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CONTACT:

Ashley Mirakian, ashley.mirakian@atlantasymphony.org

Camille McClain, camille.mcclain@atlantasymphony.org

ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES NEW MUSICIANS

ATLANTA – The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) welcomes five new musicians for the 2026/27 season.

The musicians joining the ASO this season are:

- Elmer Churampi, Principal Trumpet
- Craig Mulcahy, Principal Trombone
- Sam Blair, second bassoon
- Gabriella McClellan, cello
- Chance Gompert, bass trombone

“We are delighted to welcome these new members to the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra,” said Jennifer Barlament, Executive Director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. “The ASO is an exceptional ensemble, attracting the best musicians from around the world. Together with their colleagues, these new musicians will help define the sound of Atlanta and help us continue to grow our impact in the community.”

About the New Musicians: [Artists | Atlanta Symphony Orchestra \(aso.org\)](https://www.aso.org/artists)

Elmer Churampi, Principal Trumpet

A native of Lima, Peru, Elmer Churampi began playing the trumpet when he was four years old with his father, who is also a trumpet player who plays in street bands. Elmer was invited to be part of the National Youth Orchestra of Peru when he was seven and performed as a soloist three times with them. When he was 10 years old, he was accepted into the National Conservatory of Music of Peru. He was invited to be part of the professional orchestra of the Conservatory of Peru as a second trumpet when he was 12. At the age of 13, he played concerts with the Orquesta de Iose Reyes, the Opera Orchestra from Peru.

In 2010, he attended the Interlochen Summer Camp with a full scholarship, playing first trumpet in every concert. Elmer was accepted to the Interlochen Arts Academy with a full scholarship and studied for three years with Ken Larson. During that time, Elmer won competitions including Young Artist in 2013, Jack Kent Cooke Award in 2013 and the Interlochen Young Artist Award in 2013. Elmer was also interviewed and featured on the radio program From the Top.

He was invited by Mark Gould and Jen Lindemann to perform at the Banff Center of Arts in the brass festival in 2013. During his freshman year, Elmer won the concerto competition at New England Conservatory as well as the MTNA brass competition in Chicago. In 2015 and 2016, Elmer won first place in the National Trumpet Competition in the undergraduate division. He also won the Young Artist brass award in Texas.

In 2017, Elmer was the soloist for the Boston Philharmonic for a tour of South America. Recently, Elmer was the winner of the Boston Pops Concerto Competition. He graduated from the New England Conservatory with a bachelor's degree in trumpet performance under the instruction of Tom Rolfs and Ben Wright, Principal and second Trumpet of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Elmer has played with the Canadian Brass, Boston Pops, the Boston Symphony and the Chicago Symphony.

Craig Mulcahy, Principal Trombone

Born in Denver, Colorado, Craig Mulcahy is the newly appointed Principal Trombone of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

Mulcahy previously served as Principal Trombone of the National Symphony Orchestra, an ensemble he joined in 2005, initially as Second Trombone. Before his tenure with the NSO, he served as Principal Trombone of the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra from 1999 to 2005. His earlier orchestral career included positions as Second Trombone with the Buffalo Philharmonic and Principal Trombone of the Tulsa Philharmonic.

As a guest principal, Craig has performed across the country with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and Houston Symphony. He maintains an active international schedule as a soloist and clinician, giving masterclasses and performances worldwide.

Mulcahy completed his undergraduate studies in music performance at the University of Northern Colorado before earning an Advanced Certificate from The Juilliard School. Outside of music, he is a private pilot and an avid hiker, cyclist, and backpacker.

Samuel Blair, Second Bassoon

Sam Blair was born and raised in Frisco, TX, Sam received bassoon performance degrees from Southern Methodist University and the Yale School of Music. He then

became a bassoon fellow with the New World Symphony in Miami, FL, where he played for almost two seasons before winning a position with the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra for contra and utility bassoon in 2012. In this role, he worked with touring ballet companies from all over the world, as well as the Washington National Opera Orchestra.

During his time in Washington D.C., Sam was a frequent substitute musician with the National Symphony Orchestra, playing two one-year contracts with the orchestra from 2022-24. He has also been a guest musician with the Malaysian Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, and Los Angeles Philharmonic.

His primary teachers include Wilfred Roberts, former principal bassoon of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and Frank Morelli. Under their guidance, Sam was able to attend many summer festivals, including the National Repertory Orchestra, Round Top Festival Institute, Sarasota Music Festival, Spoleto Festival in Charleston, S.C., and the Verbier Festival in Switzerland.

During his time at the New World Symphony, Sam performed with the YouTube Symphony in Sydney, Australia and considers this to be one of the best experiences of his personal and professional life.

Gabriella McClellan, cello (one-year appointment)

Gabriella McClellan has performed internationally as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral cellist.

In 2025, she won the Colorado College Summer Music Festival Concerto Competition and was awarded first prize in the Atlanta Music Club Scholarship Competition. She was also a semifinalist in the 11th International Popper Cello Competition and prize winner in the 2025 Atlanta Festival Academy Young Artist Competition.

In 2024, she was a finalist in the PRISMA Festival Concerto Competition. She also won both the MasterWorks Festival Concerto Competition and the University of Georgia Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition in 2023.

As an orchestral musician, McClellan has served as principal cellist in the Colorado College Summer Music Festival Orchestra, the PRISMA Festival Orchestra, the Masterworks Festival Orchestra, the ARCO Chamber Orchestra and the University of Georgia Symphony Orchestra.

McClellan is a member of the Festival Mozaic 2026 Young Artist Quartet. An active chamber musician, she has collaborated with distinguished artists including Itamar Zorman, Amy Yang, Melissa Reardon, Bion Tsang, and Scott Yoo.

McClellan holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Georgia, where she studied as a scholarship student with David Starkweather and James Kim. She has served as an aural skills teaching assistant, as well as a faculty member of the University of Georgia Community Music School.

Chance Gompert, bass trombone

A native of Seattle, Washington, Chance Gompert previously served as Acting Bass Trombone with the ASO from 2023 to 2024 and as Bass Trombone with the Nashville Symphony from 2024 to 2026.

Other orchestras that he has performed with include the Boston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. He has also toured California with the ASO and performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

Chance can be heard on the ASO's most recent albums as well as on numerous soundtracks for video games and movies recorded in the Nashville area.

Chance earned a B.M. and a Performer's Certificate from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. His primary teachers include Bill Park, Denson Paul Pollard, and James Markey. Outside of his work with the ASO, Chance enjoys baking desserts and indoor rock climbing.

About the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Under the leadership of Music Director Nathalie Stutzmann, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) offers live performances, media initiatives, and learning programs that unite, educate and enrich our community through the engaging and transformative power of orchestral music experiences. The ASO engages the diverse international community of our city, bringing people together in harmony—including our youngest citizens, with extensive opportunities for youth and families to experience the power of live orchestra music.

The Orchestra's range and depth are featured in more than 150 concerts each year, including the flagship Delta Classical Series, Movies in Concert, Family Concerts, Coca-Cola Holiday series, and many community and education concerts. In addition, the ASO presents many vibrant, wide-ranging events and artists through its Delta Atlanta Symphony Hall Live presentations. The ASO also performs regularly with the ASO Chorus, originally founded by Robert Shaw, and currently under the direction of Norman Mackenzie. The Chorus is featured on nine of the ASO's 27 GRAMMY® Award-winning recordings.

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