

For Immediate Release

One evening, two anniversary celebrations: The New England Philharmonic celebrates 40 years of music making and 20 years under the direction of Maestro Richard Pittman; presents Michael Tippett's 'A Child of Our Time'

Tsai Performance Center | March 4, 2017, at 8 p.m.

BOSTON — The New England Philharmonic, under the direction of Richard Pittman, will present **Michael Tippett's "A Child of Our Time"** to celebrate their 40th anniversary on **March 4 at 8 p.m.** at the **Tsai Performance Center**. The nine-time ASCAP award-winning orchestra will also celebrate the **20th season under Maestro Richard Pittman's direction**.

For the Tippett work, the NEP will be joined by [Chorus pro Musica](#) (who performed the piece alongside the NEP when they last performed it in 1992) and noted soloists **Sarah Pelletier**, soprano; **Krista River**, mezzo-soprano; **Charles Blandy**, tenor; and **Sumner Thompson**, bass. The concert will also feature the world premiere of former NEP Composer-in-Residence **Richard Cornell's "Melospiza melodia"** and **Gunther Schuller's "Vertige d'Eros."** Cornell's piece has been gifted to the NEP in honor of the orchestra's anniversary.

"'A Child of Our Time' was inspired by developments in Nazi Germany in the late 1930's and was a protest against oppression everywhere in the world. It is a beautiful, moving work," said Pittman. "It's uncanny how similar the events in the world are today and how relevant this work is to our time. Gunther Schuller's beautiful 'Vertige d'Eros' was written one year after the world premiere of Tippett's work and is an example of another significant composer living in the same world."

In just 40 years, the NEP has performed nearly **50 world premieres**, most of which were **NEP commissions**, and **dozens of Boston premieres**. Three of the NEP's four performances this season will or did begin with the world premiere of a fanfare created by former composers-in-residence, which each gave to the NEP in honor of the orchestra's anniversary. For this concert, it's Cornell's work.

The NEP is Boston's only all-volunteer orchestra that **supports a composer-in-residence** and has held an **annual Call for Scores since 1985** and an **annual Young Artist Competition since 1994**. Since 1985, the NEP has commissioned a new work for each season from its resident composer. That is a record that few community orchestras can match.

"The NEP is a highly unusual ensemble, and its mission to perform contemporary works *as a priority* sets it apart," said Richard Cornell, who served as NEP's composer-in-residence for two separate terms, first under the direction of Jeffrey Rink (1989-94) and again with Richard Pittman (2000-2002).

"Maestro Pittman enjoys ongoing relationships with many of the most active composers today, especially some of those in the Boston area. His programming for the NEP respects not only the tried-and-true repertoire but also a particular concern for bringing less often heard compositions and lesser known but deserving composers to the stage. The program on March 4 is typical of that: a seldom-heard early work of Gunther Schuller (an NEP composer laureate), a new piece (mine) and Michael Tippett's masterpiece, 'A Child of Our Time.' It's hardly your standard fare."

For more information and tickets, visit www.NEPhilharmonic.org.

About the New England Philharmonic: Now performing its 40th season, the NEP, under the direction of Richard Pittman, is internationally renowned for its daring programming encompassing both contemporary and traditional works. The volunteer orchestra has earned nine ASCAP awards for Adventurous Programming and was

included in The Arts Fuse's top 10 list of notable classical music performances of 2016. The orchestra's illustrious past includes the installation of three landmark programs. The NEP became the first orchestra of its size to support a composer-in-residence (1985), introduce a Call for Scores program (1985), and establish a Young Artist Competition (1994), legacies that endure today.

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