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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Karen Schuessler Singers presents Missa Gaia/Earth Mass

LONDON, ON - The Karen Schuessler Singers present ***Missa Gaia/Earth Mass*** on **April 21** at **8:00 pm** at **Wesley-Knox United Church**, 91 Askin St, London.

Missa Gaia/Earth Mass - The wolves, whales and loons are back! A sweeping celebration of Creation and Creator, *Missa Gaia* weaves sound textures and colours, overlaying the world rhythms of Afro-Brazilian, Zulu and Native-American music as well as gospel and Gregorian chant, transporting audiences to a higher place. This is a concert experience like no other. With Denise Pelley, Paul Grambo, Steve Holowitz and the Missa Gaia Jazz Ensemble.

"This is the piece that started it all. I fell in love with it the first time I heard it and committed myself to performing it in London even though it wasn't published yet. I even formed a choir, which became KSS, to perform it. There is no other work I know that so completely honours our planet and its blessed diversity," says Artistic Director Karen Schuessler.

Missa Gaia/Earth Mass was first assembled by Paul Winter and Paul Halley for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City. With its unique combination of world styles and pulsing rhythm, and taking its themes from the actual voices of nature, this work is a magnificent expression of our interconnectedness. It was first performed in London by the Karen Schuessler Singers in 1994 and recorded in 2000. Over the years, it has become the choir's signature work.

Denise Pelley needs no introduction to London audiences. A vocalist of rare talent and beauty, she has been part of the *Missa Gaia* performances from the beginning. Paul Grambo adds his unique gospel style to the work.

The choir is accompanied by the *Missa Gaia* Jazz Ensemble led by Stephen Holowitz, piano, with Dave Wiffen, soprano saxophone, Marg Stowe, guitar, Steve Clark, bass, Rob Larose, drums and Greg Mainprize, percussion.

Missa Gaia intersperses four main parts of the mass with other music, such as the pulsing "Ubi Caritas" and the breathtaking solo, "Mystery", that proclaims world is one. Several pieces are based on musical themes that are taken from the calls of whale, wolf and loon. Of special note is "Return to Gaia", a magnificent movement for soprano sax and organ, which is the climax of the work.

For this special 25th Anniversary performance, KSS will be joined by the Senior and Mysterium Youth choirs of Wesley-Knox United Church—over 100 voices—as well as New Celebration Dance led by Greg Smith.

"From its beginnings as a choir created to sing this one amazing work, KSS has grown to be a force for live choral performance in London. Singing this special Earth Day performance of *Missa Gaia* for our 25th keeps us close to our roots as an arts organization that strives to connect with the community on issues of today. In the spirit of giving back, this is also a benefit concert to support Wesley-Knox United Church, our wonderful venue for 25 years," says conductor Karen Schuessler.

Tickets are Adults or Seniors \$25, Students and Children \$10. Tickets can be purchased at Tuckey Home Hardware, Attic Books, Long & McQuade (North), Lambeth Art Gallery or online at www.kssingers.com.

NOTE: this concert is NOT part of the Season Subscription Series.

For more ticket information, phone **519-455-8895** or visit our website www.kssingers.com

If You Go:

What: Missa Gaia/Earth Mass

Who: The Karen Schuessler Singers, Denise Pelley, Paul Grambo, the Choirs of Wesley-Knox, with Steve Holowitz and the Missa Gaia Jazz Ensemble

When: Saturday, April 21, 2018, 8:00 pm

Where: Wesley-Knox United Church, 91 Askin Street, London, ON

About The Karen Schuessler Singers:

The Karen Schuessler Singers is one of London's premier concert choirs. Founded in 1993 by director Karen Ann Schuessler to explore the wealth of choral music, the choir has become well known for quality performances and widely varied, accessible and innovative programming.

Each season the choir presents a 3-concert subscription series and several other performances designed to appeal to all ages and musical tastes. The choir performs choral repertoire that is not often performed by other choirs to complement traditional repertoire with music ranging from the classics to jazz to Broadway and from Medieval to the 21st century.

The vision of Karen Schuessler Singers is to create concerts that are not only entertaining and thought provoking, but that also lift spirits, lighten hearts and deepen souls.

Says Karen Schuessler, "The magic of the live concert experience, when the audience is receptive and connected, is that we all go on this journey together at this exact moment in time. Sing Joy!"