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## **“Beethoven’s Message” Closes Arapahoe Philharmonic’s 2014-2015 Season**

*Including*

**World Premiere by Edgar Girtain, AP Composer-in-Residence**

**Beethoven’s monumental Ninth Symphony with the Cherry Creek Chorale**

Denver – The Arapahoe Philharmonic (AP) finishes its 2014-2015 season with “Beethoven’s Message,” a program featuring an AP commission by composer Edgar Girtain and Ludwig van Beethoven’s iconic Symphony No. 9. The performance will be held Friday, May 15, 2015, at 7:30 p.m., in Mission Hills Church, 620 SouthPark Drive, Littleton, CO 80120.

Beethoven’s “Choral” Symphony is one of the most recognizable and frequently played symphonies in the orchestral repertoire. Finished in 1824, his last completed symphony was the first example of a composer of his stature using the human voice. Beethoven was almost fully deaf by this time, composing perhaps the best known symphony in the history of classical music while hearing it only in his mind. The work was received as positively at its premiere as it is today.

The symphony calls for the largest orchestral forces of all of Beethoven’s symphonies, as well as four vocal soloists and full chorus. He set selections for the vocalists from Friedrich Schiller’s text *Ode an die Freude*, or “Ode to Joy,” as a celebration of the brotherhood and unity of all mankind, a message that traversed the centuries and resonates even now.

The Arapahoe Philharmonic welcomes the Cherry Creek Chorale and soprano Tiffany Blake, mezzo-soprano Sarah Barber, tenor Jason Baldwin and baritone Steven Taylor for this exciting performance.

*The End of Humanism*, a new work commissioned by the Arapahoe Philharmonic from composer Edgar Girtain, opens the concert. In describing the work, Girtain writes:

*“I started this piece with the idea that when a composer writes, he tries to create music that speaks to his time. He also tries to capture the spirit of his age for the audience of the future.”*

*So now I write a piece that will be played with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. I thought about how Beethoven lived in a time that held humanity in high esteem; how his age was defined by optimism, a structured society and peace. But I find our world today to be very different. For better or worse, the world has moved past Beethoven's humanism. And so this is a piece to contrast the Ninth Symphony. Here I am painting a world I see around me—a place filled with noise, distraction and an endlessly shifting sense of order. There are moments of beauty, but they are ephemeral. Shreds of thought from the past cling where they can, but in the end no one can predict the direction in which we are headed. In the end of humanism, a new ideology begins to take shape."*

Girtain was named the Arapahoe Philharmonic's Composer-in-Residence through the 2015-2016 season after winning the first Vincent C. LaGuardia, Jr. Composition Competition. The orchestra performed his winning composition, *Isolation: Day 253* for soprano and orchestra, in November 2014, and will commission another work next year.

At 6:45 p.m. on concert night, AP Music Director Devin Patrick Hughes will be joined by Cherry Creek Chorale Music Director Brian Patrick Leatherman and composer Edgar Girtain for an exploration of the program. The talk will occur in room M12 off of the Mission Hills Church lobby.

Concert tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors (65 and over) and \$5 for students and children. Tickets may be purchased online at [www.arapahoe-phil.org](http://www.arapahoe-phil.org), by phone at 303-781-1892 and at the door the night of the concert beginning at 6:30 p.m.

#### About the Cherry Creek Chorale

The **Cherry Creek Chorale**, directed by Brian Patrick Leatherman, presents four major concerts each season in October, December, March and May, as well as an annual Showcase Concert where chorale members' talents are highlighted in individual and ensemble arrangements. The Chorale sings both a cappella and music accompanied by piano, organ, solo instruments, ensembles, or full orchestra, with repertoire including anthems, motets, masses, cantatas, opera choruses, oratorios, show tunes, folk songs, spirituals and audience sing-a-longs. The Chorale also collaborates with other adult, high school and children's choirs and ensembles. In July 2008, members of the Chorale participated in a tour of Europe that included singing at the Lucerne Choral Festival, St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna and St. Mattias Church in Budapest. [www.cherrycreekchorale.com](http://www.cherrycreekchorale.com)

#### About Brian Patrick Leatherman

Brian Patrick Leatherman has directed the Cherry Creek Chorale for 20 years. Recently retired after 30 years in the teaching profession, his students have performed at the annual conferences of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association and the Colorado Music Educators Association. He is active as a choral clinician and adjudicator and has appeared as soloist with the San Juan Symphony, National Repertory Orchestra, Colorado Springs Symphony, Arapahoe Philharmonic, Greeley Philharmonic, Aurora Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, Fort Collins Symphony, Breckenridge Music Institute Chamber Orchestra, Colorado Chorale, Columbine Chorale, Colorado Repertory Singers, Larimer Chorale, Pueblo Chorale, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Robert Shaw Festival Singers and Robert Shaw Festival Chorus. Prior director posts include the Pueblo Choral Society and Douglas County Children's Chorus. He holds BME and MM degrees from Colorado State University.

