



Anna Binneweg, Music Director, **Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic**
Ulysses James, Music Director Laureate, **Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic**
Alberto Rodriguez, Music Director, **Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra**
Randy Ward, Music Director, **Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra**
Caroline Mousset, Executive and Artistic Planning Director

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Introducing Alberto Rodriguez as the New Music Director of the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra

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Alexandria, VA—The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association (WMPA) is delighted to announce the appointment of Alberto Rodriguez as the new Music Director of the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra (WMYO). Rodriguez brings a wealth of experience and artistic vision to one of the region's premier youth orchestras, and his appointment marks an exciting new chapter in the organization's history.

As WMYO Music Director, Rodriguez will oversee the artistic direction of the orchestra, lead rehearsals and performances, and develop innovative programming to enhance the musical growth and experience of the talented young musicians in the ensemble. His exceptional musicianship, deep understanding of orchestral repertoire, and ability to inspire young musicians will undoubtedly elevate the WMYO to new heights of excellence.

"On behalf of the WMPA Board of Directors, I am pleased to welcome Alberto Rodriguez as WMYO's new Music Director," says WMPA Board President Lawrence Ries. "I also want to thank outgoing Music Director David Weigert, who has accomplished so much to make the WMYO a successful program in the past five years, including keeping the program running during COVID." Weigert says, "Al Rodriguez is a truly talented conductor and a consummate musician. Having worked with our WMYO musicians for four years now, he has an excellent rapport with our ensemble and a firm grasp of our operations. I feel confident he will contribute strongly to the musical and artistic growth of our historic ensemble into the foreseeable future."

Rodriguez states, "I am excited and immensely humbled to have been chosen as Music Director of the WMYO, and am grateful to the WMPA Board as well as my predecessor Maestro David Weigert for his support of myself over the past three years as Assistant Conductor.

He continues, "As a music educator and conductor, I am excited about the opportunities that a group like the WMYO presents. This organization has a fantastic legacy of community collaborations and partnerships, student-centered repertoire choices, and the featuring of senior soloists. I believe we also have a bright and exciting future as an ensemble that provides excellent growth and performance opportunities to some of the most gifted young musicians in the greater Alexandria area both musically and personally as we perform brilliant music as diverse as the communities we live in.

"As the Music Director of the WMYO, I aim to use my values and those of the WMPA to chart our ensemble's direction. I plan on encouraging diversity in our ensemble personnel and repertoire choices. I seek to place opportunity above all else and make WMYO a premiere ensemble for students who need extra-curricular performance challenges, regardless of background, and help these students grow by focusing on musical excellence and quality human relationships. The WMYO will strive to demonstrate our commitment to student excellence in all aspects of our existence, because ultimately, uplifting our students to share beautiful, transformational music is our purpose of existence."

Alberto (Al) Rodriguez is an engaging educator, conductor, clinician, and performer who takes on the role of Music Director of the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra after serving for three seasons as Assistant Conductor. A two time "Orchestra

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Director of the Year" winner from the Fairfax Orchestra Directors Association and currently a Quarterfinalist for the 2024 Music Educator Award presented by the GRAMMY Foundation, Rodriguez has served as Director of Orchestras at Mount Vernon High School in Alexandria, VA since 2017. Under his stable and consistent leadership, the program has grown in both numbers and quality in addition to providing his students with unique world premiere and guest clinician opportunities. His ensembles have received multiple "Superior" ratings at the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association state assessment events.

In addition to his work in the classroom and on the podium, Rodriguez is a versatile musician who maintains an active schedule as an electric and upright bassist in the Northern Virginia Area specializing in rock, blues, and funk and has been a part of multiple regional touring bands over the past decade. Given his background in alternative styles, he believes strongly in the power of diverse and engaging musical repertoire, regardless of the setting. This passion led to Rodriguez winning one of eight "Wolf Trap Grants for High School Performing Arts Teachers" in 2023 to kickstart an original music collaboration between orchestra and digital student production students at MVHS.

Rodriguez received a Bachelor of Science in Music Education from Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Institute of Music in 2015 and a M.M. in Music Education from Ithaca College in 2021.

"We are thrilled to welcome Alberto Rodriguez to the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra as its new Music Director," said Caroline Mousset, Executive and Artistic Planning Director of WMPA. "His values, artistic vision, and dedication to music education make him the perfect fit for our organization. We are confident that under his leadership, the WMYO will continue to thrive and provide exceptional musical experiences for our talented young musicians."

The Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra eagerly anticipates the beginning of a new era under the Rodriguez' baton. With his inspiring leadership, the orchestra is poised to embark on exciting musical journeys and captivate audiences with their remarkable performances.

For more information about the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, visit wmpamusic.org/wmyo. For 2023/2024 WMYO audition information, visit wmpamusic.org/wmyoauditions or contact albertorodriguez@wmpamusic.org

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IMAGE GALLERY High-resolution press images are available in [WMPA's Media Image Gallery](#).

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About Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra:

The Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra is renowned for its commitment to providing exceptional musical opportunities for young musicians in the DC/VA/MD area. Founded in 1972, the WMYO has earned a reputation for excellence and has nurtured countless aspiring musicians who have gone on to achieve remarkable success in their musical careers.

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About Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association:

A performing arts organization whose mission is to enrich, inspire, and educate through live performances of high-quality music, WMPA is comprised of several major programs, including Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra (grades 9-12), Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra (grades 6-9), the Lyceum Chamber Music Series presenting weekly concerts throughout the summer at Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum, and offering more than 50 on-demand, full-length online concerts. WMPA continues to grow and has earned a reputation for bringing adventurous and engaging programs to the community.

WMPA's Mission. To inspire enthusiasm for the live performance experience of both traditional classical and new music to people of all ages.

WMPA's Vision. Excellence in all we do. Championing contemporary and new works, particularly by American composers. Promoting inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in our activities and initiatives. Honesty, fairness, and accountability . Actively engaging with the community.

Media contact:

Caroline Mousset, WMPA Executive and Artistic Planning Director

carolinemousset@wmpamusic.org

703-799-8229 x701

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