

American conductor **Michael Avagliano** is obsessed with redefining what's possible for an orchestra. His focus on ambitious local collaborations and active community involvement have led to significant audience growth in both the Summit Symphony Orchestra and the Somerset Symphony Orchestra, all of which he serves on as music director. Largely inspired to become a conductor after a chance meeting with Leonard Bernstein, Avagliano continues to draw inspiration from the legendary maestro's twin legacies: exuberant musicianship and a devotion to broadening classical music audiences.

Constantly striving to meet new standards for musical excellence, Avagliano has twice led the Somerset Symphony to be named runner-up for the annual American Prize in Orchestral Performance; as a guest conductor, he has led over 15 orchestras across the United States and Europe. He also helmed the 50-year organization's first ever opera and ballet productions, and orchestrated a slew of new community partnerships with local organizations and schools, incorporating the artistic talents of young dancers and visual artists into performances he leads.

When not leading orchestras, Mr. Avagliano turns his attention to mentoring the next generation of young conductors, imparting skills needed both on the podium and off. In 2020, he created the online workshop, "Conducting the Interview" with Henry Fogel, former president of the League of American Orchestras, giving young conductors significant career-building skills in applying for positions as conductor and music director.

He resides in New Jersey with his wife, the violinist Evelyn Estava.