

Symphony conductor loves Tacoma so much she's staying — long term

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Symphony Tacoma's dynamo of a music director Sarah Ioannides is putting down roots in the City of Destiny.

The symphony's board is extending her five-year contract through the next seven seasons, and the East Coast-based road warrior told The News Tribune she will be making Tacoma her "primary base."

"Being here (in Tacoma) is a complete pleasure," she said Friday as she prepared for a symphony performance Saturday at the Festival of Sail.

Last season, Ioannides split time among her family's home in Connecticut, another music director position in South Carolina and guest-conductor performances.

But her last concert in South Carolina was in May, so her family is house-hunting locally and her three children will enroll in school here in the fall.

Having enjoyed the people and scenery for the last three seasons, Ioannides said Tacoma is a "great place to raise a family."

She said she will continue to travel frequently and her husband Scott Hartman will stay on as a professor at Yale University.

Ioannides started at Symphony Tacoma in 2014 after a two-year international search for a new music director.

In the time since, symphony attendance has grown and revenue from performances has increased by 60 percent, according to Symphony Tacoma.



Symphony Tacoma music director Sarah Ioannides; her husband, Scott Hartman, and their children are house-hunting in Tacoma.

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“We are delighted to announce the extension of Maestra Ioannides’ contract,” Board President Clark D’Elia said in a Symphony Tacoma news release. “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.”

In May, for Symphony Tacoma’s season finale, “Mountain and Sea,” Ioannides partnered with the National Park Service to draw attention to Mount Rainier’s rapidly melting glaciers.

The multimedia performance was the result of collaboration with the Museum of Glass, Hilltop Artists and Lincoln High School.

Events such as this “check a number of boxes for what people here care about,” Ioannides told The News Tribune.

In the future, she said, she wants to do concerts similar to “Mountain and Sea.” The symphony’s outreach and education efforts, especially with underprivileged schools, will be a focus of hers, too.

“We’ve got a vision,” she said, “We’ve got a plan.”

By offering more than a traditional symphony and great music, Ioannides said, she gets the chance to “be meaningful to more people” and cater to multiple interests.

“It’s a very exciting, vibrant time for us to be developing,” she said.



The contract of Symphony Tacoma music director Sarah Ioannides has been extended through the next seven seasons. **Peter Haley** phaley@thenewstribune.com