

PRESSRELEASE

Conductor Donald Nally Leaves Position As Chorus Master At The Lyric Opera of Chicago To Concentrate On Choral Conducting

Renowned choral conductor returns to Philadelphia after establishing an international career.

Philadelphia, PA: July 27, 2010: Donald Nally is leaving Lyric Opera of Chicago in order to concentrate fully on his choral conducting. He is a founder and conductor of The Crossing, an award-winning professional chamber choir in Philadelphia that performs new music. He is also music director of VAE, Cincinnati's Vocal Arts Ensemble, a professional choral ensemble that performs both new music and classic choral works. Nally will complete the 2010-2011 season at Lyric Opera, which will include *Lohengrin*, *Carmen*, *Masked Ball*, *The Girl of the Golden West*, and new productions of *The Mikado*, *Macbeth*, and *Hercules* (which will be directed by Peter Sellars and conducted by Harry Bicket.)

"It has been a terribly difficult decision to make – to leave Lyric Opera, a great company – but at this point in my life I feel compelled to concentrate on non-operatic choral conducting and new music, which are my passions," Nally says. "My work with The Crossing allows me to program and conduct, aspects that are not part of my work in opera, and to work with new music, including commissioning and premiering works, which is a primary interest in my musical activities. We have also expanded our recording projects and collaborations for the coming season, requiring more dedicated leadership on my part."

Nally's tenure at Lyric Opera of Chicago have been marked with several milestones, including the acclaimed second production of John Adams' *Dr. Atomic*, and Lyric Opera Chorus's first-ever solo concert, of which Andrew Patner wrote in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, it "set a new high bar for downtown choral performance and programming." Prior to his tenure at Lyric Opera, Nally was chorus master for Welsh National Opera for three years. He conducted the WNO chorus and orchestra in the major cities of England, Ireland, Scotland,

and Wales. While living in the UK he often guest-conducted London's renowned Philharmonia Chorus and was chorus master for a massed-choir performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with four Welsh choruses and Sinfonia Cymru.

From 1992 through 2003, Nally was chorus master at the Opera Company of Philadelphia and choirmaster at Saint Mark's Church, Philadelphia.; a local critic once wrote of him as "the choral czar of Philadelphia." He was artistic director of the Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia for four seasons, during which it received America's highest award in choral music, Chorus America's 2002 Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence. Nally served as chorus master for the Spoleto festivals of Italy and the U.S. (1989-91), and served as director of choruses at the Italian Spoleto Festival from 1993-98 and again in 2001 and 2007. His work there is captured on several acclaimed recordings of the music of Spoleto Festival founder Gian Carlo Menotti (Chandos records).

In addition to his conducting activities, Dr. Nally is a published author. In June Scarecrow Press published Nally's book *Conversations with Joseph Flummerfelt: Thoughts on Conducting, Music, and Musicians*, with an introduction by Kurt Masur. The book, written from a series of intimate conversations between Maestros Nally and Flummerfelt presents a window into the mind and heart of one of America's most celebrated and distinguished choral conductors. Through questions from Nally, his former student, Flummerfelt provides a captivating narrative tracing his formative years and influences, his most important artistic collaborations, and his approach to conducting and music. The conversation further develops into a philosophical discussion on cultural influences and obstacles in art, how one teaches conducting, and the foundations of ensemble music-making.

About The Crossing

Founded in 2005, The Crossing is dedicated to commissioning and performing new choral masterworks written primarily in the last fifteen years. The Crossing won the 2009 ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventuresome Programming. It is the only choral ensemble funded for the 2010-11 season by the prestigious Philadelphia Music Project (funded by the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage). The Crossing's commissioned premieres during 2010's Month of Moderns festival featured 2008 Pulitzer-Prize winning composer David Lang setting music inspired by Pulitzer-Prize laureate Philip Levine. The 2011 Month of Modern's commissions will include Gabriel Jackson, Ēriks

Ešenvalds, Kamran Ince, and Kile Smith. The Crossing recorded its second recording this summer, featuring the new works created for the 2009 Month of Moderns – music of David Shapiro, Kile Smith, Kirsten Broberg, and Erhard Karkoschka. That recording will be released by PARMA/Navona Records. Philadelphia Inquirer music critic David Patrick Stearns has called The Crossing “Philadelphia’s best chorus.” The ensemble has upcoming collaborations with the acclaimed Baroque ensemble Tempesta di Mare, as well as with Network for New Music in Philadelphia. The Crossing will produce a third recording in late December that will include two new works by David Lang, written for the recording. For more information: www.CrossingChoir.com

Please contact to arrange interviews.

Larger photographs available upon request.

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