

THE ST. CECILIA CHORUS APPOINTS MARK SHAPIRO MUSIC DIRECTOR



Mark Shapiro



The St. Cecilia Chorus and Orchestra at Carnegie Hall

New York, NY— The Board of Directors of The St. Cecilia Chorus announced today the appointment of conductor Mark Shapiro as the Chorus's Music Director, effective July 1, 2011. Shapiro succeeds St. Cecilia's previous Music Director David Randolph, who died in 2010 after leading the chorus for 45 years. The announcement concludes a year-long search by the Chorus.

As newly appointed Music Director, Shapiro will collaborate with the Board of Directors to shape the artistic and operational direction of The St. Cecilia Chorus and Orchestra. Board President Rob Ginsberg said "Mark Shapiro is the ideal choice to continue our established tradition of presenting the classical choral-orchestral repertoire. His well-established programming expertise will help us to develop new audiences, which is so important to us as we continue our second century as a part of the New York choral community."

Mark Shapiro's first season, programmed prior to his appointment, will include two concerts at Carnegie Hall: Handel's *Messiah* on December 9, 2011 and Verdi's *Requiem* on April 21, 2012; as well as a performance of Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* and Schubert's *Stabat Mater* at the Church of the Heavenly Rest on February 26, 2012.

"I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to build on the grand legacy of the peerless David Randolph," said Mark Shapiro. "It will be a treat to work creatively with the delightful singers and board of St. Cecilia, and to embark together on a sparkling new chapter in the history of one of New York's most treasured choral organizations."

Auditions for The St. Cecilia Chorus will take place throughout the year. Interested candidates are invited to visit www.stceciliachorus.org or call the Chorus office at (646) 638-2535.

MARK SHAPIRO

Versatile conductor Mark Shapiro is one of a handful of artistic leaders in North America to have won a prestigious ASCAP Programming Award four times. His work has been praised by the New York Times for its “virtuosity and assurance,” which also remarked on its “uncommon polish,” and characterized by the New Jersey Star-Ledger as “erudite and far-reaching.”

Maestro Shapiro has enjoyed twenty seasons as Artistic Director of Cantori New York, whom he has conducted in national, local and world premieres by an impressive roster of international composers. Cantori and Maestro Shapiro have released four commercial recordings; their recording of Frank Martin’s oratorio *Le vin herbé* was an *Opera News* Editor’s Choice. Cantori has been presented by Gotham Early Music Scene, Music at the Anthology, Chelsea Music Festival, American Opera Projects and Teatro Grattacielo at venues including Zankel Hall, Le Poisson Rouge, Avery Fisher Hall and the Rose Theater at Lincoln Center.

Maestro Shapiro has spent two decades at the helm of the Monmouth Civic Chorus in Red Bank, NJ. Their collaborations have encompassed standard works for chorus and orchestra; they have ventured further afield for Stravinsky’s *Les Noces* and Szymanowski’s *Stabat Mater*, and offered noted revivals of the *Mass in D* by Dame Ethel Smyth and Peter Mennin’s *Symphony no. 4*.

Frequently in demand as a choral consultant, Maestro Shapiro was invited to Austin by the Grammy-nominated ensemble Conspirare to present workshops and conduct Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man*. At the 2010 Choralies festival in Vaison-la-Romaine, France, he led a version of Handel’s *Saul* in the town’s 5000-seat Roman amphitheater.

Maestro Shapiro conducts operas and orchestral concerts as well as choruses. In 2010 he conducted Poulenc’s comic opera *Les mamelles de Tirésias* at the Juilliard School, Bizet’s *Les pêcheurs de perles* with the Opera Company of Middlebury (VT), and the staged premiere of Ben Yarmolinsky’s opera *Clarence and Anita* with Underworld Opera in New York.

As an orchestral conductor, Maestro Shapiro led the Bridgeport Symphony in a concert featuring Metropolitan Opera soprano Harolyn Blackwell. He is principal guest conductor of the chamber orchestra Nova Sinfonia in Halifax, Nova Scotia, whom he has led in performances of symphonies and concertos by Beethoven, Dvorak, and Schubert, among others.

Maestro Shapiro has been heard on PBS, conducting the soundtrack for Ric Burns’s special on New York City, as well as on radio stations WQXR (most recently on Kent Tritle’s program *The Choral Mix*) and WNYC, and Sirius Satellite Radio. His recording of Michael Dellaira’s opera *Chéri*, featuring Marni Nixon, was released on Albany Records.

Maestro Shapiro maintains a sideline as a narrator for orchestral performances. He also enjoys lecturing on Music and Mind, and has taught courses in this subject at the New School in New York and at the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University, where he is Assistant Professor of Music.

THE ST. CECILIA CHORUS

The St. Cecilia Chorus is a widely recognized, highly regarded mixed chorus devoted to performing great choral music. With a membership of 150 dedicated singers, the Chorus has contributed to New York’s musical life for over 100 years since its founding in 1906. Each season, The St. Cecilia Chorus offers at least three major concerts, two of which are performed at Carnegie Hall with professional orchestra and soloists. The repertoire is drawn from four centuries of challenging choral masterpieces. The name of the Chorus references the patron saint of music; however, over the entirety of the Chorus’s history, it has been completely secular and independent.

The Chorus was led by David Randolph, renowned conductor, author, radio host, and concert commentator, from 1965 until his death in 2010. In those 45 years, the Chorus grew in size as Mr.

Randolph established an uncompromising standard of musical excellence. In addition to its now traditional twice-yearly Carnegie Hall concerts, some of which were broadcast live on WNYC Radio, the Chorus has appeared in other venues, including Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall.

In July 2011, conductor Mark Shapiro was appointed Music Director and will begin leading the Chorus in its 2011-2012 season. The St. Cecilia Chorus is a not-for-profit organization with a Board of Directors elected from the singing membership, and is supported by dues, ticket sales, and gifts.

For Press Tickets Contact:

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