

# ALEX AMSEL

www.alexamsel.com | 

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Dear Members of the Panama City Symphony Music Director Search Committee,

It is with great enthusiasm that I apply for the position of Music Director and Conductor of the Panama City Symphony. What drew me to this search is not simply the role but the particular moment: an orchestra in its 31st year that has shown, through the devastation of Hurricane Michael and the years of adaptation that followed, a resilience that no strategic plan can manufacture. PCS's commitment to education - the String Academy, the Biennial Emerging Artists Competition, the high school mentoring program - reflects precisely my own belief that an orchestra's deepest investment is in the musicians and audiences it has not yet reached. And the community PCS serves is itself in transformation: a Bay County adding residents faster than nearly any comparable region in America, a historic downtown in renaissance, and an institution ready to move from borrowed spaces into a permanent home. My own artistic philosophy has always been that an orchestra's role is defined not by what I wish to program but by what its community needs the symphony to be. Everything I have understood about PCS tells me this is an organization that already knows that - and is looking for a Music Director who does too.

At the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, working daily alongside musicians of the highest caliber has set a standard I carry to every other podium - and that the orchestra chose to promote me to Associate Conductor at their own request is the professional milestone I am most proud of. Before Cincinnati, my seasons at The Phoenix Symphony included highlights like Mahler 4, Tchaikovsky 4, Brahms 3, Beethoven 1, Pictures at an Exhibition, Dvorak 7, Schubert 8, Beethoven 6, and a grand opera chorus program, alongside pops, family, and education programming that demanded both artistic range and rehearsal economy. I have built my craft alongside Cristian Macelaru, with whom I serve as cover conductor at the Orchestre National de France, and conductors of the caliber of Paavo Jarvi. This past season, I was chosen by Cristian, Interlochen, and the artists themselves to join the team for Yo-Yo Ma's performances of Wynton Marsalis's new cello concerto - rehearsing the Interlochen Orchestra and working directly with Wynton on the score's final details before Cristian's arrival. My training began under Marin Alsop at the Peabody Conservatory, and I have covered for ensembles including the Czech Philharmonic, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Tonhalle Zurich, and WDR Koln working closely with conductors like Manfred Honneck, Paavo Jarvi, and Robert Spano.

I have always understood the Music Director's role to extend well beyond the podium. At Phoenix, I was elected co-chair of the Young Professionals Board, served on the Artistic Advisory Committee and Patron Experience Taskforce, and was a consistent partner in fundraising and donor cultivation - appearing regularly on local media and becoming a genuine presence in the city's cultural life. PCS's multi-venue reality fits naturally into that model: performing in educational and community spaces requires exactly the flexibility and goodwill that turn an orchestra into a civic institution, and I bring both.

The PCS education ecosystem speaks directly to my track record. I founded the Student Composition Project at The Phoenix Symphony - a first-of-its-kind initiative in which middle and high school composers worked directly with me from first sketches to world premiere, resulting in six original orchestral works over two seasons, with personal feedback given to every applicant regardless of outcome. That philosophy aligns precisely with the Biennial Emerging Artists Competition and its expectation that the

Music Director collaborate with composers on new works tailored for winners - the work I most want to do. The String Academy, mentoring program, Moments with the Maestro, and school-based masterclasses round out an education infrastructure I am eager to steward and grow. My opera experience - Houston Grand Opera, Cincinnati Opera, and an upcoming production of Hector Armienta's Zorro with Utah Opera - also prepares me to partner closely with the Adult and Children's Chorus Directors on integrated choral programming.

My programming instinct balances the masterworks anchoring the symphonic tradition with pairings that give audiences a new frame for the familiar, and pops seasons that draw new listeners in while giving loyal subscribers something to celebrate. I curated two sold-out seasons of a chamber orchestra series at Phoenix and designed a sold-out, fully immersive Dia de los Muertos evening for the Cincinnati Symphony's Proof Series - a bilingual event that transformed Music Hall's lobby into an ofrenda installation with Mariachi Sol de Mexico de Jose Hernandez and local artist Rebecca Nava Soto. For an Argentinian conductor, the Piazzolla Four Seasons of Buenos Aires on PCS's upcoming season carries a particular resonance: that work is not acquired repertoire for me but inherited culture, and what I would bring to that podium cannot come from score study alone.

