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Philanthropic Leaders' Passion Projects,
PB Symphony Hits a High Note
& Lilly Pulitzer Island Homecoming

SOCIETY & CULTURE



PHOTO BY ESTEBAN PARCHUC

Palm Beach Symphony
playing "Romantic
Reflections" (Elgar &
Rachmaninov). Conductor:
Maestro Ramón Tebar,
April 17, Kravis Center

MUSIC TO OUR EARS It's come down to the final moments of the evening. All sections of the orchestra—the woodwinds, brass, percussion, strings—can be heard playing off of each other in an electrifying rondo form. Each musician keeps a steady eye on the conductor as he signals the close of the opus, and every instrument gives one last powerful hit. Full-bodied notes linger as a round of applause resonates throughout the concert hall and the maestro and musicians take their bow. The classical performance might have come to an end, but the work of **Palm Beach Symphony** (palmbeachsymphony.org) is only just getting started.

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Instrumental MEASURES

Executive Director David McClymont ups the tempo for Palm Beach Symphony—uniting the community through classical music, bringing the orchestra to national acclaim and doing all he can to ensure his passion for the arts continues on with future generations.

By Jesse Bratter // Photography by Sonya Revell

If you ask David McClymont what the most memorable performance for him has been since coming on board Palm Beach Symphony as the executive director in 2014, the answer rolls effortlessly off his tongue. It was, without a doubt, when Boston Brass joined the symphony to perform works from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and Bernstein's *West Side Story* at the Flagler Museum on a gorgeous starlit evening.

No, wait. That's not it. Actually it was when the 88-piece orchestra played its debut rendition of Mahler's Symphony No. 5 at Kravis Center for the Performing Arts. Or maybe it was its joint performance of Elgar's Cello Concerto with cellist Zuill Bailey. Or, when Broadway actress and vocalist Avery Sommers performed with the Palm Beach Symphony at the 2018 Free Community Concert on the Waterfront in West Palm Beach. Or welcoming guest conductor Robert Moody and teenage piano prodigy Maxim Lando.

It turns out, choosing just one favorite proves to be an impossible task. They all speak to how intensely the organization has crescendoed in its 45 years as Palm Beach's cultural gem—from a part-time symphony heard only in private homes to a full-time orchestra performing in 2,000-seat concert halls. More importantly, they all indicate where the symphony is headed.

McClymont was born and raised in South Florida; has an inherent

adoration for classical music; and spent years in the hospitality, nonprofit and finance arenas. He was a natural fit to build on the symphony's achievements and take it to new heights, expanding its reach from Palm Beach and welcoming world-renowned guest performers as well as increasing fundraising revenue from zero to \$700,000. This effort captured the sponsorship attention of powerhouse brands like Gucci and Lamborghini, and engaged in efforts that not only strengthened relationships with existing members and supporters, but also reaches wider audiences. "To create a more memorable experience, we have to establish standards of excellence when it comes to customer service," McClymont says. "And that customer experience has to exceed expectations each and every time we engage with a patron."

With internationally renowned artistic and music director Maestro Ramón Tebar at the creative helm of season programming, the orchestra has delighted ears with compositions from the likes of Rachmaninov, Stravinsky, Gershwin, Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert and string quartet pieces by William Grant Still. It's also branched out beyond the realm of classical music into other genres. Think lighter classics, Broadway musicals, film scores and popular melodies—even an unexpected collaboration with Vanilla Ice. This season, the symphony welcomes pianist Leon Fleisher, the Master Chorale of South Florida and young Korean violinist SooBeen Lee. It plans to expand its masterworks programming to include more concerts; increase its music education and community outreach; and explore not only the potential to present a series of chamber music concerts overseas, but also the idea of finding a permanent concert hall here in Palm Beach. McClymont says it will continue to offer intimate performances to members in the homes of major donors as an elegant throwback to the baroque period, when musicians performed for patrons of the arts. It is classical music after all.