

A dynamic and passionate conductor, Steven Byess is recognized for his distinguished musicianship, innovative programming, passion for music education, and commitment to outstanding educational programs. He has been hailed by critics as "masterful and brilliant," "creating the epitome of instrumental elegance," "a talented interpreter, able to capture the sweep of a piece without neglecting detail," and capturing "the full spirit and vitality of the score perfectly."

He is the newly appointed Music Director of the Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra (Oregon), and also holds the posts of Music Director of the North Mississippi Symphony Orchestra and the Arkansas Philharmonic Orchestra, Associate Music Director of the Ohio Light Opera, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra of Krakow, Poland. He formerly held the post of Cover Conductor for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. With the Ohio Light Opera, he has conducted, to critical acclaim, over 500 performances of 65 operas, operettas, and musical theater works, and is featured on seventeen CD recordings by Newport Classics, Albany Records, and Operetta Archives.

Mr. Byess conducted the U.S. premiere of Russian violinist Alexander Markov's *Rock Concerto* at Carnegie Hall in New York in October 2010. Celebrated for his work in opera, he has conducted acclaimed productions of Puccini's *La Bohème* and Robert Ward's *The Crucible* at the International Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv, Israel, and new productions of *Le Tragédie de Carmen* (Bizet/Brook), Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, and a highly praised production of Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* with the composer's daughter Jamie Bernstein, at the Pine Mountain Music Festival in Michigan.

Mr. Byess received his Bachelor of Music Degree in classical performance and jazz studies from Georgia State University, and his Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied conducting with Louis Lane and Carl Topilow, bassoon with George Goslee and David McGill, violin with Carol Ruzicka, and piano with Olga Radosavljevich. He also attended the Pierre Monteux Memorial School for Conductors under the tutelage of Maître Charles Brück. In addition to his conducting studies with Louis Lane, Robert Shaw, and Carl Topilow, he has worked under the auspices of the League of American Orchestras with such noted conductors as Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, and Otto Werner Mueller. Mr. Byess was an assistant to conductor Robert Shaw at the Shaw Institute in Souillac, France.

Steven Byess is a passionate advocate for the arts, much sought after for his speeches on the arts, music, and education. An important community leader, he has created and organized collaborations with numerous choruses, chamber music ensembles, and festivals of the arts. He wrote, co-directed and is featured in a PBS presentation entitled *Count On It!*, which is designed for children grades K-3, and shows the correlation of music to mathematics. He is a conductor of the Carnegie Hall Weill Music Institute *Link Up* orchestral education concerts, performing in multiple US communities for over 20,000 children in 2013-2014.

Mr. Byess was chosen by Walt Disney World Entertainment to conduct the 2000 NFL *E*TRADE* Superbowl Halftime show, featuring the Walt Disney World Millennium Orchestra, Phil Collins, Christina Aguilera, Enrique Iglesias, Toni Braxton, and Edward James Olmos, and was broadcast to over 900 million viewers worldwide.

Upcoming guest engagements include The Florida Orchestra, the Maracaibo Symphony Orchestra (Venezuela), the Eastman School of Music Opera Theatre, an eighth tour of the US with the Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra (Krakow, Poland), and opera productions of *Falstaff* (Verdi), *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (Monteverdi), *Der Kleine König* (Kálmán), *Dream City and the Magic Knight* (Victor Herbert), *Call Me Madame* (Irving Berlin), and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Menotti).

He is an ardent food and wine aficionado, a Shakespeare enthusiast, an avid motorcycle rider, and loves skiing.