#### About Tiffany Blake

Praised by *Opera News Online* for her "...truly virtuoso performance...immaculate tone, good support and breath to spare," soprano Dr. Tiffany Blake received her DMA in Vocal Performance with a minor in Opera Stage Direction from the Eastman School of Music, where she also earned her MM and was

awarded the prestigious Performer's Certificate. Blake's operatic roles include Marguerite in *Faust*, the title role in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*, Despina in *Così fan tutte*, and Mercedes in *Carmen*, among others. Solo engagements have included appearances with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Missouri Symphony Orchestra and Opera Fort Collins. Blake has a special interest in song literature, and has given several recitals in Scotland, France, Austria and across the U.S., including a radio broadcast for Opus: Classics Live NPR in Buffalo, New York; appearances with Chicago's Arts at Large and the Odyssey Chamber Music concert series in Columbia, Missouri; and a vocal chamber music recital with Salzburg International Chamber Music Concerts. She currently serves as Associate Professor of Voice and Director of the Charles and Reta Ralph Opera Center at Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

#### About Sarah Barber

Sarah Barber, mezzo-soprano, has performed with Central City Opera, West Bay Opera, Opera Theatre of the Rockies, the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Springs Philharmonic, Colorado Music Festival, and Black Hills Symphony Orchestra, to name a few. Recent operatic appearances include the title role in *Carmen*, Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*. Her extensive concert work includes Bernstein's *Jeremiah Symphony*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, and Handel's *Messiah*. A champion of new music, Sarah recently premiered Robert Spillman's *An Emily Dickinson Notebook*, a 16-song cycle for mezzo, flute, and piano, realized the role of Harriet in Leanna Kirchoff's award-winning opera *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret*, and premiered Alexandra Eddy's one-woman chamber opera *Arion*. Sarah holds a MM degree from the University of Colorado Boulder, a BME from the University of Northern Iowa, and has won numerous awards and vocal competitions. She also tours and performs regularly with the Central City Opera Ensemble and has served on the voice faculties of CU Boulder (current), Denver School of the Arts, and Front Range Community College.

#### About Jason Baldwin

American tenor Jason Baldwin has performed with the Colorado Symphony, Greeley Philharmonic, Grand Junction Symphony, Boulder Philharmonic, Colorado Chamber Players, Littleton Symphony, Sinfonia of the West, and Cherry Creek Chorale, as well as opera companies such as Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Utah Symphony and Opera, Opera Colorado, Asheville Lyric Opera, Opera Fort Collins and Opera Theatre of the Rockies, to name but a few. Upcoming engagements include premieres with Western Plains Opera, Central City Opera and Austin Lyric Opera. A gifted concert artist, Baldwin recently performed Britten's *War Requiem* under the baton of Marin Alsop. Other concert credits include Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* and Richard Einhorn's *Voices of Light*. He earned a Master's degree in vocal performance at the University of Colorado after receiving his undergraduate degree in vocal performance from Mars Hill College, North Carolina.

#### About Steven Taylor

Currently serving as Dean of the School of Music at Colorado Christian University, baritone Steven Taylor is known to audiences throughout the Rocky Mountain region both for his beautiful, expressive singing, and his dramatic interpretations. Taylor is a graduate of the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver. He has been a guest artist/faculty member at the Vocal Arts Symposium of Colorado College and is a former member of the voice faculty at the University of Northern Colorado. His versatile singing career ranges from opera and oratorio to musical theater, gospel and jazz. Appearing with major symphonies throughout the west, he has also been seen onstage in multiple productions with Central City Opera, Opera Fort Collins, Opera Theatre of the Rockies, Boulder's Dinner Theatre, the Denver Brass, Aspen Theatre, Crested Butte Theatre and sixteen seasons with Opera Colorado. Along with his singing career, he has received acclaim as a narrator, vocal instructor, clinician, and judge.

### About Edgar Girtain

Edgar Girtain began composing orchestral music at age twelve, but did not receive any formal instruction until he attended Ithaca College in 2006, where he studied composition with Dana Wilson, Sally Lamb and briefly with Jennifer Higdon. As a trombone player, early advocates of his music came from the brass world, including John Rojak. During 2012-2013 Edgar lived in Llifén, Chile, where he taught public school English and cultivated an interest in the folk music and dance of the region. In 2014 he returned to New Jersey to complete his MA in composition at Rutgers University, where he studied with Charles Fussell, Tarik O'Regan, Bob Aldrige and briefly with Steve Mackey at Princeton. He currently resides in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

### About the Arapahoe Philharmonic

Founded in 1953, the Arapahoe Philharmonic is among the longest established, continuously operating musical resources in Colorado. After thriving under just two conductors between 1953 and 2012, T. Gordon Parks and Vincent C. LaGuardia, Jr., we celebrated our 60th anniversary in 2013-2014 with an exciting new conductor, Devin Patrick Hughes. The orchestra's musicians are primarily volunteers playing for the love of music, with a core of compensated section principals who provide technical leadership and support the excellence of performance.

Concerts in our home of Mission Hills Church in Littleton feature repertoire spanning the centuries, from the great masters to composers of the current day. The Philharmonic is invested in future generations, presenting annual children's concerts, sponsoring masterclasses and outreach to schools, as well as our three collegiate-level competitions.

### About Devin Patrick Hughes

Devin Patrick Hughes was appointed Music Director and Conductor of the Arapahoe Philharmonic in the summer of 2013. He had previously held conducting posts with the Santa Fe Youth Symphony Association, Denver Contemporary Chamber Players, Denver Philharmonic Orchestra, Denver Young Artists Orchestra and Lamont Symphony Orchestra. He is also currently Music Director of the Boulder Symphony. In 2010, Hughes was the only American selected with eleven other finalists in the Arturo Toscanini International Conducting Competition in Parma, Italy. More information may be found at [www.devinpatrickhughes.com](http://www.devinpatrickhughes.com).

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