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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vaughan Williams' "Dona Nobis Pacem" to Open Karen Schuessler Singers' 2018/19 Season

London, ON - The **KAREN SCHUESSLER SINGERS** opens its 26th season with **Vaughan Williams' powerful *Dona Nobis Pacem*** and other moving works in **Grant Us Peace** (honouring the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI) on **Saturday, November 17, 2018, 8 PM**, at **Wesley-Knox United Church, 91 Askin Street**.

Dona Nobis Pacem is an impassioned plea for peace, tolerance and understanding on a global scale. Written in 1936, Vaughan Williams was motivated by the growing unrest in Europe at the time that seemed primed to explode into war. He compiled his English text from the writings of poet, Walt Whitman, and the Bible. The humanitarian warmth and splendour of his vision are an inspiration for all time. Featuring two acclaimed Canadian soloists, soprano Chelsea Van Pelt and bass-baritone Chad Louwerse, the 50-member choir will be directed by Karen Schuessler and accompanied by the musicians of London Symphonia.

As prelude to this magnificent work, KSS is also performing Randall Thompson's dramatic and timely "The Last Words of David", Durante's exquisite 18th century *Magnificat*, and Ola Gjeilo's shimmering "Sacred Heart (Ubi Caritas III)" (his setting of the second verse of the chant "Ubi Caritas"). As well, soprano Chelsea Van Pelt will sing the stunningly expressive Symphony No. 3 (*Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*), mvt. 2, by Henryk Górecki—all accompanied by London Symphonia.

"This concert is important to do. Music can help us express our deepest longings and assuage our fears. Through it we can honour the fallen, give thanks for war's end and affirm the future path to peace. The music of the first half of the concert leads poignantly into Vaughan Williams' opening statement in *Dona Nobis Pacem*: "Grant us peace". I believe this will be an extraordinarily moving concert, expressing the feelings of the heart while giving balm to the soul and hope for the future," says KSS Artistic Director, Karen Schuessler.

Soloists for the Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* are soprano Chelsea Van Pelt and bass-baritone Chad Louwerse. Van Pelt's recent credits include Pamina in *Die Zauberfloete*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bach cantatas, Handel's *Messiah* and Brahms' *Requiem*. Her rich, warm timbre is perfect for the Górecki and the Vaughan Williams.

This will be the second performance for Chad Louwerse with KSS, having performed Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* in 2016. Recent performances for him include Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Brahms' *Requiem*, Fauré's *Requiem*, and Mozart's *Requiem*. We are proud to have him join us again. With his stirring voice and commanding presence, he is the right soloist for this deeply expressive part.

Accompanying the concert will be the musicians of London Symphonia and Ian Sadler of St. James Cathedral, Toronto, on the organ.

"I love every bit of the repertoire for this concert. As well, to be able to perform Górecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*, mvt. 2 on this program is a special thrill. The Zinman/Upshaw recording of this work has sold over a million copies. It probably counts as the best selling contemporary classical record of all time. In the context of this concert, it is especially powerful and radiant," adds Schuessler.

Tickets are \$22 (adults), \$20 (seniors), in advance or \$25, \$23 at the door; Students \$10; Children 6-13, Free when accompanied by an adult. Tickets can be purchased at Tuckey Home Hardware, Attic Books, Long & McQuade (North), Lambeth Art Gallery or online at www.kssingers.com

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

Event Information:

What: Karen Schuessler Singers Concert: Grant Us Peace

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

When: Saturday, November 17, 2018 at 8:00 p.m.

Contact: 519-455-1668 <http://www.kssingers.com>

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 vast world 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 Renaissance to the 21st century.

The vision of Karen Schuessler Singers is to create concerts that are not only entertaining and thought provoking, but also lift the spirit, lighten the heart and deepen the soul.

Says Karen Schuessler, "The extraordinary thing about the live concert experience, when the audience is receptive and we are all connected, is that we can go on this journey into wonder together at this precise moment in time. Sing Joy!"