

Music Director Mark Russell Smith contracted through 100th anniversary

Written by Jared Johnson
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Davenport, IA - April 18, 2011 - On the heels of our exciting residency with violinist Midori and our best selling concert in over a decade, the Quad City Symphony Orchestra is pleased to announce that the Board of Trustees has elected to renew the contract for Music Director Mark Russell Smith. Since Maestro Smith's arrival in 2008, the QCSO has witnessed season ticket sales climbing more than 25%. Mark Russell Smith plays a critical role as the artistic leader of our organization and is key to maintaining this positive momentum. Maestro Smith has expressed gratitude for the privilege of serving as the orchestra's Music Director through the 100th Anniversary season, which will occur in 2014-15.

Bio:

Whether conducting contemporary masterpieces or bringing fresh insights to the symphonies of Mozart, Beethoven or Brahms, Mark Russell Smith demonstrates consummate musicianship and enthusiastic commitment to the art of music-making: qualities that have endeared him to audiences and musicians alike. In June of 2007, Smith was appointed Director of New Music Projects of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and Artistic Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Minnesota, a combined post that enabled him to bring his commitment for excellence and passion for education to new audiences. In March of 2008, he was named Music Director and Conductor of the Quad City Symphony Orchestra, effective September, 2008. As Music Director of the Richmond Symphony Orchestra, a position he held from 1999 to 2009, Smith was praised for his innovative and approachable programming and is widely credited with fostering the orchestras unprecedented artistic growth.

As a guest conductor, Smith enjoys a burgeoning international reputation that has already brought him engagements and re-engagements with prestigious American orchestras, including the St. Louis Symphony, the Houston Symphony and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. With the Minnesota Orchestra, he made his critically-acclaimed Sommerfest debut in 2006 and made his subscription series debut in March of 2009. In November 2007, he returned to his alma mater to lead the Symphony Orchestra of The Curtis Institute of Music in Verizon Hall, and will lead the orchestra on tour in China and Korea in the fall of 2011. Smith's debut at the Nomus Music Festival in Novi Sad, Serbia was met with critical and audience acclaim and led to immediate reengagement. Other recent and upcoming appearances include the Minnesota Orchestra, Santa Barbara Symphony, Brazils Orquestra Sinfonia da USP, the Hartford Symphony, Orquesta Sinfonica de Xalapa, the Phoenix Symphony, the Colorado Symphony, the Eugene Symphony, the Curtis Opera Theatre, the Jacksonville Symphony, the Berkshire Choral Festival, the Eastern Music Festival, the Tulsa Philharmonic, Orchestra London (Ontario), and the European Center for Opera and Vocal Art in Ghent, Belgium.

A champion of the music of our time, Smith led the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's Engine 408 series, working closely with living composers and added his unique perspective to enhance that orchestra's great tradition of fostering new works. He has collaborated with YoYo Ma and members of the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota in Hun Qiao (Bridge of Souls), a concert of remembrance and reconciliation featuring world premieres by Korean, Japanese, Chinese and American composers. A firm believer in the use of technical innovation to reach world-wide audiences, he debuted in 2002 with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, conducting the final round of the first Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition, where he led six concerto

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performances that were streamed live over the Internet. He has led the Minnesota Orchestra in the competition's final round since 2004 and returns each summer.

Smith grew up in a musical family in Phoenix, Arizona where he began the serious study of conducting while still in his teens. He is a graduate in cello performance of the Juilliard School, where he studied with Claus Adam, and of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied conducting with Max Rudolf and Otto-Werner Mueller. While at Curtis, Smith was first prize winner in the National Repertory Orchestra Conductors Competition, and upon graduation, was named Assistant Conductor of the Opera Company of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Singers. From 1989 to 1994, Smith served as Associate Conductor of the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra and from 1992 through 1999 served as Music Director of the Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra. His dynamic personality, creative programming, and focus on outreach helped revitalize the Springfield (MA) Symphony, where he served as Music Director from 1995 through 2000.

Smith resides in Minneapolis, where his wife, Ellen Dinwiddie Smith, is a horn player with the Minnesota Orchestra. They have two sons, Alexander and Noah.

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