

Laura Jackson

conductor

Biography 2025-26

“an expressive, demonstrative conductor” – *myajc.com*

“Laura Jackson... is paving a new direction for up-and-coming female conductors and composers through her artistry, leadership, and creative community engagement.” – *Forbes*

“She led with authority...” – *Houston Chronicle*

An eloquent and articulate artist on and off the podium renowned for her dynamic leadership, energetic performances, and progressive vision, American conductor Laura Jackson is praised for her innovation, passion, and commitment to the continued growth of the symphonic repertoire and expanding music’s impact within communities. Having served as the fourth Music Director and Conductor of the Reno Philharmonic Orchestra (Reno Phil) since 2009, her contract has been unanimously renewed through the end of 2028-2029 season, ensuring that diverse, compelling repertoire, and creative community programming will continue up through the organization’s 60th anniversary. A 21st century conductor at home with repertoire from every era, Jackson is recognized for her championing of new music, her creativity with commissions, and her commitment to mentoring and encouraging the next generation of musicians, composers and women conductors. A frequent guest conductor, she has led distinguished ensembles across the United States, Canada, France, Poland, Czech Republic, Algeria, and China, and her relationships with orchestras continue to expand.

Highlights of Maestra Jackson’s 2025-26 season with the Reno Philharmonic include Tennison Watts and Timothy McAllister performing John Williams’ *Escapades*, Zhou Tian’s *Transcend*, commissioned by the Reno Phil to mark the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, the annual AVA Ballet collaboration of *The Nutcracker*, Stravinsky’s Firebird Suite, the symphony debut of violinist Nathan Amaral, (first prize winner of the 2024 Sphinx Competition), with Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto, and a newly commissioned work by Michelle Isaac, written to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Guest engagements include Madison Symphony Orchestra.

A popular guest conductor, Maestra Jackson has guested with numerous orchestras nationwide, including the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Symphony and Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Ravinia conducting a “Tchaikovsky Spectacular” concert with cellist Zlatomir Fung. Other American ensembles include the Buffalo, Detroit, Alabama, San Antonio, Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Phoenix, Orlando, North Carolina, Hawaii, New World, Sacramento, Toledo, Charlottesville, Hartford, Evansville, Berkely, Cape Cod, Richmond, and Flint symphony orchestras, the Eugene, Orlando, South Carolina and National Orchestral Institute philharmonics and Mimesis Ensemble (New York), and Musiqua (Houston), to name a few.

International guest engagements include NOSPR-Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, France’s Orchestre symphonique de Bretagne-Rennes, Canada’s Ontario Philharmonic, Toronto, Windsor, and Winnipeg symphony orchestras, the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Czech Republic’s Prague Summer Nights Festival. Jackson is the first American to conduct the National Symphony Orchestra of Algeria by invitation of the U.S. State Department.

A champion of living composers, Laura Jackson created and launched the Reno Philharmonic’s Composer in Residence initiative, and has commissioned and presented seven world premieres with the orchestra to date: Reno Phil Youth Orchestra alumnus Paul Novak’s *longing is an aviary* (2023); Jimmy López Bellido’s *Symphony No. 3: Altered Landscape* (for which Jackson approached and collaborated with the Nevada Museum of Art, using its signature photographic collection “Altered Landscape” as

inspiration for the commission, and the Nevada chapter of The Nature Conservancy to raise awareness of environmental stewardship in Nevada, which resulted in a feature in *Forbes Magazine* (2020)); Monica Houghton's *Respectfully yours*, (2020); Grammy nominated Zhou Tian's *Transcend* (2019) (in which Reno Phil led a 13-orchestra consortium); Carlos Simon's orchestral version of *Amen!* (2019) (a Reno Philharmonic led commission in partnership with the Gateways Music Festival and conductor Michael Morgan along with the American Composers Orchestra); Michael Gandolfi's *Chesapeake Summer of 1814* (2013); and Sean Shepherd's *Silvery Rills* and *Desert Garden* (both 2011). With the Reno Phil, Jackson has led over 50 Reno Phil premieres and multiple Western premieres, including Jonathan Leshnoff's *Guitar Concerto* (2014) (co-commissioned in partnership with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (Lead), Nashville Symphony Orchestra, and Orquesta Sinfonica del Principado de Asturias).

Under Jackson's leadership, the Reno Philharmonic has expanded its community and education programs and initiatives to include the Composers In Residence, Conduct Us, movies with live orchestra performances, and the annual Play for a Day – in which amateur community musicians perform side-by-side in concert with Reno Phil musicians. Since Jackson became Music Director, the youth orchestras have expanded from three to five ensembles, and the organization introduced live streaming of concerts beginning in 2020.

Committed to mentoring the up-and-coming musicians of tomorrow, Laura Jackson strives to create opportunities to mentor women conductors, and to encourage young composers and musicians. Currently in her third season as an official mentor to emerging women conductors across the globe in the Taki-Alsop Foundation's Fellowship program, Jackson with Reno Phil, also partners with the Davidson Institute in Reno Nevada to feature their instrumental fellows in concert.

In the recording arena, Jackson has recorded Michael Daugherty's *Time Cycle* with the Bournemouth Symphony with Marin Alsop and Mei-Ann Chen for Naxos. With Marc Rovetti and the Tanglewood Festival Orchestra, she recorded August Reed Thomas's violin concerto *Spirit Musings*.

Prior to joining the Reno Philharmonic, Maestra Jackson served as the first female Assistant Conductor / League of American Orchestras Conducting Fellow of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (2004–2007). Additional fellowships include Tanglewood Music Center's Seiji Ozawa Conducting Fellowship and an Aspen Music Festival Conducting Fellowship. She was selected as one of six conductors for the 2009 Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview, where she conducted the Nashville Symphony. Jackson holds a DMA and Masters in Orchestral Conducting from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. As an undergraduate, she studied violin and conducting at Indiana University.

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