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BPO extends contract with Fernanda Lastra with promotion to Assistant Conductor, Diversity Fellow



Photo by Lydia Gallagher

The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra is delighted to announce the contract extension and promotion of **Fernanda Lastra**, who was hired as BPO Conductor Diversity Fellow in September 2022. In recognition of her dedication to outstanding performances, passion for community engagement, and talent on the podium, Lastra has been named Assistant Conductor to complement her role of Diversity Fellow, with her initial two-year contract extended through the 2024-25 concert season.

In this position, Lastra's responsibilities will expand to include conducting more mainstage performances in support of the orchestra's broad range of programming and community initiatives, in addition to her preexisting duties as cover conductor for Music Director JoAnn Falletta, main conductor for the BPO Kids, Music for Youth, and Summer concert series, and BPO Diversity Council member.

Lastra's extended role of Diversity Fellow underscores the BPO's commitment to fostering a more inclusive and diverse environment for musical experiences. She will

continue to be actively involved in the orchestra's music education and community engagement programs, ensuring representation of all communities through her concert commentary and programming.

BPO President & Executive Director Daniel Hart remarked, "The BPO musicians, staff, JoAnn, and I have been thrilled with Fernanda's work within our community since she joined us last concert season. We're very happy to keep her with us for another year and share her talents with broader audiences on the Kleinhans stage."

Lastra expressed: "Throughout my career, I've poured my heart and soul into nurturing deep connections between music and people, bringing communities together through the power of music. The opportunity to continue this incredible journey with the BPO as Assistant Conductor fills me with immense honor and excitement, as this organization perfectly embodies my values and personal mission. Collaborating with such exceptional musicians and dedicated staff to create amazing musical experiences for people in Western New York and beyond is an absolute privilege."

About Fernanda Lastra

Born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, Fernanda Lastra is a passionate and creative conductor interested in a wide variety of repertoire, including symphonic, contemporary, and operatic works. She is a dedicated advocate for Latin American composers, particularly those from her home country.

In 2022, Lastra was appointed as Conductor Diversity Fellow at the BPO under the mentorship of JoAnn Falletta, and was promoted to Assistant Conductor, Diversity Fellow in 2023. In this role, she fulfills various conducting responsibilities, including cover conductor, main conductor for the BPO Kids and Music for Youth concert series, and frequent conductor of other series performances. She actively contributes to the BPO's artistic team, music education committee, and Diversity Council.

Lastra has led professional and youth orchestras across the U.S., Argentina, and Brazil. Her previous engagements include conducting the National Orchestra of Argentine Music "Juan de Dios Filiberto" at the CCK National Auditorium in Buenos Aires, and the production of Missy Mazzoli's opera, *Song from the Uproar*, in Pittsburgh. She has also made significant contributions as an educator, serving as the Director of Orchestras at Augustana College (IL) and as conductor for the Central Pennsylvania Youth Orchestra, among other engagements. As an entrepreneur, Lastra founded a training ensemble in Argentina in 2013, serving as its artistic director for four years.

Trained as a pianist, Lastra holds two bachelor's degrees from La Plata University in Argentina, a master's degree from Penn State University, and a doctoral degree from the University of Iowa. She believes in the power of music to create meaningful connections with one another.

Find images [here](#). For additional information, interviews, photos, or video, contact Simone Viola at sviola@bpo.org or (716) 242-7814.

To learn more about the BPO's storied history, distinguished conductors and world-class musicians, and commitment to IDEA, visit the [Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra](#).



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