



The Washington Chorus Announces 2018/19 Season

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The Washington Chorus begins its 58th season on Sunday, November 18, 2018 with performances of Johannes Brahms' magnificent *A German Requiem*, Op. 45 and Benjamin Britten's *Ballad of Heroes* at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. Brahms' beloved work looks to console the living, while Britten's *Ballad* urges the listener to remember the sacrifices made on their behalf by soldiers killed in war. Artistic Director Christopher Bell conceived the program to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day (November 11, 1918), which marked the end of World War I, now recognized as Veterans Day in the United States. Christopher Bell conducts the Chorus and orchestra. Soloists include Laura Choi Stuart, soprano and Rob McGinness, baritone.

December brings the return of the Chorus' enormously popular holiday program, *A Candlelight Christmas*, which features traditional carols, contemporary compositions, and sing-alongs, accompanied by a brass ensemble and organ, and infused with Christopher Bell's audience-pleasing combination of reverence and revelry. These holiday concerts continue to grow in popularity, with last season's six concerts drawing more attendees than ever, including three sold-out performances. Performances take place at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall on December 7, 16, 22 and at the Music Center at Strathmore on December 20 and 21. Brand new in 2018 is a Christmas concert geared toward children and families, so carol-singers of all

ages can join the fun. The inaugural Special Family Concert will take place at George Mason University's Center for the Arts on December 23.

For the twenty-seventh year in a row, The Washington Chorus is inviting a local high school choir to join them on stage during these holiday concerts through its Side-by-Side program. The students will sing their own repertoire center stage, then join the Chorus for the duration of the concert. This season's participating school will be announced at a later date.

What better way to celebrate St. Patrick's Day than with The Washington Chorus and its Irish conductor Christopher Bell? On Sunday afternoon March 17th, the stage of the Kennedy Center Concert Hall will feature an Irish band, fiddlers, dancers, pipe players, and choral arrangements of Irish classics in a one-of-a-kind concert. A special homage to Christopher Bell's homeland, this concert is not to be missed.

The Washington Chorus ends its 2018-19 season on June 9th with a concert at National Presbyterian Church featuring two deeply moving choral works from the 20th century: Maurice Duruflé's *Requiem* and James MacMillan's *Cantos Sagrados*, both with organ accompaniment.

Duruflé's spellbinding *Requiem* bears the influences of French modernist composers, but its melodies, according to the composer, are "based exclusively on themes from the Gregorian funeral mass." The work's luxuriant tone has made it one of the most popular choral compositions written during the last century. It was published in 1948 and dedicated to his father's memory.

By his own account, MacMillan's goal in composing *Cantos Sagrados* was "to compose something which was both timeless and contemporary, both sacred and secular." The text combines Latin liturgy with poems by Ariel Dorfman

and Ana Maria Mendoza addressing political repression in Latin America. *Cantos Sagrados* was written in 1989 from a commission by the Scottish Chamber Choir (a group with whom The Washington Chorus' Artistic Director Christopher Bell has extensive experience). The work received its premiere in 1990 and the composer created an orchestrated version in 1997. The Chorus will perform the original version in this concert.

Throughout the 18/19 season, The Washington Chorus continues its role as major collaborator with the National Symphony Orchestra. In December, the Chorus joins the NSO for the annual *A Holiday Pops!* at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. This year's edition features Ashley Brown, the original Mary Poppins on Broadway, making her debut with the NSO on Friday, December 14, and Saturday December 15.

Later in the season, the Chorus and the NSO present the world premiere of Lera Auerbach's *Arctica* at the Kennedy Center on March 30. A co-commission by the NSO and The National Geographic Society, *Arctica* was inspired by Auerbach's travel to the Arctic and her conversations with Enric Sala, a National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence. This concert is part of the Kennedy Center's Direct Current Festival, which began last season with a mission to present contemporary, cutting-edge performers and repertoire. Teddy Abrams will conduct the NSO. During the inaugural Direct Current Festival in 2018, The Washington Chorus performed *Koyaanisqatsi* at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall with the Philip Glass Ensemble, receiving critical acclaim from the *Washington Post*.