



March 24, 2026

### **David Platt Named AYO Music Director**

Following an intensive search process which included over 50 applicants from across the United States and abroad, Alaska Youth Orchestras (AYO) is pleased to announce the hiring of David Platt as AYO Music Director, effective June 1, 2026.

Platt brings a multifaceted background to AYO. An experienced violinist and music educator, Platt holds advanced degrees from Butler University and the Cleveland Institute of Music, and will soon earn a Doctorate in Orchestral Conducting from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music. He recently concluded a three-year Conducting Fellowship with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and has served as cover conductor with the Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Firelands (Ohio), Austin, and Charleston Symphony Orchestras. Platt has also held positions with the Sangamon Valley Youth Symphony and Baldwin Wallace Youth Orchestras, and served as a visiting clinician with the Charleston Symphony Youth Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, and the Akron Youth Symphony.

Platt has appeared internationally in performances spanning symphonic, operatic, ballet, and contemporary music genres. Recent highlights include working with the Myrtus Festival Orquesta (Spain), Orchestra Simfonică a Filarmonicii Pitești (Romania), and the Allegra Festival Orchestra (Bulgaria). Platt made his operatic debut conducting performances of *La Traviata* with the Kyrgyz National Opera & Ballet Theater in 2019, and has since worked on productions of *Hänsel und Gretel*, *Eugene Onegin*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Alcina*, and *Die Zauberflöte*. He has been privileged to study under master conductors and pedagogues Nicolás Pasquet, Johannes Schlaefli, David Efron, Thomas Wilkins, Arthur Fagen, and Carl Topilow, among others.

"I am truly excited to join AYO and the Anchorage arts community," said Platt. "I thoroughly enjoyed working with the talented musicians of AYO during the audition this winter and getting to experience a taste of Alaska's beautiful landscapes. I see great potential for students' artistic growth, and I look forward to working with the AYO team to ensure a bright future for youth orchestral education in Anchorage."

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The search process was led by AYO Executive Director Pierre Derycz, in partnership with the AYO Board of Directors. The search was also informed by feedback from AYO's professional musician coaches and youth musician members.

"I am delighted to welcome David to the AYO family," shared Derycz. "The AYO Music Director holds a prominent place in our community, upholding a rich history of youth music performance and education. David brings significant experience to the role, and I know our youth musicians and ensembles will be inspired by his leadership. I look forward to our partnership, and to supporting David in our work to further AYO's mission."

Anne Connors, AYO Board President added, "We are confident in David's appointment. He is the right decision for our organization's needs now and in the near future. We are excited to begin this new chapter with David at AYO."

AYO has served the youth of Southcentral Alaska for 60 years, with a storied list of Music Directors including Linn Weeda, who led the artistic direction of AYO for 31 years, and most recently, Bruce Wood. AYO would like to thank both Dr. Wood and Mr. Weeda for their continued involvement throughout the search process, and investment in its outcome.

Platt's appointment was formally announced to AYO musicians and their families on March 23, during a rehearsal of the Anchorage Youth Symphony. He will conduct his debut concert in the fall of 2026, leading the Anchorage Youth Symphony in Atwood Concert Hall. As Music Director, Platt will also oversee the continued development of AYO's Symphony School ensembles, and provide artistic and pedagogical leadership for all AYO programs.