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**DOUGLAS MEARS TO RETIRE AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
OF THE FAIRFAX CHORAL SOCIETY**

**PAUL LEAVITT, ACCLAIMED CONCERT PIANIST, ORGANIST, COMPOSER AND CONDUCTOR
NAMED INTERIM DIRECTOR**

**The Fairfax Choral Society to Perform a Celebratory Concert to Honor Dr. Mears, *Bravi, Tutti!*
Sunday, November 12 at National Presbyterian Church Featuring the Symphonic Chorus
Master Singers, Concert Choir, Organist Eric Plutz, Soprano Natalie Conte and Baritone Matthew Irish**

Douglas Mears will retire as Artistic Director of the Fairfax Choral Society after a final celebratory concert at National Presbyterian Church on Sunday, November 12, 2017, at 5 pm, followed by a post-concert farewell reception. For 37 years Doug has been instrumental, through his inspiring musical leadership, in bringing the Fairfax Choral Society to the forefront of Washington choruses. He joined FCS in 1980 as accompanist, shortly thereafter became Associate Director, and was named Artistic Director in 1991. Acclaimed concert pianist, organist, composer and conductor Paul Leavitt has been named Interim Director of the Fairfax Choral Society.

“As Artistic Director Doug has shaped and polished the Fairfax Choral Society Symphonic Chorus. His talent, passion and creative programming have inspired and educated our singers. Monday night rehearsals, loaded with lessons in musicianship, expression, composers’ perspectives and philosophy have been truly fulfilling. During his tenure he also provided the chorus with extraordinary experiences with guest composers and conductors. Each performance left us hungry for the next challenge. Doug will be missed by all of us at FCS,” said long-time member and Board Chair Barbara Tuset.

Under Doug’s leadership, the Fairfax Choral Society has enjoyed working with many of the world’s truly outstanding choral conductors and composers. He held a four-day residency with National Medal of Arts recipient Morten Lauridsen, including a composition master class, a choral festival for high school and college students featuring the U.S. Air Force Singing Sergeants, film screening and lecture, discussion and concert (March 2014), celebrated the 50th Anniversary of FCS with a commission by Z. Randall Stroope, a retrospective concert, and recorded a CD during the 2011-12 season. In May 2009 FCS presented a lecture and concert, “An Evening with Sir David Wilcocks,” directed by the acclaimed British conductor. At the request of maestro Marvin Hamlisch, the FCS Symphonic Chorus performed with the National Symphony Orchestra as part of their Pops Series concert, *It’s De-Lovely: A Tribute to Cole Porter* (September 2004) and again in *Happy Holiday* (December 2005). A highlight of 2004 was a residency culminating in a concert entitled “An Afternoon with Paul Salamunovich.” Most recently Doug led the Symphonic Chorus and Concert Choir in a performance at Carnegie Hall (March 2015). The Fairfax Choral Society also performed the world-premieres of Randoll Alan Bass’ *Laudem Nativitatis* (December 2015), Travis Whaley’s *A Christmas Carol*, winner of the Choral Composition Contest for Young Composers (December, 2013), Z. Randall Stroope’s *Garcilaso’s Sonnets*, commissioned in celebration for FCS’s 50th Anniversary (May, 2012) and Joseh McIntyre’s *Missa Brevis* (March 2000); as well as the Washington premiere of Steve Dobrogosz’s *Requiem*, with the Amadeus Orchestra (April, 2013), Mack Wilberg’s *Requiem* under world-renowned conductor Dr. Craig Jessop (November, 2008) and Handel’s newly discovered *Gloria*, featuring soprano Dorothy Kingston (November, 2001). As Artistic Director of the FCS, Doug brought the Symphonic Chorus on tours to England, performing in

Cambridge, Canterbury Cathedral, and London and France, performing at the cathedrals of Notre Dame de Paris, Chartres, Reims and Le Mans.

Dr. Mears completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the prestigious Juilliard School in New York City and earned a Doctorate of Organ Performance from The Catholic University of America. He also received a diploma from the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, after studying with the late celebrated composer and teacher, Nadia Boulanger. In 1991, Dr. Mears earned a second Doctorate, in choral conducting, from the renowned Eastman School of Music under Donald Neuen. In addition to serving as the FCS Artistic Director, he is the Director of Music at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, MD. As a composer and arranger, he has published numerous works for chorus, handbells, and organ.

Concert pianist, organist, composer and conductor Paul Leavitt will begin as Interim Director of the Fairfax Choral Society in November 2017, leading the Symphonic Chorus holiday concert, *This Christmastide*, on December 2 at Our Lady of Good Council in Vienna, Virginia. He will go on to prepare the Chorus for their March 10, 2018 performance of Mozart's *Requiem* and May 12 concert, *A Night at the Opera*, with the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra as part of their 60th Anniversary Gala both at the GMU Center for the Art Concert Hall in Fairfax City.

Dave Gerber, head of the FCS Interim Director Search Committee said, "Several exceptional directors expressed keen interest in the position. Paul's continuing accomplishments as a composer, director and musician plus his flexibility during this important transition for the Symphonic Chorus made him the ideal choice. The Symphonic Chorus will thrive under Paul's artistic direction in the 2017-18 season."

Paul Leavitt made his début as a concert pianist at 15 with the Albany Symphony Orchestra. As a scholarship student he received a Master's from the Juilliard School and a Bachelor's from SUNY Purchase. Laureate of the International Steinway Competition (1989) in Paris, France, Mr. Leavitt performs regularly in Europe and the United States as a concert pianist and organist.

