

Kellen Gray, Conductor

The 2018-19 season marks Kellen Gray's first as Assistant Conductor at the Charleston Symphony Orchestra of South Carolina and Music Director of the Charleston Symphony Youth Orchestra. Kellen has earned a reputation as a versatile and imaginative conductor through his enthusiasm for traditional, experimental, and integrative multimedia art programs.

Previously, Kellen served as Project Inclusion Freeman Conducting Fellow, and later, Assistant Conductor at Chicago Sinfonietta, under Mei-Ann Chen, while fulfilling duties as Associate Conductor of the Columbus Ballet (GA) from 2016-18. Before leaving Chicago, Kellen made his Chicago Symphony Center debut, which Jacob Davis of Chicago's Picture This Post, described as, "conducted with a laser-like focus that allowed the entire orchestra to seem to become one organism."

From 2014-16, Kellen was Assistant Conductor at the Valdosta Symphony Orchestra, under Howard Hsu and Music Director of the Valdosta Symphony Youth Orchestra of Georgia. Also in 2016, he was one of eight Conducting Fellows at Eastern Music Festival where he studied with Gerard Schwarz, Grant Cooper, and Jose-Luis Novo. Of his North Carolina debut at Eastern Music Festival, Peter Perret of the Classical Voice of North Carolina referred to Kellen as an "...imposing young Georgian with gestures so smooth and polished they're almost choreography in themselves." At a 2017 festival celebrating the 100th birthday of Georgia-born author, Carson McCullers, Kellen was awarded the honor of guest-conducting a collaboration of the music of David Diamond and the premiere of Karen Allen's debut film, "A Tree, A Rock, A Cloud."

Kellen is a frequent cover conductor at the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra for both subscription series' and Pops programs. As a part of his commitment to music education, since 2015, Kellen has been a frequent Guest Conductor for the GISA (Georgia Independent Schools Association) All-Select Honors Orchestra, and often volunteered time to work with public school orchestras in Georgia. During the holidays of 2014 and 2015, he was cover conductor for the Hollywood Concert Orchestra during their tours of China.

Kellen received his earliest musical training from the public school system of South Carolina in his hometown of Rock Hill. He earned an undergraduate degree in Violin Performance and an Artist's Diploma in Orchestral Conducting from the Schwob School of Music at Columbus State University (GA), and his Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting from Valdosta State University.

Recently, Kellen spoke on a panel discussion at the 2018 League of American Orchestras conference on the value of leadership pipelines in classical music based on diversity, inclusion, and equity.

In addition to his duties in Charleston, SC, Kellen is looking forward to a busy year of guest-conducting, lecturing, recording projects, and becoming a greater presence in the Charleston-area community.