

To Allan Pollack

With Many Thanks

*From the Board of Directors,
Audience, and Musicians of
Symphony of the Redwoods*

SYMPHONY OF THE REDWOODS

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Dear Allan,

With sincere gratitude, the Board of Directors of Symphony of the Redwoods recognizes and celebrates the artistic and musical leadership you have given the Symphony over the last thirty-two years.

Many thanks for the marvelous musical memories.



*Applause of Appreciation to Maestro Allan Pollack
for 32 years of dedication to Symphony of the Redwoods
and for bringing World Class Music and Musicians to the coast.*

*Symphony performances have enriched all of our lives
and elevated our beloved Mendocino to a mecca of music and culture.*

*With sincere appreciation and deepest thanks,
we wish you all the best in the years to come.*

Sincerely, Leona Walden & Toby Wade

When I retired and left San Francisco to live in Mendocino, I worried that I would no longer have access to the live music I love. Thank you for proving me wrong!
Margaret Roberts

Thank you, Allan, for providing all the Symphony of the Redwoods music to me and the community. Your leadership and expertise will be sorely missed.
With sincere gratitude from Marta MacKenzie

Dear Allan,
I am in admiration of your god given gifts & that you have done so much to share your varied music training with so many entities in the music world, near and beyond. I know from my own experience on the board of a community orchestra that a conductor who has held the helm for 32 years is special.....keeping it all together is akin to herding cats!
Thank you, Helena Bell

I was surprised to learn you would not be conducting Symphony of Redwoods this year. I guess I was too accustomed to knowing there would be season after season of good classical music with such an accomplished conductor. The coastal community has been blessed for over thirty years to have your critical ear to lead its local and other professional musicians. This will be difficult to replace. From my audience seat I have only listened to the result of your work with the orchestra; I never felt let down by the presentation. You certainly deserve the promotion to less hectic scheduling. Congratulations on a job well done.

Ray Duff

Thank you, Allan, for the wonderful music you conducted over the years with Symphony of the Redwoods, especially the Mendelssohn for which you always seemed to have just the right touch.

Todd Walton

*Dear Allan Pollack,
Endless thanks for the decades you have enriched the lives of so many of us in this community. Your unique talents and contagious passion for music has deeply moved us at every performance we have attended. Your vision as artistic director satisfied every musical taste as well as nurturing a curiosity about learning more. And your unwavering dedication, generosity, energy, and warm, engaging personal qualities have been a testimony to all the goodness and strength of which human beings are capable. We wish you the best as you enjoy this well-deserved opportunity to pursue what awaits you.*

*With deep gratitude,
Gayle and Larry Heiss*

*Dear Allan,
Your gift to us all of many live concerts of the world's greatest, most beautiful and brilliant music is beyond remarkable. It is community generosity of the highest order and has enriched our lives immeasurably. I know you didn't do it alone, but it wouldn't have happened without you. Thank you from our hearts and happy ears. It is wonderful that you now have more time for writing music, and we have so enjoyed the productions we have heard you perform of your compositions.
Looking so forward to this summer's Music Festival,
Sharon Hansen*

Tenderness, humor, deep and extensive musical knowledge and understanding, enthusiasm and attention - you have brought it all for so many years to so many ears. May you find delight and fulfillment in whatever is next.

With gratitude for your support and great gifts,

Annie Lee

Dear Allan!!

I want to thank you for your kind and generous support during my time at the Symphony. I clearly needed all the help I could get. I must admit it was a rollercoaster for me, a "Mr. Mouse's Wild Ride" for sure, but what a wonderful ride it was.....terrifying and exhilarating, meeting and working with wonderful new people, lurching from one fundraiser to the next, managing the big adrenaline rushes getting ready for the first concerts of the year, followed by the joy and satisfaction of watching all those folks leave Cotton with happier hearts and smiles on their faces. Your leadership and perseverance helped to make it all possible for the musicians and community to share the gift of music with each other. I am grateful for that. It is an amazing gift you have given us all. Cheers to you! On to the next adventure!

Kris Stuart

My favorite place to sit attending the wonderful Symphony of the Redwoods performances over the years became midway on the fifth row of the upper balcony. From that perch I could take out my binoculars and watch all the action. Allan's gentle but dynamic conducting was a part of the pleasure of viewing (as well as listening) to the engaging music being presented. I will miss his verve. He always seemed to pulsate with passion, which brought a smile to my eye and heart.

*Sincerely and with gratitude to Allan and all of the members of Symphony of the Redwoods for all of the hard work and wonderful performances,
Rella Gadulka*

When I imagine Symphony of the Redwoods I always see Allan walking on stage in his enthusiastic swinging style. Pure joy! Each year since he took the helm, the sound of the Symphony has grown exponentially into its potential. I have been honored and delighted to witness their coming of age and the wholeness brought to life by their partnership. Thank you, Allan, for your brilliance and your steadfast leadership.

Linda Perry

There are three people who stand out in my mind as the forces that made the Mendocino coast community what it is. Bill Zacha who made the area a center for art and theater, Ernest Schoefer who enhanced the coast as a tourist attraction by building the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, and Allan Pollack who made Mendocino a center for classical music. Allan's leadership in the Music Festival and Symphony of the Redwoods has had an amazing impact on the cultural attraction of our beloved area. I was astounded when I discovered the quality of the SOR. I have lived in larger communities around the country who had symphony orchestras far less impressive than ours. I recall on a couple of occasions while photographing SOR rehearsals, talking with visiting artists who were dumbfounded to find such a talented orchestra in the boondocks.

I also loved photographing the concerts and rehearsals. Allan gave me free reign to take pictures as I wanted, allowing me to capture so many great memories of the SOR since 2014.

Bravo, Allan. Your mark on the Mendocino Coast is huge and, I know, will continue as long as there is a note in your body. Thank you for your huge contribution to our community.

*Respectfully and in awe,
Larry R. Wagner*

I have had the good fortune to watch the evolution of the Symphony under the direction of Allan Pollack over many years and I am truly saddened by his departure. He has been a wonderful influence and a grand force that has molded this group of volunteers into a fine orchestra.

I understand that there are times for men (and women) to strive and create, and that there are times to take a step back.

Thank you, Allan, for every note and every chorus that you have given to me.

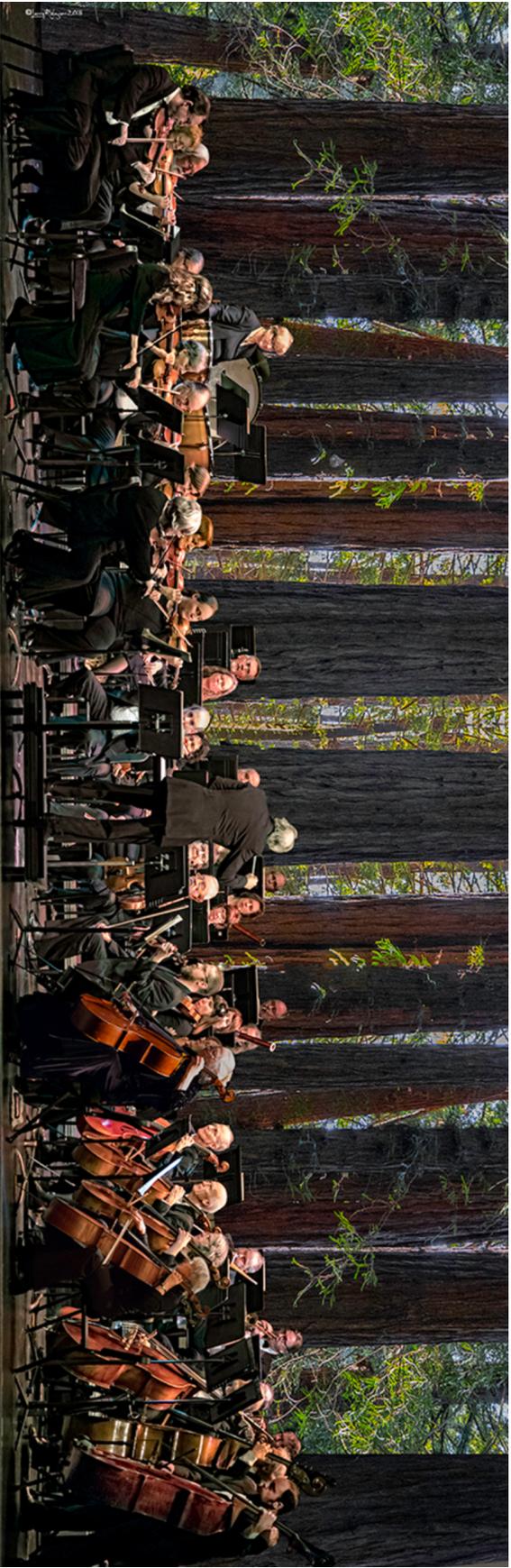
Garnish Daly

As a choir member, I appreciated that Dr. Pollack helped me express the emotion of the piece we were performing. One wise conductor said that we would understand how to be directed by Allan if we understood that he was deeply in love with every piece he conducted.

Tanya Smart



Apple Hall, Boonville Fairgrounds, 1994-97



When I moved to Mendocino in 1988, I didn't think I would have many opportunities to play the trumpet on the coast, but one of the first things I did when I arrived was find my way into Symphony of the Redwoods with Allan Pollack as Conductor and Music Director. To my delight, Allan was clearly a knowledgeable and experienced musician, and thus began my many years with Symphony of the Redwoods with Allan as its musical leader. With his dedication to bringing good music to the coast, and his connections to the community, I doubt that the orchestra could have had a better music director. It's been many years since I moved away, but recently I came back to play a few gigs with the orchestra and it became evident that the orchestra had matured in so many ways under Allan's leadership.

Thank you, Allan, for your many years with Symphony of the Redwoods..... we are all better as a result.

James Rodseth

Allan taught me a great deal in my years with SOR. He's given me a greater appreciation and understanding of the symphonic repertoire, about my own playing, and about listening and being part of an ensemble. I've appreciated his sharp wit, his clear vision, his dedication and patience, and his incredible talent. His shoes will be hard to fill. He's been one of my better teachers, for sure, and I am grateful. He will be sorely missed!
Patricia Jekel

Allan taught us a lot. From Allan I will always remember: "It's better to play the wrong note at the right time, than the right note at the wrong time." This also shows Allan's sense of humor.
Joselyn Bartlett

Allan always inspired us to do better. He told us that passion was the most important thing. He tried to get that out of us by inspiration. He changed us.
Jeff Grant

Every Symphony rehearsal was a music lesson. In between our efforts to improve a tricky passage, he often tossed off deep and meaningful insights about the composer or the music. I learned something new at every rehearsal. The passion he got out of us in performance could be astonishing – we gave back to him what he gave to us.
Jason Kirkman

When Lisa and I moved to the north coast nearly 30 years ago, I was completely oblivious to the thriving musical community that existed here. In time, I would meet so many people who have become such dear, treasured friends and musical colleagues, one of whom is Allan. I remember reading about SOR even before I started playing there, and was intrigued by their conductor, Allan Pollack. Allan was a clarinetist who had studied with Rossario Mazzeo, who had played under Kousevitsky in the Boston Symphony, and is well known and revered in the 'clarinet' community. Thinking back, that introduction gave me just a tiny glimpse of someone who would wind up having a profound influence on my musical life. Over the years, Allan has been so kind, nurturing and generous to give me so many wonderful opportunities; as a soloist with SOR and the honor of playing in the MMF orchestra for 25 years. It's impossible for me to express the gratitude I have for these remarkable experiences...

