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**MidAmerica Productions Presents the New England Symphonic Ensemble,
Visiting Artists, Conductors, and Choruses at Carnegie Hall**

- Classical and Cultural Connections

MidAmerica Productions

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Presents Works by:

Mozart, Hayes, Memley, Nickel, and Weidner

New England Symphonic Ensemble

Preston Hawes, Artistic Director

Fabrizio Da Ros, Conductor

Davide Alogna, Violinist

Giuseppe Gullotta, Pianist

Terry Russell, Conductor

Hyung Yun, Baritone

Mark Hayes, Composer

Kevin A. Memley, Conductor and Composer

Larry Nickel, Conductor and Composer

Raymond Weidner, Conductor and Composer

17 Participating National & International Choruses

At

Carnegie Hall

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Dr. Roberta E. Zlokower
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With tour de force performances tonight, MidAmerica Productions presented the second half of its 33rd Anniversary Season at Carnegie Hall. The first of three segments in the gala event was a concert by New England Symphonic Ensemble, here conducted by and accompanied by three Italian virtuoso musicians, Fabrizio Da Ros, Conductor, Davide Alogna, Violinist, and Giuseppe Gullotta, Pianist. The first of two Mozart works, "Overture to *Mitridate, Re di Ponto*, K. 87 *74a, was essentially for strings, a brief overture, precise and ravishing in acoustical depth. The cellos and violins joined for echoing passages of pathos, imbued with regality.

The concert's second purely instrumental work was Mozart's *Concerto for Violin, Piano, and Orchestra in D major*, KAnh.56/315f (New York Premiere). In 1778, Mozart visited a friend in Mannheim, Germany and wrote most of this unfinished work. It was abandoned when Mozart returned to Salzburg. Tonight we heard this music, composed when Mozart was 22, in its stunning, original form. Its heraldic opening exuded melodic nobility, with a lovely string theme and piano trills. The string theme evolves with rushing intensity, then pauses for a combined, violin-piano interlude. Mr. Alogna, on violin, created tight, sizzling phrases, while Mr. Gullotta, on piano, took turns in solo and duo musicality, both exalted and effervescent. The three movements, "Allegro", "Andantino cantabile", and "Allegretto", were courtly, regal, and filled with youthful fervor. When piano and violin blended in spotlights, the nuanced details of the instrumentations were impressive. When the orchestra and soloists expanded the experience, one could still listen to the detailed flourish of the guest artists, thanks to Carnegie Hall's exquisite acoustics.

The second segment of this first portion of the program was a concert by the New England Symphonic Ensemble, with Terry Russell, Conductor, and Hyung Yun, Baritone. They were joined by six choruses, from California, Canada, Massachusetts, and South Carolina, standing together at the rear stage. They performed Mark Hayes' recent composition, *Requiem*. The six choral segments are "Requiem", "Kyrie", "Dies Irae", "Sanctus", "Agnus Dei", "Lux Aeterna". The full orchestra was enhanced with extra timpani and chimes, and this was an outstanding presentation (as were all presentations tonight) worthy of Isaac Stern Auditorium. "Requiem" began with sumptuous tonality and yearning echoes of "requiem". The effect was spiritual, with airborne harmonies. "Kyrie" included chimes and a filmatic, tonal motif, with the male choristers highlighted at times. "Dies Irae" exuded anguish and racing violins. Mr. Yun, Baritone, was featured here, with eloquent dramatic text. Mr. Yun sang with clarity and confidence. Tuba, cymbals, harp, and bells expanded the moment. "Sanctus" was like a musical rainbow after the storm, with swirling winds and brass. The work ended with peaceful, balletic rhythms and tonality.

The Composers' Gala: Part I brought out Kevin A. Memley, Composer and Conductor, with eleven choruses standing rear stage, from Canada, Greece, California, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia. Three works by Mr. Memley were sung, "She Walks in Beauty", "O Vos Omnes", and "Count On It". The first was sung in whispering, romantic cadence, from a text by Lord Byron, "She walks in beauty, like the night...Of cloudless climes and starry skies". "O Vos Omnes" brought out the purity of the choral listening experience, as the orchestra remained backstage during this particular series of compositions. Either male or female vocalists from the eleven choruses were often showcased, making this one of the most interesting performances tonight. The text was taken from the book of "Lamentations", describing a historical event, the siege of Jerusalem. The fascinating harmonies were also exquisite. "Count On It" is sung as a children's counting rhyme, with rounds, overlapping harmonies, and a sense of wit, most unusual in the choral reverence of the evening.

The Composers' Gala: Part II brought out Larry Nickel, Composer and Conductor, as well as a return to the stage of the New England Symphonic Ensemble, in full regalia, to accompany the eleven choruses. Four excerpts from M. Nickel's *Requiem for Peace* included "Fratres in Unum", "Long Black Arm", "Bugles Sang", and "Dulce et Decorum". The excerpts were performed sequentially, with lyricism, vibrancy, and hints of Bernstein motifs. When the bugles opened with "taps", there were ensuing hints of Copland, ending in choral and instrumental fusion. A drum roll was followed by imploding voices, with brassy, atonal flourishes from the orchestra. The finale included marching military rhythms and the drum sticks clicked together before they produced percussive flashes. An a cappella phrase ended off-key. The text included Psalm 133 in Latin and three poems of war by Wilfred Owen.

The Composers' Gala: Part III closed the evening with two choral-orchestral pieces by Composer and Conductor, Raymond Weidner, "God Be in My Head" and "Psalm 23". The first was brief, reverent, and mellow, drawn from Roman Catholic prayers. The second, the renowned twenty-third psalm, was enhanced with the lilting harp. Soft drums and string interludes expanded the repetitive, choral phrases, that continually changed tone and tempo. A violin solo echoed a second melody. Then the eleven choruses and orchestra created vocal and instrumental highlights in various duos, ensembles, and merged musicality. Kudos to all.



Fabrizio Da Ros Conducting the New England Symphonic Ensemble

Davide Alogna, Violinist

Giuseppe Gullotta, Pianist

Courtesy of www.GroupPhotos.com



**Larry Nickel Conducting the
New England Symphonic Ensemble
with Composers' Gala Choruses**
Courtesy of www.GroupPhotos.com

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