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## Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Announces Antoine T. Clark as the 2022 MAC Music Innovator

CINCINNATI, OH (December 8, 2021)—The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (CSO) announced **Antoine T. Clark** as its 2022 MAC Music Innovator. An award-winning conductor known for his engaging stage presence and advocacy for arts education, Antoine is the assistant conductor of the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra and the founding artistic and music director of the McConnell Arts Center Chamber Orchestra. A supporter of new music and interdisciplinary artistic collaborations, he regularly commissions new works and engages artists from various practices to create dynamic programming that inspires, fosters music education, and establishes relationships between artists and communities.

"Antoine Clark embodies everything we are looking for in a MAC Music Innovator," said **Jonathan Martin**, President & CEO of the CSO. "The goal of the MAC Music Innovator program is to amplify African American musicians who demonstrate both artistic excellence and a passion for engaging communities not traditionally reached by the CSO. We are excited to see the impact he will have in schools and the greater community."

The **MAC Music Innovator** is a one-year music residency that highlights leading African American classical musicians who embody artistry, innovation and commitment to education and community engagement. Supported by the Multicultural Awareness Council (MAC), a diverse volunteer group that helps support audience engagement initiatives with the CSO, the MAC Music Innovator will work closely with the CSO's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) department staff in collaboration with the CSO's Learning department to develop a unique residency that includes multiple community engagement and educational activities along with a culminating performance.

"It is an honor to be chosen as the 2022 MAC Music Innovator by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra," said Clark. "The Orchestra's work in DE&I is respected and expansive, and it is work that is very important to me. I am excited, in my residency, to collaborate with the incredible musicians of the CSO to bring classical music into the community and present interdisciplinary concerts and events that will shine a light on African American composers, their unique voices, and the stories they tell through music."

Antoine Clark is the 5<sup>th</sup> MAC Music Innovator since the inception of the residency in 2018. Previous MAC Music Innovators have included violinist Kelly Hall-Thompkins (2018), pianist Michelle Cann (2019), drummer and composer Mark Lomax (2020), and pianist and composer William Menefield (2021).

## **Antoine T. Clark**

Compelling interpretations, inventive performances and an energetic stage presence are the hallmarks of American conductor Antoine T. Clark. The founding Artistic and Music Director of The McConnell Arts Center Chamber Orchestra in Ohio, now in its ninth season, Mr. Clark was named Assistant Conductor of West Virginia's Wheeling Symphony Orchestra this fall 2021. A passionate advocate of arts education, this November he was named Cincinnati Symphony's 2022 MAC Music Innovator. The program, which highlights leading African American classical musicians who embody artistry, innovation and commitment to education and community engagement, will see Clark leading chamber music and orchestral performances in schools and throughout the community during his residency.

Highlights of the 2021-2022 season include Mr. Clark's conducting debut with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, leading the Philharmonia NOYO (Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra) and the OWU Chamber Orchestra, in addition to his duties with Wheeling Symphony Orchestra, The McConnell Arts Center Chamber Orchestra and the MAC Music Innovator program.

With a focus on building strong relationships in communities, Mr. Clark creates bold programs that often include innovative collaborations with artists from various artistic disciplines. A passionate supporter of new music, Mr. Clark regularly commissions works for the symphonic and chamber music canon. Among the composers with which he has worked are Mark Lomax III, Jacob Reed, Matthew Saunders, Michael Rene Torres, Christopher Weait, and Tony Zilincik.

Committed to inspiring and nurturing the next generation of musicians, Mr. Clark has taught students ranging from young beginners to college music majors. He is currently the conductor and music director of the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra – Philharmonia Orchestra and music director of the Ohio Wesleyan University Chamber Orchestra, and has served as the assistant conductor at the Gateways Music Festival in association with the Eastman School of Music since 2017.

Antoine T. Clark holds a Master of Music degree in orchestral conducting and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in clarinet performance from The Ohio State University, a Masters from the University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music and a Bachelors from Virginia Commonwealth University. A Project Inclusion Conducting Freeman Fellow with the Chicago Sinfonietta, among his mentors are conductors Mei-Ann Chen, Michael Morgan, Markand Thakar, Michael Jinbo, and Marshall Haddock.

## **Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra**

With a legacy dating back 127 years, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (CSO) is considered one of America's finest and most versatile ensembles. Led by Louis Langrée since 2013, the CSO's distinguished roster of past music directors includes Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ysaÿe, Fritz Reiner, Max Rudolf, Jesús López Cobos and Paavo Järvi. Matthias Pintscher is the Orchestra's Creative Partner, and previous artistic partners have included Lang Lang, Philip Glass, Branford Marsalis and Jennifer Higdon. The Orchestra also performs as the Cincinnati Pops, founded by Erich Kunzel in 1977 and currently led by John Morris Russell with Damon Gupton serving as Principal Guest Conductor. The CSO further elevates the city's vibrant arts scene by serving as the official orchestra for the Cincinnati May Festival, Cincinnati Opera and Cincinnati Ballet.

The CSO has long championed the composers and music of its time and has given historic American premieres by Claude Debussy, Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Maurice Ravel, Béla Bartók, William Grant Still and other prominent composers. It has also commissioned many works that ultimately became mainstays of the classical repertoire, including two iconic works by Aaron Copland: *Fanfare for the Common Man* and *Lincoln Portrait*. The Orchestra continues to actively commission new work, amplifying new voices from a diverse array of backgrounds, most recently with the Fanfare Project, a series of solo instrument works written for CSO musicians to mark a moment in time during the COVID pandemic.

Deeply committed to inclusion, relevance, and enhancing and expanding opportunities for the children of Greater Cincinnati, the Orchestra works to bring music education, in its many different forms, to as broad a public as possible. In 2020, the CSO was one of the first American orchestras to create a Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer position to ensure the absorption of best DE&I practices into every facet of the organization. The CSO/CCM Diversity Fellowship, a nationally recognized program in partnership with the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, provides master's degree-level education and professional development and performance opportunities for extraordinary young string players from populations historically underrepresented in classical music. The CSO is an incubator for and partner to NIMAN, a consortium of American orchestras, professional musicians and educators established to address the lack of racial equity in the classical music field by aligning resources and collaborating to strengthen the trajectory of classical instrumentalists of color at all stages of their pre-careers.

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra gratefully acknowledges annual support from:

