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## **Julian Wachner to Step Down As Music Director of The Washington Chorus in June 2017**

Washington (DC) - Julian Wachner plans to step down from his position as Music Director of The Washington Chorus (TWC) at the end of the Chorus' 2016-2017 season, capping 10 years of leadership of the organization. Wachner also holds the position of Director of Music and the Arts at Trinity Wall Street in New York, and is a renowned and increasingly sought-after conductor, composer, and keyboard artist. This decision was prompted primarily by Wachner's expansion of the Music and Arts programs at Trinity Wall Street and by the increasing demand for his work as a conductor and composer, including planned operatic and other works.

Wachner said, "It's been an incredible nine years with The Washington Chorus, and I look forward to celebrating my tenth and final season next year. I'm so pleased with the enormous growth and development of the ensemble; from an artistic and musical point of view; organizationally and fiscally; and through the chorus' initiatives in the community with the ever increasing performance schedule of its Outreach Singers and our programs educating the next generation. As my own career as a composer and conductor increasingly expands, I look forward to future opportunities for staying connected with the incredible singers, instrumentalists, board members and the loyal audience that make up the family that is The Washington Chorus."

Wachner's association with TWC began in the Chorus' 2007-2008 season. Under Wachner's leadership, TWC has grown musically and has greatly expanded its and its audiences' experience with and understanding of choral music. In addition to continuing the Chorus' tradition of presenting well-received performances of the standard choral repertoire, particularly including large-scale works such as Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Bach's *Mass in B minor*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Rachmaninoff's *Vespers*, Wachner also achieved the following key accomplishments:

**"Essential" Series:** Wachner enlarged the choral experience for TWC audiences by offering the very popular "Essential" series, in which each concert is devoted to the "essential" works (often including semi-staged operatic scenes) of a single composer. Under Wachner's baton, the Chorus has performed the "essential" works of Puccini, Rachmaninoff, Mahler, Wagner, Bernstein and Verdi.

**New Music for a New Age Series:** In 2008, Wachner inaugurated the Chorus' award-winning New Music for a New Age series, which presents the works of individual living composers in a workshop environment. As part of this program, the Chorus has presented works of Trevor Weston, Nico Muhly, Paola Prestini, Elena Ruehr and Tarik O'Regan. This year the Chorus is presenting works of Luna Pearl Woolf as its NMNA offering. Characteristically, Wachner, a longstanding champion of new music, has also used the NMNA series as a pedagogical tool to sharpen the skills of his singers by exposing them to the complex, sometimes unintuitive rhythms and tonalities inherent in this challenging repertoire, making them better all-round musicians.

***Inside the Score:*** In addition to the workshop-like NMNA presentations, Wachner has offered a series of symposia prior to major concerts in which the work to be performed is explored in detail informally in a free discussion designed to bring the concert audience to a deeper understanding of the work.

***Collaborations:*** During Wachner's tenure, TWC has performed with the National Symphony Orchestra, the NSO Pops, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, The Trinity Baroque Orchestra, NOVUS NY, and other groups. Most notably, last year TWC joined with the Choir of Trinity Wall Street and NOVUS NY to present at Carnegie Hall a rarely-performed masterwork by Alberto Ginastera, the gigantic *Turbæ ad passionem gregorianam*. The concert garnered rave reviews.

***Recordings:*** During Wachner's tenure, TWC produced its best-selling Christmas recording, *Christmas With the Washington Chorus*. TWC also performed on a recently-released Naxos recording of Bernstein's Symphony No. 3 (*Kaddish*) with the BSO under the baton of Marin Alsop.

***Junior Washington Chorus:*** Wachner has continued and expanded TWC's long tradition of working with high school students by founding the Junior Washington Chorus, which gives outstanding local high school singers the opportunity to sing with TWC during its regular season and to work individually with TWC's Music Director.

The Chairman of the Chorus' Board of Trustees, Chris Denby said, "Julian's tenure with The Washington Chorus has been filled with great artistic highs and ambitious programming. The Chorus has never sounded better and is in a position to tackle any of the most challenging classics or complex contemporary pieces. The organization is immensely grateful to Julian for what he has accomplished and looks forward to a strong final season with him as well exciting collaborations in the future."

Dianne Peterson, TWC Executive Director offered, "Working with Julian has been one of the greatest joys of my time with The Washington Chorus. I was dazzled the first time I saw him work his magic many years ago, and these sparks of genius have permeated performances of even seemingly impossible programs we have tackled over the years. Julian is just an incredible force! I am so very proud to have had him as a partner in the journey of the last decade."

Andy Ireland, a longtime TWC singer and Board Trustee, said, "It has been our privilege to enjoy Julian's towering musicality, huge podium energy and larger-than-life personality for ten years. Julian is a great teacher, and we look forward to building on the skills he has instilled in us in the future with our new music director."

The TWC Board will begin its search for a new music director promptly to ensure a smooth transition.