

Music Director and Conductor Search Committee
Panama City Symphony
PO Box 744
Panama City, FL 32402

6/19/2026

Dear Music Director and Conductor Search Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for Music Director of the Panama City Symphony. My name is Rachel Waddell, and I bring over **fourteen years of experience** leading professional, educational, and community ensembles. While many conductors lead from the podium outward, I strive to lead from **human connection inward**. I aspire to work with an organization where I focus fully on service towards the community's artistic, educational, and cultural life. This resonates with the Panama City Symphony's desire to find a Music Director and Conductor **committed to both the orchestra and the Northwest Florida area**, especially as the region experiences unprecedented growth. I would be honored to work with the board and musicians in shaping your 32nd season and beyond.

The through-line of my career is building musical experiences that matter and the ecosystems that sustain them. In building a career that spans professional orchestras, youth ensembles, and academic institutions, I comfortably engage a variety of audiences and stakeholders. Whether **programming symphonic, pops, holiday, or educational concerts**, I relish the opportunity to curate experiences that are meaningful to our community through artistic excellence and local collaborations. Our programs have partnered with choir, dance, jazz, animation, historic landmarks, zoos, sports teams, and many others to provide unique and breathtaking concerts. As a result of our varied and creative programs, orchestras under my direction are the **two-time winners of the American Prize's Vytutas Marijosius Memorial Award in Orchestral Programming**. We have increased our community engagement, reflected through our **substantial audience growth and financial giving**.

Additionally, as **Director of Orchestral Activities at Colorado State University**, Music Director of the Longmont Youth Symphony, and **2025 semi-finalist for the Music Educator Grammy Award**, I offer a nationally recognized advocacy of symphonic music. I can provide educational leadership and mentorship in the Panama City Symphony Strings Academy, Emerging Artists Competition, and in masterclasses. As illustration, next year the CSU Symphony Orchestra will partner with the Colorado Symphony in a unique program that bridges educational experience and professional training. Creating pathways to lifelong music-making is essential to my commitment as a Music Director.

Beyond the podium, I am an engaged partner in artistic planning, public speaking, and donor relations. I thrive in collaborative environments where staff, boards, and musicians work together to bring shared visions to life. I view the role of Music Director as a **deep institutional commitment**, and I am energized by the prospect of being an **active, visible face for the symphony within the Northwest Florida community**. I prioritize authentic, relationship-driven engagement and have experience in development and fundraising, including **two successful performing arts hall campaigns**. Additionally, I am experienced in grant writing, budget management, supervision, and envisioning and executing program development, like the Colorado Symphony collaboration mentioned above. I am committed to supporting staff, strengthening institutional relationships, and building sustainable artistic infrastructure.

As a conductor, I lead with integrity, communicate with clarity, and take a hands-on approach to building community both on and off the podium. My goal of contributing meaningfully to an orchestra and community's long term artistic success and community presence resonates with the Panama City Symphony's expectations. I pride myself on **clear, transparent communication that aligns the administrative goals of the board with the artistic pride of the musicians**, creating a culture of mutual respect both on and off the stage. Because of my extensive experience stepping into diverse guest conducting roles on short notice, I am positioned to **seamlessly execute your pre-programmed 2026–2027 season** with artistic stability and flexibility. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss how my experience, values, and artistic vision align with the Panama City Symphony. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Rachel L. Waddell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rachel" being more prominent and the last name "Waddell" following in a similar style.

Rachel L. Waddell, DMA

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Rachel L. Waddell

- <https://www.rachelwaddellconductor.com>

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Music Director Finalist Mid-Columbia Symphony Richland, WA	2025 – Present
Music Director Longmont Youth Symphony Longmont, CO	2025 – Present
Music Director Finalist Denver Philharmonic Orchestra Denver, CO	2024 – 2025
Music Director Finalist Greater Bridgeport Symphony Bridgeport, CT	2023 – 2025
Director of Orchestras, Assistant Professor School of Music, Theatre, and Dance Colorado State University Fort Collins, CO	2023 – Present
Music Director Finalist Orchestra of Northern New York, NY	2023
Co-Founder and President Conductors for Change, Inc., CO	2020 – Present
Music Director Finalist Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra, MI	2020 – 2023
Director of Orchestral Activities, Assistant Professor	2021 – 2023
Director of Orchestral Activities, Lecturer Arthur Satz Department of Music University of Rochester, NY	2017 – 2021
Associate Conductor	2015 – 2017
Assistant Conductor Canton Symphony Orchestra, OH	2012 – 2015
Founder and Music Director New Horizons Chamber Orchestra, OH	2015 – 2017

