



### JSO Announces Three-Year Contract Extension for Music Director James Blachly

*"The Johnstown Symphony Orchestra is thrilled to continue its service to the community with the visionary artistic leadership of James Blachly!"*

Johnstown, PA, August 17, 2021: On August 12, 2021, the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra (JSO) Board of Trustees and Grammy-winning conductor James Blachly signed a three-year agreement to continue his artistic leadership of the orchestra as Music Director through June of 2024.

James Blachly's five-year tenure with the orchestra has had a transformational effect on the orchestra's service to the community through music. His dual priorities for the organization have been broader access and artistic excellence, and are evidenced in the implementation of new education and engagement initiatives, significant increases in subscription and single ticket sales, and wide recognition, both local and national, of the work of the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra.

Highlights of Maestro Blachly's tenure include his concerts in Johnstown industrial spaces, beginning in 2017 with the historic concert at Cambria Iron Works featured on Katie Couric's *America Inside Out*, in 2018 at GapVax, and in 2019 at JWF Industries. The creative use of Johnstown landmarks as unique concert venues continues to be a hallmark of his tenure as he stages a rock-style concert at the John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria County Airport in June of 2022. He is celebrated for his community collaborations with such organizations as the Johnstown Concert Ballet, Indiana University of Pennsylvania School of Music, the Steeples Project, Southern Allegheny Museum of Art, Laurel Arts, Pittsburgh's *Tamburitians* in their first appearance with an orchestra, Band of Brothers Shakespeare Company, and many others. As Music Director of the JSO, he celebrates and uplifts regional talent as demonstrated in the Johnstown Symphony's sold-out concert "Open-Mic Night at the Symphony" in February of 2020, while bringing in internationally recognized artists from around the country to perform with the orchestra here in Johnstown. Both the JSO's *Messiah* and *Joy of Christmas* have become holiday staples for the community.

James Blachly is a tireless advocate for the support and augmentation of music education efforts in our schools and in addition to personally presenting workshops and master classes as an educator, he is spear-heading the implementation of the JSO's robust education collaborations with the Greater Johnstown, Westmont, Windber, Somerset, and Richland school districts, and inaugurated a yearly tradition of side-by-side performances with the Johnstown Symphony Youth Orchestra. In June of 2021, he was presented with a proclamation from the City of Johnstown and the Johnstown Branch of the NAACP congratulating him for winning a 2020 Grammy® Award and recognizing his work to ensure expanded access to music to diverse communities.

JSO Board of Trustees President Mark Addleman says, "The Johnstown Symphony and James Blachly are a beautiful example of symbiosis. The JSO is an orchestra that is willingly acknowledging and actively addressing the challenges facing orchestras across the country. And the Maestro has shown time and again his ability to bring together all people of our

communities through his innovative programming and creative use of venues. This partnership has made it possible for us to begin to realize our potential and I'm thrilled to have Maestro Blachly committed to our symphony and communities for the next three years."

Principal Bassoon Michael Kokus shares, "From innovative concert programs to non-traditional performing venues, I appreciate all of the new and exciting artistic opportunities that Maestro Blachly has brought to the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra. It's clear to me that he works tirelessly to elevate the orchestra, and I'm looking forward to all of the wonderful and creative concerts that are yet to come!"

Principal Trumpet Matthew Barabas had this to say, "I am very pleased to hear that James Blachly's contract with the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra has been renewed. Since coming to Johnstown, James has raised the artist level of the Symphony quite dramatically. I am very much looking forward to working again with Maestro and the orchestra this fall."

James Blachly says of this contract extension, "Since I became Music Director five years ago, my vision has been to make the embrace of this orchestra ever wider. The music we perform is for everyone in this community, and we not only welcome the city and region to the symphony – we are bringing the symphony to the city and broader region. I believe in the unique power of music to heal and to inspire, and I believe that this orchestra can continue to be a galvanizing force to help our region continue to grow and thrive. Emerging from a very difficult year, thanks to the support of our friends and neighbors, we are at the strongest place in my tenure, due to the artistry of our orchestra, the extraordinary team we have in our staff and leadership, and the strength of the board. I am so looking forward to the next three years of our building on our 93-year history, and looking to even greater expressions of beauty and joy. Johnstown has become a part of me, and I am forever grateful for the welcome and support the community has shown to me."

The 2021-2022 season is posted at [johnstownsymphony.org](http://johnstownsymphony.org). On the website, patrons can purchase subscription packages, as well as learn how to participate in the JSO's ensembles, including the Symphony Chorus, Johnstown Symphony Youth Orchestra, Inclined to Sing, Community Strings, and Share the Music. In addition, everyone is encouraged to stay up to date by following [JSO's Facebook page](#) for announcements, videos, photos, and more. Single tickets for concerts go on sale on September 8.

The Johnstown Symphony Orchestra is committed to serving the community through the transformative power of music; we look forward to strengthening our bond with our current friends and connecting with new ones.