

NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC CONDUCTOR PIOTR GAJEWSKI AND SOPRANO MARLISSA HUDSON ARE AVAILABLE FOR ADVANCE INTERVIEWS.

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**National Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorale Present
Carmina Burana at Strathmore**

North Bethesda, MD, April 26, 2017 –The National Philharmonic Chorale and Orchestra and Strathmore Children’s Chorus, led by Music Director and Conductor Piotr Gajewski, perform Carl Orff’s rousing *Carmina Burana* in Strathmore’s concert hall on **Saturday, May 20 at 8 pm**. The evening, co-presented with Strathmore, also includes Tchaikovsky’s politically charged *1812 Overture* and Andreas Makris’ joyful *Alleluia*. Before the concert (at 6:45 pm), Associate Conductor Victoria Gau presents a free lecture. Tickets start at \$28 and are free for young people age 7-17 through the All Kids, All Free, All the Time program. Strathmore is located at 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to nationalphilharmonic.org or call 301.581.5100.

The late-Washington composer and violinist Andreas Makris had a close and productive association with the National Philharmonic and was a personal friend of Maestro Piotr Gajewski. His *Alleluia*, composed in 1990, presents a modern setting of the traditional medieval chant, in which the word “Alleluia” (an expression of jubilation) is often repeated. Next on the program is Tchaikovsky’s famous *1812 Overture* (with chorus), which was composed to celebrate the Russian defeat of the Napoleonic army. It is best known for its climactic finale of cannon fire, ringing chimes and brass. The *1812 Overture* is one of Tchaikovsky’s most popular works, in addition to his ballet scores for *Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*.

The program closes with Orff’s secular cantata *Carmina Burana*, arguably the best known musical work of the 20th century. The work is a scenic cantata composed in 1935-36, based on 24 poems from the medieval collection *Carmina Burana*. It features one of

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the most versatile musical pieces in the entire Western canon: the opening section, *O Fortuna*, featured in a multitude of soundtracks for movies, advertisements, video games and sports events.

"The National Philharmonic displays commitment, elegance and precision that add up to some of the most gorgeous orchestral playing this listener has heard lately, from ensembles resident or visiting," writes *The Washington Post*. "Gajewski's impeccable technique sets him apart from most of the local competition."

Vocalists:

Marlissa Hudson (soprano) received her B.A. in music and sociology from Duke University and her Master of Music (voice) from the Peabody Conservatory. While a student, she performed such roles as the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Javotte in *Manon*, and the Second Woman in *Dido and Aeneas*. She has also performed the title role in *Treemonisha* with the Municipal Opera Company of Baltimore and the role of Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Summer Opera Theatre Company. Ms. Hudson has been a soloist with the Baltimore Symphony Pops Orchestra and the Gateway Symphony Orchestra (St. Louis). Recently, she was the soprano soloist for Masterworks Chorale's performance of Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*. She is the soprano soloist with the historic New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., and is scheduled to appear as Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* with the Municipal Opera Company of Baltimore.

Tenor Robert Baker has been featured in more than 300 performances of 43 productions with the Washington National Opera. He has also sung 10 roles with the Washington Concert Opera. Career highlights include the role of Ishmael in the world premiere of Peter Westergaard's "Moby Dick" at Princeton University (recorded for Albany Records), and his Metropolitan Opera debut in Prokofiev's "War and Peace."

He appears frequently with the National Symphony Orchestra. Baker was soloist on the Grammy Award-winning recording *Of Rage and Remembrance* by John Corigliano (BMI, 1996) and sang Triquet in the NSO's presentation of *Eugene Onegin*. He appeared in *Peter Grimes* and *Turandot* with the Washington National Opera, *Carmina Burana* with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Handel's *Messiah* with the Apollo Chorus in Chicago. Baker has sung with all the major choral organizations in Washington, D.C., starting with the Paul Hill Chorale in 1979, and continuing with Norman Scribner, Reilly Lewis, Robert Shafer, Donald McCullough, Gisele Becker, Tom Beveridge and Julian Wachner. Robert Baker is the director of performance studies at the George Washington University.

Baritone Philip Cutlip has garnered consistent critical acclaim for his performances across North America and Europe. His engagements in the 2016-17 season include *Messiah* (Minnesota Orchestra); Mozart's Mass in C minor and Bruckner's Te Deum (Oratorio Society of New York); Haydn's *The Creation* (Back Bay Chorale); and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (Portland Symphony Orchestra). Recent engagements included the title role in *Don Giovanni* (New York City's Venture Opera); the title role in *Sweeney Todd* (Tri-Cities Opera); Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* and the New York premiere of Merryman's *Jonah* (Oratorio Society of New York at Carnegie Hall); Brahms' Requiem with Winston-Salem Symphony; *Messiah* under Nicholas McGegan (Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra); and multiple roles in Weill's *The Road of Promise* (New York's Collegiate Chorale).

About Music Director and Conductor Piotr Gajewski and the National Philharmonic

Maestro Gajewski is one of a select group of American conductors equally at home in nearly all musical genres. He is the Music Director & Conductor of the National Philharmonic at the Music Center at Strathmore and a sought after guest conductor (the Principal Guest Conductor of the Silesian Philharmonic (Katowice, Poland). He was a student and disciple of the late Leonard Bernstein, and is described by *The Washington Post* as an “immensely talented and insightful conductor, whose standards, taste and sensitivity are impeccable.”

The National Philharmonic is known for performances that are “powerful,” “impeccable,” and “thrilling” (*The Washington Post*). In July 2003, the National Chamber Orchestra and Masterworks Chorus merged to create the National Philharmonic, an ensemble with more than 50 years of combined history, bringing high caliber musical performances to the Washington area. The National Philharmonic took up residence at the state-of-the-art Music Center at Strathmore upon its opening in February 2005. Now, more than 250 performances later, and with far-reaching educational programming, the National Philharmonic is the largest and most active professional orchestra based in Montgomery County.

The Philharmonic boasts a long-standing tradition of reasonably priced tickets and free admission to all young people age 7-17, assuring its place as an accessible and enriching component in Montgomery County and the greater Washington, D.C., area. As the Music Center at Strathmore’s orchestra-in-residence, the National Philharmonic showcases world-renowned guest artists in time-honored symphonic masterpieces conducted by Maestro Gajewski, with additional conducting by Associate Conductor Victoria Gau, and monumental choral masterworks under National Philharmonic Chorale Artistic Director Stan Engebretson

A free pre-concert lecture will be offered at **6:45 pm on Saturday, May 20** in the concert hall at the Music Center at Strathmore. To purchase tickets to National Philharmonic’s *Carmina Burana*, please visit nationalphilharmonic.org or call the Strathmore Ticket Office at **(301) 581-5100**. **Tickets start from \$28 and parking in the adjacent Grosvenor Metro station garage is complimentary.**

Kids 7-17 are FREE through the ALL KIDS, ALL FREE, ALL THE TIME program . ALL KIDS tickets can be purchased online, in person or by phone (301-581-5100). **The photo credit for Marlissa Hudson is Shannon Finney.**

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