Allan is one of the hardest-working people I know. The Friday-night and Saturday-morning rehearsals for SOR were often incredibly grueling and demanding. Allan always emanated energy, confidence, and inspiration to a group of players who often-times had never played with each other, or were unfamiliar with the repertoire. But without fail, Allan always delivered electrifying performances, for both audience and orchestra members.

For me, this past year has been a time of reflection and introspection. One of the most difficult aspects of this time period has been the loss rehearsing and performing. It hasn't been all bad-I've practiced diligently and the time off from performing has given me the opportunity to rediscover pieces I haven't looked at since I was in school. Although I am saddened that Allan has decided to step down from SOR, I completely understand and wish him all the very best in what lies ahead. As the saying goes "When one door closes, another one opens"...

Eric Kritz

Allan has been able to balance with grace the narrow rope bridge between two wildnesses: the jungle of the inexperienced and the maladroit and the entanglement of the exacting and the excellent. He has been able to balance the reining together of disparate abilities and obdurate characters, who give him respect, into a compelling result artistically and cohesively. The love of music is so prominent in him that the players understand their mistakes are not being judged by whether they play correctly or incorrectly but rather are inspired to play together as well as they can to make a beautiful whole. It is wonderful to work with such an intelligent, erudite, sensitive and poetic musician. There's frosting on that cake, too: he's also very very funny!

Virginia Sharkey

I especially think of Allan getting horrible sounds on Friday night rehearsals and being able to transform them magically to a reasonable concert by Saturday night. I think of his energy and enthusiasm, as well as very thorough preparation, and feel he has taught me a lot over the years. I can't imagine anyone else having the same level of dedication to the process. He has certainly improved the level of the orchestra tremendously and has been the reason fine players from out of the area have been willing to travel long distances to play.

Marcia Lotter

Every concert was a charge to victory. Allan has a unique ability to rally the forces, with humor, exuberance, and passion. With Allan at the helm, the community, the orchestra, and the audience came together in a triumph greater than the sum of its parts. Mostly, we had a hell of a lot of fun.
Tammie Dyer

I had known, of course, that music is more than playing the right note at the right time, but it was Allan who conveyed to us the meaning, the shape and intention of the music. He did so with hard work, humor and frequent—sometimes maddening—repetitions until that shape and meaning was achieved, and we all felt it. Out of that work the music emerged. I left each rehearsal with gratitude, each performance with joy at what we had collectively achieved. The years I was privileged to play under Allan's direction enriched my life and love of music immeasurably. Thank you, Allan, from my heart.
Paula Mulligan

I have loved playing with Allan as conductor because he is inspirational. He knows his scores inside out and he knows what he wants from the orchestra. He is honest about what sounds good and what sounds bad. A compliment from Allan is a big deal. Best of all, Allan is not afraid to make fun of himself. What a guy!
Abigail Summers

What I thought was outstanding about Allan's conducting of *Symphony of the Redwoods* was how he would bring the music to us, with focus not only on how we played our individual parts but on how a piece worked as a whole. Sometimes the inner workings of a passage as he brought it out would really be a revelation. I want to thank you, Allan, for sharing your love of the music with us.

Alan Kendall

Since I began playing cello as an adult here in Fort Bragg, Allan is the first and most influential conductor I have ever known. How lucky I was to find this little community orchestra with such a great teacher. I'll never forget one of my first rehearsals, when I looked at the music and told Allan I didn't think I could do it. He said not to worry about it, that we'd take it apart and work on it bit by bit, and that it would all come together in the end. And amazingly, it did! It was hard work, but fulfilling and rewarding. I am so grateful for all the wonderful years of learning and striving to make music. Thank you, Allan!

Sandy Cosca

Performing under Allan was worth so much more than simply performing in a couple concerts a few times a year. The memories of working with Allan continue to inspire my work with music as a student, and as a leader.

Holly MacDonell, Viola, McKinleyville

Although I wish Allen a very happy retirement from Symphony of the Redwoods, I will miss him! My many memories of our concert weekends are filled with fondness and great appreciation. Upon arriving for the Friday evening rehearsal prior to the concert, I knew it would be an exciting and demanding adventure. I have always admired the way Allen raised the bar, took the lead, and carried us forth, ultimately resulting in performances we were all proud to be a part of. Everyone in the orchestra took on this challenge, striving to achieve excellence! Such teamwork!

Thank you, Allan!

Kathleen Lane Reynolds

I've had the privilege of playing under Allan's baton for nearly 30 years. To play with the orchestra required a two-hour commute to rehearsal for me. Allan's rehearsals were always constructive, educational, and fun which made the drive always worthwhile. His strong passion for music and vast knowledge of the repertoire would inspire me to play my best and I loved that he never let the orchestra settle for mediocre, but had us strive for excellence. I have so many fond memories playing with Allan, but what stands out is the faith that Allan had in my playing ability. Allan was able to give me constructive criticism without damaging my fragile ego; he helped me become a better and more confident player and leader in the wind section. I also experienced some pretty magical moments on stage and at times felt a strong connection with Allan while playing solos and following his expressive conducting. So many magical moments. Allan's high-energy, musical expertise, compassion and great sense of humor will be sorely missed and I wish him the best in his continued music endeavors.

Beth Aiken

There are so many things I could write about Allan, but of all of his many remarkable qualities it is his gift of expression that I appreciate the most. Many conductors are all about technical perfection or putting on a show for the audience, but Allan has an uncanny ability to awaken the very soul of the music in both the players and the audience that has kept us all coming back for years on end. Yet it is his refreshing and pin-pointing way with words that rivals even his expressive presence on the podium. Anyone who knows him certainly appreciates his unique and effortless way of seasoning his comments with a humorous twist, yet his true gift is his ability to capture an obscure musical concept or effect with just a phrase - a couple of words that simply nail it for everyone. Many times I have scribbled his quips and comments in the margins of my music so that I can remember them and use them with my own students. So Allan, for the treasures of your mind, both musical and otherwise, and your amazing ability and willingness to share them with the rest of us for all these years, I thank you!

Randy Masselink

I would look forward to concerts under Maestro Allan Pollack because I knew the programming would be dynamic, challenging, and enjoyable. He did a great job garnering the collective energy and talents of his players. Thanks for all your years of effort and service, Allan!

Best wishes, Eric Price, Occasional principal bass, Martínez

If you bring the level of passion you showed for the orchestra to your post-orchestra life, you will enjoy a rich retirement. Thank you for your inspiration from the podium.

Elaine Herrick, Bass, Napa

Thank you, Allan, for inspiring me to look for and appreciate "pianissimo" moments amidst the chaos and noisiness in life.

Richard Chang, Bass, Angwin

Thank you for the time and energy you put into score study and developing your interpretation of the music we played. It was always clear that you had a vision of what the piece should be, and I really value that. Thanks!

Cindy Moyer

Even though you are not a New Yorker, I always felt like you were, with your wit and, yes, a bit of attitude. And I enjoyed your musicality.

Best, Karen Davy

Dear Allan,

Thank you for a lifetime of sharing your deep musical inspiration with us all, and for fostering community of the highest order. Nothing brings us together like music, and it's been a pleasure and a joy to know you and to play under your baton in Symphony of the Redwoods and during our early years in San Francisco. Fondest wishes on your retirement. We will miss you very much but will think of you often!

In harmony and with gratitude,

Stephanie Costanza

Best wishes Allan! Your leading Symphony of the Redwoods has made every concert set special, and totally worth the drive up from Sonoma County. My son loves the educational way in which you talk about the music before performing it. Keep up the magic, whatever you do next. You'll be missed!

Ruth Wilson, Horn, Rohnert Park

Dear Allan,

Thank you for enriching all of our musical lives - all of these years. It's hard to imagine a music director/conductor who could care more about the music and the musical experience of the concert-goers and musicians.

Sending our love & best wishes,

Bill & Sally Fletcher

Allan,

I want to thank you for being such an inspirational teacher to me. You created a "professional level" community orchestra, which I had the privilege of being a member of as a Mendocino coast community member. I will definitely miss your dramatizations of how to play certain passages, such as the little mouse Jerry sneaking past Tom the cat. You really know how to communicate to musicians to inspire gorgeous music.

