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Coro Allegro Presents “Infinite Majesty”

Sunday, May 17th, 3:00pm at Church of the Covenant, 67 Newbury Street, Boston

May 7, 2015 (Boston, MA) — [Coro Allegro](http://CoroAllegro.org), Boston’s award-winning classical chorus for members, friends, and allies of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, and Artistic Director David Hodgkins present “Infinite Majesty,” 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 17th at Church of the Covenant in Boston’s Back Bay.

Concert Description

The concert features a striking contrast between two majestic works that offer distinctly different paths to the infinite through choral music. The minimalist lines of Arvo Pärt’s *Te Deum* completed in 1984, are inspired by medieval chant, but resonate with the innovative, radiant tintinnabulations that have made his works among the most frequently performed today by contemporary composers. The shifting textures of Pärt’s musical panorama over the mystical drone of a wind harp wash over and immerse the listener, drawing us into a place of the spirit. George Frideric Handel’s *Dixit Dominus*, completed in 1707 when the composer was all of 22, is as elaborate in its structures as Pärt’s “Te Deum” is spare. Already suffused with the brilliance, sparkle, and gravitas that characterized his later compositions such as “Messiah,” Handel’s setting of the Latin text of Psalm 110 from the Old Testament dazzles the listener with the virtuosic energy of its invention. *Dixit Dominus* gives off the strong whiff of a young composer trying to make his mark and staking his place in musical history.

Joining Coro Allegro in this concert are a Baroque-sized orchestra and vocal soloists who are among the Boston area’s most lauded music professionals.

Ticket Information

Tickets to “Infinite Majesty” are \$22, \$35, and \$48 (\$5 discount for students/seniors on \$22 tickets) and can be purchased online at coroallegro.org or by calling 617-236-4011.

Concert Details

Title: Coro Allegro presents “Infinite Majesty”

Date: Sunday, May 17th at 3pm

Location: Church of the Covenant, 67 Newbury Street, Boston

Repertoire:

Arvo Pärt: *Te Deum* (1984)

George Frideric Handel: *Dixit Dominus* (1707)

Featuring:

Sonja Tengblad, soprano

Barbara Kilduff, soprano

Clare McNamara, alto

Omar Najmi, tenor

Bill Donelan, bass

Artist Profiles:

David Hodgkins, Artistic Director

Artistic Director David Hodgkins has delighted audiences in the greater Boston area for over 20 years with "creative programs, sung with enthusiasm and tonal beauty" (Ed Tapper, Bay Windows). Mr. Hodgkins is the Artistic Director of Coro Allegro in Boston, which Boston Globe critic Michael Manning deemed "one of Boston's most accomplished choruses," Artistic Director of The New England Classical Singers in Andover, Director of Music at The Commonwealth School in Boston, advanced conducting instructor at the Kodály Music Institute, and serves on the advisory boards of The Boston City Singers and the UMass/Amherst Music Department.

Mr. Hodgkins has performed with Coro Allegro at the ACDA and GALA music festivals, served as guest conductor with Chorus Pro Musica, Masterworks Chorale, and Emmanuel Music, and has made numerous festival appearances as guest conductor and clinician. His ensembles have collaborated with the Boston Celebrity Series, Boston Cecilia, Handel and Haydn Society, Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, The New England String Ensemble, and the Boston Landmarks Orchestra.

Mr. Hodgkins has conducted numerous world and Boston premiere performances of works ranging from Marianne Martinez to Arvo Pärt. Mr. Hodgkins with Coro Allegro received the 2012 Chorus America Alice Parker/ASCAP Award for their collaborative premiere performance of Kareem Roustom's oratorio *Son of Man*, with The United Parish Church of Brookline and Music Director Susan DeSelms, a work commissioned by United Parish. That same year, Mr. Hodgkins with Coro Allegro released the critically acclaimed CDs *Awakenings* and *In Paradisum* on the Navona label, which feature contemporary composers Robert Stern, Ronald Perera, and Patricia Van Ness and soloists Sanford Sylvan and Ruth Cunningham.

Mr. Hodgkins has been featured in *Choral Director Magazine*, *The Voice of Chorus America*, *UMass Amherst Magazine*, and *Haverhill Life*. He has served as producer for three award-winning CDs by La Donna Musicale, Laury Gutiérrez, Artistic Director, *In the Style of...* for Terry Everson, trumpet, and Shiela Kibbe, piano on Albany Records, and a CD of trumpet concerti for the Boston University Wind Ensemble and Terry Everson, directed by David Martins.

David Hodgkins received his Bachelor of Music in voice, piano, and harpsichord from UMass/Amherst, a Masters in Choral Conducting from Temple University, and fellowships in choral and orchestral conducting at the Aspen and Sandpoint music festivals. His mentors include Wayne Abercrombie, Fiora Contino, Alan Harler, James Roth, Gunther Schuller, and Paul Vermeil. Mr. Hodgkins has served on the faculties of the New England Conservatory, UMass/Amherst, Temple University, and Clark University.

