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The Philadelphia Orchestra Appoints Sara Aldana as Assistant Conductor

(*Philadelphia*, June 25, 2026)—The Philadelphia Orchestra and Music and Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin are pleased to announce the appointment of **Sara Aldana** as the Orchestra's new assistant conductor, effective September 1, 2026, through the 2026–27 season. A native of Colombia and student of Philadelphia Orchestra Principal Guest Conductor Marin Alsop, Aldana will provide valuable assistance to Nézet-Séguin and other guest conductors throughout the season. Additionally, she will lead select Family Concerts and actively participate in residency programs, Orchestra tours, and a variety of educational activities. She will make her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in January 2027, leading the Orchestra in a program titled [Wonderful Waltzes, featuring works by the Strauss family](#).

The Philadelphia Orchestra's assistant conductor position has long served as a launchpad for some of the most promising artists in the next generation of orchestral leadership. The role offers emerging young conductors hands-on experience working alongside world-renowned conductors, composers, and soloists. Former Philadelphia Orchestra assistant conductors have gone on to serve as music directors at major ensembles across North America and abroad.

"The assistant conductor position is one of the clearest expressions of The Philadelphia Orchestra's commitment to creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music," said President and CEO Ryan Fleur. "Sara Aldana joins a distinguished line of artists who have used this platform to find their voice on the podium, and I'm looking forward to watching her flourish throughout her tenure."

"Sara Aldana brings to the podium a unique combination of musical intelligence, authenticity, charisma, and a deep commitment to community—qualities that are essential to The Philadelphia Orchestra," said Nézet-Séguin. "I look forward to working alongside her as she continues to grow as an artist and know she will be a colleague for years to come."

"I've had the privilege of working with Sara at the Peabody Institute and through the Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship, where she is currently a 2026 mentee," said Alsop. "I could not be happier for her; she is a remarkable musician and collaborator, whose curiosity and dedication to the art will serve The Philadelphia Orchestra and its audiences beautifully."

Aldana succeeds Naomi Woo, who has served as the Orchestra's assistant conductor since 2024 and whose tenure ends in August. The Philadelphia Orchestra is grateful for Woo's extraordinary contributions to the Orchestra and its audience over the last two years. The

ensemble is looking forward to welcoming her back as a guest conductor throughout the 2026–27 season.

Born in Bogotá, Colombia, Aldana is known for her collaborative leadership and belief in music as a force for connection and inclusion. A 2026 Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship mentee, she served as cover conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra from 2023 to 2025, working alongside conductors including Jader Bignamini, Marie Jacquot, Jeannette Sorrell, Kevin John Edusei, and Tabita Berglund, and has held positions as assistant conductor of the Reno Chamber Orchestra, associate conductor of the Michigan Youth Symphony Orchestra, and conducting fellow and assistant conductor to Alondra de la Parra at the Festival Paax GNP in Mexico. Aldana has conducted the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, National Philharmonic Orchestra, Basel Chamber Orchestra, and other ensembles in master classes led by Mei-Ann Chen, Johannes Schlaefli, Cristian Măcelaru, and Marin Alsop. Most recently, she debuted with the Bogotá Symphony Orchestra and the Lansing Symphony Orchestra, and she will spend the summer at the Aspen Conducting Academy as a conducting fellow. Previous summers have included fellowships at the Cabrillo Festival for Contemporary Music, the National Orchestral Institute, and the Conductors Retreat at Medomak. She has studied with Marin Alsop and Joseph Young at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University and holds a master's in orchestral conducting from the University of Michigan, studying under Kenneth Kiesler.

Download Sara's headshot [here](#).

Yannick Nézet-Séguin holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair.

Marin Alsop holds Ralph and Beth Johnston Muller Chair.

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