ADDITIONAL TRAINING	Everything Conducting Seminar and Masterclass Omaha Symphony, NE	Ankush Kumar Bahl John Devlin Anna Edwards Enrico Lopez-Yanez	2025
	Conducting Program Domaine forget de Charlevoix, CA	Yannick Nézet-Séguin Kensho Watanabe	2023
	Conducting Masterclass Vienna Opera Academy, AUT	Toby Purser	2022
	Conducting Intensive The Juilliard School, NY	Mark Shapiro	2021
	International Conductor Workshop and Competition Fort Wayne Philharmonic, IN	Ennio Nicotra Andrew Constantine	2020
	Hart Institute for Women Conductors Dallas Opera, TX	Emmanuel Villaume Carlo Montanaro Elizabeth Askren	2019
	NYC Conducting Masterclass International Conducting Institute, NY	Silas Nathaniel Huff David Leibowitz	2019
	Fundamentals of Orchestral Conducting Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, TX	Miguel Harth-Bedoya	2018
	Conducting Institute Miami Music Festival, FL	Larry Rachleff David Effron Jacomio Bairos Michael Rossi	2016
COMPETITIONS, AWARDS, AND FUNDING	Bard College-Conservatory of Music The Conductor's Institute, NY	Harold Farberman Apo Hsu Lawrence Golan Raymond Harvey	2010
	Music Educator Award GRAMMYs, The Recording Academy	Semifinalist	2026
	Music Educator Award GRAMMYs, The Recording Academy	Quarterfinalist	2025
	Conducting Program		2023

Domaine forget de Charlevoix, CA	Selected by Yannick Nézet-Séguin to Lead Orchestre Métropolitain in Concert	
<i>Conductors for Change IdeaLab</i> The Puffin Foundation Grant, NJ	Recipient	2022
<i>“Reimagining Beethoven”</i> Best Virtual Performance, College Orchestra The American Prize	Finalist	2021
<i>“Reimagining Beethoven”</i> LIT Talent Awards, International	Best Instrumental Performance Platinum Winner	2021 2021
Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award in Orchestral Programming for Conductors The American Prize	3 rd Place Winner	2020
<i>Women in Music</i> Project Grant Humanities Center University of Rochester, NY	Recipient	2020
Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award in Orchestral Programming for Conductors The American Prize	2 nd Place Winner	2020
<i>Leonard Bernstein</i> Project Grant Humanities Center University of Rochester, NY	Recipient	2018
New Horizons Chamber Orchestra Workshop Grant Associated Chamber Music Players, NY	Recipient	2015
Twenty Under 40! Award <i>The Canton Repository</i> , OH	Recipient	2015
Canton Youth Symphonies Classics Alive Foundation, Los Angeles, CA	Youth Orchestra of the Year	2015

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

College Orchestra Directors Association, (CODA)	National Association for Music Education (NAfME)
Colorado Music Educators Association (CMEA)	League of American Orchestras
Conductors for Change, Inc.	The Recording Academy
Conductors Guild	Supermajority Majority Leaders

Rachel L. Waddell

- www.rachelwaddellconductor.com

CONDUCTING FOOTAGE

Performances:

[Violet Archer, *Poem for Orchestra* \(Excerpt\) \(4.52"\)](#)

Orchestre Métropolitain

Charlevoix, Quebec

7/22/2023

[W.A. Mozart, *Magic Flute Overture* \(2.02"\)](#)

Colorado State University Symphony Orchestra

Fort Collins, CO

12/04/2025

[Ludwig van Beethoven, *Egmont Overture, Coda* \(2.05"\)](#)

Colorado State University Symphony Orchestra

Fort Collins, CO

10/16/2025

[Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 2, Mvt. 5* \(3.05"\)](#)

University of Rochester Symphony Orchestra

Rochester, NY

3/20/2022

[Sergei Prokofiev, *Peter and the Wolf* \(5.46"\)](#)

Clip Starts: 51.40"

Clip Ends: 57.26"

Jamie Bernstein, Narrator

Greater Bridgeport Symphony

Bridgeport, CT

12/14/2024

[Jean Sibelius, *Symphony No. 2, Mvt. IV* \(2.40"\)](#)

Clip Starts: 28.50"

Clip Ends: 31.30"

TMEA All State Orchestra Sinfonietta

San Antonio, TX

2/15/2025

Rehearsals:

[Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, *Scheherazade, Mvt. II* \(4.06"\)](#)

Colorado State University Symphony Orchestra

Fort Collins, CO

11/30/2023

Emilie Mayer, Symphony No. 2, Mvt. 2 (5.00")

Clip Starts: 0.00"

Clip Ends: 5.00"

Colorado State University Symphony Orchestra

Fort Collins, CO

9/26/2024