

PRELUDE!

A NOTE FROM THE MAESTRO!

I would like to boast about our conducting staff for a moment.

Maria Sensi Sellner, Levi Hammer, and Douglas Bayda bring a range of skills to our organization. And with those skills, they do a world of good. All three are featured prominently in the final months of our 2012 programming.

Maria conducts the Poulenc *Gloria* on the third Classics Series concert. She is also the recipient of a terrific national honor: the 2012 American Prize in Conducting, Opera Division, for her work in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* at the Carnegie Mellon School of Music. This summer, Maria returned as guest conductor with the Boston Opera Collaborative, leading a stellar account of Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*. I had the pleasure of hearing the dress rehearsal, and was proud to tell everyone there of Maria's fine work in Akron. Also in Northeast Ohio recently, she led an outstanding account of Verdi's *La Traviata* at the Solon Center for the Arts.



Levi Hammer brought the house down with his performance of three works by Gershwin on our October Classics Series concert. Many were astonished to learn on that night what an extraordinary pianist Levi is. In July, I had the opportunity to witness first-hand his conducting of *A Little Night Music*, as Lorin Maazel's right-hand man at the Castleton Festival in Virginia. He led a first-rate performance, conducting with confidence, and all the nuance that Sondheim's sophisticated score demands. His work with the Akron Youth Symphony, with his students at The University of Akron, and as a chamber musician collaborating with many of Akron's leading musicians has made him a one-of-a-kind contributor to the musical life of this community.

This fall, we also welcomed to the Symphony's conducting staff an extraordinary musician, Douglas Bayda. Doug has just begun his work as the conductor of the Akron Youth Philharmonic. He brings to the task energy, ingenuity, and the know-how of a seasoned professional. Doug has served for five years as director of orchestras at Miller South School for the Performing and Visual Arts. He is an enthusiastic, creative, and highly motivated teacher, and is one of this area's most outstanding educators. We are proud to welcome him to our team.

Music is a people art. Orchestras are successful to the extent they connect to all the citizens of their communities. I am pleased and honored to work alongside these three remarkable young musicians, who have the passion and the skills to make that happen. Let's enjoy them while we can.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Wilkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.