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GERARDO EDELSTEIN, MUSIC DIRECTOR
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Holiday Concert

Friday December 19th | 7:30pm
PSU Recital Hall

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Cantores Convallis

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Our Music Director

Gerardo Edelstein

A native of Argentina, Maestro Gerardo Edelstein has conducted symphonic music, opera, and choral works in Europe, Asia, South America, and the United States. Audiences, musicians, and press alike continuously praise him for his sensitive, charismatic, and energetic performances.

This season marks his third as the music director of the Pennsylvania Chamber Orchestra. Maestro Edelstein has also been music director/conductor of the Williamsport Symphony Orchestra for fifteen years and under his leadership, the orchestra has reached new artistic heights and secured financial stability.

In addition, he is director of orchestral studies, music director of the Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestras and music director of the Penn's Woods Music Festival at the Pennsylvania State University. Under his leadership, Penn State Orchestras have toured in Spain and performed in Carnegie Hall, the Kimmel Center, and Heinz Hall. For the 50th Anniversary of the College of Arts and Architecture, Maestro Edelstein conducted Leonard Bernstein's Mass.

Edelstein was principal conductor of the Jerusalem Oratorio Choir and Orchestra in Israel, leading the orchestra in radio and television appearances and touring throughout the country. In the United States, he served as assistant conductor, associate conductor, and music advisor for the Richmond Symphony in Virginia conducting a variety of performances. Under his leadership, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) awarded the symphony first prize for innovative music programming awarded in 2000.

Other conducting engagements have brought him to Israel, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Brazil. In the United States, he has conducted the Houston Chamber Orchestra, the Houston Ballet, the San Antonio Metropolitan Ballet, the Pennsylvania Chamber Chorale and Orchestra, and the Kalamazoo, Williamsport and San Antonio symphonies.



Over an illustrious career, Maestro Edelstein has performed with internationally renowned artists including Joyce DiDonato, Rachel Barton Pine, Jorge Maria Osorio, Randy Newman, and Dianne Schurr.

Committed to the education of young musicians, Maestro Edelstein has served as clinician and guest conductor for many orchestra festivals in Virginia, Texas, Vermont, Michigan, New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. He has also collaborated with the San Antonio Symphony and the Pittsburgh Symphony in side-by-side concerts. He has presented masterclasses and conducting workshops in the United States, Argentina, Israel, Brazil and Turkey.

Maestro Edelstein graduated with high honors from the National Conservatory of Music in Buenos Aires (piano) and studied choral conducting at the J. J. Castro Conservatory of La Lucila, Argentina. He continued his education in Israel at the Jerusalem Rubin Academy of Music where he won the Leonard Bernstein Conducting Scholarship awarded by the American/Israel Cultural Foundation. In the United States, he received a master's degree in orchestral conducting from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His teachers included Mendi Rodan, Helmuth Rilling, and Larry Rachleff, among others.

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Cantores Convallis ("Singers of the valley") is an auditioned ensemble composed of singers from the State College community. Our members span a wide range of ages, from students at the prestigious Eastman School of Music to Penn State Faculty and local professionals. The members are very excited for our inaugural concert and to sing Handel's masterpiece. Our goal is to perform repertoire of the Baroque era in a smaller ensemble that will allow for the kind of nuance and flexibility found in chamber music. The soloists for our performance will be drawn from the choir, which is also more in keeping with the concerto style of the baroque era. We hope the results will be a fresh and exhilarating performance of this beloved masterpiece.

* denotes soloist



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Holiday Concert

Messiah Part I

G. F. Handel

Sinfony

1. Accompagnato, Comfort ye, my people
2. Aria, Ev'ry valley shall be exalted
3. And the glory of the Lord
4. Accompagnato, Thus said the Lord of Hosts
5. Aria, But who may abide the day of His coming
6. And He shall purify the sons of Levi
7. Recitativo, Behold, a virgin shall conceive
8. Aria, O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
9. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
10. Accompagnato, For behold, darkness shall cover the earth
11. Aria, The people that walked in darkness
12. For unto us a child is born
13. Pifa
14. Recitativo, There were shepherds abiding in the field
15. Glory to God in the highest
16. Aria, Rejoice greatly , a daughter of Zion
17. Recitativo, Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd
18. Aria, He shall feed His flock like a shepherd
19. His joke is easy, His burden is light