The drive to build PCS a permanent home is one I share without reservation - and with specific credibility. I have conducted in world-class halls across Europe and America, and I know firsthand what a purpose-built acoustic environment enables: programming that current multi-venue logistics make impractical, guest artist commitments that require reliable infrastructure, and the sense of civic ownership that forms when a community enters a hall built for them. I also know what the absence of that home costs - in artistic ambition, in fundraising narrative, and in the story an orchestra can tell about its future. I have cultivated donor relationships, sat in Board and civic conversations, and advocated publicly for arts infrastructure. I would bring that experience - and the credibility of someone who knows exactly what is currently being left on the table - to every conversation about PCS's permanent home by being a fundraising machine engine and loud advocate.

It would be a privilege to serve as the next Music Director and Conductor of the Panama City Symphony, and I am deeply grateful to the Board and Search Committee for their consideration.

Sincerely,

**Alex Amsel**

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## APPOINTMENTS

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| <b>Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra</b><br><i>Associate Conductor, 2026–</i><br><i>Assistant Conductor, 2025–2026</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 2025–     |
| <b>The Phoenix Symphony</b><br><i>Associate Conductor</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Founder, Student Composition Project — six world premieres with middle and high school composers</li></ul>                                                                                                                                           | 2023–2025 |
| <b>Cincinnati Opera</b><br><i>Resident Conductor</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2023–2025 |
| <b>Houston Grand Opera</b><br><i>Resident Conductor</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 performances of La traviata and world premiere of Another City</li><li>• Rehearsal Conductor &amp; music preparation: <i>The Wreckers, Le nozze di Figaro, Werther, Tosca, Salome, El Milagro del Recuerdo</i> (dress rehearsal conductor)</li></ul> | 2022–2023 |
| <b>Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra</b><br><i>Assistant Conductor, 2021–2022</i><br><i>Conducting Fellow, 2019–2021</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2019–2022 |
| <b>Aspen Music Festival</b><br><i>Assistant Conductor</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2022      |
| <b>Cabrillo Music Festival</b><br><i>Assistant Conductor</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2019–2020 |
| <b>National Repertory Orchestra</b><br><i>Assistant Conductor</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 Subscription Concerts</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 2019      |
| <b>Peabody Conservatory Opera and Orchestra</b><br><i>Choirmaster &amp; Assistant Conductor</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 2017–2019 |

## PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

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| <b>Interlochen Arts Academy Tour</b> | <i>Ives Symphony No. 4; Rehearsal Conductor, Wynton Marsalis Cello Concerto for Yo-Yo Ma</i> |
| <b>Utah Opera</b>                    | <i>Zorro, 2026</i>                                                                           |
| <b>Kentucky Opera</b>                | <i>Il barbiere di Siviglia</i> — withdrew due to further engagements; rescheduled for 2028   |
| <b>Cincinnati Opera</b>              | <i>Guest Conductor</i>                                                                       |
| <b>Fort Worth Symphony</b>           | <i>Guest Conductor</i>                                                                       |
| <b>Camerata Regală București</b>     | <i>Guest Conductor</i>                                                                       |
| <b>Arad Filarmonica</b>              | <i>Guest Conductor</i>                                                                       |
| <b>Columbus Symphony</b>             | <i>Guest Conductor</i>                                                                       |
| <b>West Virginia Symphony</b>        | <i>Guest Conductor</i>                                                                       |
| <b>West Valley Symphony</b>          | <i>Music Director Finalist</i> — withdrew due to Cincinnati engagement                       |
| <b>Elgin Symphony</b>                | <i>Music Director Finalist, Runner-Up</i>                                                    |

## ACADEMIA

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**University of North Texas**

*Music Director, Massenet's Cendrillon*

**American Festival for the Arts**

*Faculty*

**Round Top Music Festival**

*Subscription Week*

## COVER CONDUCTING

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L'Orchestre National de France (cover for Cristian Măcelaru)

WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln

Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich

Czech Philharmonic

Budapest Festival Orchestra

Dallas Symphony Orchestra

Kansas City Symphony

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

## EDUCATION

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**Peabody Conservatory**

*M.M. Orchestral Conducting — studied with Marin Alsop*

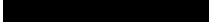
**New England Conservatory**

*M.M. Bassoon Performance*

**The University of Texas at Austin**

*B.M. Bassoon Performance*

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## CONDUCTING VIDEO LINKS

### **Mahler – Symphony No. 4**

III. Movement (Excerpt)

<https://youtu.be/JI1axUevh74>

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### **Strauss – *Salome***

Dance of the Seven Veils (Excerpt)

<https://youtu.be/KNfPoaxMuSA>

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### **Mussorgsky/Ravel – *Pictures at an Exhibition***

X. Great Gates of Kiev

<https://youtu.be/LMEOghk-7XY>

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