



Indianapolis Symphonic Choir Artistic Director and Butler University professor Eric Stark selected for prestigious Fulbright Scholar Program

Award will support Stark's upcoming teaching work in Brazil

INDIANAPOLIS (March 27, 2019) — The Indianapolis Symphonic Choir is proud to announce the selection of Artistic Director Dr. Eric Stark as a 2019-2020 Fulbright Scholar, part of the prestigious U.S. Fulbright Scholar Program of the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The award will support Stark's invitation to teach, conduct and study in residence during the first half of 2020 at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (URGS) in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The opportunity offers an extension of work Stark has done in other countries including multiple trips to work with top ensembles in Bolivia, Japan and Hong Kong, and aligns with the Symphonic Choir's mission and robust dedication to outreach and education.

The U.S. Fulbright Scholar Program offers nearly 470 teaching, research or combination teaching/research awards in over 125 countries. Opportunities are available for college and university faculty and administrators as well as for professionals, artists, journalists, scientists, lawyers, independent scholars and many others. The Fulbright Program awards approximately 8,000 grants annually. Roughly 1,600 U.S. students, 4,000 foreign students, 1,200 U.S. scholars, and 900 visiting scholars receive awards, in addition to several hundred teachers and professionals. Approximately 370,000 "Fulbrighters" have participated in the Program since its inception in 1946.

"I am very honored to be designated a Fulbright Scholar for the 2019-2020 period, and to have the confidence and support not only of the U.S. State Department and the Fulbright program, but also of the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir and Butler University," said Stark, who is also Professor of Music, Director of Graduate Studies and Assistant Chair of the School of Music at Butler University's Jordan College of Fine Arts. "When we teach music and lead choral singing, we are helping to build bridges that unite persons, communities and cultures. I know that just as important as the perspective and knowledge that I can share will be the experience and learning that others will share with me. In this way, this opportunity offers rewards for all involved, including singers and students in Brazil and the United States."

In a dynamic career that combines performance, scholarship and collaborative leadership, Stark has established himself as a choral-orchestral specialist. His work as artistic collaborator and community leader has been both broad and unique. He has conducted in the Oriental Art Center Concert Hall in Shanghai, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Strathmore Hall in Bethesda, Md., and the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing. He has made conducting appearances in Greece, Italy, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay, and has led choirs on domestic tours in New York City, Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, New Orleans, Orlando and Tampa.

A firm believer in the power of music to connect diverse audiences and enrich lives, Stark has led a revitalized program of innovative educational outreach programs since joining the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir in 2002. In addition to his duties as Artistic Director of the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir, Stark is also Professor of Music, Director of Graduate Studies and Assistant Chair of the School of Music at Butler University's Jordan College of Fine Arts. There he conducts the Butler Chorale, teaches graduate and undergraduate conducting and choral literature, and serves as coordinator of the vocal and choral areas.

"We are extremely proud that Eric has been selected as a Fulbright Scholar," said Indianapolis Symphonic Choir Executive Director Liam Bonner. "It is incredibly validating for us as an organization to see him recognized nationally and internationally for his academic and professional achievement, as well as his demonstrated leadership in the field of choral arts, all of which we have been aware of locally during the past 17 years he has spent at the artistic helm. Senator J. William Fulbright, for whom the award is named, had a vision for mutual understanding that shaped this program. Throughout his life, and especially through choral arts, Eric is a shining example of that same desire. The Indianapolis Symphonic Choir board, staff, and singers congratulate Dr. Eric Stark on this achievement."

"Dr. Stark will be an exceptional cultural ambassador for the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program," said Kathy Landschulz, a current Indianapolis Symphonic Choir singer and board member, and 1982 Fulbright Scholar. "His fine communication skills and cultural sensitivity, combined with successful, prior overseas conducting experience, position him for a very successful experience. Dr. Stark's love of learning, along with his fundamental love of educating, means both the Butler and Indianapolis Symphonic Choir communities have much to gain from his time in Brazil. As a former Fulbright Scholar myself, I am personally very excited about the educational journey ahead for Eric, and can't wait to learn from him upon his return."

Indianapolis Symphonic Choir Board of Directors President Mike Slocum added, "The Indianapolis Symphonic Choir's board of directors is thrilled by Dr. Stark's selection as a Fulbright scholar. His outstanding achievements in both music and education make him the perfect choice for this experience. What he'll learn and bring back from Brazil will leave an indelible mark both personally and professionally. We're excited to incorporate what he learns back into the Symphonic Choir's repertoire and operations."

About the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir

The Indianapolis Symphonic Choir is proud to be one of the nation's most established and dynamic musical institutions and 2018/2019 marks its 82nd Season. Among the most active symphonic choruses in the United States, this organization reaches over 25,000 persons each season through more than 25 performances and education/community engagement programs. The approximately 200 volunteer singers demonstrate the Choir's commitment to musical excellence through their talent and dedication during each 11-month season. The Symphonic

Choir is led by a professional staff and governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Founded in 1937 at the Orchestra's request to perform the great choral-orchestral repertoire, the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir continues to be the choral partner of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. In 2018, the Choir joined the ISO at The Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.) for the SHIFT: A Festival of American Orchestras. In 2015, the Symphonic Choir commissioned and premiered Mohammed Fairouz's newest oratorio, *Zabur*, which was released internationally by Naxos Records (2016) and also featured the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and the Indianapolis Children's Choir. For more information about the Symphonic Choir, visit www.indychoir.org.

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