

# BRETT MITCHELL

## Biography

Hailed for presenting engaging, in-depth explorations of thoughtfully curated programs, American conductor **Brett Mitchell** is in consistent demand on the podium at home and abroad. In March 2024, he was named Music Director of the Pasadena Symphony, beginning an initial five-year term with the 2024-25 season. He has also served as Artistic Director & Conductor of Oregon's Sunriver Music Festival since 2022.

Working widely as a guest conductor, Mr. Mitchell's recent engagements have included appearances with the Dallas, Detroit, Edmonton, Fort Worth, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, National, North Carolina, Oregon, San Antonio, San Francisco, and Vancouver symphonies; the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl; the Cleveland and Minnesota orchestras; the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra; the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; the Grant Park Festival Orchestra; and a two-week tour with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Mitchell also regularly collaborates with the world's leading soloists, including Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Itzhak Perlman, Kirill Gerstein, Conrad Tao, Rudolf Buchbinder, James Ehnes, Augustin Hadelich, Leila Josefowicz, and Alisa Weilerstein.

From 2017 to 2021, Mr. Mitchell served as Music Director of the Colorado Symphony in Denver; he previously served as Music Director Designate during the 2016-17 season. During his five-season tenure, he is credited with deepening the orchestra's engagement with its audience via in-depth demonstrations from both the podium and the piano. He also expanded the orchestra's commitment to contemporary American repertoire—with a particular focus on the music of Mason Bates, Missy Mazzoli, and Kevin Puts—through world premieres, recording projects, and commissions. In addition, Mr. Mitchell spearheaded collaborations with such local partners as Colorado Ballet, Denver Young Artists Orchestra, and El Sistema Colorado. In summarizing his tenure, *The Denver Post* wrote that "Mitchell has been a bright and engaging presence over the years, delving into the history of certain well-worn pieces while leading expert renditions of them."

From 2013 to 2017, Mr. Mitchell served on the conducting staff of The Cleveland Orchestra. He joined the orchestra as Assistant Conductor in 2013, and was promoted to Associate Conductor in 2015, becoming the first person to hold that title in over three decades and only the fifth in the orchestra's hundred-year history. In these roles, he led the orchestra in several dozen concerts each season at Severance Hall, Blossom Music Center, and on tour.

From 2007 to 2011, Mr. Mitchell led over one hundred performances as Assistant Conductor of the Houston Symphony. He also held Assistant Conductor posts with the Orchestre National de France, where he worked under Kurt Masur from 2006 to 2009, and the Castleton Festival, where he worked under Lorin Maazel in 2009 and 2010. In 2015, Mr. Mitchell completed a highly successful five-year appointment as Music Director of the Saginaw Bay Symphony

Orchestra, where an increased focus on locally relevant programming and community collaborations resulted in record attendance throughout his tenure.

As an opera conductor, Mr. Mitchell has served as music director of nearly a dozen productions, principally at his former post as Music Director of the Moores Opera Center in Houston, where he led eight productions from 2010 to 2013. His repertoire spans the core works of Mozart (*The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magic Flute*), Verdi (*Rigoletto* and *Falstaff*), and Stravinsky (*The Rake's Progress*) to contemporary works by Mark Adamo (*Little Women*), Robert Aldridge (*Elmer Gantry*), Daniel Catán (*Il Postino* and *Salsipuedes*), and Daron Hagen (*Amelia*). As a ballet conductor, Mr. Mitchell most recently led a production of *The Nutcracker* with the Pennsylvania Ballet in collaboration with The Cleveland Orchestra during the 2016-17 season.

In addition to his work with professional orchestras, Mr. Mitchell is also well known for his affinity for working with and mentoring young musicians aspiring to be professional orchestral players. His tenure as Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra from 2013 to 2017 was highly praised, and included a four-city tour of China in June 2015, marking the orchestra's second international tour and its first to Asia. Mr. Mitchell is regularly invited to work with the talented young musicians at this country's high-level training programs, such as the Cleveland Institute of Music, the National Repertory Orchestra, Texas Music Festival, Sarasota Music Festival, and Interlochen Center for the Arts. He has also served on the faculties of the schools of music at Northern Illinois University (2005-07), the University of Houston (2012-13), and the University of Denver (2019, 2022-23).

Born in Seattle in 1979, Mr. Mitchell holds degrees in conducting from the University of Texas at Austin and composition from Western Washington University, which selected him as its Young Alumnus of the Year in 2014. He also studied with Leonard Slatkin at the National Conducting Institute, and was selected by Kurt Masur as a recipient of the inaugural American Friends of the Mendelssohn Foundation Scholarship in 2008. Mr. Mitchell was also one of five recipients of the League of American Orchestras' American Conducting Fellowship from 2007 to 2010.

For more information, please visit [brettmitchellconductor.com](http://brettmitchellconductor.com).

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