

Allison Vulgamore President and Chief Executive Officer

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Allison Vulgamore, president and chief executive officer of The Philadelphia Orchestra Association, is driven by her deep passion for the transformative power of orchestral music, and is known as a strategic and collaborative leader with a global vision, as well as for a unique gift for navigating organizational challenges with grace.

Since 2010 Vulgamore has guided The Philadelphia Orchestra through a radically changing cultural environment and financial landscape, while maintaining the artistic excellence of this world-renowned ensemble and its core principles. An artistic visionary, she recognized the extraordinary promise of conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and within her first six months in the job successfully recruited him to be the next music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra—only the eighth music director in its 115-year history. She subsequently guided the process leading to an early renewal of his contract for

another seven years, through the 2022 season. In addition during her tenure Charles Dutoit was appointed conductor laureate beginning in the 2012-13 season, affirming his 30-year relationship with the Orchestra.

In September 2015 The Philadelphia Orchestra, led by Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, performed on the world stage for Pope Francis at two events during the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia: the Festival of Families and the Papal Mass. The previous June, Vulgamore joined a group of civic leaders, including Mayor Michael Nutter and Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, on a trip to the Vatican to help work out the massive list of details, including the Orchestra's critical role, surrounding the pope's trip to Philadelphia.

Vulgamore has brought innovative thinking to The Philadelphia Orchestra, spearheading important strategic initiatives since her arrival. She has led a creative process that brings together a collaborative group that curates seasons with a deepened and diversified the mix of concert programs and offerings. She brought to Philadelphia “theater of a concert” presentations—unique dramatic multimedia and lighting effects and theatrical elements, all designed to enhance the concert experience. Under her leadership, during the 2012-13 season the Orchestra celebrated the centenary of the legendary Leopold Stokowski's appointment as music director and his creative legacy of imaginative programming, new works, and the embrace of emerging technologies, which helped shape today's Philadelphia Orchestra. A highly successful Stokowski Celebration at the Academy of Music in June 2012 and sold-out performances of Bach's St. Matthew Passion in March 2013 showcased elements of the “theater of a concert” concept and introduced hundreds of new listeners to the Orchestra. In May 2014 that signature of innovation was on display when Nézet-Séguin and the Orchestra brought the season to a close with Richard Strauss's revolutionary opera *Salome*, in a first-ever co-production with Opera Philadelphia.

Vulgamore has expanded the Orchestra's commitment to community engagement, creating a new focus on collaborative learning that brings together people in such collective music-making activities as pop-up performances; PlayINs; free events held throughout the neighborhoods of the city, and a Free Concert for Giving Tuesday. She has launched new partnerships and collaborations with Pennsylvania Ballet, Philadelphia Live Arts (FringeArts), Philadanco, Opera Philadelphia, the Curtis Institute of Music, Ridge Theater Company, and stage director James Alexander, among others. Audiences of tomorrow have been cultivated through the eZseatU and Young Friends programs and innovative initiatives such as the LiveNote app.

The Philadelphia Orchestra's historic connection with the People's Republic of China has thrived under Vulgamore's leadership with the signing of a long-term partnership with the National Centre for the

Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing, as well as the launch of unprecedented residency programs in 2012, 2013, and 2014. With its 2013 Residency and Fortieth Anniversary Tour, the Orchestra fulfilled a promise made during its groundbreaking visit in 1973—a promise to build cultural bridges, cultivate a shared commitment to the highest quality of music-making, nurture talented musicians, shift the prevailing paradigm of classical music by bringing it out of the concert hall and into the community, and foster goodwill by contributing positively to international relations. That promise was continued with the 2014 China Residency. The model she is creating for The Philadelphia Orchestra in China is important because it is built on residency concepts, as well as performances. Vulgamore's work has proven that sharing the joy of music with communities, amateurs, semi-professionals, and audiences is possible in any country in the world. Having lived in Austria, Germany, and Lebanon while growing up, and in Morocco as an adult, Vulgamore is driven by her belief in the power of sharing the arts cross-culturally as a means to strengthen global relationships. She also emphasizes the importance of learning and sharing multiple languages in order to better understand other peoples' perspectives, while also developing a deeply personal and meaningful relationship with the universal language of music.

In recent seasons, Vulgamore has encouraged the return of The Philadelphia Orchestra to radio and recordings. The Orchestra opened its 2013-14 season with a newly-released CD on the Deutsche Grammophon label of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and Leopold Stokowski transcriptions of works by Bach and Stravinsky, all under the baton of Nézet-Séguin. Yannick and the Orchestra's second disc on Deutsche Grammophon, of Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini with pianist Daniil Trifonov, was released in August 2015. The Orchestra has also returned to the radio with weekly Sunday afternoon broadcasts on WRTI-FM, in a joint partnership with WRTI-FM/Temple University.

Previously, Vulgamore served as president and CEO of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) for more than 15 years. The Atlanta Symphony's achievements under her leadership included unprecedented fundraising, earned revenue expansion, and the establishment of an inclusive culture of communication and cooperation among the diverse constituencies of the ASO organization. In 2000 Vulgamore and the ASO established the Creative Partnership, a groundbreaking leadership model that attracted Music Director Robert Spano and Principal Guest Conductor Donald Runnicles to Atlanta, sparking collaborations with today's leading composers, orchestras, artists, and recording companies. During her tenure, Vulgamore recognized the need to diversify the ASO's revenue base. In 2004, under her guidance, the ASO acquired SD&A Teleservices, Inc., the nation's oldest and largest provider of telemarketing and telefundraising services to cultural and cause-based nonprofits. In 2008 Vulgamore also expanded the ASO's reach in the community, overseeing the design, construction, and opening of North Atlanta's Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre at Encore Park, a 12,000-seat state-of-the-art venue.

Prior to her tenure in Atlanta, Vulgamore served in leadership roles with the New York Philharmonic and the National Symphony Orchestra. A trained musician and student of voice, she began her career in 1981 with The Philadelphia Orchestra following her graduation from the inaugural class of the American Symphony Orchestra League's Orchestra Management Fellowship Program. Today she is a leading mentor of the next generation of orchestra leadership.

Vulgamore's record of achievement is reflected in her many professional honors and associations. She joined the Board of Overseers of the Curtis Institute of Music in 2010 and is an honorary trustee of Oberlin College, having served on its Board for 12 years and from where she received her Bachelor of Music degree; she received an Honorary Doctor of Music degree from the College in May 2015. In 2014 she was selected as one of 31 business leaders named *Philadelphia Business Journal* Women of Distinction.

Within the orchestra field Vulgamore has chaired the Orchestra Management Fellowship Program of the League of American Orchestras and she continues to be a frequent contributor to seminars on artistic planning, strategic planning, and governance culture. In 2006 she was accepted into the A.W. Mellon Foundation's Orchestra Forum Executive Leadership Development Program, a selective two-year program developed in conjunction with the Center for Creative Leadership and the Institute for Cultural Policy and Practice at Virginia Tech.

Photo by J.D. Scott