



DATE: June 15, 2017
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Andy Buelow, (253) 272-7264
abuelow@symphonytacoma.org

Symphony announces contract extension of Music Director Sarah Ioannides

Symphony Tacoma has extended the contract of Music Director Sarah Ioannides through the 2023-2024 Season, Board President Clark D’Elia announced today. Described by *The New York Times* as a conductor with “unquestionable strength and authority,” Sarah Ioannides arrived in 2014-2015 after a two-year international search. Her tenure has brought a new level of artistic vibrancy to the Tacoma-based performing arts organization, distinguished by her inclusive leadership style and progressive artistic sensibility.

“We are delighted to announce the extension of Maestra Ioannides’ contract,” stated D’Elia. “In just three seasons, the changes she has implemented—both artistic and programmatic—have been remarkable. She has wholeheartedly embraced and been embraced by the community, building the Orchestra’s artistic capacity, forging collaborative relationships, and bringing a new caliber of guest artists to the concert stage. The Board is extremely pleased with the results, and we look forward to continuing this fruitful partnership for years to come.”

Under Ioannides’ leadership, Symphony Tacoma has worked dexterously to honor the canon of classical works while also taking the audience on new musical excursions and engaging the wider community beyond the concert hall. The recent performance of Daniel Ott’s *Fire-Mountain*, dedicated to raising awareness of Mount Rainier’s rapidly melting glaciers, incorporated the Museum of Glass, Hilltop Artists, Lincoln High School, and the National Park Service as collaborators. *The News Tribune* called it “A culmination of creativity, education, outreach and advocacy that touched our community and brought people together in a powerful shared experience.”

Last season’s performance of Tan Dun’s *Water Passion* was an explosive tour-de-force of symphony, Chinese opera and theater, leading *The News Tribune* to proclaim, “With imagination, skill and engagement... the Symphony is an integral part of our city’s culture and communal spirit.” With performances such as these, Sarah Ioannides has demonstrated a unique skill as a musical curator who embraces the vital tension between tradition and innovation.

Since her arrival, the season has expanded to include additional Classics concerts and repeat performances in Gig Harbor at Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church. Attendance has increased significantly, and performance revenue overall has grown by 60%.

- more -

Under Ioannides' leadership, the Symphony has added new education and community engagement programs and made important changes to existing ones. Last season, the organization presented a free community concert that featured Tacoma Youth Symphony musicians performing in a "side-by-side" format with Symphony Tacoma musicians. 2016 marked the pilot year of Symphony Coaches, a program embedding principal string players in three underserved high schools—Foss, Mount Tahoma and Lincoln—to bolster their string orchestra programs. The fledgling program received high marks from teachers and students and has been expanded this season. Ioannides also used her national influence to bring Carnegie Hall's acclaimed "Link Up" curriculum to the Symphony's Simply Symphonic series of concerts for fourth and fifth grade students, enhancing the long-standing program with state-of-the-art curriculum materials and interactive performance features.

One of the top 20 female conductors worldwide, according to Lebrecht's 2016 "Woman Conductors: The Power List," Sarah Ioannides was cited as "one of six female conductors breaking the glass podium" by the *Los Angeles Times* and noted in *The New York Times* as part of "a new wave of female conductors in their late 20s through early 40s." In April she attended the inaugural Global Cultural Leadership Summit in Abu Dhabi, the world's first event convening leaders from the worlds of the arts, media, public policy and technology to address the role of culture in the rapidly-changing modern world. In May, she performed her final concerts as Music Director of the Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra of South Carolina.

As a guest conductor she has appeared internationally with the Tonkünstler Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra Nationale de Lyon, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Flemish Radio Orchestra, National Symphony of Colombia, Daejeon Philharmonic, Freiburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Wuttenbergisches Kammerorchester, and the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra.

Ioannides has also led orchestras extensively in the United States including the Buffalo and Rochester Philharmonics and the orchestras of Chattanooga, Charleston, Louisville, New Haven, New West, North Carolina, Toledo and Tulsa. A protégé of the late Otto-Werner Mueller, Ioannides has appeared in special engagements with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New World Symphony and the London Symphony Orchestra working with Pierre Boulez and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Formerly the Assistant Conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Ioannides was the first woman appointed to its full-time conducting staff. She also held appointments as Music Director of the El Paso Symphony, guest Music Director of the Dessoff Choirs, and Music Director of Oxford University. Her extensive and diverse experience in orchestral, choral, operatic, new works and multimedia performance is equal to her passion to support learning and music education. She continues to coach orchestra at high-level conservatories such as Yale University, Curtis Institute, Chicago College of Performing Arts.

A zealous supporter of living composers, Ioannides has conducted over 40 World, North American and European premieres. Under her leadership, Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra

and Symphony Tacoma have received ArtWorks grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, both for creativity in collaborations, commissioning and community involved projects. She has both commissioned and directed films for live orchestral multimedia performances, including Holst's *The Planets* and Steve Reich's *The Desert Music*. During the summer of 2016 she was producer and advisor for a new multimedia art film to accompany Darius Milhaud's *Creation du Monde*, directed by Brad McCombs, using artwork selected from the Cincinnati Art Museum as well as her own personal paintings and collections internationally; the multimedia performance was premiered at Cincinnati's Summermusik Festival 2016.

Ioannides has collaborated regularly with composer/conductor Tan Dun, serving as his Assistant Conductor & Production Coordinator between 1999 and 2003. As such, she conducted the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Concert Orchestra, the Flemish Radio Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Sinfonietta and the Oregon Bach Festival. In 2005, she was selected by Tan Dun to conduct his *Water Passion After St. Matthew* at the Perth International Arts Festival. *Opera-Opera* depicted Ioannides lyrical conducting technique as one "with the most persuasive of gentle textures, she coaxed from the performers an extraordinary array of sounds. She was grace personified." Ioannides has led many operas and conducted festivals worldwide, including the European premiere of Stephen Paulus' *The Woodlanders*, British Youth Opera, Curtis Opera Theatre, Spoleto Festival and Philadelphia Opera Company, Perth International Festival.

Ioannides began performing as a violinist in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain in the UK and horn player in the Surrey County Youth Orchestra from the age of 11. With Masters degrees from Oxford University (Instrumental Scholar) and the Juilliard School of Music (Bruno Walter Award), Ioannides studied conducting, violin, piano, singing and French Horn. A recipient of numerous prizes and awards, following studies at the Guildhall School of Music, she came to the United States as a Fulbright Scholar attending the Curtis Institute of Music. Serving on numerous advisory boards, as a competition adjudicator, and public speaker, she has served as panelist for the National Endowment of the Arts for the US Government.

#####