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Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Welcomes New Cellists

**Ethan Blake and Simon Housner to join BPO in September;
Cellist Robbie Hausmann to retire after 43-year tenure**



Ethan Blake



Simon Housner

The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra is pleased to announce two new members of their cello section, starting in September with the 2025-26 concert season. Ethan Blake will fill the BPO's new role of Assistant Principal Cello, and Simon Housner will join as a section cellist to fill the seat of Robbie Hausmann, who retires this summer after a distinguished 43-year tenure. The appointments of Blake and Housner follow a rigorous three-day audition process involving nearly 50 candidates, led by a committee of BPO musicians and Music Director JoAnn Falletta.

Ethan Blake recently earned a Master of Music from the Eastman School of Music and holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Colorado Boulder. He has performed with the Rochester Philharmonic, Colorado Symphony, Alabama Symphony, and served as Assistant Principal Cello of the Boulder Philharmonic. As a soloist, Blake has appeared with orchestras including the West Texas Symphony, Arapahoe Philharmonic, and the Pikes Peak Philharmonic, and has won top honors at the Eastman Cello Concerto Competition, the University of Colorado Honors Competition, and the T. Gordon Parks Concerto Competition (Arapahoe). He has held fellowships at the Colorado College

Summer Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival and School, and the Accademia Musicale Chigiana (Siena, Italy), and has also taught at El Sistema Colorado, Parlando School of the Arts (Boulder), Eastman Community Music School, and the ROCmusic Collaborative (Rochester).

Blake shared, "It's been a dream of mine for as long as I can remember to be able to perform with an orchestra like the BPO. To join this amazing ensemble as a full-time member is an immense honor and privilege. I can't wait to move to Buffalo and get started!"

Simon Housner recently earned a Master of Music from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, with a Bachelor of Music and minor in philosophy from Oberlin College and Conservatory. He has performed with the Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet, and Symphony in C, and performed as principal cello with the Sarasota Music Festival Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, and the Shepherd School Symphony. Housner has toured internationally with orchestral and chamber groups, and has appeared at festivals including the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Academy, Manchester Music Festival, and the Aspen Music Festival. He founded the Sacred Heart Concert Series at Oberlin to connect its musicians to the community, and has coached for the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra, Symphony in C Youth Orchestra, and Rice University's Campanile Orchestra. His guest appearances include DACAMERA of Houston, WQXR's Young Artists Showcase, and Apollo Chamber Players.

"I am ecstatic to be joining the BPO!" Housner said. "It is an incredible honor to be offered a position in this GRAMMY Award-winning orchestra well known for its stellar recordings, and I am thrilled to play under the baton of legendary Maestra JoAnn Falletta after working with her at Music Academy of the West in 2023. I am truly grateful to begin a new life chapter under her leadership while meeting the warm and welcoming BPO family."

On July 23, the BPO will honor the career and contributions of retiring cellist Robbie Hausmann at their Patron Appreciation Concert, featuring him as a soloist in Ernest Bloch's *Prayer*.

"Robbie has been a treasured colleague and an anchor of our cello section for over four decades. His artistry and character have left an indelible mark on the BPO, and we will miss him greatly," JoAnn Falletta remarked. "As we prepare to turn the page, we're excited to welcome Ethan and Simon, whose musicianship and expressive playing stood out during the audition process. I look forward to working with them as they add their talents to our orchestra."

View Blake's full biography at bpo.org/ethan-blake, and Housner's full biography at bpo.org/simon-housner. For additional information, interviews, or images, contact Simone Viola at sviola@bpo.org.

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



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