

# Waco Symphony Orchestra

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## **Waco Symphony Orchestra Welcomes New Conductor, Lawrence Loh**

The Waco Symphony Orchestra Board of Directors is pleased to announce Lawrence Loh as the new Music Director and Conductor. Mr. Loh was selected from four finalists following a long Music Director search.

“I am very pleased with the announcement of Maestro Lawrence Loh as the new Music Director and Conductor of the Waco Symphony Orchestra. I have known Larry for a number of years, from his studies at Yale, through his leadership of The Syracuse Orchestra, his work as Resident Conductor with the Pittsburgh Symphony and as Associate Conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Certainly, Larry is a highly gifted conductor and a talented builder of orchestras. But he also has the rare ability to construct a deep bond between the music and the audience and a genuine sense of community. These gifts promise exciting new vistas for the Waco Symphony in the years ahead and soul nourishing performances of the cherished historical repertoire and deserving new works of our time. Hearty congratulations and welcome to Maestro Loh and deepest thanks to the dedicated Committee of board members, musicians, and volunteers who made such an impressive and auspicious decision,” Stephen Heyde, Music Director Emeritus, Waco Symphony Orchestra, said.

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**Waco Symphony Association, Inc.**

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**Carolyn Kannwischer Bess**

Executive Director • ED@wacosymphony.com

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Heyde retired from WSO in November of 2022 after 35 years of music directing and conducting. Heyde was awarded with the Music Director Emeritus title, and he served as the second conductor of WSO.

WSO received more than 100 applications from people all over the globe who were seeking to be the next Music Director. WSO's 11-member search committee performed extensive review of these applicants. Each of the four finalists, Loh and three others, guest conducted a WSO classical concert and visited Waco for a week to meet Board and community members.

During WSO's October 2023 "Breaking Boundaries" performance, Loh led the symphony in a performance that included Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5. This symphony is groundbreaking in its breadth, technical challenge and emotional scope. Loh described this piece as music that transports the listener out of the world in which they are in, as it translates a message that words cannot articulate.

"Drawing a metaphor from our season theme OUT OF THIS WORLD, I am over-the-moon excited to welcome Maestro Loh as the WSO's new Music Director and Conductor. He is respected and admired personally and professionally by orchestras across the country and possesses strong leadership and a depth of experience that will be an asset to us as an organization. His musicality, enthusiasm, energy, humor, and creative approach are a perfect fit for us as we broaden our horizons in this exciting new chapter and connect with new audiences in our community," Carolyn Bess, Executive Director, Waco Symphony Association, Inc. said.

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Loh is the Music Director of The Syracuse Orchestra (formerly Symphoria) in Syracuse, New York. Over his career he has held various other conducting positions with the Syracuse Opera, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony and Pittsburgh Youth Symphony, Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic, West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, and the Colorado Symphony.

Loh has been a frequent guest conductor of orchestras all over the world. A highlight of his career was working directly with film composer legend John Williams. In addition to working with guest soloists like Itzhak Perlman, James Ehnes, and Garrick Ohlsson, Loh has also worked with Broadway and pop artists like Idina Menzel and Chris Botti. He has conducted a variety of Films in Concert, most recently “Black Panther,” “The Princess Bride” “The Nightmare Before Christmas,” and various “Star Wars” films.

“Maestro Loh is a wonderful conductor who has vast experience with world renowned soloists and fine musicians across the country. He’s built a reputation through his work with Symphoria (recently renamed The Syracuse Orchestra) in Syracuse, NY, as a leader who listens to the needs and wishes of the community as well as the musicians. He implements programming for classics and pops that is exciting, appropriate, and inclusive of everyone in the wider community. His warmth, humor, and relatability are evident from the moment you meet him! Maestro Loh often remarked how much he loves Texas, and he genuinely wants to be here with our Waco Symphony Orchestra. I’m especially excited to see where he takes us as we move forward alongside the exciting growth occurring throughout Greater Waco,” Sue Jacobson, Concertmaster, WSO, said.

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Loh earned his Artist Diploma in Orchestral Conducting at Yale University, his Master's Degree in Choral Conducting at Indiana University, as well as his Bachelor's Degree in Music from the University of Rochester. Loh and his wife, Jennifer, have two children, their son, Charlie, and daughter, Hilary.

"I am so excited to learn of the appointment of Larry Loh as the next Music Director of the Waco Symphony Orchestra. I've always been very impressed by his high standards of music making, and how he passionately engages with orchestra musicians and audiences alike," said Miguel Harth-Bedoya, 2023-2024 Interim Artistic Advisor for the Waco Symphony Orchestra, The Mary Franks Thompson Director of Orchestral Studies at Baylor University and Conductor of Baylor Symphony Orchestra, and Music Director Laureate of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra.

Loh is thrilled to be the new Music Director with WSO and to continue the legacy of Music Director Emeritus, Stephen Heyde. WSO musicians and staff are looking forward to continuing their musical journey and legacy with Loh.

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“From the moment I visited Waco as a guest conductor last fall, I felt the warmth of the community and the love they have for their orchestra! The musicians are wonderful, and I know we will make great music together. I couldn’t be more thrilled to lead the Waco Symphony Orchestra as Music Director,” Lawrence Loh said.

In his first official WSO role, Loh will be conducting the highly anticipated Sci-Fi Spectacular performance on Sunday, April 7 at 3:00 p.m. at Waco Hall on the Baylor campus. This performance, on the eve of the great eclipse, will feature iconic space film music including selections from *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Interstellar*, Holst’s *The Planets*, *E.T.*, and more. Tickets are available at [WacoSymphony.com](http://WacoSymphony.com).

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## **About Waco Symphony Orchestra:**

The Waco Symphony Orchestra has been a cornerstone of Waco music for more than 60 years. The orchestra features a wide variety of world-renowned soloists during their season concerts. The WSO’s mission is to present live classical and symphonic music that will enrich the cultural life of the Waco community. They believe that music serves as a source of beauty, conscience, humanity and tranquility, which are essential to the human spirit, and that music transcends all national, racial, social, and economic barriers, serving as both a link to our past and a bridge to our future.

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There are two performances remaining in the 2023-2024 season, Exploring the Great Unknown on March 21 and Sci-Fi Spectacular on April 7. Tickets are available on WSO's website.

For more information, please visit their [website](http://wacosymphony.com) at wacosymphony.com.

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