



It is a bittersweet feeling that I announce my departure from Florida Symphony Youth Orchestras as its Music Director and Symphonic Orchestra Conductor. It has been an extreme honor, and one of my life's greatest joys, to have returned to an organization that gave me so much as a young musician. Coming back, I aimed to help affect positive change and develop a vision focused on the cultivation of an environment that provides a safe space for talented young musicians to explore music and humanity through shared experience.

My extraordinary colleagues (both artistic and administrative) have worked alongside me in support of the shared mission and vision of FSYO at every moment. They have shared in the miraculous acts of awe-inspiring humanity and helped usher in an exciting chapter of consideration, possibility, and hope within and for FSYO. They continue to devote every fiber of their being, but especially their care and love, to every aspect of this organization.

Every student, whose kindness and talent has graced my life over the last several years, leaves an indelible imprint on my soul. I have witnessed their perseverance and dedication to music, which continues to offer the greatest hope for our future as humans and appreciators of art. Every moment spent in our time bringing music to life has been personal oil for my lamp, which burns particularly brighter because of each of you. Without equivocation, I love all of you young people for giving my life purpose and for sharing in some magical moments with me. I look forward to knowing how you, current students, continue to transform the world - I will be looking out for your meaningful contributions to humanity as we get older. Do not hesitate to reach out to me or share with me your upcoming performances or life events until we are afforded the chance to run into each in the future.

I am particularly proud of the several initiatives and projects begun and nurtured since my tenure with this important organization picked up after two decades away. The future of FSYO is brighter than ever before.

To the inspiring and devoted Executive Director and Friend, Abigail Tran, I sincerely thank you for providing the best of collaborative environments. The incubus of kindness, openness, and appreciation for our shared family is nothing short of amazing. In a short time, you met challenges and continue to do everything in your power to bring FSYO onward and upward. This is no surprise for anyone who understands how life-changing FSYO was and is for us then, now, and for those to come.

Because of each of you, in the FSYO family, in this community, and those working in support of this work, I am a better conductor, teacher, and person. I thank you for every moment you shared with me, and I will always consider FSYO (and those a part of it) my extended family.

This work I do (and the people who I get to do it with) remains my life's greatest purpose. Thank you.

In adoration and appreciation for sharing your time and gifts with me (and hoping that I am afforded the opportunity to share in your lives in the future).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James O. Welsch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "W".

Dr. James O. Welsch