Beverly Karkruff

Dear Allan,

I am incredibly grateful for your untiring devotion to bring classical music to the Mendocino Coast. Starting when I was a middle school-aged student, you engrained upon me a commitment to the highest expectation for performance with Symphony of the Redwoods, the Mendocino Music Festival, and local chamber groups. This formed the cornerstone of my musical education in a way that would have otherwise been unachievable in such a rural area. I remember the kind letter of recommendation you wrote for me as a high school student that helped me to win a Mendocino Rotary scholarship for college. In college, medical school and residency, I played under many different community orchestra conductors and found that your musical expression as a conductor is second to none. One of my greatest joys of returning to the Mendocino Coast has been to participate again in making music under your baton. Your retirement is well deserved and you will be missed.

Sincerely, Zoe Duff Berna MD

To Allan,

Well, you really are irreplaceable!

How very sad that you are leaving the Symphony. So many times throughout the past years I have wanted to say THANK YOU for making music happen here. I want to tell you how much I have appreciated playing music with you and learning from you. You have given immensely to me, and to this community. And, I guess you really deserve a rest.

I hope you enjoy the time to take it easier and to really enjoy creating new music.

Lorraine Duff

Allan,

Thank you for playing a pivotal role in my life with music.

You provided support and encouragement.

You sharpened my appreciation of orchestral music.

You gave me the opportunity to play in an orchestra, which came with free music lessons!

You greatly improved my musicianship.

You conducted thrilling concerts I was privileged to be part of.

Most of all, thank you for sharing your joy of music with me, and with all of us.

Very best wishes on your retirement from Symphony of the Redwoods,

Kathy O'Shea

April 25, 2021

Dear Allan,

About five years ago you told the SOR board you had a five-year plan. I guess this is it! You can finally enjoy family and do what YOU want to do, not being driven by what you are supposed to do. And now it is bucket list time, so don't wait!

I've been thinking about how I came to know you. It started with our move to Fort Bragg in Sept. 1990, when I transferred from CDF Sacramento; me with a new baby on the way. I knew Gail Lucas through Sierra Club and she encouraged me to join. Then Cordelia Shampanier worked on me a bit, but I wanted a music break. It wasn't until the following summer that I attended MMF's performance of Magic Flute that I knew I couldn't sit out another season. Also a new baby is a great reason to get out of the house.

In Sept 1991, I walked into your rehearsal (at the grammar school?) with sticks and a viola and said, "what do you need?". And you picked timpani. And that was it. It took 2 years before Walter Green asked me to play in the MMF and his operas, and the rest is history.

The Albin family participated in many of your productions. Little Alex (now 30) was a child in Showboat and played trombone in the Pops and also percussion for SOR. My daughter Jamie (now 37) played a child in Carmen and later she played assistant 1st horn in MMF as well as 2nd horn in SOR during her brief return from college. My husband Doug was in numerous opera productions, SOR choirs, etc. Our favorite was Fanciulla del West.

Specific memories? Having fun when Susan performed with SOR; setting up a drum set for little Julian, who was using a cardboard box for a bass drum. (And didn't we sign him up for soccer?) You were a good dad! I enjoyed gossiping while stuffing envelopes with you and Susan. And I loved catching up with Julian when I picked him up at the airport while you were dealing with a cancelled singer for Big Band night.

Over the span of 30 years—you welcomed my getting involved with the board and let me do what I do. I think of all those countless fundraisers, soccer dinners, and plans to save the MMF tent; lots of good memories and stories and you are in the center of them all.

You will be sorely missed by our symphony musicians. Musicians want to play for you. That's why they come from 5 counties. Twice I remember Ukiah Symphony musicians (including board members) chose SOR over Ukiah when there was a conflict of concert dates. Why? Because rehearsals with you are a wonderful learning experience. Concerts are secondary.

