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YOUNG WOMEN'S CHORAL PROJECTS NAMES MATTHEW OTTO AS ITS NEXT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SAN FRANCISCO (May 24, 2022) – **Young Women's Choral Projects (YWCP)** and its Board of Directors has appointed Canadian conductor Matthew Otto as its new Artistic Director. Matthew Otto will succeed **Dr. Martín Benvenuto**, who served as Interim Artistic Director after the retirement of YWCP Founding Director, **Dr. Susan McMane**, in July 2022.

"On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am excited to welcome Matthew Otto as the new Artistic Director of Young Women's Choral Projects," says **Martha Daetwyler, President of the YWCP Board of Directors**. "His track record of developing high-quality music education combined with his commitment to innovation, inclusion and musical excellence make him the ideal person to lead YWCP into the future."

Matthew is a lecturer and Ph.D. candidate in Music Education at the University of Toronto where he teaches choral methods and has conducted the Soprano-Alto Chamber Choir. His doctoral dissertation, entitled *Towards a Reimagined Choral Pedagogy: A Phenomenological Case Study of Chorister Experience at the Toronto Children's Chorus*, traces the impact of high-level choral singing on youth.

"I am honored to lead Young Women's Choral Projects into its next chapter, carrying on Dr. McMane's vision, as we build on YWCP's legacy in the San Francisco Bay Area and around the world," adds Matthew. "YWCP is known for its exceptional artistry in choral performance. Alongside the support from the Board of Directors and the incredible faculty and staff, YWCP will continue to flourish as we develop artistic excellence and vocal integrity while empowering singers of all ages."

Most recently, Matthew served as the Director of Education & Associate Artistic Director of the renowned Toronto Children's Chorus (TCC) where he conducted the Toronto Youth Choir and co-conducted Chamber, Chorealism & Cantare. Over the past 12 years at the TCC, Matthew has co-conducted the TCC's Chamber Choir on tour to Russia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, USA, Bahamas, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, as well as at the 2017 World Choral Symposium in Barcelona. The TCC has also premiered his treble arrangements and compositions. Throughout the 2020-21 season, he was a major architect of TCC's virtual choir performances, and during the 2021-22 season served as Interim Artistic Director.

“Throughout the interview process, Matthew demonstrated a deep commitment to artistic excellence and incredible leadership with his impressive background of collaboration and passion for education,” said **Samantha Maas-Baldwin**, YWCP Training Choirs Director. “His energy and enthusiasm are infectious. We are excited to welcome him to the team and see how his vision for the future will offer a fresh perspective for our choruses.”

In 2013, Matthew co-founded the Toronto Youth Choir (TYC) with Elise Bradley. The ensemble offers a space for innovation, inclusion, and musical excellence to youth and young working professionals ages 14 to 30. The TYC has performed with The King’s Singers, Irish Youth Choir, West Liberty University Singers, Choir of Trinity College Melbourne, Elmer Iseler Singers, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In April 2018, Matthew led the Toronto Youth Choir on its first international tour, traveling to New York City to sing at Carnegie Hall. In June 2019, the TYC made its debut with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, performing Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana* alongside the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir & TCC. The TYC is a founding member of Bridge Choral Collective, a consortium of Canadian youth choirs that offers innovative virtual programming by internationally renowned artists. Throughout the 2020-21 season the TYC participated in workshops with Jacob Collier, Rajaton, Moira Smiley, Sherryll Sewepagaham, Anúna, Lone Larsen and VoNo, The University of Pretoria Youth Choir, and The Philippine Madrigal Singers.

Matthew is founder/artistic director of Incontra Vocal Ensemble, a project-based, professional-level chamber choir. Now in its eighth season, Incontra provides high-caliber performance opportunities for emerging singers and conductors. He has prepared choruses for appearances with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and conductors Peter Oundjian, Nicholas McGegan, Bramwell Tovey, Donald Runnicles, Tania Miller, and the late Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos.

As a strong advocate for the choral arts in Canada, Matthew has been the President of Choirs Ontario, a board member of Choral Canada, and is a founding member of the Bridge Choral Collective. He has actively contributed to many choral communities in the Toronto area, including Pax Christi Chorale (Assistant Conductor), Toronto Mendelssohn Choir (Associate Conductor), and several Toronto churches, most recently Christ Church Deer Park. He has served as an adjudicator at several festivals including the Toronto Kiwanis Music Festival and the Kiwanis Guelph Music Festival, and has guest conducted the Elora Festival Singers, Toronto Cantata Chorus and University of Auckland Chamber Choir.

Twice-recipient of the Elmer Iseler Fellowship in Choral Conducting, and finalist in both the Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting (2014) and Sir Ernest MacMillan Foundation Fellowship Award in Orchestral Conducting (2010), Matthew holds a Bachelor of Music in Composition (2007) and a Master of Music in Conducting (2009). His conducting mentors include Doreen Rao, Raffi Armenian, David Briskin, Elise Bradley and Karen Grylls, and he has participated in masterclasses with numerous conductors including Helmuth Rilling, Maria Guinand and Simon Carrington. He has presented papers at the International Symposium on Singing and Song, and at Podium 2018.

About the Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco

The award-winning Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco is recognized as a world-class choral organization for young women. Founded in 2012, YWCP includes six levels of choral experience for young women ages 4-18 from across the San Francisco Bay Area. YWCP's mission is to transform the lives of young women through exceptional artistry in choral performance and bring the expressive power of their music to the community, the nation, and the world. Through YWCP, participants of diverse backgrounds find their voices as singers, artists and women in a nurturing environment that empowers them to achieve artistic and personal excellence. The collaborative experience of high-quality music education and choral performance foster the development of each individual young woman and teach her important life skills. Learn more at www.ywcp.org.

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