



## Joe Jaxson to succeed Damien Geter as Richmond Symphony Composer-in-Residence

**Richmond Symphony Announces Joe Jaxson as Next Composer-in-Residence**  
*New appointment continues the Symphony's commitment to living composers, Virginia stories, and community connection through music*

**Richmond, Va.** — Richmond Symphony is pleased to announce composer **Joe Jaxson** as its next **Composer-in-Residence**, continuing a program that has become an important part of the organization's artistic vision. Jaxson will succeed acclaimed composer **Damien Geter**, whose residency continues through the conclusion of the 2025–2026 season. The transition marks both a celebration of Geter's impactful tenure and an exciting new chapter with a rising Virginia artist whose work has already resonated deeply with Richmond audiences.

The Composer-in-Residence program reflects Richmond Symphony's ongoing commitment to championing living composers, investing in new music, and connecting symphonic performance with the stories and communities of Virginia. During his residency, Jaxson will compose a new work for the Symphony's 2026–2027 season, inspired by the Symphony Series finale featuring *Carmina Burana*, and will also contribute to education initiatives with Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra Programs in collaboration with **Julie Bemis, Vice President of Education and Community Engagement**.

A Staunton native, Jaxson first collaborated with Richmond Symphony as a commissioned guest composer during the 2024–2025 season. His orchestral work *Born in the Iron Grip*, inspired by Richmond tennis icon Arthur Ashe, premiered on March 22, 2025, and received a standing ovation from audiences at the Carpenter Theatre. The work was commissioned as part of Richmond Symphony's commitment to amplifying Virginia stories and Virginia voices through contemporary music. A portion of the piece was also recently featured in the Black History and Cultural Museum of Virginia exhibition "**Arthur Ashe: An Enduring Legacy**," further extending its reach beyond the concert hall and into the community.

Jaxson's music is noted for its emotional immediacy, narrative depth, and thoughtful engagement with history and identity. In *Born in the Iron Grip*, he translated Ashe's perseverance, discipline, and advocacy into a vivid orchestral work that invited audiences to experience history through sound. His appointment builds on that successful collaboration and signals Richmond Symphony's desire to continue

developing meaningful relationships with composers whose work speaks powerfully to the present moment.

“Richmond Symphony’s composer-in-residence program has become a meaningful way for us to deepen our investment in new music and in artists whose voices matter to our community,” said **Lacey Huszcza, President & CEO**. “As Damien Geter’s remarkable residency comes to a close, we are thrilled to welcome Joe Jaxson, an exceptional composer whose work reflects both artistic excellence and a deep connection to Virginia stories.”

“It is a tremendous honor to deepen my relationship with Richmond Symphony as Composer-in-Residence,” said **Joe Jaxson**. “My experience working with the orchestra affirmed how committed this organization is to telling meaningful stories through music and to creating connections with the community. I’m grateful for the opportunity to build on that work in the seasons ahead.”

Jaxson follows Damien Geter, whose residency helped shape a vibrant period of new creative work for the Symphony. Geter, an acclaimed composer and bass-baritone, is known for blending classical music with styles from the Black diaspora and for creating works that engage themes of justice, history, and identity. During his tenure, Richmond Symphony premiered major works including *Sinfonia Americana* and *An African American Requiem*, and in 2025 joined Virginia Opera in co-commissioning and premiering *Loving v. Virginia*, with a libretto by Jessica Murphy Moo. His residency has helped strengthen the Symphony’s role as a home for bold, relevant American music. Damien Geter is Richmond Symphony’s Composer-in-Residence through 2026.

As Richmond Symphony looks ahead, Jaxson’s appointment underscores the institution’s belief that orchestras can honor tradition while also making space for new voices, new stories, and new audiences.

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## **About the Richmond Symphony**

The Richmond Symphony is dedicated to putting music at the center of its community, creating joy, connection, expression, and collaborations. Each season, the Richmond Symphony offers more than 200 public performances for approximately 250,000 patrons through concerts and educational programs and collaborates with other organizations, such as Morgan Avery McCoy, Inc., for special projects. The Symphony maintains an active touring schedule that brings live symphonic performances to rural communities. Founded in 1957, the Symphony includes 70 professional Orchestra Musicians and a 150-voice volunteer Chorus. Demonstrating a dedication to music education, the Richmond Symphony School of Music (RSSoM) was founded in 2020 and includes a 120 strong Youth Orchestra Program of all skill levels as well as online enrichment and

instruction for both school-aged and adult learners. Learn more at [richmondsymphony.com](http://richmondsymphony.com).

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