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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Stephen Alltop, Music Director & Conductor
Announces the**



**Choral Classics Concert
Saturday, March 10, 2018**

The Apollo Chorus of Chicago presents Verdi's Requiem, the greatest choral masterpiece of all time.

Chicago, Ill. — One of the most renowned musical organizations in the nation, [The Apollo Chorus](#) of Chicago, celebrates 146 years of making music with its 2017-2018 season featuring an exhilarating lineup of choral blockbusters. Following a season-opening preview concert, the Apollo Chorus will return to Holy Family Church for **Choral Classics: Verdi's Requiem**.

"The Apollo Chorus is honored to perform at Holy Family Church as the parish celebrates 160 years in the community," Apollo's Executive Director Sheila Lyons says. "As the longest running choral group in Chicago, the Apollo Chorus salutes Holy Family's strong history of serving their neighborhood, as Apollo continues to provide a rich cultural service to the city's many neighborhoods and suburbs with its wide-ranging season."

Known for its masterful presentations of some of the most beloved choral repertoire, The Apollo Chorus again collaborates with the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra for its performance of **Verdi's Requiem** on Saturday, March 10, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. With its intimate solo passages and towering choral settings, this venerable masterwork is still unsurpassed, 144 years after its first performance. The Apollo Chorus will be joined by a truly outstanding quartet of soloists: soprano Sarah Gartshore, mezzo-soprano Lauren Decker, tenor Scott Ramsay, and bass-baritone Sam Handley.

Canadian soprano **Sarah Gartshore** was recently described by the Chicago Tribune as “particularly impressive” and possessing a “rich, shining soprano” after performances with Music of the Baroque and the Apollo Chorus of Chicago. Her performance of excerpts from Stravinsky’s *The Rake’s Progress* with the Richmond Symphony (VA) inspired the Times-Dispatch to write, “Soprano Sarah Gartshore sang the arias with strong characterization, full-bodied tone and unusually clear diction, promising some fine portrayals of Anne Trulove in future productions of this opera.” As a Santa Fe Apprentice Artist, Ms. Gartshore made her debut with Santa Fe Opera as the First Lady in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*. Her portrayal of the desperate Magda, described by Opera Canada as “startlingly dramatic” was a highlight of Chamber Opera Chicago’s recent production of Menotti’s *The Consul*. Career highlights include a Ravinia Festival debut with Music of the Baroque performing Handel’s *Israel in Egypt*, a debut with the Grammy nominated Chicago Chamber Musicians singing Scarlatti’s *Su le sponde del Tebro*, her Symphony Center debut with the Apollo Chorus performing Brahms’ *Requiem*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with American Opera Group, Micaëla in Bizet’s *Carmen* with Chamber Opera Chicago, Santuzza in Mascagni’s *Cavalleria Rusticana* with the Skokie Valley Symphony (IL), the title role in the Chicago premiere of Barber’s *Vanessa* with Chamber Opera Chicago, and Brahms’ *Requiem* with the Kingston Symphony (ON).

A second-year member of The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, contralto **Lauren Decker** recently received, for the second consecutive year, an Encouragement Award at the Upper Midwest Region Finals of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Professional engagements include covering the role of Mary/*The Flying Dutchman* at Florentine Opera Company in Milwaukee, where she has also been heard in opera scenes with Kalliope Vocal Arts. A Wisconsin native, Decker holds a B.F.A. degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has participated in the Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto in Italy and, for two summers, Dolora Zajick’s Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, as well as the American Wagner Project (Washington, D.C.), where she was a featured recital artist in 2015 and 2016, and the Up North Vocal Institute (Boyer Falls, Michigan), performing Sally/Barber’s *A Hand of Bridge*. The contralto received third place in the Senior Women Division of the Wisconsin National Association of Teachers of Singing Competition. During the 2016/17 season at Lyric Decker was heard in *Die Zauberflöte*. In the current season she appears in *Rigoletto*, *Die Walküre*, and *I Puritani*.

Tenor **Scott Ramsay** is highly regarded by opera companies and symphony orchestras across the globe for his dynamic performances in repertoire ranging from bel canto to the 21st Century. Engagements during the 2016/17 season include Wilhelm Dantine in Philip Glass’s *The Perfect American* at Chicago Opera Theatre & Long Beach Opera; Don Jose in *Carmen* with the Santa Monica College; and concerts with the Des Moines Symphony in Beethoven’s *Symphony No.9* & the Rogue Valley Symphony in Beethoven’s *Choral Fantasy* and Mozart’s *Requiem*. Recent successes include his return to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra as Narraboth in Strauss’ *Salome*; Portland Opera debut as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*; Rodolfo in *La Boheme* for MusicArtes, Inc. in Manila, Philippines; Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with the Boston Youth Symphony; a New Years Gala Concert with the Kaohsiung Symphony in Taiwan; a debut as Don Jose in Bizet’s *Carmen* with the Duluth Superior Symphony & Cleveland Suburban

Symphony; the Jacksonville Symphony for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*; debut with the Detroit Symphony in the world premiere of David Del Tredici's *Dum Dee Tweedle*. Other notable performances include Mitch in Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*; the Painter/Sailor in Berg's *Lulu*, Mark in Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*; Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, with Lyric Opera of Chicago.

The 2017/18 season will hear bass-baritone **Sam Handley** in Verdi's *Requiem* (Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra and Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra), *The Mikado* (Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra), Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* (UW-Milwaukee orchestra and chorus), and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (Symphony New Hampshire). On the operatic stage, Handley will join Dallas Opera for *Der Ring des Polykertes*. Additionally, he returns both to Lyric Opera of Chicago (as a former member of The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center) for *Fellow Travelers* and to Beijing, China, to sing Konrad Nachtigall in The National Centre for Performing Arts' production of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He will perform a recital for the Santa Fe Wagner Society in July of 2018. Born in Memphis, Tennessee, Sam now lives in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and enjoys spending time with his wife and daughter, especially while camping, hiking, sailing, cooking, and fine dining!

The Apollo Chorus, founded in the aftermath of the Great Chicago Fire, is one of the most recognizable volunteer choral organizations in the United States. Its approximately 130 auditioned members include men and women of all ages, races, and backgrounds brought together by their love of music. The chorus has performed the masterworks of the choral repertoire, as well as new music from contemporary composers. The Apollo Chorus has performed at notable historic events, such as the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, the Century of Progress International Exposition, the opening of Medinah Temple, the opening of Orchestra Hall (Apollo was considered the official chorus of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra prior to the formation of the Chicago Symphony Chorus), the opening of Navy Pier, and the "Oprah Surprise Spectacular." Recent collaborations include appearances with Josh Groban, Chicago Opera Theater, Chicago Philharmonic, and the Netflix Original Series *Sense8*. The Apollo Chorus continually strives to advance musically and to share the power, beauty, and majesty of choral music by presenting concerts for diverse communities throughout Chicago and beyond.

Regular priced tickets are \$35, student tickets are \$20. To purchase tickets, call (312) 427-5620 or visit www.apollochorus.org.

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