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For immediate release

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## Nathalie Stutzmann Is Named Fifth Music Director of Atlanta Symphony Orchestra



*Nathalie Stutzmann (photo: Simon Fowler)*

***“Nathalie is the real thing. So much love, intensity and sheer technique.  
We need more conductors like her.” – Sir Simon Rattle***

The [Atlanta Symphony Orchestra \(ASO\)](#) announces the appointment of **Nathalie Stutzmann** as its fifth **Music Director**. Widely recognized as “a musician of great refinement and

sophistication” (*The Times* of London), whose performances are known for their “delicate sensuality” (*Die Welt*) and “huge emotional punch” (*Seen and Heard International*), Stutzmann currently holds positions as Principal Guest Conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra and Chief Conductor of Norway’s Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra. She looks forward to leading two compelling ASO programs this season (**today and tomorrow, Oct 13 & 14; March 17, 18 & 20**), before succeeding departing Music Director Robert Spano and beginning with an initial term of **four years** with the 27-time Grammy-winning orchestra next fall.

Stutzmann will be the first woman to serve as the ASO’s music director and only the second woman to lead a major American orchestra, following in the footsteps of trailblazer Marin Alsop, who recently stepped down as Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. In Atlanta, Stutzmann follows past ASO Music Directors Henry Sopkin, Robert Shaw, Yoel Levi and Robert Spano.

Looking forward to the new appointment, Stutzmann comments:

“It is a privilege to be named Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. The devoted commitment to music of the ASO musicians touches my heart. They have beautiful open minds, and they love to work hard, to be challenged and to take the necessary risks to serve the music and bring the highest levels of emotion to their audience. There is a special chemistry between the orchestra and me that we all immediately recognized, and this is the perfect time for us to deepen our relationship. After doing such wonderful work with Robert Spano over the past 20 years, the orchestra is in top shape, and I look forward to working with this incredible ensemble to chart new artistic territory. As a singer, I am also thrilled about the prospect of working with the ASO Chorus, which is one of America’s finest choirs. We are planning several ambitious projects, including performances of Mozart’s Requiem in March 2022 and of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, a life-changing experience for any orchestra, during the 2022-23 season. It is also very important for us to connect with the Atlanta community, sharing our infectious love of music. Fulfilling the community’s hopes and expectations is a huge responsibility and a legacy that I am honored to continue.”

ASO Executive Director **Jennifer Barlament** responds:

“Nathalie Stutzmann is an inspiring musician of the highest caliber and a conductor of historic significance. Her fresh and engrossing interpretations make the classics feel as though we are hearing them for the first time, creating a sense of drama and anticipation with every performance. Her focus on making magic happen while providing liberty to the musicians, along with her uncompromising standards, will bring the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra into a new era. Nathalie’s humanistic ideals and her commitment to engaging the next generation of music-lovers and music-makers will make Atlanta a more musical city, while her charisma and rising international profile will affirm Atlanta’s place on the global stage. I could not imagine a more exciting partner with whom to shape the future of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.”

**Patrick Viguerie**, Chair of the ASO’s Music Director Search Committee and Chair Elect of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Board, says:

“I am delighted that we are making this announcement today. Our search process has been incredibly thorough and inclusive, with a global reach, and involving many of our musicians, board members and patrons. Nathalie is a remarkable artist and leader, and we are confident that the musicality, passion, care and energy she brings both on and off the podium will enable our great orchestra and chorus to reach new levels of excellence. I am excited to welcome Nathalie to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.”

**Janine Brown**, Chair of the ASO’s Board of Directors, says:

“Speaking both personally and on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, I am thrilled to welcome Nathalie Stutzmann as our next Music Director. Nathalie is a formidable conductor, bringing vibrancy and excitement to the podium. She is charismatic, passionate about music and, as Sir Simon Rattle says, ‘The real thing.’ I am looking forward to introducing Nathalie to our audiences and to the broader Atlanta community. The combined leadership of Nathalie as our Music Director Designate and Jennifer Barlament as our Executive Director sets the stage for what will undoubtedly be a shining future for our great Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.”

Stutzmann has already made her mark in Philadelphia, where she has just begun her first season as Principal Guest Conductor of The Philadelphia Orchestra. The *Philadelphia Inquirer’s* Peter Dobrin recently observed:

“She ‘plays’ the orchestra as a piano — which is to say, she manipulates variances in tempo to such a fine degree of control that it is as if she were acting with the single-minded will of a pianist. ... This level of attention led to revelations, not to mention drama. In Brahms’ Symphony No. 2, the dynamic changes were big, the tempo changes frequent. But the choices were anything but random. Phrases were shaped in the service of the underlying emotional intent.”

