

DOREEN RAO

"The world of choral music owes her special thanks. She is preparing our future."

Robert Shaw, conductor

"For her, every note has an urgent meaning, not just within the composition, but within the wider world."

Robert-Everett-Green, critic

Doreen Rao's distinguished career as conductor and master teacher links the standards of professional performance with the goals of music education. Celebrated for her spirited and moving concerts, Rao's commitment to choral music is recognized in her innovative programming, teaching initiatives, worldwide conducting appearances, and her award-winning *Choral Music Experience* publications with Boosey & Hawkes.

Appointed Music Director and Conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus in 2008, Rao holds the Cameron Baird Conductor's Chair working in close collaboration with the Grammy Award winning Maestro JoAnn Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. In this position, Rao leads the newly inaugurated *Buffalo Sings! Community Concert Series* dedicated to building bridges between artists and their audiences through concert performances and educational programs throughout Western New York.

Doreen Rao holds the University of Toronto's Elmer Iseler Chair in Conducting Emeritus. As Director of Choral Programs, she established and led the Faculty of Music's Graduate Program in Conducting, she directed the Toronto Bach Festival in collaboration with its principal guest artist, the eminent Bach scholar and conductor Helmuth Rilling, and she conducted the award-winning University of Toronto MacMillan Singers and Bach Festival Singers. Her choirs collaborated regularly with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, under conductors Peter Oundjian, Gianandrea Noseda, Bernard Labadie and Helmuth Rilling.

During Rao's long association with the *Chicago Symphony Orchestra* and as the first female assistant conductor of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, she prepared the award-winning Glen

Ellyn Children's Chorus (Anima) for concerts, tours, and recorded performances that won four Grammy Awards and a *Grand Prix du Disque* under Sir George Solti, Margaret Hillis, Claudio Abbado and James Levine. Her choirs also performed for Leonard Slatkin and the St. Louis Symphony and for Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival.

Rao's seminal work as a conductor and master teacher fostered the children's choir movement and inspired a generation of conductors and teachers to lead young choirs in schools and communities around the world. As Founder and Chair of the ACDA National Committee for Children's Choirs, she was recognized by the American Choral Director's Association in a national tribute offered by the eminent American conductor Robert Shaw who wrote: "The world of choral music owes her special thanks. She is preparing our future."

Rao is also the Founding Artistic Director of the CME Institute for Choral Teacher Education, a professional development program and certification course for conductors and choral music educators offered in the United States, Canada, Ireland and Great Britain. Rao's CME Institute expanded in 2000 to include the New Millennium Festival Concerts, a *peacemaking through performance* initiative with concerts in Dublin, New York, Toronto and London.

Doreen Rao began her career in Chicago as a professional singer, music teacher and professor of voice and choral music at Roosevelt University's Chicago Musical College. She completed her MM and PhD at Northwestern University and moved to Canada in 1988 to accept an appointment there as Director of Choral Programs at the University of Toronto.

In a pioneering career of "firsts," Doreen Rao continues to guest conduct, lecture and teach worldwide. She is frequent guest conductor of international choral festivals, all-states and honor choirs for the American Choral Directors Association, the Music Educator's National Conference, the International Society for Music Education and concert producers worldwide. She is active as a masterclass conducting teacher at the graduate and post-graduate levels of instruction and enjoys her choral residencies with both university music schools and concert associations throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

Rao is also Choral Advisor to Boosey & Hawkes and Editor of the award-winning *Choral Music Experience* series of music and textbooks. Rao's demonstrated commitment to commissioning and premiering the music of living composers has championed a generation of American and Canadian composers including Imant Raminsh, Stephen Hatfield, David Brunner and Daniel Brewbaker, to name only a few.

Toronto music critic Robert Everett-Green wrote "for her, every note has an urgent meaning, not just within the composition, but within the wider world." Journalist Bronwyn Drainie described Doreen Rao as "a brilliant artist and teacher...whose methods and materials could re-energize the art of choral singing". The Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia awarded her their National Citation for her significant and lasting contribution to the cause of American music. The American Choral Director's Association has honored her for her "commitment to choral excellence" and a CBS television documentary called her musical achievements "extraordinary." This year, the Buffalo Business First community named Rao as a **Woman of Influence** for her inspirational work with the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus.

Doreen Rao, PhD

- Music Director and Conductor, Cameron Baird Conductor's Chair , Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus
- Founder-Director, CME Institute for Choral Teacher Education
- Choral Advisor and Editor, Boosey & Hawkes New York and London