

Dear RCO Family,

It is hard to believe that I am writing this letter as my two years as Assistant Conductor Fellow with the Reno Chamber Orchestra come to an end. Looking back, these past two years feel almost like a dream, and they have been among the most meaningful and memorable experiences of both my personal and professional life.

During my fellowship, I was deeply grateful for the opportunity to conduct Reno Chamber Orchestra subscription concerts, thanks to the trust and generosity of Maestro Kuo, the musicians, and the entire RCO family. Those experiences challenged me to grow beyond my comfort zone, not only in score preparation and musical interpretation, but also in learning how to adjust in the moment, live fully in the music, and communicate more honestly and confidently as a conductor. The thoughtful feedback and encouragement I received from Maestro Kuo and the musicians helped me develop both confidence in myself and a stronger sense of identity as an artist.

Often, assistant conductors are expected to always be ready to step in when needed, but opportunities to actually stand in front of an ensemble and gain meaningful conducting experience can be rare. That is why I have been especially thankful for Maestro Kuo's mentorship and generosity. Even during rehearsals, he consistently created opportunities for me to learn, grow, and conduct whenever possible. His willingness to invest in young conductors is something I will always carry with me.

The path of conducting can sometimes feel uncertain. There is no single roadmap and no one correct way to build a career, and at times it can feel easy to lose direction. During these two years with the RCO, however, the guidance and support I received from Maestro Kuo helped me discover my own artistic path and strengthened my confidence in the values I want to uphold as a musician and leader. I am also especially grateful to our Executive Director, Amy, whose support extended far beyond the professional world. As a young conductor and also as a new mother, I will always appreciate the kindness, advice, and encouragement she offered me through many different stages of life and while preparing for my next chapter.

In the United States, assistant conducting opportunities are limited, and even when they exist, few programs feel as special as the Reno Chamber Orchestra. What makes the RCO unique is its sense of family and the way people genuinely support and care for one another. Being nurtured in this environment for two years reminded me that music-making is never only about music itself. It is about the people who create it together, and the relationships, trust, and humanity behind every performance. To me, that is one of the most beautiful parts of this art form.

One of the greatest gifts of this fellowship was the opportunity to connect with the Reno community beyond the concert hall. Through visits with middle and high school students, pre-concert talks, conversations with patrons and donors, speaking at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, participating in library concerts for children, and many other community events, I was able to experience firsthand the meaningful role the RCO plays in people's lives. I am grateful for every moment of connection and for being included in so many projects throughout Reno. These experiences inspired me to continue serving communities through music in my own future work as a conductor, following the example that the RCO has set so beautifully.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the RCO staff members who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make every concert and project possible, and to the musicians who always welcomed and supported me so warmly while creating extraordinary music together. And of course, thank you to all of the audience members, donors, and patrons whose love and support for the Reno Chamber Orchestra make everything possible.

In Korean, the word “안녕 (annyeong)” means both “hello” and “goodbye.” I love that the same word can hold both meeting and parting because it reminds us that goodbyes are never entirely final. So I want to say “안녕” to all of you, not as a farewell, but as a promise that our paths will cross again someday.

Thank you for supporting the Reno Chamber Orchestra, its musicians, its assistant conductor program, and all of the work it does within the community. It has been an honor to be part of this family.

Annyeong, and until we meet again.

With gratitude,
Yoona Jeong