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Diane Wittry, Artistic Director and Conductor



DIANE WITTRY is an international conductor known for her innovative programming and engaging audience rapport. Ms. Wittry has led performances by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Buffalo Philharmonic and the symphony orchestras of Milwaukee, San Diego, Houston, and New Jersey among others. She has also conducted numerous concerts in Japan, China, Slovakia, Canada, Ukraine, Poland, Russia, and Italy.

In 2014, Diane Wittry was appointed as the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Ridgewood Symphony, NJ. In addition, she also serves as the Music Director and Conductor of the Allentown Symphony, PA, and Artistic Director of the International Cultural Exchange Program with the Sarajevo Philharmonic in Bosnia.

In the past, Ms. Wittry has been the Music Director and Conductor of the Norwalk Symphony (CT), and Music Director and Conductor of The Symphony of Southeast Texas (TX) where her artistic leadership garnered national attention.

Diane Wittry has been the subject of profiles in *The New York Times* and *Newsweek*, and she was honored as the Outstanding Alumnus (2013) of the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. Ms. Wittry also received the national Helen M. Thomson Award from the League of American Orchestras, the Women of Excellence Award in Beaumont, Texas, and the Arts Ovation Award and the Woman of Distinction Award from Allentown, Pennsylvania. She is one of only three Americans to be named - in recognition of her leadership in the arts and humanities - the recipient of the prestigious Fiorino Doro Award from the City of Vinci, Italy.

Diane Wittry is the author of *Beyond the Baton*, a book focusing on artistic leadership for regional orchestra conductors, and her new book, *Baton Basics*, was recently released by Oxford University Press.

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Guest Artists



Noah Baetge

Noah Baetge starts off his 2015-16 season with a bang, performing Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and Collegiate Choral for Caramoor Summer Music Festival's 75th opening night, which is immediately followed by singing the Chevalier in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*, also with at Caramoor. Then performing his biggest role with the Metropolitan Opera to date, singing Walther von der Vogelweide in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. He closes his season by performing Marico in Verdi's *Il Trovatore*.

A native of the Pacific Northwest, Mr. Baetge spent two years at the Seattle Opera Young Artist Program (2006-08) performing Fenton in *Falstaff* and Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi*. During his stay with the Pittsburgh Opera's Resident Artist Program (2009-10) he performed the Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* and Remendado in *Carmen*. Mr. Baetge has also participated in the Music Academy of the West and Caramoor Music summer programs, performing roles such as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, and the Herald in the Paris version of *Don Carlos*.

On the concert stage, Mr. Baetge has performed Bruckner's *Te Deum* with the Spoleto Festival USA and St Cecilia Chorus & Orchestra, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Peninsula Music Festival and Allentown Symphony, Mozart's *Requiem* with Syracuse Symphoria and Stamford Symphony, and Verdi's *Requiem* with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, Fort Wayne Symphony, Erie Philharmonic, Monmouth Civic Chorus, St. Cecilia Chorus & Orchestra (his Carnegie hall debut), and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

A 2009 Grant Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Nation Council Auditions, Mr Baetge has taken the first prize and the Upcoming Wagner Singer prize in the Gerda Lissner Foundation Vocal Competition, Kirsten Flagstad top prize in the George London Foundation, as well as prizes from the Liederkraz Foundation, Licia Albanese-Puccini Foundation, and the Zachary Foundation.

Noah Baetge received his Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Pacific Lutheran University where he was awarded the Mary Baker Russell Music Scholarship for merit. Mr. Baetge graduated from The Juilliard School in 2012 with an Artist Diploma in Opera Studies, where he received the Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshanna Foundation.

In the fall of 1990, John Palatucci became music director of the Orpheus Club Men's Chorus, Ridgewood's oldest civic musical organization. His efforts to uphold and enhance the OCMC's proud history, tradition, and reputation include performing Johannes Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody* with the Adelphi Chamber Orchestra,

Continued on Page 23

Program Notes

By Edmund A. Moderacki

Saturday, February 27, 2016

Academic Festival Overture

Johannes Brahms

(1833-1897)

Johannes Brahms did not follow the conservatory route taken by most Nineteenth century composers. He honed his craft as a young man while working as a pianist. Despite his lack of formal academic training, some academic institutions wished to honor him with honorary degrees. The first was Cambridge in England when they offered a honorary doctorate in 1876 provided that he attend the ceremony. Brahms was deathly afraid of water journeys, and declined the offer. The next offer came from the University of Breslau in Germany that did not require Brahms to attend a ceremony. Brahms offered his thanks via a post card, but was then informed by conductor Bernard Scholz that the honorary degree required that he respond with a new composition to be premiered in Breslau.

Brahms may have been amused that the degree described that he was “the foremost composer of serious music in Germany today” and set to work on a concert overture while he summered at the Spa at Bad Ischl.

The composer conducted the orchestra at the premiere at Breslau on January 4, 1881. He incorporated four student drinking songs into the masterfully crafted overture. The songs that undoubtedly delighted the younger members of the audience included “We Have Built a Stately House”, “The Father of our Country”, “What Comes from There on High”, sung at freshman initiation rituals, and the best know today, “Gaudeamus igitur” (Therefore let us be merry when we are young). It was immediately popular and has remainder an orchestra staple to this day.

Rinaldo

Johannes Brahms

(1833-1897)

Brahms started the composition of his cantata Rinaldo in 1863, intending to enter it into competition for a contest conducted by the Aachen Leidertafel, a choral society. The composer did not complete the work until 1868, and finally premiered the work on February 28, 1869. Scored for orchestra, male chorus and tenor soloist, it was well received at the time, but has not remained as popular as his Alto Rhapsody or his German Requiem.

