ABOUT MATTHEW HALLS

One of today’s leading young conductors, Matthew Halls was named Oregon Bach Festival Artistic Director designate August 24, 2011 and became the Festival’s Artistic Director July 15, 2013.

The word “versatile” is often applied to musicians; in the case of the British conductor Matthew Halls, it is particularly well deserved. Although he first came to prominence as a keyboard player and early music conductor, Halls, still in his thirties, is now better known for his dynamic and intelligent work with major symphony orchestras and opera companies, and for his probing and vibrant interpretations of music of all periods.

In 2013, he made his Toronto Symphony debut, performing a critically acclaimed interpretation of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, a work he calls “the heart and soul of the modern symphonic tradition.” He first led Washington, D.C.’s National Symphony in 2011, with performances of Handel’s Messiah returning the following season to lead works by Ravel, Dutilleux and Vaughan Williams. Other recent and upcoming North American engagements include appearances with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Ottawa’s National Arts Centre Orchestra, and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, in repertoire from Bach and Handel to Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Rachmaninov, Tippett and Kernis.

In July 2011 he appeared for the first time at the Oregon Bach Festival. Such was the impact of his performances here, he was immediately asked to succeed Helmuth Rilling as artistic director. He has since returned annually and has now assumed the leadership post.

European orchestras are equally eager to welcome Halls to their podiums, including the BBC Scottish Symphony, Bergen Philharmonic, Bremen Philharmonic, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Iceland Symphony, Northern Sinfonia, RTE National Symphony, Tonkünstler Orchestra NÖ, and regular appearances in Austria and on tour with the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra. He is also invited to Australia to conduct the Melbourne Symphony and West Australian Symphony Orchestras.

In the opera house, Halls has appeared with companies such as the Handelfestspiele Halle and the Salzburg Landestheater. His debut performances of Handel’s Rinaldo with Central City Opera Colorado were so well received that he was immediately asked to conduct not only Handel’s Amadigi but also Puccini’s Madama Butterfly. His operatic repertoire covers Renaissance, Baroque and Classical works, but also extends to later works, with a particular focus on Britten. His associations with both the Netherlands Opera and Bayerische Staatsoper have included productions of Verdi’s Luisa Miller, Britten’s Peter Grimes and Bellini’s Norma. In spring 2014 he leads Handel’s Ariodante at the Aalto-Musiktheater Essen.

Halls is represented on disc with Handel’s Parnasso in Festa, winner of the Stanley Sadie Handel Recording Prize, released by Hyperion. On Linn Records, he has recorded a set of four Bach Harpsichord Concertos conducted from the keyboard, and Bach’s Easter and Ascension oratorios, as well as award-winning discs of Purcell’s Sonatas in Three and Four Parts.

Matthew Halls was educated at Oxford University and subsequently taught at the University for five years. Following his time in Oxford, he has held positions as Artistic Director of the King’s Consort and the Retrospect Ensemble, which he founded in 2009. Passionately committed to education and working with young musicians, he has taught regularly at summer schools and courses.

For more listings of reviews, recordings and concert dates, please see hazardchase.co.uk

The Artistic Director position is endowed by J. Peter and Mary Ann Moore.

Photo by Eric Richmond
Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing (1963)  
Hebrew Howells  
(1892-1983)

Hymn to St. Cecilia (1942)  
Benjamin Britten  
(1913-1976)

Heather Bachelder and Carolyn Quick, soprano  
Alyse Jamieson, mezzo-soprano  
Riley Forrest, tenor  
Alex Johnson, bass  
Chamber Choir

INTERMISSION

Mass in C minor, K.427 (417a)  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)

Kyrie (Andante moderato)  
Alishia Piper, soprano

Gloria (Allegro vivace)  
Heather Bachelder, soprano

Laudamus te (Allegro aperto)  
Kathleen Murphy-Geiss and Alishia Piper, soprano

Qui tollis (Largo)  
Heather Holmquest, soprano

Quoniam (Allegro)  
Kathleen Murphy-Geiss and Alishia Piper, soprano

Sponsored in memory of Dorothy Bergquist

Dorothy Bergquist was a beloved singer and teacher. She came to Eugene in 1964 when her husband Peter took a position with the School of Music. She was the soprano soloist in the first Eugene Symphony performance in 1965 and in the ESO’s 1978 performance of Mahler’s Resurrection Symphony at Mac Court. Dorothy was active in the School of Music as a soloist with Royce Saltzman’s Schola Cantorum, a member of Hal Owen’s Consort, and was among the first soloists with the Oregon Bach Festival. She performed in recital with Jim Miller and was a memorable participant in School of Music April Fool’s concerts. Dorothy made one entrance feet-first, when she sang “That Old Black Magic” standing on her head on top of a grand piano as it rose from the basement to the stage level. She brought a clear-eyed, playful attention to students in her private studio, regional colleges, and in her choirs that cultivated the joy of singing in so many.
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus


Sanctus

And was made incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.

who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven.

God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by

one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in

one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds.

God of light, of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by

whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven.

And was made incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.

