

**CONTACT:**

Liz Fetchin  
Owner/Director, Elm Ink  
724/612-9921  
[liz@elmink.com](mailto:liz@elmink.com)

**Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh's Music Director to Step Down**

*After seven seasons, Robert Page Music Director Matthew Mehaffey will end his tenure with the 2022-'23 season.*

**PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania (January 12, 2023)** – The [Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh](#) (MCP) has announced that [Matthew Mehaffey](#), the choir's Robert Page Music Director, will be leaving at the end of the 2022-'23 season. During his seven seasons with the choir, Mehaffey expanded its reach through compelling storytelling, unconventional collaborations and impactful community partnerships.

At 115 years in operation, MCP is the city's most celebrated chorus. The choir's approximately 130 members are everyday community members from diverse backgrounds and professions who give generously of their time and vocal talent to create deeply moving moments of musical discovery for Pittsburgh audiences.

Mehaffey, a native Pittsburgher, became MCP's music director in 2016. During his time with the choir, he has engaged singers and audiences in dramatic choral storytelling, such as the re-telling of the story of Anne Frank in *Annelies* and the Underground Railroad in *Let My People Go*. He has also challenged the organization to explore new forms of relevancy by working with composers such as Steven Hackman and Stewart Copeland to bring their visions to life on the stages of rock venues.

These types of performances gave MCP greater visibility beyond its traditional classical music base and built a reputation of innovative risk-taking for the centenarian organization. By embracing partnerships with a wide range of arts and civic organizations, from City of Asylum, to VocalEssence of Minnesota, to Mr. Smalls to Ebenezer Baptist Church, Mehaffey sought to introduce choral music to new audiences.

At the same time, he continued to cultivate the standard of excellence for which MCP is known, particularly in its performances with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra – including a Grammy-nominated recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

"My work with the Mendelssohn Choir has been one of the great joys of my personal and professional life," said Mehaffey. "As a Pittsburgh native, I'm delighted to have had the chance to come back to my hometown and create music here. It's been a dream come true. The singers, the members of our board, our partners at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra—they are the best of the best. It's been an honor to collaborate with them"

Mehaffey is stepping down from the position of Music Director of the Mendelssohn Choir to assume the role of Director of Choral Activities at the University of Minnesota. There he will lead a comprehensive program of six choirs and lead a studio of graduate students pursuing Master's and Doctoral degrees in conducting.

Mehaffey's last performance with MCP will be [The Notebooks of Leonardo DaVinci](#) on May 20, 2023, by his friend, composer Jocelyn Hagen, which will take place at the Greater Pittsburgh Masonic Center.

“It has been a delight working with Matt, and he will be missed greatly by all of us—from singers to audience members,” says Mary Ann Lapinski, executive director of MCP. “Matt’s desire to push MCP into new ‘spaces’ both literally and metaphorically and have choral music viewed as a compelling entertainment choice by a wider range of prospective audience members will be part of his enduring legacy. As for what’s next for MCP, the board, Search Committee and I are embracing the search for his successor with a sense of openness and excitement.”

A national search has been launched to find Mehaffey’s successor, with the goal of announcing the new music director in May, 2023 and continuing the great momentum Mehaffey has set in motion.

“Matt has been an absolute pleasure to work with,” said Guy Leonard, chair of MCP’s Board of Directors. “He’s talented, creative, and has a real gift for thinking outside the box and expanding the choir’s musical boundaries. By giving our singers an innovative range of music to perform, he fully tapped into their talent and empowered them to exceed even their own expectations. He brought out their very best, and he did so in a way that was encouraging and supportive.”

###

**About the Mendelssohn:** Critically acclaimed as one of the finest choruses in the country, the 115-year-old Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh (MCP) is re-inventing choral music for the 21st century. MCP singers are everyday community members from diverse backgrounds and professions who give generously of their time and talent to create powerful, unexpected, and deeply moving moments of musical discovery. Composed of approximately 130 singers, the Choir performs both with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and in its own concerts, and it fosters the next generation of choral singers through the Junior Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh. More info: <https://www.themendelssohn.org>