



University Musical Society

ANNOUNCES

MATTHEW VANBESIEN AS NEW PRESIDENT

New York Philharmonic President

Becomes 7th UMS President Since 1879

ANN ARBOR, MI (January 24, 2017) — **Matthew VanBesien**, president of the New York Philharmonic, will become president of the University Musical Society of the University of Michigan in July 2017.

VanBesien, who has served as president of the New York Philharmonic since 2012, will take the reins from Kenneth C. Fischer, who retires at the end of June 2017 after 30 years in the job. He will become only the seventh president in UMS's 138-year history after Henry Simmons Frieze (1879-81, 1883-89), Alexander Winchell (1881-83, 1889-91), Francis Kelsey (1891-1927), Charles Sink (1927-68), Gail Rector (1968-86), and Ken Fischer (1987-2017).

Matthew VanBesien said, "I am truly honored to become the next president of UMS. UMS, its extraordinary programming, staff, and board are, simply put, among the most admired in the performing arts field. It's my great privilege to be able to succeed Ken Fischer, who I know and deeply respect, and with whom I've collaborated during my tenure at the New York Philharmonic. While my career has been centered in the orchestral world for the last 25 years, I'm extremely excited about the

diversity of programming that UMS offers, both on the stage and working throughout their community. I've visited Ann Arbor several times over the past few years and love the energy and sense of commitment that pervades both the University of Michigan and the Ann Arbor community. My wife Rosie and I are looking forward to moving to Michigan and immersing ourselves in all that the region offers."

Stephen Forrest, chair of the UMS Board chair and of the Search Committee, commented, "We began the search process over a year ago and were extremely pleased with the quality, diversity and strength of the candidate pool. Matthew's experiences in Ann Arbor and with the New York Philharmonic, his appreciation for the unique university environment in which we operate, and his vision for the organization catapulted him to the top of our choices for the next president of UMS. We are thrilled and honored that he has elected to join UMS, and are excited to embark on this next chapter of UMS's extraordinary history under Matthew's leadership."

Sarah Nicoli, vice chair of the UMS Board, added, "Matthew brings everything that the search committee had hoped to find in its ideal candidate: long experience in the arts, a gift for making connections with people, and an extraordinary ability to turn long-term vision into short-term action. Ken Fischer has left an incredible legacy at UMS, and I have every confidence that Matthew will continue to expand that fine work."

A former French horn player, Matthew VanBesien spent eight years performing with the Louisiana Philharmonic before joining the League of American Orchestras' management fellowship program. Upon completion of that program, he worked with the Houston Symphony for seven years, rising to executive director and CEO for the final four years of his tenure. He spent two years as managing director of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in Australia before returning to the United States to become executive director of the New York Philharmonic in 2012. He was named president of the New York Philharmonic in 2014.

During his tenure at the New York Philharmonic, Matthew VanBesien has helped develop and execute innovative programs along with music director Alan Gilbert, such as the NY PHIL BIENNIAL in 2014 and 2016, the *Art of the Score* film and music series, and exciting productions like *Jeanne d'Arc au bucher* with Marion Cotillard and *Sweeney Todd* with Emma Thompson. He led the creation of the New York

Philharmonic's Global Academy initiative, which offers educational partnerships with cultural institutions in Shanghai, Santa Barbara, Houston, and Interlochen to train talented pre-professional musicians, often alongside performance residencies. He led a successful music director search (with Jaap van Zweden appointed to the role beginning in 2018); the formation of the Philharmonic's International Advisory Board and President's Council; and the unique and successful multi-year residency and educational partnership in Shanghai, China.

He serves on the Board of Directors of the League of American Orchestras, a membership organization comprised of hundreds of orchestras from across North America, and the Executive Committee for the Avery Fisher Career Grants, which provides professional assistance and recognition to talented instrumentalists.

A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Matthew VanBesien earned a bachelor of music degree in French horn performance from Indiana University. In May 2014 Mr. VanBesien received an Honorary Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Manhattan School of Music. He is married to Rosanne Jowitt, an accomplished geoscientist in the oil and gas business.

