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CONTACT: Audrey Dunne

786-508-2306

adunne@sarasotaorchestra.org

Sarasota Orchestra Announces Bramwell Tovey as New Music Director

Tovey to serve as sixth music director in the Orchestra's 72-year history

SARASOTA, FL – August 24, 2021 – Sarasota Orchestra announces the appointment of internationally-renowned conductor Bramwell Tovey as Music Director. Tovey will begin his role as Music Director Designate on September 1, 2021, prior to taking the reins as Music Director in the fall of 2022 for the following four seasons.

In demand as a conductor with some of the most prestigious orchestras in the world, Tovey recently led the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, New York Philharmonic at Bravo! Vail Festival, Boston Symphony Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra, as well as orchestras across Europe and Asia. He is also Principal Conductor of the BBC Concert Orchestra, Artistic Advisor to the Rhode Island Philharmonic and Principal Guest Conductor of Orchestre Symphonique de Québec.

Tovey served for 18 years as Music Director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO). He is widely known in the Vancouver community for having advanced the orchestra through tours and recording. Additionally, his vision and institutional leadership resulted in the creation of the VSO School of Music, which opened in 2011 and is now housed within the Tovey Centre for Music, a state-of-the-art facility named in his honor in 2018.

Sarasota Orchestra's Search Committee, chaired by Board member Anne Folsom Smith and comprised of musicians, staff and Board members, unanimously recommended Tovey.

“Bramwell’s proven artistic leadership, experience as an institutional leader and his desire to join us in Sarasota after his designate year offer our Orchestra and community a strong foundation on which to realize our long-term aspirations for a new music center,” said Smith.

Joseph McKenna, President & CEO of Sarasota Orchestra, said, “We are thrilled to welcome an artist of Bramwell Tovey’s stature at this important time in the development of our organization. His brilliant musicianship, passion for education and his immediate chemistry with our musicians inspired his selection by the search committee and Board of Sarasota Orchestra.”

“My decision to accept the invitation to become Music Director of Sarasota Orchestra was made because the musicians’ artistry and dedication, the organization’s health and the community’s support all resonated with an inspirational unanimity of vision,” said Tovey.

Tom Ryan, Sarasota Orchestra board chair and ex-officio member of the Search Committee, added, “Bramwell brings a warmth and humanity to the role, as well as a fervor for all genres of music. We believe his gifts will be an asset to the community and to Sarasota Orchestra. Not only is he an exceptionally versatile conductor, but he is also an accomplished composer and a talented pianist. We are beyond excited to begin this journey with Bramwell.”

Tovey is a Grammy and Juno award winner with the VSO. He was formerly the Music Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg where he played an instrumental role in the opening of the Philharmonie Luxembourg, one of the finest concert halls in Europe. He held successful artistic directorships with Calgary Opera and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra (WSO) where he created the WSO’s international New Music Festival, now in its 30th year.

“For me, music is a profound language that addresses humanity at a level that is beyond mere words. To have been able to spend my career sharing music through the power of the modern symphony orchestra has been an extraordinary privilege,” added Tovey.

Sarasota Orchestra has also announced that Tovey will conduct the orchestra in a special concert entitled *Tovey: the Adventure Begins* on October 30, 2021. Held at the Sarasota Opera House, the concert will feature multiple Grammy Award-winning violinist James Ehnes. Frequent collaborators, Ehnes and Tovey first performed together when Ehnes was an emerging artist in Canada. A current resident of the Sarasota-Manatee region, he and Tovey won a Grammy Award for their 2007 recording of Barber, Korngold, and Walton concerti with the VSO. The concert will feature Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7 and music by Verdi, Saint-Saëns and Sarasate.

During his Music Director Designate year, Tovey will conduct two weekends, plan the full 2022/2023 season and hold auditions for open spots in Sarasota Orchestra that have been deferred due to the pandemic.

“It is common for new music directors to spend their first season setting the foundation for their tenure with a designate year, as their schedules are generally booked out well over a year in advance,” explained McKenna.

Tovey will also conduct Sarasota Orchestra’s final Masterworks concert of this season. The concert, called *Breaking Boundaries*, will be performed at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall from April 1-3, 2022. The revised program includes Ravel’s *Daphnis and Chloé* Suite No. 2, Richard Strauss’ *Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks* and Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto featuring guest artist Angelo Xiang Yu.

Single tickets for these and other Sarasota Orchestra concerts go on sale Tuesday, September 7, 2021. Information is available at www.SarasotaOrchestra.org.

About Sarasota Orchestra:

Since 1949, Sarasota Orchestra has inspired and entertained music-lovers across the region and visitors from around the world. As the oldest continuing orchestra in the state of Florida, each year the 76-member Orchestra performs more than 100 classical, pops, chamber music, and community outreach concerts. Sarasota Orchestra's acclaimed music education program includes the Sarasota Youth Orchestras, established in 1959. Sarasota Orchestra is also the parent program of the world-renowned Sarasota Music Festival, founded in 1965. For further information, please visit www.SarasotaOrchestra.org.

Images Available:

- Images of Bramwell Tovey can be found here:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/cv55nc9xkts2c3j/AACvTqUf1ORk_nzC0-Q9j101a?dl=0
- Additional high-resolution photography is available at
www.sarasotaorchestra.org/download

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