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CABRILLO FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC APPOINTS CRISTIAN MĂCELARU AS ITS NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR



photo by Sorin Popa

Santa Cruz, CA, September 9, 2016—The Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, America’s longest running festival dedicated to new music for orchestra, is pleased to appoint Cristian Măcelaru as its new Music Director and Conductor. Măcelaru takes on the position with immediate effect and conducts his inaugural season in August 2017. He succeeds longtime Music Director and Conductor Marin Alsop, who stepped down after her 25th Anniversary season this August.

The appointment comes after a yearlong search led by the Festival’s Board of Directors and Executive Director Ellen Primack.

A fast-rising star of the conducting world, Cristian Măcelaru has established himself for his musical insight and assuredness on the podium. Winner of the 2014 Solti Conducting Award and now Conductor-in-Residence of the Philadelphia Orchestra, he came to public attention in February 2012 when he conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as a replacement for Pierre Boulez. These performances were met with widespread critical acclaim and launched an international career. An accomplished violinist from an early age, he grew up in Romania as the youngest of 10 musical siblings and immigrated to the United States at the age of 17 to pursue his musical studies. This marks Măcelaru’s first Music Directorship.

“We are absolutely thrilled to have found Cristian Măcelaru,” said Executive Director Ellen Primack. “His curiosity and genuine passion for new music, coupled with his skill and dynamism on the podium, make him a perfect fit for the Festival. Cristi understands and respects Cabrillo’s

important role in the music world. He is confident and charming, and eagerly embraces the special spirit and ethos that has distinguished the Festival and allowed it to thrive.”

“On behalf of the Cabrillo Festival’s Board of Directors, I’m very gratified that we’ve been able to find such a worthy successor for the helm of Cabrillo Festival,” said Liza Culick, Chair of the Artistic Leadership Transition Team. “Cristian Măcelaru is a great young talent. We’re confident that he will lead the Festival into a new era that will be marked by all the passion, excitement, and community that have been the hallmark of the Cabrillo Festival from its earliest days.”

“I am excited and humbled by the prospect of joining this beautiful artistic family,” said Măcelaru. “Cabrillo’s vision is unique—it has contributed immensely to the creation and performance of great art. It is an organization that nurtures innovation while maintaining the highest professional standards. I look forward to working with the incredible Festival Orchestra and building on the great legacy established by my illustrious predecessors, including Marin Alsop whose work I deeply admire. I hope to expand our artistic vision while ensuring that the Festival continues to be a destination for those seeking a unique experience and a deeper understanding of a truly remarkable art form.”

Măcelaru will celebrate his first season with the Festival July 30–August 12, 2017.

About Cristian Măcelaru

Winner of the 2014 Solti Conducting Award, Cristian Măcelaru has established himself as one of the fast-rising stars of the conducting world. With every concert he displays an exciting and highly regarded presence, thoughtful interpretations and energetic conviction on the podium. Măcelaru came to public attention in February 2012 when he conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as a replacement for Pierre Boulez in performances met with critical acclaim. Conductor-in-Residence of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Măcelaru made his subscription debut with the orchestra in April 2013 and continues to conduct them annually on subscription programs and other special concerts.

The 2016/17 season sees Măcelaru returning to the Philadelphia Orchestra and National Symphony Orchestra and the symphony orchestras of St. Louis, San Diego, Milwaukee, Colorado, Detroit and Vancouver. Internationally he leads the Bayerischen Rundfunk Symphonieorchester, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, WDR Sinfonieorchester, Weimar Staatskapelle, Halle Orchestra, Royal Flemish Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and New Japan Philharmonic with Anne-Sophie Mutter as soloist. In Summer 2016, Măcelaru made debuts at Dresden Staatskapelle, Ravinia Festival with the Chicago Symphony, Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Wolf Trap Festival with the National Symphony Orchestra and at the Aspen Music Festival. Additionally, he returned to the Mann Center and Saratoga Performing Arts Center with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Chautauqua Music Festival with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

In the 2015/16 season, Măcelaru led subscription concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the National Symphony Orchestra in D.C., as well as with the Atlanta Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra and New World Symphony. His international guest-conducting appearances brought him to Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Cristian Măcelaru made his Carnegie Hall debut in February 2015 on a program with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Anne-Sophie Mutter. A keen opera conductor, in June 2015 he

made his Cincinnati Opera debut in highly acclaimed performances of *Il Trovatore*. In 2010, he made his operatic debut with the Houston Grand Opera in *Madama Butterfly* and led the U.S. premiere of Colin Matthews's *Turning Point* with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra as part of the Tanglewood Contemporary Music Festival. In 2019, he returns to the Houston Grand Opera on a Kasper Holten production of *Don Giovanni*.

In addition to being appointed the 2014 Solti Fellow, Măcelaru previously received the Sir Georg Solti Emerging Conductor Award in 2012, a prestigious honor only awarded once before in the Foundation's history. He has participated in the conducting programs of the Tanglewood Music Center and the Aspen Music Festival, studying under David Zinman, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Oliver Knussen and Stefan Asbury. His main studies were with Larry Rachleff at Rice University, where he received master's degrees in conducting and violin performance. He completed undergraduate studies in violin performance at the University of Miami.

An accomplished violinist from an early age, Măcelaru was the youngest concertmaster in the history of the Miami Symphony Orchestra and made his Carnegie Hall debut with that orchestra at the age of nineteen. He also played in the first violin section of the Houston Symphony for two seasons.

Măcelaru formerly held the position of Resident Conductor at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, where he was Music Director of the Campanile Orchestra, Assistant Conductor to Larry Rachleff and Conductor for the Opera Department. A proponent of music education, he has served as a conductor with the Houston Youth Symphony, where he also conceptualized and created a successful chamber music program. As Founder and Artistic Director of the Crinalis Music Project, Măcelaru spearheaded a program in which young musicians perform in a variety of settings, side-by-side with established artists. Their groundbreaking inaugural season produced and presented concerts featuring chamber ensembles, a chamber orchestra, a tango operetta, and collaborations with dancer Susana Collins, which resulted in a choreographed performance of Vivaldi/Piazzolla's *Eight Seasons*.

Cristian Măcelaru resides in Philadelphia with his wife Cheryl and children Benjamin and Maria. www.macelaru.com

High-resolution photo are available [here](#) (Click on Photos).

About the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music

America's longest running festival dedicated to new music for orchestra, the Cabrillo Festival is a preeminent force in new music, both nationally and internationally. Celebrated as a "summer mecca for musicians and a premier musical destination for audiences," (*San Jose Mercury News*) the Festival attracts some of the world's top contemporary composers whose compositions are shared with an award-winning orchestra and an enthusiastic audience. www.cabrillomusic.org.