"A university can be neither excellent nor comprehensive without fostering cultural appreciation and the humanistic connections made possible by the arts. U-M's 200 years as a premier public institution would be much less meaningful without the University Musical Society," said University of Michigan President Mark S. Schlissel. "I have had the pleasure of seeing the benefits of Matthew's work on our campus and in Southeast Michigan, and I am certain that he will continue to advance the amazing impact of UMS and extend its influence ever more broadly throughout our academic community."

Aaron Dworkin, dean of the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance and a member of the Search Committee, said, "I am greatly looking forward to working with Matthew VanBesien in his new role at UMS. Our students at the School still talk about the wonderful New York Philharmonic residency last year and how it expanded both their performance and entrepreneurial skill sets. UMS and SMTD have a history of partnering on projects large and small, and I couldn't be happier that we'll be able to continue that important work with Matthew."

“I was elated when UMS Board leadership told me that Matthew VanBesien would be UMS’s next president. I’ve known Matthew for many years, and I know that UMS is in great hands under his leadership,” said Ken Fischer, current president of UMS. “This is a wise choice, and that we could attract a candidate of Matthew’s caliber says a lot about the vibrancy and support of this organization, this University, and this community. I couldn’t be more delighted.”

UMS Programming Director Michael Kondziolka added, “Having had the opportunity to work with Matthew in various contexts over the past few years, I am confident that his appointment provides an opportunity for seamless transition for our UMS team. Together, with Matthew at the helm, we are energized to continue our mission of serving diverse audiences, artists, and communities. Indeed, we are excited to watch our work evolve and flourish over the coming years.”

The search committee included Stephen Forrest, chair of the UMS Board; Rachel Bendit, secretary of the UMS Board; Lisa Cook, UMS Board member; Aaron Dworkin, dean of the U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Linda Gregerson, U-M Professor of English and Literature; Michael Kondziolka, UMS director of programming; Tim Lynch, U-M vice president and general counsel; Tim Marshall, president & CEO of Bank of Ann Arbor; Sarah Nicoli, vice chair of the UMS Board; Mike Ross, director of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois; Rhemé Sloan, U-M ’14, working at Rice University; and Dr. James Stanley, UMS Campaign co-chair.

More info: ums.org/newpresident

[NOTE FOR JOURNALISTS: this link will be made live on Tuesday, January 24 by 10:30 am]

ABOUT UMS

A National Medal of Arts recipient (2014), UMS contributes to a vibrant cultural community by connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. By juxtaposing innovative/creative work with traditional/interpretive work, UMS frames an exploration of performance forms within a diverse, international cultural lens.

Also known as the University Musical Society, UMS is an independent non-profit organization affiliated with the University of Michigan, presenting over 70 music, theater, and dance performances by professional touring artists each season, along with over 100 free educational activities for K-12

students, teachers, university students, and the community, with sustained efforts to engage and celebrate regional communities of shared heritage. Since its founding in 1879, strong leadership, coupled with outstanding venues, authentic artistic and community collaborations, dynamic education programs, and enduring commitment to excellence, has placed UMS in a league of internationally-recognized performing arts presenters.

Legendary artists presented by UMS over the years include Marian Anderson, Vladimir Horowitz, Leonard Bernstein, Robert Wilson, Ornette Coleman, Jessye Norman, Robert Lepage, Enrico Caruso, Celia Cruz, Sonny Rollins, Peter Brook, Youssou N’Dour, Mikhail Baryshnikov, and Gilberto Gil, along with extended campus residencies with leading ensembles such as Royal Shakespeare Company (England), Complicite (England), Setagaya Public Theatre (Tokyo), Théâtre de la Ville (Paris); Martha Graham Dance Company (New York), and Handspring Puppet Theater (Johannesburg); the New York, Vienna, and Berlin Philharmonics, and others. UMS also hosts the Grammy Award-winning UMS Choral Union, a 175-voice chorus that performs with local and visiting orchestras. UMS presents performances in multiple venues throughout the region and on the University campus, most notably including Hill Auditorium, acknowledged by many artists since its opening in 1913 as one of the great concert halls of the world.

UMS is part of the University of Michigan’s “Victors for Michigan” campaign, reinforcing its commitment to bold artistic leadership, engaged learning through the arts, and access and inclusiveness. Since 1990, the organization has co-commissioned and supported the production of nearly 80 new or reimaged works over the past 25 years, such as the recent remounting of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass’s iconic opera *Einstein on the Beach*.

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