

DAYTON PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE



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THE DAYTON PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE NAMES KEITARO HARADA AS THE NEXT MUSIC AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE DAYTON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

**Harada will act as the Music and Artistic Director Designate in '24-25
before taking the helm on July 1, 2025**

DAYTON, OH – The Dayton Performing Arts Alliance (DPAA) announced its appointment of conductor Keitaro Harada as the next Music and Artistic Director of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra (DPO). Maestro Harada will become the fifth Music Director in the orchestra's 92-year history, preceded by founder Paul Katz (1933–1975), Charles Wendelken-Wilson (1975–1987), Isaiah Jackson (1987–1995), and Neal Gittleman (1995–present). Harada will begin his tenure during the 2024–2025 season as Music and Artistic Director Designate; he'll assume the role of Music and Artistic Director on July 1, 2025. Harada committed to a five-year term with the option to renew.

DPAA announced the appointment during a press conference at the PNC Arts Annex on Thursday, May 30.

Regarding the announcement, DPAA President and CEO Patrick J. Nugent commented: "DPAA is privileged to be working with such a stellar conductor with international scope and passion for local communities. Maestro Harada has an impressive sense of artistic vision, community engagement, and commitment to our model of three arts in one organization. He also has a keen understanding of the business of the arts and can think in the language of finances and demographics as well as musical scores and artistic strategy. His technical and artistic abilities as a conductor are prodigious, and he electrifies audiences wherever he goes. He will be a major cultural force in Dayton, and we are delighted that he has agreed to lead the Philharmonic."

Harada responded:

I am honored to join the DPAA family as Music and Artistic Director of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. As the proud leader of two profound American institutions, I look forward to immersing myself in the DPAA community while I continue in my present role as Music and Artistic Director with the Savannah Philharmonic.

The DPAA stands out to me as it brings together three art forms I absolutely love: orchestra, opera, and ballet. Dayton's rich history and vibrant art scene will provide us with the inspiration and imagination to build collaborations that can only be achieved at DPAA. Having recently performed together, we began to discover the endless possibilities of our music-making and great community. I am deeply grateful to serve as the next Music and Artistic Director.

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And as I build new relationships in the Dayton community and deepen my relationships in Savannah, I believe both cities will benefit from this tandem experience. I will forever cherish the Savannah Philharmonic—the organization that provided me with my first Music Director opportunity—while wholeheartedly embracing the Dayton community as we bring the performing arts to life throughout the region.

Keitaro Harada is a recipient of the prestigious 2023 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award, and as Music and Artistic Director of the Savannah Philharmonic in Savannah, Georgia (a position he's held since the 2020-21 season), Harada has transformed the quality of the orchestra and energized its audiences through his imaginative programs and charismatic presence. In addition to his American posts, Harada also acts as Permanent Conductor of the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and is the Principal Guest Conductor and Artistic Partner of the Aichi Chamber Orchestra in Japan. Harada was Associate Conductor for four years at the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops, where he regularly assisted Music Director Louis Langrée (now Music Director Laureate) and collaborated with James Conlon and Juanjo Mena at the orchestra's annual May Festival.

Harada's engagements as a guest conductor include appearances with the symphony orchestras of Cincinnati, Houston, Seattle, Indianapolis, Fort Worth, NHK, Yomiuri Nippon, and Osaka, as well as with the philharmonic orchestras of Osaka, Kanagawa, Nagoya, Japan, New Japan, and Tokyo. He's also conducted with the Nikiaki Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Arizona Opera, and the North Carolina Opera.

Harada is a six-time recipient of The Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award, and in 2013, he was invited to the Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview. He studied with Lorin Maazel at Castleton Festival and Fabio Luisi at the Pacific Music Festival, where, at Valery Gergiev's invitation, he served on the festival's faculty in 2016, 2018, and 2021.

Keitaro Harada made his Dayton debut in April of 2024 with a pair of programs entitled, "Total Eclipse: The Sun and The Planets," featuring Carl Nielsen's *Helios Overture*; W.A. Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 16 (performed by pianist Richard Dowling); and Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. He was met with great acclaim from the audience and orchestra alike.

DPAA Players' Committee Chairperson Chad Arnow said: "The musicians of the DPO are thrilled to welcome Keitaro Harada to the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance as the next Music and Artistic Director of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. Harada brought a great deal of enthusiasm to the podium during his recent appearance with us and his energy and musicality were infectious. We look forward to the exciting artistic potential of Maestro Harada leading performances for the DPAA."

Harada was the top candidate among nearly 250 applicants from around the globe, according to Arts Consulting Group (ACG), which guided the extensive international executive search. ACG remarked that they had never before received such a response for an Artistic Director position. ACG screened applicants through a rigorous process that yielded a preliminary round of 57 candidates. After conducting initial interviews, ACG presented 27 candidates to the DPAA Search Committee for consideration. The diverse applicant pool represented 40 states and 26 countries and included a substantial number of candidates who self-identified as BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA+.

Barbara O'Hara, Chair of the DPAA Search Committee, said: "I feel certain that our Dayton community will heartily welcome and embrace Harada and his family, as will all the musicians, ballet dancers, opera performers, subscribers, future subscribers, donors, and young musicians. To me, a fitting description of Harada is that of a Renaissance man! His background is so varied covering classical music, opera, and ballet as well as contemporary and pops. His rapport with the musicians is outstanding—he challenges them and is respectfully demanding of them. While in Dayton, one of his great desires is to become an involved partner with other performing arts organizations. So, here's to a wonderful and exciting musical future for the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance as we welcome Keitaro Harada, the next Music and Artistic Director of the Dayton Philharmonic."

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In addition to Chairperson O'Hara, members of the Search Committee included fellow DPAA Trustees Ed Tomme, Allyson Danis, and Rev. Joshua Ward; DPAA staff members Patrick J. Nugent, Michael Sieveking, Steven Hankle, Ted Nelson, and Jeanita Iféwándé Château Olówè; community partners Shaun Yu and William Henry Caldwell; and notably, several musician and Players' Committee representatives, including John Kurokawa, Aurelian Oprea, Rachael Young, Jonathan Lee, and William Manley.

Harada succeeds Neal Gittleman, who announced his intent to retire in May of 2022. Regarding Harada's appointment, Gittleman said: "I'm excited to see where Maestro Harada leads the Philharmonic in the future. After 30 wonderful years on the podium, I look forward to enjoying what comes next from a seat in the audience. I sincerely hope that Harada finds, as I have, that the DPAA is a place to make great music and build great community. And wish I him, the musicians, and the audience all the best on their adventure together."

Learn more about Keitaro Harada at kharada.com.

Download the official press kit at daytonperformingarts.org/keitaro-harada

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About the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance:

Dayton Performing Arts Alliance (DPAA) was formed in a groundbreaking and innovative merger between Dayton Ballet, Dayton Opera, and Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. DPAA is the largest performing arts organization in the greater Dayton community, with a mission to be the community's indispensable source for traditional, diverse, and innovative experiences in ballet, opera, and orchestral music. The vision of DPAA is to transform lives through the power of music and dance. In addition, DPAA offers various performance and education programs, setting a new standard for artistic excellence. DPAA performances reach an audience of more than 90,000 people annually, and their rich arts education programming serves over 50,000 schoolchildren in 150 schools in southwest Ohio. These performances and education initiatives are made possible partly through significant support from the Ohio Arts Council, Culture Works, Montgomery County, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Learn more at daytonperformingarts.org.