sound to the core orchestral repertoire: the works of Beethoven, Bach, Debussy and Mahler! This is the kind of magic I envision with his appointment, and the way I see Matthias Pintscher and the Kansas City Symphony coming together to shape the future of our art."

Pintscher shares this deep-seated excitement about his new role. He says:

"Many friends told me beforehand how much I would enjoy meeting and working with the Kansas City Symphony. But in March, when I first met the orchestra, we had much more than just a good time! There was an immediate connection between us. I felt a sense of homecoming when I recognized some of the musicians as alums of the New World Symphony, which I regularly conduct. And it wasn't just that. Right from the start, the Kansas City Symphony and I shared an extraordinary level of trust and joy in music-making. Their playing was inspired, which I found immensely inspiring in turn. I felt truly welcome: welcome as the musician I am. I felt as though we had already known each other for a long time and were just picking up musically from where we had left off.

"The Kansas City Symphony is a world-class orchestra. It is dynamic, openminded and curious, and has already been brought into top shape by current music director Michael Stern. What's more, it now plays in a state-of-the-art concert hall, one of the finest in the country, with phenomenal acoustics. Our week together culminated in three terrific performances, filled with color, passion and mutual appreciation. This appreciation was shared by our enthusiastic audiences, which gave us an exceptionally warm response.

“During my week there, I could feel the energy of the entire city and its diverse communities, and immediately connected with the locals. Some of them had never been to the symphony before, but came out to see us perform. How great is that?”

“I am excited about embarking on this journey of adventures with the Kansas City Symphony, and can’t wait to start exploring different repertoires together and working to create a compelling story and vision for our vibrant community. Our hall is a place where people can meet and listen to each other’s powerful musical and human stories. I feel so honored to become part of that dynamic, as Music Director from the beginning of the 2024–25 season. Avanti!”

The musicians were unanimous in their support for Pintscher’s appointment. **Kristin Velicer**, Chair of the KCS Musicians’ Committee, comments:

“The musicians of the Kansas City Symphony warmly welcome Matthias Pintscher as our new Music Director. The instant chemistry and respect between Maestro Pintscher and the musicians were palpable from the first rehearsal. He set an incredibly high bar with a challenging program, and the musicians went above and beyond to deliver exhilarating performances. Additionally, the personal connections he made with us both on and off stage were inspiring and genuine. When the audience applause died down after our last concert together, we all began to stomp our feet to insist that he return to the stage, so we could applaud him ourselves and thank him for a truly spectacular week. We all came away knowing that he was the one.”

**Patrick McCown**, Chair of KCS’s Board of Directors, comments:

“As Kansas City continues to grow as a cultural destination, it is hard to imagine a more perfect time for Matthias Pintscher to assume the position of Music Director of the Kansas City Symphony. As a world-class conductor, teacher, musician and composer, Matthias brings a truly unique combination of gifts, skills and experience to the role. From his first appearance with the orchestra, he has made a powerful connection with the musicians that can only be described as magical. Together, their artistry and his innovative approach to classical orchestral music will build on Maestro Michael Stern’s years of invaluable foundational work, taking KCS to new heights of excellence in performance, enhancing its reputation, and winning recognition among the nation’s top orchestras.”

As Music Director, Pintscher will lead the KCS for ten weeks each season. Working in close partnership with Beckley, he will strive to shape each program as a unique experience and find new ways of presenting music to the community. Among the projects he is currently considering are small-format concerts in non-traditional venues; programs that contextualize music with storytelling; museum-based collaborations with Kansas City’s thriving visual arts’ community; period-instrument performances of core repertoire; and a semi-staged production of Bach’s *St Matthew Passion*. As local audience trust and support continues to grow, he hopes to explore further new directions in programming.

Pintscher’s appointment has the strong support of current Music Director **Michael Stern**, who says:

“I am overjoyed that Matthias is to be the next Music Director of the Kansas City Symphony. Looking beyond the end of my tenure, with all that we have worked so hard to build, I hoped only for the best possible transition to an exciting new chapter, led by an artist who would cherish our

musicians and music-loving public. My hope was fulfilled. Matthias is not just the right person at the right time. He is the perfect choice, and more. His enormous accomplishments as both a composer and conductor speak volumes. Furthermore, he is a sterling colleague and a generous and brilliant artist who is completely committed to KCS's mission. With his spirit and talent, it promises to be a great ride! I welcome his coming to Kansas City with all my heart."

When Pintscher inaugurates his tenure in fall 2024, Stern will assume the honorary title of **Music Director Laureate** for the next ten seasons. Further details will be announced shortly.

## About Matthias Pintscher

Matthias Pintscher is "a sculptural conductor who continually conjures up images for one's ears" (*Der Tagesspiegel*, Germany). Now nearing the end of his tenure as Music Director of Ensemble Intercontemporain, winner of the 2022 Polar Music Prize, he recently led the ensemble on their final European and U.S. tours together, which featured appearances at both Carnegie and Disney Halls. Also in his second season as Creative Partner of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Pintscher's previous titled positions include Principal Conductor of the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra, Music Director of California's Ojai Music Festival, Season Creative Chair of Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra, Artist-in-Residence of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and nine seasons as Artist-in-Association of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. In addition, he enjoys especially close relationships with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, besides appearing almost annually with Florida's New World Symphony. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut this spring, bookended by engagements in the German capital, where he led the Berlin Philharmonic at this year's Biennale and looks forward to conducting *The Flying Dutchman* at the Berlin State Opera. Previous operatic engagements include productions at the Vienna State Opera and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

Alongside his conducting career, Pintscher is one of today's preeminent composers. His music is championed by some of the finest performing artists, conductors and orchestras worldwide, including the Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Orchestre de Paris. His works are published exclusively by Bärenreiter, and he has served on the composition faculty of New York's Juilliard School since 2014. Born in Marl, North Rhine-Westphalia, Pintscher studied conducting with Pierre Boulez and Peter Eötvös.

## About the Kansas City Symphony

Founded in 1982, the Kansas City Symphony has rocketed to become one of the top 25 orchestras in the United States. The orchestra makes its home in Helzberg Hall at Kansas City's Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. With 1,600 seats and acoustic design by living legend Yasuhisa Toyota, this is widely recognized as one of the world's great concert halls. In addition, the orchestra regularly presents traveling chamber performances on the Mobile Music Box. Conceived at the start of the coronavirus pandemic, this self-contained portable stage has been in regular operation since September 2020.

The Kansas City Symphony aims to increase the desirability of classical music throughout the community by taking an experiential approach to concerts. Launching in fall 2023, the orchestra's Audience Development Initiative will integrate music performances with story-driven narrative, to draw clear connections between music and the human experience. Besides giving hundreds of orchestral and chamber music performances each season, the Kansas City Symphony serves as the pit orchestra for both the Kansas City Ballet and Lyric Opera of Kansas City. The 160-member Kansas City Symphony Chorus provides the choral voice of the Kansas City Symphony, expanding the orchestra's artistic scope.

Click [here](#) for high-resolution photos.

---

<https://www.facebook.com/kcsymphony>

<https://www.instagram.com/kcsymphony>

<https://www.youtube.com/kcsymphony>

<https://www.kcsymphony.org>

<https://twitter.com/kcsymphony>

---

© 21C Media Group, May 2023