

## BICAA is Celebrating the Past, Building for the Future

The Baroque on Beaver Festival of Beaver Island, MI will celebrate the tenth anniversary of outstanding leadership by both Robert Nordling, the Festival's Music Director and Principal Conductor, and Kevin Simons, Choral Director. Together they have transformed the Festival into one of the most artistically adventurous and successful chamber music series in the Midwest.

In recognition of their contributions to the Festival and its musical forces, the Board of the Beaver Island Cultural Arts Association (BICAA) has reached a multi-year agreement with both gentlemen to secure their services for the foreseeable future. At the same time, BICAA is instituting multi-year program and financial planning to ensure the Festival has the musical forces and technical support needed to meet the high level of performance quality the Island community has come to expect. Incoming Board Chair Tammy McDonough is delighted with the new arrangement. "Beaver Island is becoming a destination for cultural tourism, and the Baroque on Beaver Festival is a big part of the attraction for hundreds of visitors each summer. Robert and Kevin are essential to keeping the Festival's unique blend of outstanding music and laid-back ambience. We have many great years ahead under their leadership as well as that of our Festival Director Matthew Thomas, who does double duty as Principal Trumpet in the Festival Orchestra."

"We are delighted to recognize Music Director Robert Nordling and Choral Director Kevin Simons on their tenth anniversary seasons with Baroque on Beaver," said Thomas. "Thanks to their efforts, the festival has become recognized as one of the Midwest's finest." Indeed, Baroque's season highlights are now broadcast on National Public Radio affiliates across Michigan, the festival's musicians hail from national and international destinations, and its guest artists include some of the most sought-after names in classical music today: Garrick Ohlsson, Martha Guth, Michael Hall, James Crawford, The Lincoln Trio, and Jeeyoon Kim. "Robert has consistently raised the bar in his tenure with us," says Anne Glendon, the BICAA's outgoing Board Chair. "We are so very grateful for his talent, collaborative spirit, and musical vision."

Nordling's conducting has been characterized as "emphatic", "dramatic", and "vivid" with a "fresh and airy quality and a certain elegance" (San Francisco Chronicle). A superb communicator as well as gifted conductor, he came to Beaver Island when a change in musical direction was needed. The vision was to create a nimble musical ensemble able to excite and inspire Festival audiences with a range of repertoire from Baroque classics to contemporary gems, and Mr. Nordling has worked closely with the BICAA Board to do just that. In addition to his Beaver Island work, Robert is the founding Music Director of the Bandung (Indonesia) Philharmonic, co-founder and Artistic Director of the Shoreline Music Society (MI), and Music Director of the Lake Forest (IL) Civic Orchestra, making musical magic across Lake Michigan to the Pacific rim.

Beloved by choral groups from Oklahoma to Northern Michigan, Kevin Simons is also a church organist, solo baritone, and devoted instructor to his students at Saginaw Valley State University where he is Director of Choral Music. Mr. Thomas notes that "Kevin Simons has overseen the marvelous transformation of our Festival Chorus with an infusion of fresh voices to complement an already strong core of local singers which he has cultivated and coached. Not every chorus has the ability to perform Mozart's

*Requiem*, which we will feature during this season and release for broadcast.”

Please visit [www.baroqueonbeaver.org](http://www.baroqueonbeaver.org) for more information on the Baroque on Beaver Festival and its upcoming season, and [www.bicaa.org](http://www.bicaa.org) to learn more about the Beaver Island Cultural Arts Association and its mission.