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## Ronald Thomas Stepping Down as Director of BCMS

Speaking to the near-capacity audience attending the final concert of the Boston Chamber Music Society's Silver Jubilee season at Sanders Theatre on May 18th, Co-Founder and Artistic Director Ronald Thomas reflected on his 25 years as the company's artistic leader and announced that the 2008-09 season would be his last in that position. As to the reason for his decision, Thomas said "The reason: it's simply time, it's time for me and it's time for BCMS. It's vitally important that artistic organizations such as ours are always renewing themselves and bringing in fresh ideas and fresh vision, and I very much want that for BCMS."



Ronald Thomas addressing the audience at Sanders Theatre  
Photo: James Galdos

Thomas went on to thank "all the wonderful musicians who have appeared on this stage and Jordan Hall: musician members, musician guests, who have made this such a great experience for me and, I hope, a great experience for all of you. I have to thank our board of directors who have worked endlessly, tirelessly, and given very generously over the years to make these concerts possible. And of course I have to thank all of you because, you know, we can sit on stage here and play, but it's not quite the same when nobody's here. So thank all of you."

The Boston Chamber Music Society is recognized as New England's preeminent chamber music society, presenting the most extensive and longest-running concert series in the region. The Society is distinguished in Boston's musically fertile region for its enduring performance standards.

In an e-mail to BCMS, Richard Dyer, former music critic of the Boston Globe, wrote "The gasp at his announcement that Ron is going to retire next season shows how popular a figure he has become with the Society's loyal audience. Big shoes to fill."

The Boston Chamber Music Society was founded in 1982 by Thomas and Bruce Coppock (now President and Managing Director of The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra), and has built a reputation for impassioned performances, ripened over time by the long personal and professional histories of its member musicians. BCMS's mission is to provide audiences with exceptional performances of chamber music repertoire from the Baroque era to the present day while fostering understanding and appreciation of the artform.



Thomas, in talking about the upcoming season, said, “I look forward to having a really successful and fruitful transitional year with whomever is chosen to succeed me and I very much look forward to the next 25 years of BCMS. It is my life goal to see BCMS succeed beyond my being here.”

When Thomas steps down from the position of Artistic Director at the end of the 2009-2010 season, he will become Artistic Director Emeritus and, in this role, will continue to perform before the devoted audience that he has helped to cultivate over the past 25 years. “I very much look forward to helping to find a new artistic director,” Thomas told the audience. “I look forward to working with that person and I’m sure the concerts will be everything they’ve been and then some.”

The Boston Chamber Music Society was saddened by Thomas’ decision to leave his position. “Ron has done a stellar job programming the best chamber music concerts in the Boston area,” said Stephen Friedlaender, President of the Board of Trustees of BCMS. “He has both maintained a fantastic core of BCMS musicians and brought in outstanding guests providing our audience with the best music and performers imaginable for the past 25 years. We are looking for someone of Ron’s artistic caliber and performance charisma to lead the Boston Chamber Music Society and be a leader in Boston’s artistic community for the next 25 years.”

As Dr. Jeffery Berman, Vice-President of the Board of Trustees, who is coordinating the membership of the Artistic Director Search Committee, said, “All of us involved in this search, including Ron, the Trustees, member musicians, and advisors, are aware of the importance of finding just the right person to take the helm of this organization. This person will lead the Society into the next phase of its artistic development, with its mission, vision and values as a guide. We all want to make sure that Boston audiences will continue to enjoy exceptional performances of chamber music from this nationally-recognized, Boston-based ensemble.”

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