



Ottawa Chamber Orchestra

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MEDIA RELEASE
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Donnie Deacon named Artistic Director of the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra

It is with mixed emotions that the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra (OCO) announces a change in leadership. We are sad to note that our Music Director and Principal Conductor for the last fourteen years, David Thies-Thompson, is stepping down. But we are buoyed up by the news that Donnie Deacon, who has ably filled in twice this season as guest conductor, has agreed to take on the position and lead the OCO in the future.

David Thies-Thompson was named Music Director and Principal Conductor in 1999. A violinist with the National Arts Centre Orchestra since 1990, David has performed as concertmaster of the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, the Thirteen Strings Chamber Orchestra and the Opera Lyra Orchestra. In 2008 he joined the viola section of the NAC Orchestra, where he continues today, also performing on both violin and viola, as a soloist and in chamber music concerts notably in the Music for a Sunday Afternoon series, New Music concerts and the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival.

Under his leadership, the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra has developed into a highly respected ensemble of semi-professional and top amateur musicians. Through his initiative, the orchestra has undertaken two important and successful programs; the Ottawa Composers Series and the OCO Concerto Competition.

In the Ottawa Composers Series, since 2008 works by Ottawa composers have been programmed in more than half of the programs the orchestra has presented, giving unequalled opportunity to local composers to have their works played. Most of these works have been world premieres, and several of the composers have had their first opportunity for the exposure of their orchestra works.

As well, since 2003 the OCO has held a competition for young performers who are preparing for a musical career. Generously supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the competition has been held every year since its inception with the exception of 2009, with its 9th rendition already in progress. Alternating between piano, strings, voice and winds, the competition has become an important stepping stone for promising Ottawa area musicians. In its final concert of the 2012/13 season, on June 8th the OCO will be presenting the finalists in this year's competition, for wind instruments, and presenting the awards to the winners.

David's comments on his retirement are: "I want you to know, truly, deeply how very proud I am of the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra! When I joined the group, it was a foundling entity. We built it, together, powered by a love for music and a burning desire to learn. It has become a fine, robust ensemble and with Donnie at the helm will further flourish in new directions."

We are enormously grateful for the dedication and commitment we have received from David Thies-Thompson over the last fourteen years, and hope that we will have opportunities to work with him again in the future as a guest conductor.

As we say goodbye to David, we are extremely pleased to be able to announce that another member of the NAC Orchestra and hugely talented violinist, Donnie Deacon, has agreed to become the next Music Director of the OCO.

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Donnie began to study the violin at age 10 and was invited to join the Royal Scottish Academy of Music at age 11. Mr. Deacon continued his studies at the Yehudi Menuhin School in London and finished his schooling at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

As soloist, Mr. Deacon has performed all over the world with such distinguished orchestras as the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, BT Scottish Ensemble, London Soloists, Concerto

Soloists of Philadelphia, Pablo de Sarasate Orchestra, and the Orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music.

This season, members of the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra had the opportunity to work with Mr. Deacon in our first two concerts, with mutual chemistry. For the orchestra, it gave us the chance to work with a new and equally talented musician in David's absence, who brought a fresh musical approach and continued the high expectations that have become the OCO's standard. For Mr. Deacon, on hiatus from the NAC, leading the orchestra was an occasion to continue to make music in a new capacity.

Referring to his upcoming tenure with the OCO, Mr. Deacon says: "It is with great excitement that I join the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra as Music Director. Working with the orchestra over the past year has given me the strength to get through a very tough time in my playing career. I look forward to planning a great season with the OCO."

We also look forward to working with Mr. Deacon over the coming seasons, and to the continued development of the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra as an excellent ensemble with an important place in the Ottawa musical community.

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