Credo

For thou only art the Lord, thou only art holy, thou only art most high.

And was made incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.

Hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right

hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For Thou only art the Lord, Thou only art holy, Thou only art most high.

Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, in the Glory of the Father, Amen.

Invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds.

God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by

whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven.

And was made incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.

Sanctus


Benedictus

Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

University of Oregon Chamber Orchestra

Zeke Fetrow, assistant conductor

VIOLIN I

Samuel Taylor, principal

Christopher Stark, asst. concertmaster

Bashar Matti

Elyse Hudson

Holly Roberts

Michael Welland

VIOLIN II

Christopher Ives, principal

Lesslie Nuñez

Emily Schoen

Mary Evans

Amara Sperber

FLUTE

Sarah Benton, principal

Avery Pratt

OBOE

Laura Goben, principal

Megan Zochart

BASASSOON

Raquel Vargas Ramirez, principal

Katharine Cummings

HORN

Eric Grunkemeyer, principal

Kelsi McGlothin

TRUMPET

Casey Riley, principal

Steven Sharp

TROMBONE

John Church, alto

Seth Arnold, tenor

Stephen Young, bass

TIMPANI

Adam Dunson

VIOLA

Amnissa Olsen, principal

Hannah Breyer

Avery Pratt

CELLO

Kathryn Brunhaver, principal

Natalie Parker

Pecos Singer

Jennifer Jordan

BASS

Milo Fultz, principal

Kyle Sanborn

Rhys Gates

HYMN TO ST. CECILIA

While scholars debate the true existence of St. Cecilia, poets and composers have created tributes to

the patron saint of music for hundreds of years. Benjamin Britten, by happenstance born on St. Cecilia’s

day 100 years ago (November 22, 1913), completed his Hymn to St. Cecilia (based on poetry by his

friend W.H.Auden) in 1942, during the second World War. An avowed pacifist living in a time of

conflict, Britten’s music expresses the dual imagery found throughout Auden’s poem: innocence versus

evil; conformity versus non-conformity (perhaps an allusion to Britten living an openly gay lifestyle in the

1940s); and the destruction of life versus the restorative power of music. (Sharon J. Paul)

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing

(Prudentius: 348-413)

Take him, earth, for cherishing,
To thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee,
Noble in its ruin.

Not though ancient time decaying
Wear away these bones to sand,
Ashes that a man might measure
In the hollow of his hand:

Once was this a spirit’s dwelling,
By the breath of God created.
High the heart that here was beating,
Christ the prince of all its living.

Not though wandering winds and idle
Drifting through the empty sky,
Scatter dust was nerve and sinew,
Is it given to man to die.

Guard him well, the dead I give thee,
Not unmindful of His creature
Shall He ask it: He who made it
Symbol of His mystery.

Once again the shining road
Leads to ample Paradise;
Open are the woods again
That the Serpent lost for men.

Comes the hour God hath appointed
To fulfill the hope of men,
Then must thou, in very fashion,
What I give, return again.

Take, O take him, mighty Leader,
Take again thy servant’s soul.
Grave his name, and pour the fragrant
Balm upon the icy stone.

Hymn to St. Cecilia text cont’d next page...
Hymn to St. Cecilia (W.H. Auden: 1907-1973)

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

I

In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Pouréd forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean’s margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer.
The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

II

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
Where Hope within the altogether strange
From every outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a best
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restored their fallen day; O re-arrange.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

III

O eye whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Playing among the ruined languages,
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,
Is drawn across our trembling violin.
O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

Mass in C minor, K.427 (1783)

Mozart’s Mass in C Minor originated as a votive offering for his new wife, Constanze. He intended to perform it when he and his bride visited Salzburg together for the first time in the summer of 1783. The mass was not yet finished, however, and it must have been filled out with other music at the performance on August 25. Mozart never did complete the work, and it stands as a magnificent torso of what would have been the most imposing mass between J. S. Bach and Beethoven. It was planned as a succession of separate choruses, arias and ensembles, like Bach’s Mass in B Minor. Mozart completed only the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Benedictus. In the Credo only the voices and principal instrumental parts were written in full; the rest of the Credo and the Agnus Dei were never composed. (Today’s performance features a completion by scholar Helmut Eder.)

The Mass in C Minor far surpasses anything Mozart had previously written for the church in expressive depth and technical complexity. It sometimes retains the operatic style found in his earlier church music, notably in the soprano solo, “Et incarnatus est,” which was written for Constanze herself to sing. But Mozart’s new acquaintance with Bach and Handel in the early 1780s is clearly mirrored in the monumental choruses in four, five, and even eight parts. The elaborate counterpoint in these pieces also comes into play in the ensembles for solo voices. The orchestra is substantial, but always functions as an accompaniment, except in the “Et incarnatus est,” where three woodwinds join the soprano with elaborate obbligatos. It is a great pity that Mozart did not complete the mass, but even unfinished, it stands with Mozart’s Requiem and Haydn’s late masses as one of the chief monuments of church music in the classic period. (Peter Bergquist)