PITTSBURGH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MANFRED HONECK, MUSIC DIRECTOR

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Digital Assets



Jason Yoder
Principal Percussion



Maria Semes
Viola

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Announces Jason Yoder as Principal Percussion and Maria Semes as Section Viola

PITTSBURGH – Today, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PSO) announced the appointments of **Jason Yoder as Principal Percussion**, beginning in September 2026, and **Maria Semes to the viola section**, who joined the orchestra in June 2026.

A native of Squirrel Hill and graduate of Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12 and Carnegie Mellon University, Yoder returns home from Seoul, South Korea, where he has served as Principal Percussion and Assistant Timpani of the KBS Symphony Orchestra since 2023. He fills the chair previously held by Andrew Reamer, who retired in September 2024. Yoder will hold the Albert H. Eckert Chair.

Equally at home in percussion and timpani, Yoder has served as acting Principal Timpani of the KBS Symphony Orchestra and Principal Timpani of the Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra, and has held percussion positions with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Illinois Symphony Orchestra, and Civic Orchestra of Chicago. As a guest, he has performed with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Virginia Symphony Orchestra, and Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern. He has appeared as a soloist with the Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra and the National Repertory Orchestra, performed a duet with Yo-Yo Ma at the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh, and performed with Alisa Weilerstein for

Classical Music Appreciation Day at the White House. Yoder also holds degrees from Temple University and DePaul University, and was awarded the Charles Owen Fellowship at the Aspen Music Festival and School.

Semes comes to the PSO from the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and previously performed with the Louisville Orchestra. Her first season with the orchestra began on the road: she performed on the PSO's 2026 European Tour, which included the orchestra's appearance at the Salzburg Festival. She holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School, where she studied with Naoko Tanaka and David Chan, and performs each summer at the Grand Teton Music Festival. She has also participated in the Tanglewood Music Center and the Aspen Music Festival and School. In coming to the PSO she joins her husband, Associate Principal Trumpet Conrad Jones, and her sister, Carolyn Semes, a member of the second violin section.

This weekend's BNY Classics concerts mark the final concerts for Anne Martindale Williams, who joined the Symphony in 1976 and became Principal Cello in 1979. Joen Vasquez, Assistant Principal Viola has retired effective with the start of the season and will be honored on stage this weekend as well. It was also announced that Philip Pandolfi, bassoon, will retire from the PSO on March 1, 2027. Auditions for the viola and bassoon positions are now open for applications, and Principal Cello auditions will be announced in late fall.

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