



*The University of Arizona School of Music
welcomes Charles Bontrager*

Charles Bontrager joined the faculty of The University of Arizona School of Music in the fall of 2007 after nearly thirty years as a professional conductor of symphony and opera.

Maestro Bontrager held numerous musical positions in the United States including the music directorships of orchestras in Ohio, Kentucky, Washington and Missouri along with opera companies in Missouri and Arkansas.

As a guest conductor in the United States, he led symphony orchestras in Cincinnati, Denver, Columbus, Syracuse, Chattanooga, Pensacola, and San Juan among numerous others. Abroad he conducted orchestras in Rio de Janeiro, Trieste and Spoleto (Italy), Pardubice and Hradec Kralove (Czech Republic), and the National Academic Opera Theater of Minsk (Belarus). He also directed opera companies in Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Ohio, New York, Colorado and Washington.

Charles Bontrager collaborated in performance with many leading instrumental artists of our day including Misha Dichter, Midori, Joshua Bell, Barry Tuckwell, and Richard Stoltzman. John Alexander, Evelyn Lear, Wendy White and Thomas Stewart are among the noted vocal artists with whom he has shared the stage. Bontrager has also appeared with numerous important "pops" artists including The Canadian Brass, Ray Charles, Roy Clark, Benny Goodman, and Peter Schickele.

The inspiration of having worked with world-class teachers including Leonard Bernstein, James Levine, Thomas Schippers, and Leonard Slatkin, dramatically shaped Maestro Bontrager's life and work. All led Charles Bontrager toward a high commitment to teaching and mentoring potential podium leaders of the next generation. To that end, he served for a number of years on the board of directors and executive committee of the Conductors Guild, Inc., an international service organization devoted to educational and artistic opportunities for conductors worldwide.

His enthusiasm for younger musicians also recently led him to teach elementary and junior high school string orchestra students in the Flowing Wells Schools of Tucson. For this work, in 2007 Prof. Bontrager received the "Silver Apple" Award from 3TV's Arizona Family Foundation. "We all claim our nation's youth to be our future; but what a privilege it has been to actually spend the last several years working with these 'little' ones!"

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