

# Celebrating 20 Years of Excellence

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## **Atlantic Classical Orchestra Opening 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season Anniversary Year Highlights Spectacular Growth for the Orchestra**

**December 14, 2009, Fort Pierce, Florida---** The acclaimed Atlantic Classical Orchestra, Stewart Robertson Music Director, opens its concert season on January 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010, a season which will celebrate 20 years of spectacular growth and service to the Treasure Coast community.

The season-opening concerts, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 8:00 pm, at the Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts at St. Edward's School in Vero Beach, and January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 4:00 pm & 8:00 pm, at the Lyric Theatre in Stuart, features works by Vaughn Williams, Ravel, and the North American premiere of Mahler's Fourth Symphony in a new chamber version for 14 instruments by Klaus Simon.

"This is obviously a very important and historic season for the ACO," states Larry Kopp, ACO Executive Director. "Our orchestra has grown tremendously over the past 20 years, and grown to better serve our community. ACO concerts in 2010 truly celebrate the arrival of a world-class orchestra dedicated to serving the Treasure Coast."

The ACO sprang from humble beginnings- the first concert of the ACO as an amateur orchestra took place in November 1991, with founder and conductor Andy McMullan leading the nascent ACO in a performance at the Vero Beach Museum of Art's Leonhardt Auditorium. Since that time, the ACO has undergone remarkable artistic growth, first under Andy McMullan and now under the baton of second Music Director Stewart Robertson. The ACO now attracts musicians from all over the United States as well as internationally to perform with the orchestra. A testament to the world-class status of the orchestra was an invitation for the

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orchestra to tour Italy in 2009, a tour that due to cuts in government funding to Italian theatres was postponed to 2010.

But primarily the world-class talents of the ACO are used to benefit the Treasure Coast community, a community that has, despite economic conditions, offered steadily, and often-times spectacularly, increasing support.

“As a nonprofit organization, we exist solely to support and provide a service to our community,” states Kopp. “That is our mission. And the incredible support we receive from our patrons and the community shows just how successful we have been and how much the community approves of that mission.”

Over the past three seasons the number of subscribers to the ACO has increased by 41%. During the same time frame, the number of donors to the orchestra’s Annual Fund Campaign has increased by 25%- in Stuart alone, the number of donors to this campaign has increased by over 50%! The total contributed to the Annual Fund has more than tripled to well over \$200,000/annually. And the orchestra’s critically important Challenge Gift Campaign, where major gifts are matched by anonymous donors up to \$1 million through 2011, now has slightly more than \$750,000 in pledges and gifts.

“The orchestra is truly coming into its own artistically, and our patrons are overwhelmingly supporting the orchestra and its mission,” states Kopp. “The incredible and increasing support we have been receiving speaks volumes as to our community’s backing of the ACO. In our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season we are proud to be fulfilling our mission more thoroughly and better than ever before.”

The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season begins with concerts featuring as its centerpiece the North American premiere of a new chamber version of Mahler’s Fourth Symphony by Klaus Simon along with works by Vaughn Williams and Maurice Ravel.

The Series I Orchestra Concerts of the ACO open with Ralph Vaughn Williams Overture to *The Wasps*. Excerpted from the incidental music Vaughn Williams wrote for a Cambridge performance of Greek playwright

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Aristophanes' play of the same name, the overture is full of Vaughn William's signature melodies, beautiful harmonies and high spirits and is a perfect concert opener for a gala anniversary season.

The next piece on the program, Maurice Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, is by the literal translation of the title "The Tomb of Couperin," which is both descriptive and non-descriptive of the work. Originally seen as a tribute by Ravel to the French baroque composer Francois Couperin, a *tombeau* in France is not only a "tomb" but a collection of works in memory of an artist. The function of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* as a work in memory of those passed expanded after Ravel's frontline service in World War I as a truck driver. Ravel dedicated each of the movements of the original piano version of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* to friends who were killed in the war. He later took four movements of the original piano version and orchestrated them for chamber orchestra. The exquisite beauty of the music and unparalleled orchestration make *Le Tombeau de Couperin* a gentle and moving tribute to those lost and as such has a particular resonance with our time.

The final work on the program, Gustav Mahler's Fourth Symphony, is in many ways Mahler's most accessible symphonic composition. It is the shortest in terms of length of all his symphonic creations, is full of gorgeous melodies and breathes a peaceful, gentle air throughout. Composed during the summers of 1899 and 1900, the final movement (and the symphony as whole) is based upon a song by Mahler composed in 1892, *Das Himmlische Leben* (The Heavenly Life). The text of *Das Himmlische Leben*, derived from a 18<sup>th</sup> Century folk poem, is a view of heaven through the eyes of an innocent child. The entire symphony describes a journey from life, through death up to heaven, a rather ambitious program that Mahler achieves musically in unexpected and innovative ways. The final movement requires a soprano soloist, which will be sung in the January ACO performances by young soprano Laura Warriner, currently a Master's Degree student at North Texas State University.

The ACO performances in January will also feature the North American premiere of the Klaus Simon version of Mahler's Fourth Symphony for 14 musicians. The first chamber version of Mahler's Fourth Symphony was heard in 1920's Vienna during concerts by Arnold Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances,

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Schoenberg's attempt to make contemporary musical performances readily available to the general public. Klaus Simon updated the original chamber version of the symphony by Erwin Stein, slightly changing the orchestration to better fit Mahler's intentions for the symphony. Not a note of the Mahler's symphony is missing- and due to the smaller number of players a greater clarity is evident, making Mahler's original intentions much easier to discern.

"We are very excited and proud to be selected to give the North American premiere of Klaus Simon's arrangement of Mahler's Fourth Symphony," states Kopp. "It is an honor and privilege and is a perfect way to open our gala 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary Season!"

The ACO Series I Concerts will be held on Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 8:00 pm, at the Waxlax Center for the Performing Arts, 1895 St. Edward's Drive, Vero Beach, and Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm, Lyric Theatre, 59 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart. Tickets are \$40 for the Vero Beach performance and the 4:00 pm Stuart performance; \$45 for the 8:00 pm Stuart performance. Tickets for the Vero Beach performance are available through the ACO Box Office by calling toll-free (866) 310-7521 or visiting the orchestra's website at [www.acomusic.org](http://www.acomusic.org). Tickets for the Stuart performances are available by visiting the Lyric Box Office at 59 SW Flagler Avenue in downtown Stuart or calling (772) 286-7827.

For more information concerning the ACO's 2010 Orchestra Series, electronic copies of artist photos, artist biographies or an interview with Music Director Stewart Robertson, Soprano Laura Warriner or Executive Director Larry Kopp, please contact Director of Communications Silvia Longa at (772) 460-0850. In-depth information on the orchestra is available on the orchestra's website, [www.acomusic.org](http://www.acomusic.org). The ACO office is located at 415 Avenue A, Suite 301, Fort Pierce, and is open 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. Mail should be sent to 415 Avenue A, Suite 301, Fort Pierce, FL 34950. For more information about the Atlantic Classical Orchestra or its events, call the Orchestra office at (772) 460-0850 or fax (772) 460-0851. E-mail to [marketing@acomusic.org](mailto:marketing@acomusic.org). Press and advertising information can be obtained through the Symphony office as well.

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