Sonja Tengblad, soprano

Commended by the Boston Globe for her "crystalline tone and graceful musicality," Tengblad is a versatile performer with credits spanning the Renaissance era through the most current composers of our time. Recent highlights include Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* with Boston Baroque (as La Fortuna and Giunone) and Handel's *Acis and Galatea* with the Blue Hill Bach Festival (Galatea). A champion of new music, Ms. Tengblad has premiered many roles and works including the Boston premiere of Kati Agocs' *Vessel* for three solo voices and chamber ensemble, and Agocs' world premiere of *The Debreceen Passion* (written for the Lorelei Ensemble) for which she was a featured soloist, both performed and recorded with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. The 2014-2015 season will feature a collaboration with the laudable Shirish Korde ensemble (www.shirishkorde.com) on a multimedia operetta depicting the experiences of female war veterans. Ms. Tengblad performs with the Grammy-winning ensemble *Conspirare* out of Austin, Texas, the Yale Choral Artists, and Boston's Blue Heron, Lorelei Ensemble, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston.

Barbara Kilduff, soprano

Coloratura soprano Barbara Kilduff began her career as a national winner of the Metropolitan Opera auditions, going from there to win first prize in the famed Munich International Competition and the silver medal in the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. Within a year of these competitions, Ms. Kilduff made favorable debuts with the Bavarian, Vienna and Hamburg State Operas, all in the demanding role of Zerbinetta in Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Zerbinetta was also the role of her 1987 Metropolitan Opera debut with Jessye Norman, conducted by James Levine. Ms. Kilduff has appeared often in concert with Dedham Choral Society under Jonathan Barnhart, and with Coro Allegro under David Hodgkins. Ms. Kilduff's most recent opera performance (May 2014) was in the role of Konstanza in *Escape from the Seraglio* (Mozart) with Emmanuel Music directed by Ryan Turner. Ms. Kilduff has made many recordings of both opera and oratorio, and has given recitals in artists' series across the United States. She has been a visiting faculty member at Boston University's College of Fine Arts and the New England Conservatory of Music, and is currently a faculty member at Phillips Academy in Andover.

Claire McNamara, alto

Praised for her "lushly evocative mezzo" and "attentive and precise" musicianship, Clare McNamara is a soloist and chamber musician with a passion for early and new music. Recent solo engagements include her critically-acclaimed Jordan Hall debut in Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with The Boston Cecilia; Vivaldi's *Gloria*, BWV 6, and Handel's *Messiah* with the New England Classical Singers; and Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* with Newton Choral Society. In the recording studio, Clare most recently provided solo vocals for "On the Nature of Things," commissioned by the internationally-recognized modern dance troupe Pilobolus Dance Theatre from composers Michelle DiBucci and Ed Bilous. Clare's ensemble and chamber affiliations include Handel and Haydn Society, Lorelei Ensemble, Skylark Vocal Ensemble, Cut Circle, Apollo Master Chorale, and Vox Humana. Clare earned her Masters of Music in Early Music (Vocal Performance) from Longy School of Music of Bard College and her Bachelor of Arts in Music from Princeton University. She currently resides in Boston. (www.claremcnamara.com)

Omar Najmi, tenor

Tenor Omar Najmi is a Boston native and has performed frequently throughout the area. Omar is currently an Emerging Artist with the Boston Lyric Opera, where he has appeared in *Katya Kabanova* (Vanya Kudrjasch). Omar has performed with various companies in the greater Boston area including Boston Opera Collaborative, where he was recently seen as Werther in *Les lettres de Werther*. Omar received his Bachelor's Degree from Ithaca College and his Master's Degree from Boston University, where he performed in many of the BU Opera Institute productions including *Susannah* (Little Bat) and *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (Katz). Omar has been a Young Artist with both Opera Saratoga and

Opera North, where he performed such roles as Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* and Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. This summer, Omar will return to Opera Saratoga as an Apprentice Artist, where he will be covering Ricky in *The Long Walk*.

Bill Donelan, bass

Bass-Baritone Bill Donelan has been a member of Coro Allegro since 2007. He also sings with David Hodgkins as a member of Andover-based New England Classical Singers. In the Boston area, he has appeared as a soloist with Coro Allegro, NECS, and The Spectrum Singers. In 2013, he gave his solo recital debut in a concert that featured Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*. He holds a BA in American History from Brandeis University.

About Coro Allegro

Founded in 1990, Coro Allegro is a chorus for members, friends, and allies of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community that strengthens and enriches the lives of its members and the greater Boston community through its performances of outstanding classical choral repertoire and recordings. It is dedicated to its mission to provide broad audiences access to choral music, perform works by diverse composers, serve as a model of a successful and valued LGBT community group through artistic excellence and visibility, and create an affirming, welcoming, and supportive environment for its membership. In addition to its Boston-area subscription series, Coro Allegro reaches national and international audiences through broadcasts on WGBH "Classical Performances," and performances at the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses Festivals, and the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association. In 2015, Coro Allegro has been chosen to perform Arvo Pärt's *Te Deum* at the prestigious Chorus America Conference in Boston. In 2008, Coro Allegro established the Daniel Pinkham Award in memory of the late Boston composer and conductor. The award is given annually in recognition of outstanding contributions to classical music and the LGBT community. An advocate of contemporary music, Coro Allegro was the recipient of the 2012 Chorus America/ASCAP Alice Parker Award for programming recently composed music that expands its mission and challenges its audiences in new ways. With Artistic Director David Hodgkins, Coro Allegro has released four critically acclaimed commercial recordings: *In Paradisum* and *Awakenings* on the Navona Records label, as well as *In the Clearing* and *somewhere i have never traveled*. *Gramophone* magazine noted of *Awakenings*: "These are deeply affecting pieces and meaningful additions to the choral repertoire. ... The Boston-based Coro Allegro, led by David Hodgkins, performs each score with fine balance and interplay."

Coro Allegro is supported in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

For more information, electronic images, and interviews, please contact:

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