Mr. Leavitt has been full-time director of Music and Arts at Church of the Reformation on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC since 2002 and director of the Chorale and Orchestra of the Friday Morning Music Club since August 2014. As a composer he has produced a considerable body of work for chorus, theater, dance, film and piano, and collaborated on many artistic projects combining theater, music and dance. His choral works have been performed by the Choral Arts Society of Washington, the Cathedral Choral Society, and the New York City Master Chorale among others, in concert venues such as Alice Tully Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Washington National Cathedral and l'Eglise St. Sulpice in Paris.

Cecelia Porter, contributing critic for *The Washington Post* said, "Paul Leavitt's *Requiem* should belong in every chorus's repertoire. It is deeply expressive and skillfully written, and successfully combines the sense of overwhelming grief and consolation that suffuse the requiems of Mozart, Verdi, Brahms and Fauré." Premiered in Washington, DC in 2009, Mr. Leavitt will be conducting the premiere of *Requiem* in Hamburg, Germany in October 2017 with the Musici Emeriti Orchestra, and is preparing a festival chorus for another premiere with the Lithuanian National Orchestra under the direction of Robertas Severnikas.

Discography: *Requiem Live* (DVD) (2011), *Requiem and Other Choral Works* (2010) Chopin: 4 Ballades, Barcarolle and Sonata in B minor (2007) and *Muse en Scène* (1995). Choral compositions are available through Augsburg Fortress Press, Yelton Rhodes Music and Lumenaria Music Publishing. He's currently preparing a recording of the complete piano works of Maurice Ravel.

The Fairfax Choral Society is one of the largest choral groups in Northern Virginia, with eleven ensembles and more than fifteen musicianship classes providing opportunities to more than 300 choral singers from preschool through adult. The Fairfax Choral Society's mission has remained the same for the past 56 years to enrich lives through the performance, education, and appreciation of choral art. The Symphonic Chorus is comprised of approximately 100 volunteers who audition annually. FCS has received rave reviews for its performance of

choral masterworks in collaboration with the Fairfax Symphony, Cathedral Choral Society, Choral Arts Society, National Symphony Orchestra, City of Fairfax Band, and other arts organizations in the region. *The Washington Post* has described the FCS Chorus as "...confident and polished...this chorus produced waves of gorgeous tones and a rich tapestry of color...the effect of some very skillful conducting." Auditions for FCS Symphonic Chorus and Youth Choruses will be held late August and early September. For more information, or to purchase season or single tickets visit our website, www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org.

FAIRFAX CHORAL SOCIETY 2017-18 SEASON

BRAVI, TUTTI! A CELEBRATION TO HONOR DR. DOUGLAS MEARS

Sunday, November 12, 2017, 5 PM | National Presbyterian Church, 4101 Nebraska Ave., NW Washington, DC 20016
SYMPHONIC CHORUS | MASTER SINGERS | CONCERT CHOIR and
ERIC PLUTZ, ORGANIST | NATALIE CONTE, SOPRANO | MATTHEW IRISH, BARITONE

THIS CHRISTMASTIDE

Saturday, December 2, 2017, 7:30 PM | Our Lady of Good Council Church, 8601 Wolftrap Rd., Vienna, VA 22182
SYMPHONIC CHORUS | MASTER SINGERS | CONCERT CHOIR

CHRISTMAS YOUTH CONCERT

Tuesday, December 5, 2017, 7 PM | Annandale United Methodist Church, 6935 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003
ANNANDALE YOUTH CHORUSES

SHINE

Saturday, December 9, 2017, 1 PM | Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Rd., SW, Vienna, VA 22180
CENTREVILLE AND VIENNA YOUTH CHORUSES

CHRISTMAS IN FAIRFAX

Saturday, December 16, 2018, 7 PM | Fairfax High School, 3501 Rebel Run, Fairfax, VA 22030
SYMPHONIC CHORUS WITH CITY OF FAIRFAX BAND

MOZART REQUIEM

Saturday, March 10, 2018, 8 PM | GMU's Center for the Performing Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Dr. Fairfax, VA 22030
SYMPHONIC CHORUS | MUSIC & ARTS CHORUS | FAIRFAX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

HARMONIOUS ART: EMERALD ISLE

Saturday, March 17, 2018, 1 PM | Annandale United Methodist Church, 6935 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003
DA CAPO AND LYRIC YOUTH CHORUSES

POETRY OF MUSIC

Tuesday, March 20, 2018, 7 PM | Annandale United Methodist Church, 6935 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003
MASTER SINGERS | CONCERT CHOIR | TREBLE CHOIRS

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Saturday, May 12, 2018, 8 PM | GMU's Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Dr. Fairfax, VA 22030
SYMPHONIC CHORUS | MUSIC & ARTS CHORUS | FAIRFAX SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
FSO'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CELEBRATION WITH
DANIELLE TALAMANTES, SOPRANO, and CARL TANNER, TENOR

SPRING FOLLIES!

Friday, May 18, 2018, 7 PM | NVCC's Ernst Community Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Tpke, Annandale, VA 22003
ANNANDALE CAMPUS YOUTH CHORUSES AND SELECT SOLO ACTS

NONSENSE

June 2, 2018 1 PM | Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Rd., SW, Vienna, VA 22180
CENTREVILLE AND VIENNA YOUTH CHORUSES