

Music Director Candidate Questions: Stilian Kirov

1. *What instrument do you play?*

I play the piano and the oboe. I also took some violin lessons when I was living in Paris but I think this was just a bother for my poor neighbors.

2. *At what point did you know you wanted to conduct?*

Probably when I was five. There are some memories of me conducting some favorite tunes I would hear on the TV. But seriously, I fell in love with this craft when I was in high school. I had great teachers who would also allow me to conduct the school orchestra and chorus when I was maybe fifteen years old. This really nurtured my passion to pursue this profession. Since early age, I was in love with the beautiful colors of the orchestra and I developed a great appreciation for the opportunity to build excitement with fellow musicians.

3. *Who is your favorite composer right now?*

The one I am conducting tonight.

4. *Is there one great work that is on your "bucket list" to conduct?*

My bucket list is pretty extensive but just to mention a few: Rachmaninov - The Bells, Ives's Fourth Symphony, and Schönberg's Gurre-Lieder. But there are many more... I would say everything that is artistically compelling.

5. *What are you looking forward to doing when you visit Kalamazoo?*

Of course making music with the wonderful KSO. I also would like to have the opportunity to meet the community and feel the vibe of the city. In my opinion, every city has its own character and as potential new music director, I would like to embrace and learn about the community as much as I can. Our mission as artists is not only to be ambassadors for the arts, but also to serve our audiences and make sure that everyone feels welcome in our concert hall. Music is a necessity and it is our duty to make it heard as far as possible.

6. *What are your hobbies/interests outside of the music world?*

I love being with my family. My son is three years old now and we are spending a lot of time doing fun activities like building trains, going to the beach, jumping while singing songs, playing soccer and many more. Our family also loves nature so we try to enjoy it as much as we can. This gives me so much inspiration and happiness that also helps me be a better artist.

7. *If I got in your car and turned on the radio right now, what would I hear?*

Probably the jazz station.

8. *If you could have lunch with any composer, dead or alive, who would you choose and why?*

Can I choose two? Mozart and Bernstein! They both seem not only to be genius composers but also really great people to have a party with.

9. *What role do you see symphony orchestras fulfilling in today's arts and entertainment world?*

I think music is not only entertainment but a necessity. The orchestra should be a cultural hub in the city. It should look for opportunities to make everyone feel welcome in the concert hall, make collaborations with other arts organizations, and make sure that every kid in the city has an exposure to art. I think music makes you see the world from a higher perspective, and having a great orchestra helps the city grow culturally and economically.

10. *How would you define your style on the podium?*

It's hard to speak about myself; I prefer to let others describe me. I want to think that I help the music come alive, and that I serve my purpose to inspire the orchestra and for us all together to bring inspiration to the audiences.

11. *What is your favorite part of working with professional orchestras?*

Working with orchestras is an inspirational process because we build something extraordinary together. The process is fascinating as we have to find the right emotions, the right structure, the right interpretation and direction for the music to have the emotional impact we are striving for. Music is something you cannot touch or see but you feel the energy, and finding the right energy together is very inspiring.

12. *What is your favorite food?*

I have many, so this is a hard question. To be honest, I am quite simple in this regard. I love good healthy food - so lots of organic greens, avocados, tomatoes, peppers, sweet potatoes, and occasionally a nice NY strip steak or salmon. I like everything that is cooked with inspiration and great quality ingredients.