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PressRelease

For Immediate Release

The Crossing Returns to Philadelphia for Second Concert

Following the critical and popular success of its premiere concert, the Crossing will perform works previously unheard in Philadelphia

Philadelphia, PA - July 24, 2006: The Crossing, with Donald Nally Conductor, returns September 8th to begin the new arts season with a performance in Chestnut Hill. Continuing the formula of the first concert, "like an answered prayer" wrote David Patrick Stearns, this professional ensemble will be joined by Scott Dettra, organist at St. Paul's K-Street in Washington DC, to sing a concert of recently-composed choral music previously unheard in Philadelphia.

Friday, September 8, 2006 at 8pm
Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill
8855 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia 19118
To reserve tickets, visit our website www.crossingchoir.com
Tickets may be paid for at the door by cash or check.
\$20 Adults / \$10 Students - Seniors

Some notes on the programme.

Bruno Bettinelli's death in November 2004 was a great loss to the Italian music world; for much of his life he was a revered professor of composition at the Milan Conservatory, teacher of such international stars as Ricardo Muti and Claudio Abbado. The seven late unaccompanied *Madrigals for Five Voices*, written in his eighties (in the mid-1990s), are masterful works, clearly recalling the Italian heritage of Monteverdi and Gesualdo, combining the sage style and technique of a seasoned contrapuntist with surprisingly youthful responses to the joys and pains of love.

Universally recognized as a prodigious compositional phenomenon, the thirty-four-year-old Thomas Adès has already seen his operas premiered at Covent Garden and his symphonic works introduced by every major Western orchestra. His opera *The Tempest* was featured this summer at Santa Fe. In *January Writ* (2000) Adès sets Ecclesiastes 6.6 ("Yeah, though he lived a thousand years

more

twice told...") in a taut structure of shifting harmonies that ascend and descend slowly and relentlessly, mesmerizing and ageless, like sand in an hourglass.

Since renowned Scottish composer **James MacMillan** visited Philadelphia's Choral Arts Society and Saint Mark's Church in 2002, his works have become closely associated with the members of The Crossing. MacMillan's *Te Deum* was premiered that same year by the Choir of the Chapels Royal at the Tower of London to celebrate Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee. It is typical MacMillan: sparse solo writing with Scottish ornaments adjoin overwhelming, crashing organ sonorities, which give into sweeping polyphonic choral sections. The result is an uplifting, thoughtful work.

MacMillan's fellow countryman **Judith Weir's** *Two Human Hymns* of 1994 draw on the metaphysical poetry of George Herbert and his contemporary Henry King. They were composed to celebrate the quincentenary of the University of Aberdeen. In "Love bade me welcome," Weir achieves an introspective quality in the choral writing, while, beneath that surface, the organ dances spontaneously, sounding improvised. In "Like to the falling of a star" Weir celebrates the marriage of organ and voices in the British anthem tradition of Stanford and Howells.

An icon of Italian music of the last century, **Luigi Nono** passed away in 1990, leaving a wealth of challenging, beautiful music; often writing in miniatures, his work is of Romantic lineage, following the path of Webern, yet often suggesting electronic sonorities produced acoustically. This can be heard in *¿Dónde estas Hermano?* (Where is your brother?; the Lord's question to Cain in Genesis) a short, contemplative lament for four women, subtitled: "For the Disappeared of Argentina," reflecting Nono's characteristic union of human rights concerns and art. Ironically, the shortest and oldest work (written 1982) in our concert may sound the most "modern."

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