



MARCELO LEHNINGER CONDUCTOR

Music Director: Grand Rapids Symphony

Artistic Director: Bellingham Festival

Brazilian-born Marcelo Lehninger is Music Director of the Grand Rapids Symphony since 2016 and in 2018 he brought the orchestra to Carnegie Hall, its first performance at the famed venue in thirteen years. Lehninger was recently appointed Artistic Director of the Bellingham Festival of Music, where he inaugurates his new annual Conducting Institute, a one-month residency to promising young conductors. Previously, he was Music Director of the New West Symphony in Los Angeles, for which the League of American Orchestras awarded him the Helen H. Thompson Award for Emerging Music Directors. For five years, Lehninger served as Assistant and then Associate Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, a tenure that included many concerts in Boston, Tanglewood and a highly praised debut at Carnegie Hall in 2011.

In the 2024-2025 season Lehninger leads ten programs with the Grand Rapids Symphony, conducting a new orchestration of a work by Clara Schumann; Jake Heggie's Earth 2.0, a co-commission with the Fort Worth Symphony; a program of Latin-American music, including Antonio Estevez's Cantata Criolla; a Gala Concert with Yo-Yo Ma; and major works by Mahler, Strauss, Bruckner, Mussorgsky, Stravinsky, Villa-Lobos and others. Also, this season, he returns to the Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo in Brazil, Tulsa and Springfield (Massachusetts) Symphonies, and makes his debut appearances in South Africa with the Johannesburg and Kwa Zulu Natal (Durban) Philharmonics.

As a guest conductor, Lehninger has led many of the top orchestras in the United States, including the Chicago, Boston, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Houston, Detroit, Baltimore, Seattle, National, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Colorado, New Jersey and Portland Symphonies; the Florida, Louisville and Sarasota Orchestras; and the Rochester and Buffalo Philharmonics. In Canada, he has appeared with the Toronto, Winnipeg, and Kitchener- Waterloo Symphonies, the Calgary and Hamilton Philharmonics, and the Symphony Nova Scotia.

European highlights include engagements with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Lucerne Symphony, Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, Prague Philharmonia, Budapest's MAV Symphony, Slovak State Philharmonic, regular visits to the Slovenian Philharmonic, including on tour to Vienna's Konzerthaus, and a tour with the Royal

Concertgebouw Orchestra assisting Mariss Jansons. Lehninger made his Australian debut with the Sydney and Melbourne Symphonies with his friend and mentor Nelson Freire as soloist. In Japan, he conducted the Yomirui Nippon Symphony in Tokyo and the Kyushu Symphony Orchestra in Fukuoka.

Lehninger was Music Advisor of The Orchestra of the Americas for the 2007-08 season. In summer of 2008, he toured with the orchestra in South America, conducting concerts in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. He has led all of the major orchestras in Brazil, and served as Associate Conductor of the Orquestra Filarmônica de Minas Gerais, where he returns often as guest conductor. He also appears regularly at the Festival de Inverno de Campos do Jordão.

Chosen by Kurt Masur in 2008, Lehninger was awarded the First Felix Mendelssohn- Bartholdy Scholarship sponsored by the American Friends of the Mendelssohn Foundation. He was Maestro Masur's assistant with the Orchestre National de France (during their residency at the Musikverein in Vienna), Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, and the New York Philharmonic.

Before dedicating his career to conducting, Lehninger studied violin and piano. He holds a Master's degree from the Conductors Institute at New York's Bard College, where he studied conducting under Harold Farberman and composition with Laurence Wallach. His mentors also include Kurt Masur, Mariss Jansons, Leonard Slatkin, and Roberto Tibiriçá. A dual citizen of Brazil and Germany, Marcelo Lehninger is the son of Brazilian pianist Sônia Goulart and German violinist Erich Lehninger.