

*For Immediate Release*



*Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Music Director*

## **Robert Spano Named Principal Guest Conductor of Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra**

**FORT WORTH, TX— March 15, 2019** — The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra announced today that **internationally-acclaimed conductor Robert Spano has been named the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor**, effective immediately. Spano, who is conducting a program of Strauss and Mahler at Bass Performance Hall this weekend, will return to Fort Worth to conduct two concert weekends per year in each of the 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 seasons. His term as Principal Guest Conductor will conclude on **June 30, 2023**.

FWSO President and CEO, Dr. Keith Cerny stated, "On behalf of all of us at the FWSO, I am absolutely delighted to welcome Maestro Spano to the orchestra in his new role. His reputation and stature will allow us to continue to develop and grow this superb orchestra, and I look forward very much to working with him in the coming seasons."

"We are thrilled to have Robert Spano join the FWSO as Principal Guest Conductor," stated FWSO Board Chair Mercedes Bass. "I have long admired his great work with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the Aspen Music Festival, and it is a great pleasure to have him join our orchestra in this capacity."

Spano will appear on the orchestra's Symphonic Series, offering ten concerts each season featuring world-class artists, timeless classics, and exciting new works performed in the acoustically superb Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall. In each of the three seasons of his tenure, he will conduct two of the ten scheduled concert weekends. In addition to his duties on the podium, he will also assist with the company's fundraising and community outreach efforts.

"What a joy it is to have met this wonderful orchestra, and I anticipate with pleasure the prospect of making great music together in the future," stated Spano. "I am thrilled to join such a dynamic and enthusiastic organization."

"I am very pleased that Robert Spano -- a highly-respected conductor of international standing -- will be playing an important role in the musical life of the FWSO for the next few years," stated FWSO Music Director Miguel Harth-Bedoya. "I have long admired Robert's programming, as well as the range and variety of living composers he performs and supports. I offer a sincere and very warm welcome!"

Spano is conducting the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, with soprano Jessica Rivera, March 15-17 in a program featuring performances of Strauss' Four Last Songs and Mahler's Symphony No. 5. Tickets are available online at [www.fwsymphony.org](http://www.fwsymphony.org) or by calling 817-665-6000.

### **About Robert Spano**

Robert Spano, conductor, pianist, composer, and teacher, is known worldwide for the intensity of his artistry and distinctive communicative abilities, creating a sense of inclusion and warmth among musicians and audiences that is unique among American orchestras. Beginning his 18th season as Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, this highly imaginative conductor is an approachable artist with the innate ability to share his enthusiasm for music with an entire community and concert hall. A fervent mentor to rising artists, he is responsible for nurturing the careers of numerous celebrated composers, conductors, and performers. As Music Director of the Aspen Music Festival and School since 2011, he oversees the programming of more than 300 events and educational programs for 630 students and rising artists.

Highlights of the 2018-2019 season have included Mr. Spano's Metropolitan Opera debut, leading the US premiere of *Marnie*, the second opera by American composer Nico Muhly, with Isabel Leonard, Janis Kelly, Denyce Graves, Iestyn Davies, and Christopher Maltman. With the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, programs include the Music Director's quintessentially rich, diverse pairings of contemporary works and cherished classics, welcoming seasoned guest artists and many new faces. Opening the season, Kirill Gerstein joined Spano and the Orchestra in a program of Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky; further performances with the Orchestra include works by composers as varied as Jennifer Higdon and Berlioz, Michael Gandolfi and Mozart, Christopher Theofanidis and Tchaikovsky, James Oliverio and Beethoven, featuring acclaimed soloists Johannes Moser, Roberto Diaz, Daniel Hope, David Finkel, Wu Han, and Jeremy Denk. Additionally, Spano recently invited Atlanta-based dance troupe GLO to the Symphony Hall stage, with a music and dance collaboration featuring Ravel's *Mother Goose* Suite. The conductor concludes the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's season with Beethoven's beloved *Fidelio*, featuring the acclaimed ASO Chorus and starring soprano Christine Goerke. Overseas, Spano's guest engagements included two compelling programs with works by Jennifer Higdon, John Adams, Barber, Gershwin, Copland, and Dvorak with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic; and an all-Mahler program with acclaimed bass-baritone Shenyang with the Hangzhou Philharmonic later this spring. The conductor also appeared with the San Diego Symphony and pianist Jorge Federico Osorio; the Fort Worth Symphony with Jessica Rivera; and will conduct the Nashville Symphony with Simon Trpčeski.

