



Contact:

Holly McKissick
Hollis Strategic Communications
hmckissick@hollis-sc.com
864-915-3173

Greenville Symphony Orchestra introduces Lee Mills as next Music Director

Internationally recognized conductor to bring passion, energy, and dynamic artistic leadership to Greenville Symphony

GREENVILLE, SC – May 14, 2024 – The [Greenville Symphony Orchestra](#) announced today that Lee Mills will be its sixth Music Director. Encompassing an extensive and community-driven search process, the decision included an audition of guest conductors who led performances throughout the Symphony's 76th season. Mills accepted the job earlier this spring, with a four-year contract that will secure his artistic leadership through the spring of 2028.

At an event in Unity Park Tuesday, Greenville Symphony leaders lauded Mills' vision, energy and innovative spirit. As Music Director, Lee Mills will be responsible for conducting the orchestra, ensuring its artistic excellence and growth, engaging audiences through innovative programming and community collaborations, and setting the over-arching artistic vision for the organization.

"I am overjoyed to welcome a new leader to Greenville," said Cathy Jones, VP of Quality in Design and Manufacturing at Michelin and President of the Greenville Symphony Board of Directors. "Lee Mills possesses profound talent, creativity, commitment to community, and a clear and compelling artistic vision for our orchestra. After a three-year-process and 160 applicants, it was clear that Lee is the right person to build on the Greenville Symphony's foundation of artistic excellence and help shape the future of our symphony."

Mills will succeed Edvard Tchivzhel, who has served as the symphony's Music Director and Conductor for 24 years before transitioning to his current role of Music Director Emeritus. Greenville Symphony Executive Director Jessica Satava, who will serve alongside Mills, said, "From the moment Lee arrived in town for his concert in November, his enthusiasm for Greenville, his chemistry with the orchestra, and his unique program of music both traditional and brand new inspired us all. He brings a depth of musical insight paired with contagious joyful energy, and I am honored to partner with Lee to build on the 76-year legacy of our incredible Greenville Symphony. We are aligned in our focus on growth through innovation and community engagement, and to say I'm excited about the future of this organization is an understatement!"

Mills, a five-time winner of the Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award, has led concerts with the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra (USA), Rochester Philharmonic, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, the San Antonio Symphony and the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra, among others. In 2014, Mills was the Assistant Conductor to David Robertson for Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra of the USA.

"I'm honored and excited to step into the role of Music Director of the Greenville Symphony Orchestra," Mills said at the event. "Greenville's welcoming community immediately drew me in when I came as a guest conductor, and the Symphony's mission-driven approach to bringing people together through the performing arts is exactly what I want to be a part of. The musicians here are incredibly talented and inspired me by their adventurousness and dynamism. I can't wait to bring our next season to life with them this fall."

In the fall of 2022, Mills was the Solti Foundation U.S. Resident at Lyric Opera of Chicago, where he worked with maestro Enrique Mazzola on the Lyric's production of Verdi's *Don Carlos*. The League of American Orchestras selected Mills for the 2018 Bruno Walter National Conductors Preview where he conducted the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, and in 2017 Mills was selected as a semi-finalist in both the Sir Georg Solti International Conducting Competition and the Opera Royal de Wallonie-Liege International Opera Conducting Competition. In addition, he conducted alongside David Robertson in the highly acclaimed U.S. Premiere of John Cage's *Thirty Pieces for Five Orchestras* with the Saint Louis Symphony.

Through his project Vibe Sinfônica, initiated in 2018 in partnership with nightlife producer The Week Group in São Paulo, he has brought classical music to thousands of new listeners through performances in unusual settings. In their inaugural performance, Vibe Sinfônica performed music of Vivaldi at The Week Group's 14th anniversary in São Paulo, playing to a crowd of over 10,000 EDM fans and opening for DJ Offer Nissim. This project was also featured in a video clip of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, created to commemorate the 15th anniversary of The Week.

At the invitation of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Music Director Marin Alsop, he received the prestigious BSO-Peabody Institute Conducting Fellowship in 2011. Under the tutelage of Gustav Meier and Marin Alsop, Mills received his Graduate Performance Diploma and Artist's Diploma in Orchestral Conducting at the Peabody Institute. He was a conducting fellow at the American Academy of Conducting at Aspen during the summers of 2012 and 2013, working closely with Larry Rachleff, Robert Spano and Hugh Wolff. Mills graduated cum laude from Whitman College, where he studied with Robert Bode.

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About the Greenville Symphony

THE GREENVILLE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA is recognized as one of the finest professional orchestras in the southeastern U.S., and through a diverse mix of concert performances, educational programming, and community engagement reaches more than 50,000 individuals across the Upstate each year.

In the 2024-2025 season, the orchestra embarks on its 77th year with the appointment of Music Director Lee Mills.

Mills begins the season with a message of joy and unity and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony to kick off the Concert Hall Series at the Peace Center. The series features the power of the full orchestra in six concerts featuring the music of names like Tchaikovsky and Duke Ellington alongside new or lesser-known composers such as Amy Beach and Mason Bates.

The orchestra's unique offerings also include four smaller-scale music experiences in the intimacy of Gunter Theatre, showcasing everything from opera to percussion to Baroque! Holiday at Peace, a 30+ year tradition featuring local and national celebrities, and the next installment of the ever-popular Harry Potter™ Film Concert Series are perennial favorites of families across the Upstate. Pop-Up Music! is a free community series that brings the magic of music to everyday places and spaces, and Music in the Gray Loft is an offering that features the outstanding artistry of the principal musicians of the orchestra at Greenville Center for Creative Arts.

Education and community engagement have been an important part of the Greenville Symphony's mission since its first children's concert in 1951. GSO musicians present free education programs in all 51 elementary schools in the Greenville County School District, mentor high school musicians, and have a strong presence in the county library system as part of our Lollipops music and literacy programs, providing access to great music for over 25,000 children annually.

To purchase subscriptions and individual tickets, visit [greenvillesymphony.org](https://www.greenvillesymphony.org), the Peace Center box office at the corner of Broad and Main Streets in downtown Greenville, or call (864) 467-3000 between 9:30 am – 5:30 pm Monday through Friday.