During the 2020-21 season, Stutzmann conducted the ASO in three performances, released as part of the orchestra’s virtual *Behind the Curtain* series. She makes her first appearances as **Music Director Designate** on October 13 and 14, 2021, with a program of **Tchaikovsky’s** Fifth Symphony, **Verdi’s** *La forza del destino* overture and the **U.S. premiere** of *Dark with Excessive Bright* by Grammy-nominated composer **Missy Mazzoli**. The conductor rejoins the orchestra next spring for grand-scale performances of **Mozart’s** mighty Requiem, featuring the superb **ASO Chorus**, together with **Richard Strauss’s** tone poem *Death and Transfiguration*, on March 17, 18 and 20, 2022.

## About Nathalie Stutzmann

Combining profound musicianship with rigor, energy and charisma on the podium, Nathalie Stutzmann is one of the most outstanding musical personalities of our time. Rooted in 19th-century Romanticism, her core repertoire ranges from Beethoven, Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák and the French impressionists to the larger symphonic works of Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Mahler, Bruckner and Richard Strauss. As *Opera Today* noted after her leadership of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales at London’s BBC Proms:

“Stutzmann is an impressive conductor. The sheer elegance she brings to her formidable technique, the effortless drive towards making much of the music she conducts sound so passionate and the ability to shock us into hearing something quite new in music we think we know is rather refreshing.”

At the start of the present season, Stutzmann inaugurated her three-year tenure as **Principal Guest Conductor** of The **Philadelphia Orchestra**, where she will be a regular presence both in the orchestra’s subscription series and at its summer festival residencies in Saratoga and Vail. She is now entering her fourth season as **Chief Conductor** of Norway’s **Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra**, where her tenure has just been extended until the end of next season. Highlights include acclaimed accounts of Bruckner’s Seventh Symphony, Tchaikovsky’s Sixth and a complete Beethoven cycle. From 2017 to 2020, she served as **Principal Guest Conductor** of Ireland’s **RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra**, drawing accolades for her sold-out performances of Strauss’s *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony and Mahler’s *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*.

Stutzmann is in high demand as a guest conductor. Her recent and future U.S. engagements include collaborations with such leading ensembles as the **Los Angeles Philharmonic**, **Minnesota Orchestra**, **National Symphony Orchestra**, **Seattle Symphony**, **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** and **San Francisco Symphony** while her recent and future European engagements include dates with the **London Symphony Orchestra**, **Orchestre de Paris**, **Vienna Symphony**, **Bamberg Symphony**, **Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra**, **Finnish Radio Symphony**, and **Oslo Philharmonic**. Having also established a strong reputation as an opera conductor, she was scheduled to make her **Metropolitan Opera** debut this fall (postponed because of the pandemic) and has led celebrated productions of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* in Monte Carlo and Boito’s *Mefistofele* in Provence. She will conduct a new production of Tchaikovsky’s *The Queen of Spades* at Brussels’s **La Monnaie** next year.

Stutzmann studied conducting with the legendary Finnish teacher **Jorma Panula** and was mentored by **Seiji Ozawa** and **Sir Simon Rattle**. Also, as one of today’s most esteemed contraltos, she has made more than 80 recordings and received the most prestigious awards. She is an exclusive **Warner Classics/Erato** a recording artist and was named both “**Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur**,” France’s highest honor, and “**Commandeur dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres**” by the French government.

## About the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Now celebrating its 77th season, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra continues to affirm its position as one of America’s leading orchestras, with superlative live performances, renowned guest artists and engaging education initiatives. In regular seasons, as a cornerstone for artistic development in the Southeast, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra performs a full schedule of more than 150 concerts each year, including educational and community concerts, for a combined audience of more than half a million.

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

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<https://nathaliestutzmann.com/>

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## Atlanta Symphony Orchestra & Nathalie Stutzmann: 2021-22 engagements

### Oct 13 & 14

VERDI: Overture to *La forza del destino*

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 5

MISSY MAZZOLI: *Dark with Excessive Bright* (U.S. premiere)

### March 17, 18 & 20

MOZART: Requiem (with ASO Chorus)

R. STRAUSS: *Death and Transfiguration*

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