

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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May 6, 2018—The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Association (WMPA) is pleased to announce the addition of two new music directors to the organization. Randy Ward and David Weigert will take up the batons as directors of the Washington Metropolitan Concert Orchestra (WMCO, students grade 6 to 9) and the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra (WMYO, students grade 9 and up), respectively. Their leadership begins immediately in preparation for the 2018–2019 season of concerts. Both will assist outgoing music directors Dr. Henry Sgrecci and Ruth Erbe with upcoming auditions for the youth orchestras. Auditions will be held from 4 to 9 pm on Monday, May 14 and Tuesday, May 22 at the Convergence Lab Studio, 1819 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria VA. For more information about auditions, visit <https://www.wmpamusic.org/wmyowmco-auditions-general-information.html>.



Randy Ward

Randy Ward is principal cellist of the Philharmonic Orchestra and has served on the board of directors as musician representative. He earned his master's degree in musical pedagogy at George Mason University and has been conducting youth orchestras in the area since 2005. He comes to the position of WMCO Music Director after working as a music teacher in Fairfax County public schools for the last four years.

“It's such a pleasure to share in the learning of new music,” Ward said of his expanded role at WMCO.

“Based on his impressive depth of experience with the local Virginia school system, his enthusiasm for music and love of working with youth and their parents and his multiple musical and conducting talents, he is an outstanding choice to inspire a life-long love of music in our WMCO middle-school-age youth,” said WMPA Board of Directors President Lawrence Ries.



As an alum of WMYO, David Weigert joins the organization with intimate knowledge of the orchestra he will now lead. He holds two master's degrees, one in orchestral conducting from the University of North Texas and one from Baylor University in clarinet performance. He has worked as a conductor and director for the last eight years, most recently as Orchestra Director, Clear Creek Independent School District, Friendsville, TX.

“David's outstanding educational, musical and conducting credentials, as well as his outgoing personality, experience as a former member of the WMYO and his special passion for making music with the WMYO youth all give me great confidence that he is the outstanding choice for Music Director of

WMYO,” Ries said.

David Weigert

“Having been in multiple youth orchestras as a student, including several within the Washington, D.C. area, I can say confidently that the WMPA houses a rare group of individuals who genuinely and selflessly care about the artistic enrichment of the community and the education of young people,” Weigert said. “The WMYO, in particular, has always provided a warm and supportive environment for students in a manner which greatly stands out from other youth orchestra programs. I am more than thrilled to provide leadership for the WMYO.”

Ward and Weigert take the reins from Ruth Erbe and Dr. Henry Sgrecci, respectively, who are both retiring. “It has been my great honor to know and collaborate with Henry Sgrecci,” said Ulysses James, Artistic Director of WMPA and Conductor of the Philharmonic for more than three decades. “He cares deeply about young people and the importance of music, especially classical music, in their development. WMPA has been most fortunate to have him as a member of the organization for seventeen years.”

“Ruth Erbe, with great energy enthusiasm, successfully built the WMCO from a very small string orchestra to a full symphony orchestra in 10 years,” James continued. “This remarkable achievement was accomplished because of her extraordinary perseverance and constant search for ways to create a fine youth orchestra for youngsters ready to begin performing in a symphony orchestra setting.”

About WMPA

WMPA was founded by former National Symphony Orchestra principal bassist H. Stevens Brewster. He established the Mount Vernon Youth Orchestra and Mount Vernon Orchestra in 1971 and 1972, respectively. After Mr. Brewster’s tragic death in an automobile accident in 1984, Ulysses S. James became the Director of both orchestras. Under James leadership, the organization has continued to grow and has earned a reputation for bringing high quality, adventurous musical programs to the community. The association places consistent emphasis on the performance of new and exciting musical compositions and the support of local and emerging artists, while working to make high quality musical performance accessible to all members of the community. Learn more at wmpamusic.org.

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