Intermission

Christmas Overture

Arr. Edward D. Zeliff

March (from Nutcracker Suite)

P. I. Tchaikovsky

African Drums Improvisation

P. I. Tchaikovsky

“Arabian Dance” (from Nutcracker Suite)

Arr. Bill Holcombe

Festive Sounds of Hanukah

P. I. Tchaikovsky

“Waltz of the flowers” (from Nutcracker Suite)

Handel/Mozart

“Hallelujah” (from Messiah as singalong)

Smoking is not permitted in any of the School of Music facilities.
Food and beverages are not permitted in the audience seating area.
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Yiming Zhou

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Michael Holtzapple

Viola

Ian Hipps*
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Anna Jarboe

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Kyung Won Jeon*
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Katie Van Vareck
Carol Lyon

Bass

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Dan C. Armstrong*

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David Sabella*
Paul "Mako" Robeson
Kyle Haust

Harp

Ruth Hunter*

Keyboard

Mark Ferraguto*

*denotes principal player

Program Notes

***Messiah* Part 1**

George Frideric Handel



There is perhaps no classical work that gets performed more during the Christmas season than George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* oratorio. But, despite its association with the holiday season, the premiere of this enduring classic actually took place in April of 1742 in Dublin, Ireland.

At this point in his life Handel had experienced great success as a composer in England and was in the process of reinventing his career. He trained as a violinist and harpsichordist in his native city of Hamburg, Germany—an epicenter of Italian opera. Thanks to a ravenous appetite for Italian-language opera in England (where he settled in the early 1710s), Handel ran a successful opera company for thirty years and wrote nearly 40 operas. But, by the 1740s, English taste for Italian opera declined and a rival opera company had taken some of Handel's best singers, forcing his company to fold.

Handel, ever the expedient businessman, turned to writing English oratorios—large dramatic works for voices and orchestra that told religious stories with no costumes or staging—which were cheaper to produce and satisfied the public's taste for singing in English.

The idea to write *Messiah* was originally proposed by Charles Jennens, a friend of Handel's and a literary scholar. Jennens was also responsible for compiling the libretto, or text, of each movement. The premiere was given on April 13, 1742 for the benefit of three Dublin charities: prisoners' debt relief, Mercer's Hospital and the Charitable Infirmary.

Handel's *Messiah* is split in three different parts that follow the liturgical year. On this concert, you'll hear Part I, which is commonly known as the Christmas portion. After the Overture, the Advent and Christmas story is told in movements that alternate between the chorus and individual soloists.

Program Notes

Excerpts from *The Nutcracker Suite*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky



Alongside Handel's *Messiah*, Tchaikovsky's music for *The Nutcracker*—a ballet which takes place entirely on Christmas Eve—contains some of the most iconic music associated with the Christmas season. The work has become one of the most enduring and popular ballets in the world, thanks to Tchaikovsky's arresting and beautiful score. It is Tchaikovsky's last ballet score, preceded by *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*.

The plot of the ballet is based on an adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' short story *The Nutcracker* of 1844, which itself is based on the E.T.A Hoffmann story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. In this ballet, a young girl named Clara is given a nutcracker on Christmas Eve but the toy breaks; later, unable to sleep during the night, she discovers that the nutcracker and all of the other toys have come to life. Together, the toys and Clara fight off an army of mice and the nutcracker is transformed into a prince.

The two disappear into the forest and visit the prince's kingdom of sweets, ruled by the benevolent Sugar Plum Fairy.

The Nutcracker was written as part of a double-commission (in tandem with the opera *Iołanta*) from the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. Tchaikovsky worked very closely with Imperial choreographer Marius Petipa, who had also worked on *The Sleeping Beauty*. Petipa was meticulous in his guidelines for the music, carefully dictating the tempo and number of measures in each individual movement.

You'll easily recognize the **March, Coffee (Arabian) Dance** and **Waltz of the Flowers** from their ubiquity in all things Christmas. Enjoy!

