
For immediate release

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“The Search”

98.7 WFMT and Lake Forest Symphony announce a series of radio documentaries about an arts organization’s search for a new Music Director

WFMT and The Lake Forest Symphony today announced their collaboration on a new series of five short radio documentaries to be broadcast on WFMT each centered on one of the five finalists for the position of Music Director with the Lake Forest Symphony. Each segment of “The Search” series will provide an in depth portrait of the guest conductor candidate as well as an exploration of the search process itself. In addition to these five broadcasts, WFMT will create a one-hour radio documentary about the Lake Forest Symphony search process for national and international syndication.

Each guest conductor will lead a pair of classical subscription concerts in the Lake Forest Symphony’s 2013-2014 Season. The candidates are Vladimir Kulenovic , Russell Ger, Andrés Franco, Stilian Kirov, and Jacomo Rafael Bairos. These conductors were selected from a pool of over 150 applicants and evaluated by a search committee comprised of musicians, board members and community leaders.

“Anyone who hears a description of how extensive and involved this search is will think it is for the Berlin Philharmonic. But it isn’t a conductor search in Berlin, it’s taking place in Lake Forest and as soon as we heard about it we knew we had to document it,” stated **Steve Robinson, Executive Vice President and General Manager of the WFMT Radio Network**. “‘The Search’ not only illustrates the importance of the Lake Forest Symphony locally, but also creates a national story demonstrating how important culture in general—and classical music in particular— is in 21st century America.”

Henry Fogel, Dean of the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, serves as advisor to the search process. He noted that the search committee “has gone about its work with a wonderful seriousness of purpose. Its composition assures a wide range of perspectives, which is extraordinarily healthy. I have enjoyed working with this committee immensely, and look forward to a wonderful result when the process concludes.”

Each candidate will conduct one concert pair (and all requisite rehearsals), in addition to attending donor dinners, a Lake Forest Symphony Guild tea, pre-concert lectures and post-concert receptions. In an effort to select the conductor who is the best fit on and off the podium, the LFS Search Committee will include surveys taken from orchestra members and

symphony patrons in its final selection process. The next Lake Forest Symphony Music Director will be announced live on WFMT at the conclusion of the 2013-2014 Season.

“We are thrilled by the opportunity to collaborate with WFMT, and hope that this unique radio series will help to demystify the exciting and complicated process of selecting a Music Director for the modern professional orchestra,” stated Susan Lape, Executive Director of the Lake Forest Symphony.

About 98.7WFMT

98.7WFMT, Chicago’s classical radio station, provides the best and broadest selection of classical music and fine arts programming in the country. A broadcasting force for more than 60 years, the station’s appeal continues to widen. Via the WFMT Radio Network and WFMT’s enhanced streaming service at wfmt.com/streaming, the station is currently serving the largest audience in the station’s history, with its programming available to a global audience. A wealth of supplemental content is also available at wfmt.com, including interactive features, event and membership opportunities, and information and blogs related to WFMT series and specials.

About the Lake Forest Symphony

Celebrating more than 55 years, the Lake Forest Symphony is the only fully professional orchestra in Lake County. The orchestra, named Illinois Orchestra of the Year in 2006 by the Illinois Council of Orchestras, presents five concert pairs in its Classical Series which regularly feature both prominent guest artists and emerging young musicians. 2013-2014 will feature Ralph Votapek, piano; Lukáš Vondráček, piano; Masha Lakisova, violin; and Rachel Barton Pine, violin. Innovative outreach programs reach thousands of school children throughout Northern Illinois each year, providing an introduction to classical music for grade school students and unique performance opportunities for students in high school and college.

About the Lake Forest Symphony Music Director Finalists

Vladimir Kulenovic

Following the completion of his post-graduate conducting studies at Juilliard, Vladimir Kulenovic was named Associate Conductor of the Utah Symphony and Opera, Principal Conductor of the Kyoto International Music Festival and Resident Conductor of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra. His recent guest conducting engagements with renowned orchestras in the U.S., Europe and Asia included performances with soloists Leon Fleisher and Joseph Silverstein. His awards include the prestigious Alfred B. Whitney Prize for the highest scholastic achievement at the Boston Conservatory, and Second Prize at the Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Paris. He also had the honor to rehearse the orchestra at the Dubrovnik Festival for Zubin Mehta. This season, Kulenovic will conduct the Leipzig Symphony.

Russell Ger

Russell Ger has conducted a broad spectrum of orchestral, operatic, and choral music in North America and his home country of Australia. He holds a Bachelor degree in

Musicology with Honors from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, and a Masters in Orchestral Conducting from the Boston Conservatory. Ger recently completed a tour of the East Coast with renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman. The tour produced sold-out performances at Boston's Symphony Hall, Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall, Long Island's Tilles Performing Arts Center, and an audience of 6,000 at the Barclays Center arena in New York. Russell conducted the finale from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the Sydney Opera House in 2003 for a major fundraising campaign. The following year he repeated this performance at the Sydney Convention Centre for an audience of over 3,000.

Andrés Franco

Andrés Franco is currently Associate Conductor of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Director of the Concerts in the Garden Summer Festival. He also served as Music Director of the Kansas City Philharmonic from 2004-2010. His recent successful debuts include the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León/Spain and the Pops and Family Concerts with the Houston and St. Louis symphonies. In South America, Andrés Franco has appeared with the National Symphony Orchestra of Peru, the Medellin Philharmonic/Bogotá, EAFIT Symphony Orchestra, and the Bogotá Philharmonic. He has made his recent debut with the Elgin Symphony. Franco holds a bachelor's degree in Piano Performance from the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia, and Master of Music in Piano Performance and Conducting from Texas Christian University.

Stilian Kirov

Stilian Kirov is the Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony. He has conducted orchestras around the world, including the Orchestre Colonne (France), Zagreb Philharmonic (Croatia), Orchestra of Colours (Greece), State Hermitage Orchestra (Russia), Thüringen Philharmonic Orchestra (Germany), Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra "Leopolis" (Ukraine), Amarillo Symphony and the Juilliard Orchestra. Kirov has worked with some of the world's most distinguished artists including Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim, Plácido Domingo, Zubin Mehta and Yo-Yo Ma. Among Kirov's awards are the Orchestra Preference Award and Third Prize at the 2010 Mitropoulos Conducting Competition, France's 2010 ADAMI Conducting Prize, and he was the 2001 gold medalist of the Claude Kahn International Piano Competition in Paris.

Jacomo Bairos

Described as "expressive and passionate" and lauded as a "very impressive conductor," Jacomo Bairos enjoys a rising international career as conductor, champion of new music and dedicated educator. Bairos was recently named music director of the Amarillo Symphony, following a two year extensive search process. Bairos has worked with an array of distinguished artists including Shlomo Mintz and Caroline Goulding. Awarded the prestigious 2012 Mendelssohn- Bartholdy Scholarship by Kurt Masur, he worked with the Leipzig Symphony Orchestra, assisted at the Gewandhaus Orchestra and furthered his studies with Kurt Masur. Bairos regularly works with many of America's finest orchestras, including the Atlanta and Charleston Symphony and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra

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For tickets please visit www.lakeforestsymphony.org or call 847.295.2135.