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The text was inspired by Goethe's *Rinaldo* written in 1811. Goethe in turn based his literary work on an 16th century epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*) by Torquato Tasso (1544 – 1595). The poem published in 1581 celebrated the First Crusade lead by Godfrey of Bouillon. The episode that was set by several composers concerns the seduction of the knight Rinaldo by the sorceress Armida. The same episode was used by Handel in his opera *Rinaldo* in 1711, and by Rossini in his opera *Armida* in 1817.

Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 73

Johannes Brahms

(1833-1897)

Brahms had worked on his Symphony No. 1 from 1855 until 1876, and when it was premiered on November 4, 1876, it was the first major, non-programmatic symphony by any composer in almost twenty-five years. The critical acclaim that the symphony received at its premiere led to Brahms being proclaimed as the natural successor to Beethoven. Encouraged by its reception, the composer spent the following summer at his retreat in the Carpathian Mountains working on his new symphony and completed it at Baden Baden in the autumn. The Symphony No. 2 conducted by Hans Richter, received its premiere on December 30, 1877 in Vienna to equal acclaim.

Brahms composed his symphony in the classic four movements. The fast third movement is not in the customary minuet-trio or scherzo-trio format.

Rather it is a series of alternate contrasting themes. Many period critics referred to the Second Symphony as “The Pastorale” in an attempt to connect Brahms’ symphonic works to Beethoven’s. The symphony is not apparently as programmatic as Beethoven’s *Pastorale* Symphony. The presence or absence of a program has made no difference in its enduring appeal to concert audiences.

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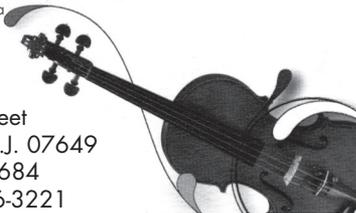
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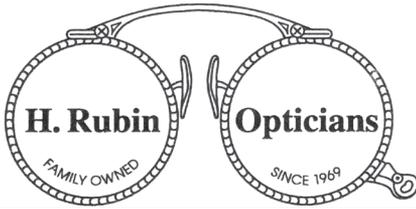
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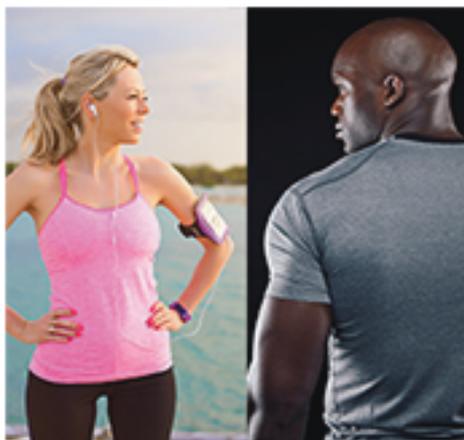
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Randall Thompson's *The Testament of Freedom* and Giuseppe Verdi's *Hymn to the Nations* with the Orchestra of Saint Peter-by-the-Sea, as well as several commissions of new music for male chorus which are dedicated to him and the OCMC including a new work, "Hymn of Triumph," composed by Dr. Thomas Juneau, to be premiered at this spring's 2015 OCMC concerts. Since 1993 the OCMC and the RCB have collaborated on Howard Hanson's *Song of Democracy*, Ottorino Respighi's *Laud to the Nativity*, Aaron Copland's *Old American Songs* and the revised finale to Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser*. This coming May, he and the OCMC will take part with the RCB in a performance of excerpts from the Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band arranged for male chorus and concert band.

In the spring of 2005, Mr. Palatucci led the OCMC in its Lincoln Center debut, performing at the Lincoln Center Library with the Palisades Virtuosi chamber ensemble. The OCMC became a charter member of the New Jersey Choral Consortium in 2008 where he sat on the board of directors and served as vice president. In January 2009 he was honored by his colleagues at Montclair State University, being selected as speaker at the annual Dr. Jack Sacher Memorial Lecture. Also in 2009, during the OCMC's centennial year, he led a Ridgewood community choral festival which culminated in a performance with orchestra and soloist Ron Levy of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*. In 2011, his setting of Percy Grainger's *Sussex Mummers' Christmas Carol* for male chorus and piano was published by the International Percy Grainger Society. With Mr. Levy, he prepared the OCMC and its sister ensemble, the Ridgewood Choral, for a performance of the *Beethoven Choral Fantasy* with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. Under the auspices of the NJCC, with the OCMC and the Rutgers University Glee Club, in 2012 he helped organize and oversee an inaugural state-wide men's chorus workshop and concert at Rutgers University. A 2013 debut performance at Carnegie Recital Hall with members of the OCMC included the NYC premieres of Peter Findley's "Ubi caritas" and Godfrey Schroth's "Orpheus with his lute."

For more information about Mr. Palatucci, please visit the Orpheus Club Men's Chorus web site: <http://ridgewoodorpheusclub.org/ocmc/the-director/>



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FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

THE RIDGEWOOD YMCA

Our Cause Defines Us

We know that lasting personal and social change comes about when we all work together. That's why, at the Ridgewood Y, strengthening community is our cause. Every day, we work side-by-side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

Our Good Works Programs

The Ridgewood Y meets community needs through its Good Works programs. Thanks to the generous support of our members, the Ridgewood Y is able to offer most of its Good Works programs free of charge or for only modest fees. Examples of our programs include **Rainbows**, a free peer support and grief recovery program for children who have suffered a painful family loss and **Living Strong, Living Well**, a 12 week strength and conditioning program for cancer patients and survivors.



Our Impact is Felt Every Day

With a mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all, our impact is felt when an individual makes a healthy choice, when a mentor inspires a child and when a community comes together for the common good.

The Ridgewood YMCA - Making Lives Better

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