Professional Choral Institute Will Be First of its Kind in United States

Seraphic Fire and the University of South Florida will be embarking on a unique private-public collaboration in establishing the first ever Professional Choral Institute, a two-week training program for aspiring singers wishing to break into the competitive and growing field of professional choral singing. Held at the new state-of-the-art School of Music building on the campus of the University of South Florida from May 23 - June 5, 2011, the Professional Choral Institute (PCI) will bring together the professional musicians of Seraphic Fire and the best recent vocal performance graduates from the nation’s top conservatories and universities to record and perform Johannes Brahms' Ein Deutsches Requiem.

Participants will work side-by-side with the professional musicians of Seraphic Fire under the leadership of the team that created Seraphic Fire's chart-topping recording of Claudio Monteverdi's Vespers: Patrick Dupré Quigley, Artistic Director of Seraphic Fire; James K. Bass, Director of Choral Studies at USF; and Peter Rutenberg, GRAMMY-winning producer/conductor of the Los Angeles Chamber Singers. The two-week workshop will culminate in a recording and three performances of Johannes Brahms' Ein Deutsches Requiem.

With professional choruses on the rise in the United States, the Professional Choral Institute will give emerging singers the tools, information and personal contacts to break into a career in this growing field. "There's nothing else like this," says Patrick Dupré Quigley, Artistic Director of Seraphic Fire. "While there are numerous programs teaching students how to be opera singers or orchestral players, no one is showing young singers how to break into singing with a professional chorus."

"Really, it's very needed," says USF Director of Choral Studies James K. Bass. "In the time since Seraphic Fire was founded 9 years ago, the number of professional choruses in the United States has more than doubled, while professional orchestras are folding left and right. This is a growing field, and we can teach these young musicians how to be future leaders."

About Seraphic Fire

Founded in 2002 by Artistic Director Patrick Dupré Quigley, Seraphic Fire has garnered critical acclaim locally and nationally. Lauded by the Miami Herald as "one of the best choirs anywhere," Seraphic Fire has gained a reputation for dynamic, cutting-edge performances. In an exciting crossover collaboration in 2004, Seraphic Fire was invited to record with international pop star Shakira on a track for her album Oral Fixation II, which ultimately went platinum on the Billboard Pop Charts.

Seraphic Fire's programming is broad, including classical and contemporary, sacred and secular choral works. This programming has won the organization awards and earned wide-ranging praise. Over the past seven seasons, the organization has commissioned and premiered works by up-and-coming young composers. In 2005, Seraphic Fire commissioned The Road From Hiroshima: A Requiem, a 50-minute work from 28-year-old composer Shawn Crouch. It was subsequently nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.
In recent years, Seraphic Fire has made significant organizational and artistic strides. Recent seasons have experienced record-breaking ticket sales with many sold-out performances. In 2007, Seraphic Fire was awarded a Knight Foundation grant for the formation of the Firebird Chamber Orchestra, which debuted in 2008. Seraphic Fire currently performs full seasons at several South Florida venues in Coral Gables, Miami Beach, Key Biscayne and Fort Lauderdale. In 2007, the ensemble began touring nationally. Seraphic Fire has eight CDs in circulation, including the critically acclaimed Monteverdi *Vespers of the Blessed Virgin 1610*.

In 2010, Seraphic Fire started its education initiative, Miami Choral Academy. The Choral Academy is a program designed to create a Little-League style network of choirs in Miami’s inner-city schools. In partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the Choral Academy seeks to make positive academic and social change through participation in choral singing and an integrated academic enrichment program.

**About Patrick Dupré Quigley**

The founding artistic director of Seraphic Fire, Patrick Dupré Quigley, has conducted ensembles throughout North America, Europe, China, and Israel.

In eight seasons, Patrick Dupré Quigley has built Seraphic Fire into a nationally recognized ensemble, now considered one of the five major performing arts institutions in Miami. The international classical music magazine *Gramophone* has declared that Seraphic Fire "has quickly become one of the top attractions in the [South Florida] region. No group programmes more adventurously." *The South Florida Sun Sentinel* calls Seraphic Fire "the smartest, most creative and consistently excellent classical music ticket in South Florida." Additionally, Patrick Dupré Quigley has lead numerous thrilling recording projects, including the Monteverdi *Vespers of the Blessed Virgin 1610*. *Vespers* is a standout recording that was the number one best-selling new classical release on iTunes the week it was released.

Mr. Quigley received his M.Mus. in Conducting from Yale University, where he studied on a full scholarship. He earned a B.A. in Musicology from the University of Notre Dame.

**About Peter Rutenberg**

Peter Rutenberg begins both his 18th season as music director of Los Angeles Chamber Singers & Cappella and his 39th in the choral arts. Rutenberg has produced radio and records for over two decades. He is president of RCM records, a Grammy®-winning conductor and producer of *Padilla: Sun of Justice*, and producer of the Los Angeles Master Chorale’s Grammy®-nominated *Lauridsen Lux Aeterna* CD. He is also a composer of concert, radio, and television music, and has served as master teacher and clinician for various choral music festivals in Southern California, as well as for residencies at UCLA and UC Riverside. As Director of Programming & Production for KUSC, and beginning with the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival, Rutenberg covered every major festival and arts organization in Los Angeles for the balance of the decade. Under his artistic direction, Chorus America's radio series *The First Art* won the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award for Broadcasting in 1995. Rutenberg joined the faculty of the UCLA Music Department in 2006.

**About Dr. James K. Bass**

Doctor James K. Bass, chorusmaster and bass-baritone for Seraphic Fire, is the director of choral studies at the University of South Florida in Tampa. James received his doctorate in music from the University of Miami. James serves as the artistic director and conductor of the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay, the official chorus of the Florida Orchestra, and is the chorus master of Seraphic Fire.
About USF/College of The Arts

The University of South Florida is one of the nation's top public research universities and one of only 25 public research universities nationwide with very high research activity that is designated as community engaged by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. USF opened its doors in 1960 to 2,000 students. Today, the USF System welcomes more than 47,000 students from across the country and around the globe and is recognized as one of the nation’s top 63 public research universities. At USF, students are encouraged to participate in meaningful research that seeks to change lives for the better, to collaborate across fields of study, and to connect to local and global communities through service learning, activism and volunteerism. The College of The Arts at USF is continually developing as a distinguished metropolitan-based center for learning and research in the arts, preparing tomorrow’s artists, scholars, and arts leaders as they explore new forms of artistic expression and examine contemporary perspectives within the arts. Faculty and students critically investigate and sustain the ideas, traditions, and practices in which the present is grounded through a full range of educational experiences; students are prepared to create, perform, present, teach, and understand through the arts.

About USF SoM/Choral Studies

The USF School of Music is an exciting place for study and performance in one of the most artistically active areas in Florida. There are many incentives that attract music students to USF, including distinguished artist faculty, splendid ensembles that perform regularly at state, regional and national music events, an exceptional jazz studies program, one of the most complete electronic music studios in the nation (SYCOM), a visionary music education program, and an environment that boasts a wide range of excellent cultural activities. The Choral Studies department at USF, directed by Dr. James K. Bass, has four exceptional choirs that each specialize in different types of choral literature; Collegium Choir (20 voice), Collegiate Singers (70 voice), Chamber Singers (40 voice) and the Master Chorale (120 voice). Students seeking graduate degrees in choral conducting are provided the unique opportunity to work with each one of these exceptional ensembles in various rehearsals and public performances. For any questions regarding Choral Studies at USF, please contact Dr. James K. Bass at: jkbass@usf.edu