Program Notes

Festive Sounds of Hanukah

Traditional/arr. Holcombe



This piece is an orchestral medley of traditional Hanukah tunes, including *Rock of Ages*, *Mi Yimalel* (Who can Retell?), *Hanukah*, *Hanukah, My Dreidel*, *S'vivon* and *Hanukah, O Hanukah*.

The arrangement was made by Bill Holcombe—one of the most in-demand orchestral arrangers and professional woodwind doublers in the 20th century. After studying composition and flute at the University of Pennsylvania and Juilliard, Holcombe worked as a staff arranger, composer and woodwind player for many film scores and Broadway shows.

Program notes by Michael Divino.

Christmas Overture

Edward David Zeliff



Edward David Zeliff is a composer, pianist, arranger and conductor, who earned a doctor of musical arts degree in composition from Claremont Graduate University in California and has composed and conducted many scores in the religious, secular and student film communities. His extensive catalogue of choral music has been performed around the world. He is currently an adjunct professor of composition at Claremont Graduate University and also directs the music program at La Habra United Methodist Church.

Christmas Overture is an exciting piece that presents many well-loved Christmas classics.

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Upcoming Concerts

Season Concert 3

Fantastical Classical Tales

Sunday, May 3, 2026 | 3:00pm

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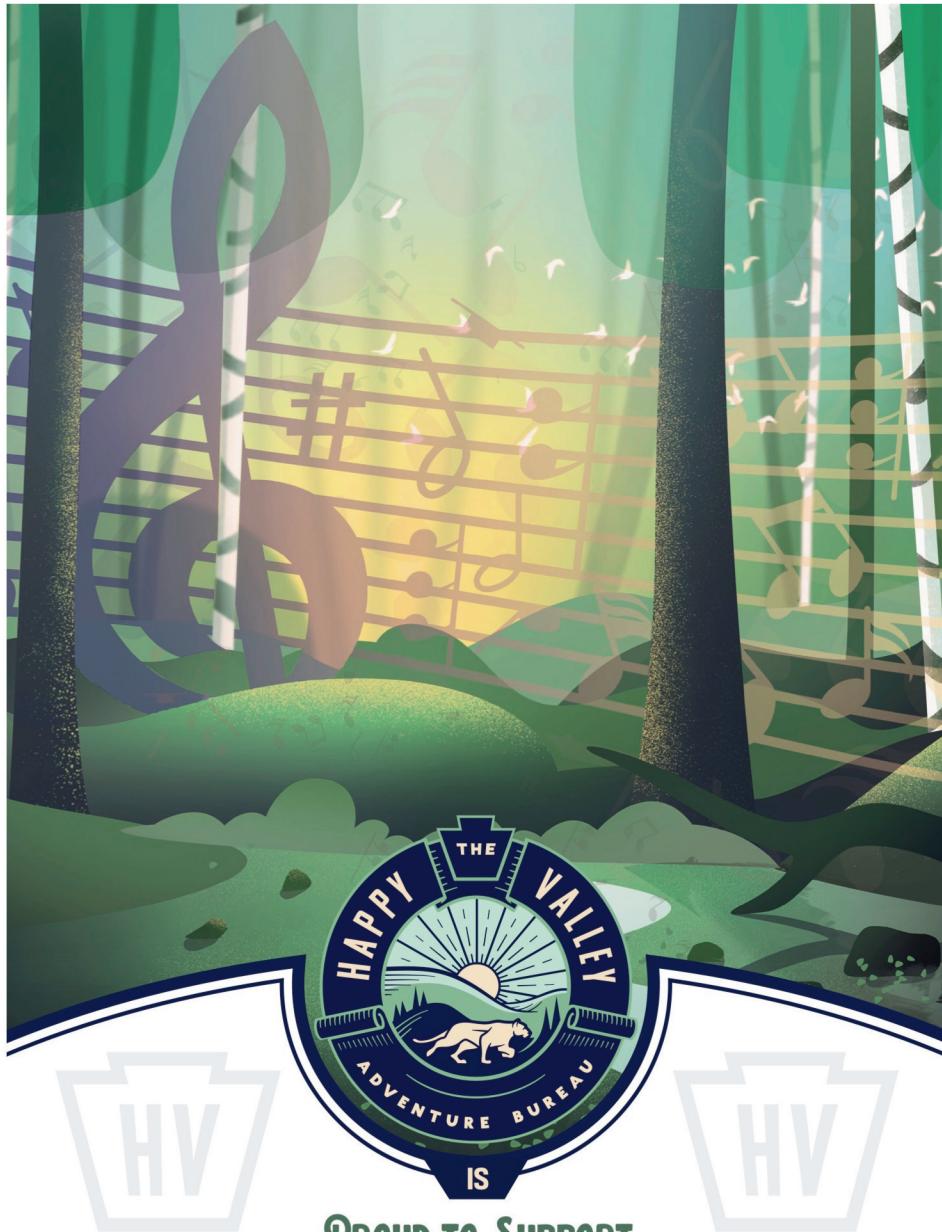
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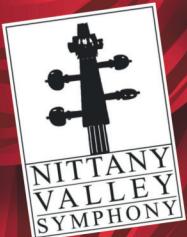
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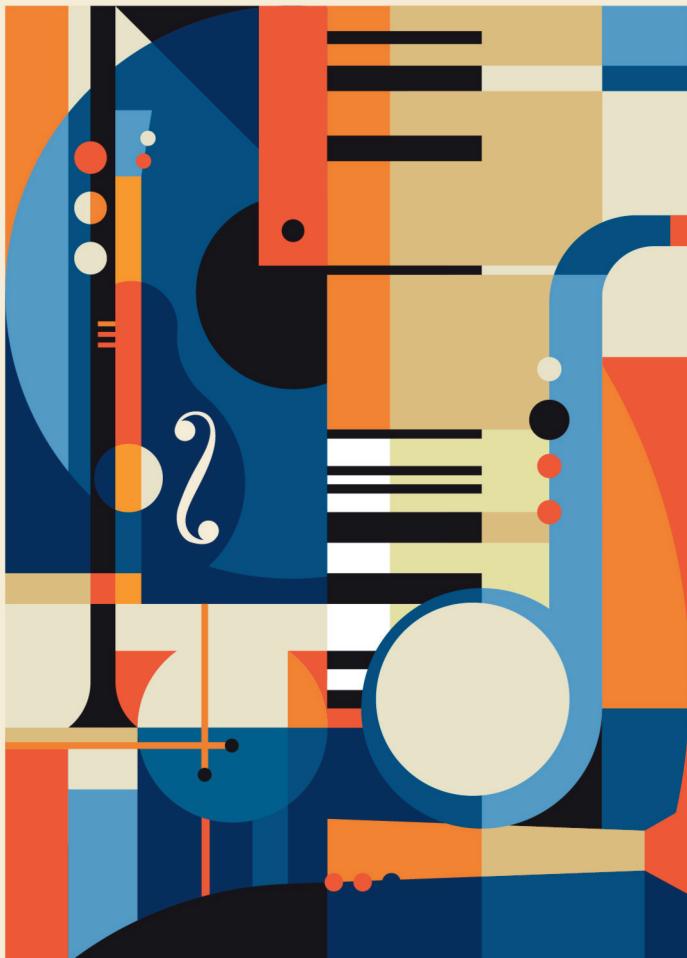
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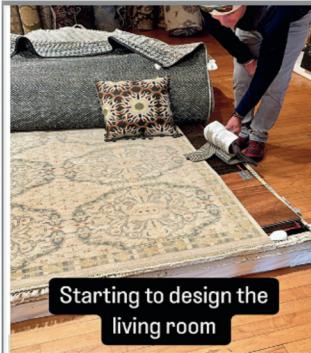
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Decoda

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7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 31 | Recital Hall

Virtuosic chamber ensemble Decoda, featuring co-artistic director and Penn State alum Clara Lyon on violin, joins cinematic electro-pop duo Ringdown (Caroline Shaw and Danni Lee Parpan) to explore the relationship between inspiration and imagination.



Photo Credit: Fadi Kheir



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