



Ulysses James, Music Director, **Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic**
David Weigert, 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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Anna Binneweg appointed as Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic's new Music Director

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Alexandria, VA—Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association (WMPA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Anna Binneweg as the third Music Director of the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic (WMP), now in its 51st Season. Binneweg was selected out of a pool of 50 applicants and four finalist candidates and succeeds Alexandria Living Legend Ulysses "Ul" James, who retires from the position on May 20 after a thirty-nine year tenure. Binneweg's first concert as Music Director will take place on October 15 at George Washington National Masonic Memorial.

Binneweg says, "I am thrilled and deeply grateful to the musicians, staff, and Board of WMPA for choosing me to be WMP's next musical leader in its 52nd season. I want to also recognize the immense impact of outgoing Music Director Ul James, whose artistic vision shaped WMPA for almost four decades and paved the way for exciting new growth in the future. When I performed for the first time with WMP in December 2022, I was immediately struck by the orchestra's extremely high artistic quality and sense of pride, but also their desire to evolve, explore new repertoire, and adapt as the modern world continues to change. I am very much looking forward to the powerful, transformative work we will do together in the coming seasons."

"I couldn't be happier that we've found Anna to join WMPA," says Executive Director Caroline Mousset. "During her concert in December 2022, I could already tell what a great match Anna would be for WMP. I'm convinced of her knowledge and confidence as a conductor and communicator, and her inherent understanding of musicians' needs and experience. Anna has a wealth of inspiring ideas to take us forward, is enthusiastic about music education and WMPA's role in the community, and has a true love of Alexandria. We are so excited to start working together!"

"Collaborative ... Engaging ... Audience - ingratiating ..." - Baltimore Sun

As the Music Director/Conductor of the Lوندtowne Symphony Orchestra, the AACC Symphony Orchestra at Anne Arundel Community College, and a frequent guest conductor on the national and international scene, Binneweg repeatedly captures audiences with her enthusiasm and passion for music. Putting her musicians, not herself, in the spotlight, Binneweg brings out the best in them. Her orchestras' shared focus and energy makes orchestral music sound new, fresh and exciting. Her programs and performances are alluring, engaging and attract diverse audiences of all ages, particularly making classical repertoire more appealing to younger generations.

Over the course of her career, Binneweg has performed in some of the nation's most renowned concert venues including the Kennedy Center's Concert Hall, the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall and the Walt Disney Concert Hall. Her international conducting experiences include tours to Austria, Spain and debut appearances with the Chernihiv Philharmonic (Ukraine), Lviv Virtuosi (Ukraine), and the Minsk Conservatory Orchestra (Belarus).

A committed music educator, Binneweg's youth orchestra experience includes appointments with the Houston Youth Symphony and the San Luis Obispo Youth Symphony, in addition to her guest conducting appearances with colleges and universities throughout the United States. She is in frequent demand as an orchestra clinician and adjudicator throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and served on the national executive board of directors for the College Orchestra Directors Association (CODA) from 2014-2018.

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She has worked with conductors such as Leonard Slatkin, Daniel Barenboim, Robert Spano, James Paul, Michael Morgan, Duaine Wolfe, Nurhan Arman and David Effron through various engagements sponsored by the League of American Orchestras, the Conductors Institute of New York and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Most recently, Binneweg was elected to the board of directors of the International Conductors Guild (2021).

Earning a doctorate degree of music in orchestral conducting from Northwestern University where she studied with Victor Yampolsky, she has also served on the conducting faculties at Loyola University, the Sherwood Conservatory of Music, and American University.

Like all conductors, Anna is the most visible part of the orchestra, the advocate and face of the ensembles she leads. As an active conductor of the 2022-2023 season, she remains committed to reigniting her community's passion for live music and collaboration during these post-pandemic times.

Binneweg is the recipient of the 2015 Annie Award for the Performing Arts awarded by the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County.

"We knew our next Music Director would also play a key position in other performing arts organizations and have a robust independent conducting life. This is quite common for orchestras of WMP's size. It provides the Music Director with irreplaceable experience in and connections to the broader world of music which are highly beneficial to her time spent here," explains Mousset.

While a large part of Binneweg's initial WMP season has been planned, she is integral to completing the artistic choices for next year's concerts and looks forward to fully fleshing out an artistic vision for Alexandria's oldest community orchestra. The 2023/2024 season will be announced this June.

"As Music Director it will be my goal to choose programming which serves the entirety of the VA/DC/MD area," says Binneweg. "That means programming works by composers of color, female composers, creating new collaborations with local creative professionals, engaging high-quality guest artists while also promoting both WMP principal musicians and the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra talent who will one day shape the future of our industry, and offering audiences a healthy dose of the ever-relevant "classics" while also celebrating and cultivating the work of living composers. Luckily, as a strong legacy of UI James, WMP has been doing that work for decades, and the foundation is strong!"

The WMPA Music Director search committee included members of the orchestra, Board, and staff who assessed the pool of 50 candidates over the past year. Audience and orchestra surveys after each of the four finalist's concerts were taken into consideration for the final decision.

Lawrence Ries, President of the WMPA Board of Directors, says "The Board is extremely pleased to be bringing Anna Binneweg in as the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic's next Music Director. The consistently high quality of each candidate we brought in to conduct the orchestra is testament to the work of our search committee, the staff, and the reputation of the WMPA. Whoever emerged from that process, as the WMP's next Music Director, had to be exceptional.

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Anna is all of that. All parties to the process are looking forward to a long and fruitful relationship with Anna as the Music Director."

"Having recently lived in Alexandria for 10 years, I have loved this area. I can't think of a more alluring and vibrant place to work and make music. The Shenandoah Valley, the Potomac River, the charm of Old Town Alexandria, the vibrancy of DC paired with the relaxed Virginia feel—who could ask for more? I look forward to really getting to know WMPA audiences, donors, and musicians as we share the gift of music with all of you for many seasons to come," says Binneweg.

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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 Philharmonic:

Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic is a modern, symphonic orchestra of approximately 65 professional and semi-professional musicians dedicated to creating innovative and exhilarating live music experiences through memorable performances for the community and adventurous programming of both well-known and rarely played classical repertoire. As a firm proponent of diversity and inclusion, its identity has been shaped by a strong focus on presenting American music, championing works by living composers, and presenting works by underrepresented composers.

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.

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