

NYC MASTER CHORALE

Thea Kano, Artistic Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK CITY MASTER CHORALE
MAKES SUCCESSFUL EUROPEAN DEBUT

*Chorale Collaborates with District 1660 of Rotary International in Paris
to Premiere Paul Leavitt's Requiem*

NEW YORK, NY, May 13, 2011 – The New York City Master Chorale (www.nycmasterchorale.org), under the direction of Artistic Director Dr. Thea Kano, collaborated with District 1660 of Rotary International, Paris, France to present the European premiere of Paul Leavitt's *Requiem* on Friday, April 29th, at 7:30 p.m. at Saint-Sulpice Church in Paris. The performance was part of the Chorale's fifth anniversary season and was the Chorale's European debut.

Approximately 60 singers from Washington, DC joined the Chorale in Paris to perform Leavitt's *Requiem*, including singers from the Lutheran Church of the Reformation and the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC. A full orchestra, comprised of professional musicians from the Paris area and students from the Conservatory of the 6th Arrondissement, accompanied the Chorale. The concert featured Paige Cutrona and Irina Varamesova, sopranos, Erica Joan Haman, mezzo-soprano, Douglas Benoit, tenor, Gregory Stuart and Skip Teel, baritones. In addition to the

Requiem, the program included the *a cappella* piece, *Ubi Caritas*, by Maurice Duruflé, followed by the composer's *Messe cum Jubilo*.

The concert was organized with support from the City Hall of the 6th District of Paris. Concert proceeds benefited the Rotary's initiative to bring sanitized, potable water to people in developing countries.

A reception at the City Hall of the 6th Arrondissement immediately followed the concert at which Paul Leavitt, Paige Cutrona, and the Rock Creek Singers of the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC performed briefly. Leavitt and Kano were awarded city medallions from Jean-Pierre Lecoq, Mayor of the 6th Arrondissement of Paris, for their collaborative efforts.

The concert was the highpoint of a week-long excursion to Paris by the Chorale as part of its fifth anniversary celebrations. The week's festivities were kicked-off with a welcome reception hosted by Rotary International District 1660 at La Coupole Restaurant in the 14th Arrondissement. The week concluded with a gathering on the Pont des Arts at which the Chorale and the Rock Creek Singers sang a brief public concert to an audience of several hundred spectators.

"This has been a remarkable experience," says Kano. "From the warm hospitality of the members of the Rotary Club to singing to a sold-out crowd at the beautiful St-Sulpice Church, it has been a magical week that we will always remember."

"We are thrilled with the turn-out and the success of this project," says Jean Ozonder, president of District 1660 of Rotary International. "We have already begun planning a similar project for

March 2012, when the New York City Master Chorale will perform at the second annual Rotary International Water Summit in Marseilles, France.”

Leavitt's *Requiem* has been praised by *Washington Post* Contributing Critic Cecelia Porter as successfully combining “the sense of overwhelming grief and consolation that suffuse the requiems of Mozart, Verdi, Brahms and Fauré.” The Chorale will present the same repertoire at its upcoming Fifth Anniversary Concert at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall on Friday, May 20, 8 pm. Tickets are priced at \$20 for students/seniors, \$30 for balcony/rear orchestra, \$45 for orchestra and \$60 for premium seating and are available through the Chorale's website at www.nycmasterchorale.org or by calling the organization's box office at 917.326.1422. Tickets are also available at the door prior to the concerts, as space permits. Public transportation to Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall is readily accessible via the 1 train to 66th Street/Lincoln Center, or the A, B, C, D to 59th Street/Columbus Circle.

About Composer Paul Leavitt

Paul Leavitt made his début as a concert pianist at 15 years old with the Albany Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Julius Hegyi. As a scholarship student he received a Master's Degree from the Juilliard School in New York and a Bachelor's Degree from SUNY Purchase. He was a laureate of the International Steinway Competition for Young Talents (1989) in Paris, France. A versatile musician and composer, Leavitt performs regularly in Europe and in the United States as a classical pianist, concert organist and choral conductor. He currently serves as the Director of Music and Arts at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation in Washington, DC.

About Conductor Thea Kano

Thea Kano is the founding artistic director and conductor of the New York City Master Chorale. She has prepared choruses for Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and has prepared the Chorale for performances with the Astoria Symphony and the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting from the University of California, Los Angeles, where she studied with Donald Neuen and Paul Salamunovich.

About New York City Master Chorale

Founded in 2005, the New York City Master Chorale presents an annual concert series, performing at the Church of Saint Paul the Apostle, The Riverside Church and Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center. In addition, the Chorale has been invited to sing in many of New York City's most prestigious venues, including Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Avery Fisher Hall and Carnegie Hall. The Chorale is noted for its excellent performances of the entire range of the choral repertoire. The Chorale also provides education and outreach initiatives to New York City schools and community programs as an integral component of its mission.

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