Mr. Spano's recent concert highlights have included several world premiere performances, including *Voy a Dormir*, by prolific composer Bryce Dessner at Carnegie Hall with the Orchestra

of St. Luke's and mezzo-soprano Kelley O'Connor; the Tuba Concerto by Atlanta School of Composers alumna Jennifer Higdon, performed by Craig Knox and the Pittsburgh Symphony; *Melodia, For Piano and Orchestra*, by Canadian composer Matthew Ricketts at the Aspen Music Festival; and *Miserere* by the ASO's own bassist Michael Kurth. With the Atlanta Symphony, Spano brings local audiences inspired, thoughtful programming, including the conclusion of the two-year "LB/LB" celebration commemorating Leonard Bernstein and Ludwig van Beethoven, featuring six Bernstein works and nine Beethoven Symphonies, and vocal masterpieces including Verdi's *Otello* and Bernstein's *Candide*. In addition to his leadership of the ASO, Spano recently returned to his early love of composing. His most recent works include *Sonata: Four Elements* for piano, premiered by Spano in August 2016 at the Aspen Music Festival, and a new song cycle, *Hölderlin-Lieder*, written for and performed by soprano Jessica Rivera; both works were recorded on the ASO Media label and praised by *Oberon's Grove*: "On this latest release, from ASO, we experience Spano as both an imaginative and evocative composer - with a special gift for writing for the voice - and a poetic pianist."

The Atlanta School of Composers reflects Spano's commitment to American contemporary music. He has led ASO performances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Ravinia, Ojai, and Savannah Music Festivals. Guest engagements have included the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, the San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, Oregon, Utah, and Kansas City Symphonies, and the Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Minnesota Orchestras. Internationally, Maestro Spano has led the Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala, BBC Symphony, Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orquestra Sinfonica Brasileira, Orquestra Sinfonica Estado Sao Paulo, the Melbourne Symphony in Australia, and the Saito Kinen Orchestra in Japan. His opera performances include Covent Garden, Welsh National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and the 2005 and 2009 Seattle Opera productions of Wagner's *Ring* cycles. Spano also holds a conductor residency with the Colburn School Orchestra in Los Angeles.

With a discography of critically-acclaimed recordings for Telarc, Deutsche Grammophon, and ASO Media, Robert Spano has won six Grammy™ Awards with the Atlanta Symphony. Spano is on faculty at Oberlin Conservatory and has received honorary doctorates from Bowling Green State University, the Curtis Institute of Music, Emory University, and Oberlin. Maestro Spano is one of two classical musicians inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame and makes his home in Atlanta.

### **About Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra**

The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra is deeply committed to uniting its community through performance, education, and outreach, reaching an audience of more than 200,000 annually. Since its beginnings in 1912, the FWSO has been an essential thread in the city's cultural fabric and the very foundation of Fort Worth's performing arts. Music Director Miguel Harth-Bedoya, now in his 19th season at the artistic helm of the FWSO, has led the orchestra into the 21st century to new levels of excellence. Under his leadership, the FWSO has performed at Carnegie Hall and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as part of SHIFT: A Festival of American Orchestras. Throughout his tenure, the FWSO has released 13 recordings – with several being world premiere releases – garnering international acclaim. Miguel Harth-Bedoya

and the FWSO have embraced creative collaborations through residencies, partnerships, and commissions. As the principal resident company of the acoustically superb Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall, the Orchestra performs a full season of concerts featuring internationally-acclaimed guest artists and works by living composers. The Orchestra performs and partners with the Texas Ballet Theater, Fort Worth Opera, The Cliburn, and Performing Arts Fort Worth. Each summer at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, the FWSO presents Concerts In The Garden – a series of family-friendly concerts that has become a city-wide tradition. Additionally, the orchestra hosts an annual Festival of Orchestras, providing an opportunity for non-professional orchestras across the state of Texas to perform in Bass Performance Hall. The FWSO keeps exceptional musical experiences at the heart of its community. After all—life is better with music!

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