



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FEBRUARY 20, 2018**

PHILADELPHIA, PA.— The Germantown Oratorio Choir, under the direction of Dr. F. Anthony Thurman, will perform the Brahms *Requiem* on Sunday, March 18, at 4 p.m., with pianists Gayle Martin and Ted W. Barr. Featured soloists will be Philadelphia Opera’s Evelyn Santiago, soprano, and Robert Phillips, baritone. This concert will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first performance of the complete work in Bremen Cathedral in 1868. The *Requiem* will be performed in English using the composer’s own arrangement for four-hand piano—often called “The London Version.” The piano duo will be performing on the nine-foot Linda Leube Memorial Concert Piano.

Also included on the concert program will be the Brahms *Alto Rhapsody*, performed by mezzo-soprano soloist Margaret Mezzacappa, a grand prize winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She will be joined by pianist Gayle Martin and the gentlemen from the Oratorio Choir. The concert is open to the public. A free-will offering is requested.

The Germantown Oratorio Choir was founded in 1910 as a community outreach program of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown. The choir performs seasonally and rehearses weekly October–December, and January–March. Members of the choir, representing a wide diversity of age, socioeconomic, racial, and educational backgrounds, are drawn from throughout the Delaware Valley. The semi-professional choir unites volunteers and professional musicians working side by side toward a common goal of musical excellence while promoting classical music to an underserved community.

Transportation:

The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown is easily reached by SEPTA bus and regional rail service (Chestnut Hill East: Germantown Station; Chestnut Hill West: Cheltenham Ave. Station). Free parking is available on each side of the church building complex, on the street, and at the Germantown Life Enrichment Center one block away. The church building is ADA accessible.

The concert will be Internet livestreamed for those unable to attend. For more information please visit www.fpcgermantown.org or e-mail music.fpcgermantown@gmail.com.

**The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
35 W. Cheltenham Ave. | Philadelphia, Pa.**

**The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

Performers' Biographies for March 18, 2018 Brahms Concert

EVELYN SANTIAGO, soprano, is winner of the Metropolitan Opera District Auditions in Puerto Rico and a frequent soloist with Opera Philadelphia's mainstage productions and community outreach performances. Equally at home on the concert stage, Ms. Santiago has been soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Lancaster Symphony, the Germantown Oratorio Choir & Orchestra, the Symphonic Orchestra of Bayamon (Puerto Rico), and Philomusica Chorale.

MARGARET MEZZACAPPA, mezzo soprano, rose to prominence in the opera world as the Grand Prize Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2012. She is a first prize winner of the Licia Albanese–Puccini Foundation International Vocal Competition and recipient of the George London Award. A graduate of Philadelphia's Academy of Vocal Arts, the Ohio native has performed with Opera Philadelphia, Opera New Jersey, San Francisco Opera, the Philadelphia Orchestra, Columbus Symphony, Phoenix Symphony, and with the Germantown Oratorio Choir & Orchestra.

ROBERT PHILLIPS, baritone, performs with Opera Philadelphia and numerous choral organizations throughout the greater Philadelphia region. The Swarthmore native studied at the Tanglewood Institute Summer Program for Young Artists and continued his vocal studies at Westminster Choir College in Princeton. He was a core member of The Philadelphia Singers, a founding member of The Crossing in Chestnut Hill, and enjoyed a long association with the Spoleto Festival of Two Worlds in Italy.

GAYLE MARTIN achieved international prominence as sole American laureate of the sixth International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow—the third American woman ever to reach the finals. A native Texan, she was one of the last students of the famous pedagogue, Mme. Rosina Lhévinne at Juilliard. Martin has presented solo recitals and performed as concerto soloist with orchestras around the world. Her latest CD recording, *To Keep the Dark Away*, has received rave reviews. "This is an infinitely rewarding disc that demands repeated listening to get the most out of it." (*Fanfare Magazine*)

TED W. BARR joins Gayle Martin in piano duo performances in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. A Kentucky native, Barr is a graduate of Westminster Choir College and has taught on the faculties of Westminster, Rutgers, and Wagner College in New York City. He offers private instruction in voice, piano, and organ in Cherry Hill, N.J. His students have performed on Broadway, with major symphony orchestras and opera companies, in the world's largest churches and cathedrals, and in television dramas.

F. ANTHONY THURMAN has been both conductor and accompanist for choral societies in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky, and conductor of choral and instrumental ensembles at the Manhattan School of Music, where he was awarded his doctorate. He was named music director at The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown in 2016 after having spent 22 years as music director at the Irvington (N.Y.) Presbyterian Church. Dr. Thurman also enjoys a distinguished career as organ soloist, having performed hundreds of recitals from coast to coast in the U.S. and abroad.
