

Introduction to Marco Frisina

Good Evening,

Normally you will only find me playing in the orchestra, as I have done for over 35 years. But, for tonight, it is my greatest joy and privilege to also present to you this special concert as a gift to my musical colleagues, to this wonderful PSO organization, my family, friends and audience. This event has been in the making for over 3 years and has been quite a journey for both Monsignor Frisina and me.

I believe you will understand in a few minutes why I have been so profoundly touched by him and by his music. It has been a very personal and life changing experience for me in the most significant ways with one major result being my new mission to assist Monsignor in bringing him and his music to our country – for him to compose for us and work with our singers and orchestral musicians – to encounter and reach out to all Americans.

Marco Frisina is a very humble, engaging and joyous priest from the Diocese of Rome, rector of the Basilica of Santa Cecilia and choirmaster at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, to name only a few of his many responsibilities. Thirty years ago, he founded and continues to direct the Choir of the Diocese of Rome that today numbers over 250 voices – a volunteer choir of faith and music that, under his direction, often animates the liturgical celebrations with the Pope and gives concerts throughout Italy and the world. Monsignor has composed over 415 sacred and liturgical songs sung by his choir and others throughout the world. Just two weeks ago in Rome was held the first gathering of choirs from around Italy and as far away as Brazil, Spain and Turkey. Over 1,500 voices filled St. John Lateran in concert– a true testament to his influence and the power and inspiration that his music gives to so many people.

Fundamental to his life and vocation were the presence and words of Saint John Paul II. During the late 1970's, JP II was beginning his Pontificate and Monsignor his studies for the priesthood. Upon hearing Monsignor's music, the Pope recognized the power of this priest's musical gifts and encouraged him to pursue his talent as a means for evangelization. Monsignor remained close to the pontiff throughout his life and composed over 27 works for him many reflecting the Pope's own words and ideas – to communicate the beauty of the gospel through music and art with simplicity, depth, joy, tenderness and closeness to the poor.

Tonight you will be exposed to the impressive range of style and genre in Monsignor's music from opera to film music, from the sacred to the liturgical. Most significant for me is the world premiere of his Sinfonia *Mysterium Pachale*, a work I commissioned him to compose specifically for our orchestra. My heartfelt thanks to all those who helped make these concerts possible, especially the PSO BOD, Leslie Pruess, Michael Avagliano, Allen Artz, Dr. Candace Wicke, Maria Ogorek and all the participating musicians and singers.

All the music you will hear tonight and all that he expresses whether in action, words or music is from his heart - a sharing of his love for God and for all humanity. His music is truly universal touching the hearts of people of all backgrounds and religions. For Monsignor Frisina, music is the purest expression of the soul, an act of love.

It is now my great honor to introduce to you my dear friend, my inspiration, Maestro Monsignor Marco Frisina.