

**For Immediate Release
November 28, 2016**

**Contact: Chris Silva
845.473.5388, x101**

The BARDAVON CONTINUES

The HUDSON VALLEY PHILHARMONIC'S 2016/17 SEASON

HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*

Saturday, December 17 at 2pm, at the Bardavon

One of the most popular choral works of all time in a holiday sing-along performance

(Poughkeepsie, NY) The Bardavon is proud to continue the Hudson Valley Philharmonic's 57th season on **Saturday, December 17 at 2pm**, at the Bardavon with a special holiday performance of **Handel's *Messiah*** with guest conductor Christine Howlett

Guest vocalists from **Cappella Festiva** will join the HVP to perform George Frideric Handel's most popular choral work, for a total of 100 instrumentalists and singers on the Bardavon stage. And audience members will be invited to sing along. A pre-concert talk with Maestro Howlett and members of the orchestra will take place one hour before the concert for all ticket-holder.

This series is sponsored by Rhinebeck Bank, The Bruderhof, WMC Health/Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital, as well as through the generous support of WMHT FM 89.1 Schenectady and WRHV FM 88.7 Poughkeepsie.

Canadian conductor and soprano **Christine R. Howlett** is the Director of Choral Activities at Vassar College where she conducts the Vassar College Women's Chorus, and Vassar College Choir, and teaches music theory and voice. Her choruses have sung at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, and have toured in Italy, Turkey, Germany, Spain, and in the United States. The Vassar College Women's Chorus performed at both the National Collegiate Choral Association at Yale University in 2009 and at the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Conference in Philadelphia in 2010.

Ms. Howlett is the Artistic Director of Cappella Festiva, an auditioned choral ensemble with a 35-year history of performing in the Hudson Valley. In 2006, she co-founded the Summer Choral Festival at Vassar College and the Cappella Festiva Treble Choir, an auditioned choral ensemble for treble voices ages 10-16.

The featured soloists for Messiah include:

Mark A. Boyle is a powerful lyric tenor, at home as an oratorio soloist, recitalist, or professional chorister. He is a professional member of the Shadyside Chancel Choir, Kinnara Ensemble, and a regular soloist with the Lycoming Baroque Choir and Orchestra. Boyle is an alum of professional choral ensembles The Princeton Singers, Fuma Sacra and has been heard on WQXR in New York City with a chamber choir of choral professionals performing

the complete *Liebeslieder Walzer* of Johannes Brahms. Recent engagements have included Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, the Shepherd in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, performed at the National Seminar of the Intercollegiate Men's Choirs, Inc, Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the choirs at the University of Arkansas, and *Messiah* at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Blessed with a sumptuous voice of magnificent proportions, soprano **Rachel Rosales** is capable of delivering the fiery intensity of Verdi's most demanding works or spinning out the delicate filigree of Handel's intricate embellishments--from Early Music to Modern--and has achieved both popular and critical acclaim on national and international stages in opera, oratorio and solo recital.

A ubiquitous presence on the New York City scene, she has performed as a soloist in major New York concert venues from Lincoln Center to Carnegie Hall with New York City Opera, New York Philharmonic, American Symphony Orchestra, Musica Sacra, the Orpheus Orchestra, Sacred Music in a Sacred Space, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Oratorio Society of New York, Voices of Ascension, American Virtuosi/Baroque Opera Theatre, New York Collegium, Little Orchestra Society of New York, The New York Choral Society and the Ensemble for Early Music.

Mezzo-soprano **Sarah Nelson Craft** is a "born storyteller" whose commanding, versatile voice has caught the attention of audiences around the world. Carnegie Hall recently presented her in a solo Spotlight Recital with pianist Warren Jones, a triumphant performance that drew high praise from critics; *Opera News* described her performance as "exquisite... glowing... charming... affecting... Craft fully inhabited the music with intensity and focus." The previous season brought her to France where she participated in "The Song Continues: Paris Residency" presented by Carnegie Hall at the Opéra Bastille. Ms. Craft made her Caramoor Festival mainstage debut in 2013 as Ninetta in Verdi's *Les vêpres siciliennes* and in several concerts there for which she was noted as a "young singer to watch out for" (*taminophile.com*). She also received critical acclaim for her performance as Giunone in Handel's *Agrippina* with New York City's operamission: she "knocked this exciting aria out of the park" (*Parterre*), and her "imposing mezzo scored in Giunone's lone aria" (*Opera* magazine).

Andrew Cummings is a compelling artist consistently praised for his rich, flexible baritone and heart-wrenching expressiveness, as well as his stage presence and dramatic intensity. Hailed by the Houston Chronicle in his 2013 role debut of Verdi's *Macbeth* with Opera in the Heights: "Andrew Cummings' Macbeth...brought both hefty voice and formidable presence. Not only did he sing with power enough to make Verdi's big moments hit home, but he could also go the opposite way: by reining his voice in to a whisper or a sotto voce cry of terror, he opened a window on the terrors that seize the character's soul." 2013 also saw Mr. Cummings' South American debut in the role of Kurwenal in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* with the Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra in Colombia; his Atlanta Opera debut in Puccini's *Tosca* as Sciarrone, and as Scarpia for their student matinees and as cover for main stage performances; and his reprise of the role of Germont in Puccini's *La Traviata* for which he first received acclaim in 2008: "...Germont was in the skilled hands of Andrew Cummings, whose

strong and warm baritone caressed the ear. His singing of 'Di Provenza il mar' was sung with depth and bursts of vocal beauty that...recalled the great baritone Robert Merrill." [The Brooklyn Eagle, 3/18/08] Andrew is reprising the roles of Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca*, and the title role in Verdi's *Rigoletto* with Central Florida Lyric Opera in 2016.

Prices for Handel's *Messiah* are \$26, \$36 and \$51, depending on location. \$20 *Student Rush* tickets will be available one hour prior to the concert subject to availability.

Tickets can be purchased at:

Bardavon Box Office
35 Market Street
Poughkeepsie, NY
845.473.2072

UPAC Box Office
601 Broadway
Kingston, NY
845.339.6088

or through Ticketmaster 800.745.3000 or www.ticketmaster.com .

The Bardavon 1869 Opera House, Inc. (the Bardavon) is a New York State nonprofit corporation that owns and operates two historic theaters – the 944-seat namesake theater in Poughkeepsie and 1510-seat Ulster Performing Arts Center (UPAC) in Kingston – and the region's premiere orchestra, the Hudson Valley Philharmonic. It presents top-notch music, dance, theater, and classic films for diverse audiences in both its venues; stages free annual outdoor events in local communities; and partners with regional schools to offer unique arts-based learning experiences. The Bardavon also continues to restore and preserve its historic theaters for today's audiences and future generations to enjoy.