Who else would tell us to "swing" when playing Beethoven? You are a genius musician...you explain and demonstrate important chords and melodies by isolating instruments in certain passages. You tell funny stories about your former life doing gigs with clarinet and saxophone; you had us play your composition about the Boonville Fair (so fun!), and you bring amazing soloists to perform at discount prices because they want to play for you.

For me personally, I thank you for the countless musical challenges, holding me accountable to be prepared, and helping me be the best I can be. Thank you for inviting me to join the SOR and MMF boards, which developed into some interesting volunteer avenues for me, including my dive into politics!

You have influenced so many lives, including the many students that you welcomed into the orchestra; Zoe Berna and countless others, many of whom became music majors. They owe you a lot because you taught them to listen and appreciate classical music like no one else.

So please, you and Susan should stick to the plan to have fun doing what you want to do. Grandchildren are in your future I hope. I hope you will stay connected with your Mendocino family though the Music Festival and all that entails.

Fondly with tons of hugs,

Tess Albin-Smit

(Aka "Tympani" Tess)



Dear Allan,

What a surprise to receive the announcement of your resignation as music director and conductor of Symphony of the Redwoods. I want you to know what a special experience it has been for me to play in your orchestra for the past twenty years.

You have a unique personality and a marvelous way of conducting which serve to encourage and inspire the players to produce their finest. From my perspective at the end of our section in the center of the symphony, I was greatly impressed with your rehearsal techniques. I also enjoyed the marvelous wind players directly behind and your communication with them. Your knowledge of the score and how to get results in such a short time was beyond belief!

Thank you for your great efforts to produce first class performances on the Mendocino Coast. You will be missed but always remembered.

*With love and good wishes,
Mary Jerland, Violin, Eureka*

Thank you, Allan, for your 32 years of inspiration and guidance on our musical adventure!

*With deep appreciation,
Francis Rutherford*

Allan, thank you for the many years of bringing your superb musicianship and your commitment to excellence to Symphony of the Redwoods. And especially, thank you for the amazing musical opportunities you have given me, both in conducting and performing with the Symphony, which have enriched my life so much. I am forever grateful.

Love, Carolyn

Thank you, Allan, for all the music over all the years, for relentlessly stretching our skills and opening our ears at rehearsals, and then, with the work under our belts, inspiring us to play our hearts out at the concerts. Emerging at 10pm from rehearsals on rainy Friday nights, more than once I marveled how, hidden away in a high school band room in a tiny rural town, our small but mighty band of musicians negotiated our way through human history via the works of the great composers. You steered our craft with passion and determination, and your pursuit of excellence has made us all better musicians. It's been thrilling to work at this level and I thank you for the tremendous gift you've given me, the orchestra, and our community.

With love and gratitude,

Marcia S

Allan,

It is with a heavy heart that I accepted your resignation on March 26th on behalf of the Symphony Board of Directors. It has been so many years and we will miss you and your leadership greatly. In those times when I would make the long drive late at night from Sacramento or Berkeley in order to play in the orchestra, I remember thinking that it was well worth it because we had Allan to lead us. It is a fact that you've always been very much loved by the whole orchestra. You have been instrumental to our growth, and thanks to your leadership, this small rural community has been blessed with glorious symphony concerts for years.

It has been a joy.

Eva von Bahr



allan our dear friend
your good taste your fine style left
us all so enriched

with love we know how
much you put into our care
beauty eloquence

inspiring us all
gorgeous sublime generous
scores beauty revealed

thank you, barbara d'augelli

Boundless appreciation & standing ovation to you, Allan---
world-classiest rural maestro, molto vivace dancer on the podium, savvy
educator, soulful interpreter, tuner of chaos, herder of cats.
Northwest Nowhere has been enormously graced.
May the music continue to pour through you.
May whatever is next for you achieve liftoff.
Go well, be well, with our bravos ringing in your ears.

Liz Helenchild





"Moon Setting over Albion Bridge" by Rita Crane © 2011

