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Plainfield Symphony announces Charles Prince as new Music Director

The Plainfield Symphony will enter its 90th season with a new music director as the symphony announces that American conductor Charles Prince has been selected to lead New Jersey's oldest community symphony. The symphony has been led for the past 21 seasons by retiring music director Sabin Pautza who now becomes Conductor Emeritus.

Mr. Prince will officially take the baton during a celebratory 90th Anniversary Gala Concert scheduled for October 10, 2009 at the Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church in Plainfield. Guest conductor Roger Stubblefield will lead the symphony for their annual Free Children's Concert on September 26 at Shiloh Baptist Church in Plainfield while the rest of the season will be announced in mid-June.

"We will announce our season a little later than usual but it's worth the wait as Charles will now put his touches on our very special 90th season," said symphony president James Rowland. The symphony received interest from dozens of candidates for the Music Director position and formally asked six candidates to guest conduct over the past two seasons. The announcement of Mr. Prince brings an end to the selection process.

"I am thrilled to be the new Music Director of this wonderful orchestra." Mr. Prince stated, "As it reaches its 90th year, I wish to celebrate its rich past while ushering in a new era that will build upon its legacy. I can't wait to get started."

Charles Prince is best known as Associate Conductor of the New York Pops from 1996 – 2003. Since then he has spent more time in Europe than the U.S. guest conducting with the WDR Radio Orchestra (Cologne), the Bavarian Radio Orchestra (Munich), the Munich Symphony Orchestra and the Sofia (Bulgaria) Philharmonic Orchestra. Recently he was chosen as the new music director for the Wiener Operettensommer music festival in Vienna, Austria.

He has also conducted many U.S. orchestras including performances with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Oregon Symphony Orchestra, the Seattle Symphony, the Ft. Worth Symphony Orchestra and the Utah Opera Festival. In 1999, he was music director of the Tony Award winning production of James Joyce's *The Dead* which ran on Broadway, in Los Angeles and Washington D.C.

Mr. Prince received his degree in music history and theory from Oberlin College where he trained with Robert Page of the Cleveland Orchestra. He also studied with Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, Gustav Meier and Kurt Sanderling through the Tanglewood Conducting Seminars (1988 and 1989). And he also works extensively with one of Europe's most eminent conductors, Jorma Panula in Helsinki.

Mr. Rowland stated the selection process was very difficult because all the guest conductors were very talented musicians and conductors. But, he stated, "Charles brings our community symphony a global perspective which our musicians find exhilarating. Yet he plans to work with New Jersey music organizations and local musicians to develop thrilling collaborations and meaningful partnerships that will lead our symphony into our second century."

The symphony will formally announce its 90th season in June 2009, with ticket sales beginning shortly thereafter. "We have had 89 great years but, with this announcement, we are confident that the best is yet to come," said Mr. Rowland.

For more information about the Plainfield Symphony, visit www.plainfieldsymphony.org.