



## Christopher James Lees

conductor

Emerging American conductor Christopher James Lees brings passionate and nuanced orchestral performances to the stage, a fierce commitment to contemporary music, and a natural charisma to audiences all around the world.

Lees has served as Resident Conductor of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra since 2018 and was Principal Conductor of the Charlotte Symphony Youth Orchestra through 2024. In addition to the more than 70 concert appearances with the CSO per season, he has annually stepped in to conduct Subscription Classical performances, including two Gala concerts with legendary artists and Grammy Award-winners Branford Marsalis and Rhiannon Giddens, respectively.

An active guest conductor, Lees has conducted or returned for performances with the New York, Los Angeles, and Rochester Philharmonic Orchestras, as well as the Houston, Detroit, New World, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Fort Worth, North Carolina, Portland, Flint, Toledo, and Winston Salem symphonies. Additional engagements have taken him to the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Orchestra de Chambre de Paris, Aspen Philharmonic Orchestra, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, and the Music in the Mountains Festival and Festival Internacional de Inverno de Campos do Jordão in Brazil.

Only the second American to be named a Gustavo Dudamel Conducting Fellow with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Lees made his debut with the orchestra in April 2013 and returned for concerts in February 2015.

With the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis and Atlanta symphonies, among others, Lees has served as an assistant conductor for the world's leading conductors, including Gustavo Dudamel, Paavo Järvi, Herbert Blomstedt, Leonard Slatkin, David Robertson, Robert Spano, Marin Alsop, Pablo Heras-Casado, Stéphane Denève, Susanna Mälkki, and Nicholas McGegan.

Additionally, Lees was named Music Director of the Rock Hill Symphony Orchestra in 2023.

A dedicated advocate for music of our time, Lees has premiered more than 150 works by a diverse range of composers, and collaborated closely with Pulitzer Prize winners John Adams, William Bolcom, John Corigliano, Jennifer Higdon, Joseph Schwantner, Steven Stucky, Caroline Shaw, Roger Reynolds, and Julia Wolfe.

When not performing, Lees can be found riding roller coasters with his ten-year-old son, reading through the stack of books by his nightstand, or training for his next World Majors marathon.



Charlotte  
Symphony  
Orchestra

IN CONCERT AT

WINTHROP  
UNIVERSITY

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

7:30 pm • BYRNES AUDITORIUM



# Charlotte Symphony Orchestra

Kwamé Ryan  
Music Director

The Charlotte Symphony Orchestra (CSO) is one of the premier music organizations in the Southeastern United States. As Charlotte's most active performing arts group, the Orchestra presents around 175 concerts each season, reaching more than 160,000 music lovers. The CSO is committed to its mission of igniting the human spirit through the passion and unifying power of live symphonic music. Led by Music Director Kwamé Ryan, the CSO fosters four youth orchestras and offers significant educational support for under-resourced areas of our community. Founded in 1932, the CSO plays a leading cultural role in Charlotte, uniting our region through the transformative power of live music.



## *College of Visual & Performing Arts*

The College of Visual and Performing Arts at Winthrop University is a dynamic community committed to excellence in creative practice, scholarship, and performance. Through nationally accredited programs in art, design, theatre, dance, and music, the College offers rigorous, artistically rich instruction within a collaborative, interdisciplinary environment that fosters innovation and meaningful exchange. Guided by accomplished faculty who are active professionals, students develop technical expertise, critical thinking, and strong creative identities. Learning extends beyond the classroom through exhibitions, performances, research, and community engagement, preparing graduates for diverse careers while inspiring lifelong appreciation for the transformative power of the arts.



# Charlotte Symphony Orchestra

## IN CONCERT AT WINTHROP UNIVERSITY

Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 7:30 pm  
Byrnes Auditorium · Winthrop University

Christopher James Lees, *conductor*  
Tessa Jackson, *harp*

### ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Slavonic Dance in G minor, Op. 46, No. 8

### JOHANN STRAUSS, JR.

*On the Beautiful Blue Danube*, Waltzes, Op. 314

### SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

Ballade in A minor, Op. 33

### TERRY MIZESKO

"Appalachian Lament" from *Highland Suite*

### JEAN SIBELIUS

*Finlandia*, Op. 26, No. 7

### CLAUDE DEBUSSY

*Danse sacrée et danse profane*, for Harp and Orchestra  
Tessa Jackson, *harp*

### AARON COPLAND

"Hoe-down" from *Rodeo*

This concert is made possible in part by the Springsteen Foundation.