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Indianapolis Symphonic Choir exceeds aggressive goal for major endowment campaign

Citing strong financial growth over the last decade, Choir's first endowment campaign is a major success raising more than \$4 million and far surpassing original goal

INDIANAPOLIS (August 27, 2019) – One of the nation's oldest symphonic choruses, the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir is thrilled to announce it has raised \$4.1 million in gifts and pledges as part of its first endowment campaign, launched in 2017, far surpassing its original goal of \$3.75 million by July 2019.

The "Giving Voice to Tomorrow" campaign endows the Artistic Director position and partially endows the performance of choral masterworks, and is co-chaired by Dr. Paul and Martha Schmidt, involved with the Symphonic Choir for more than 30 years and among the first to make a visionary gift to establish the endowment fund. "It matters deeply to us to offer an opportunity to give something very special, even spiritual, and a chance to gather others to join us in this remarkable step forward," said Dr. Paul Schmidt.

"For many reasons, Paul and I are truly delighted to be co-chairs of this grand endeavor, but it is especially meaningful, since a Symphonic Choir Endowment has been our dream for many years," said Martha Schmidt. "The Endowment offers another option for people to show their love and support for this iconic and vitally important institution, which has been enriching the life of our many communities with its incredibly moving, inspiring, and often provocative music for more than 80 years. Many of us have been a part of this in various ways for many decades, and we not only wish but plan to make certain that this company of musicians remains for generations to come."

Founded in 1937, the Choir is recognized as one of the most active and widely respected choruses in the United States. Recent seasons have included performances at the famed Carnegie Hall and Kennedy Center, and television broadcasts of their annual *Festival of Carols* holiday performance. The 2019-2020 season includes the choral-orchestral Bach masterwork *Mass in B Minor*, a New Orleans-style Mardi Gras celebration, and the return of east-side Indianapolis native Michele McConnell, who recently completed eight years of performances as Carlotta in Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Phantom of the Opera* on Broadway in New York, for the annual *Festival of Carols* holiday performances. In addition to the Choir's self-produced performances, the season will feature collaborations with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra for Pops

concert *Vienna to Broadway* and critically acclaimed compositions from musical greats including Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

With an average annual operating budget of approximately \$1 million, the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir is professionally managed and governed by a volunteer board of directors. The Choir attributes the bulk of the last decade's growth to increased ticket sales and individual donations.

"The Symphonic Choir has a tradition of dreaming big, aiming high and then delivering," said Artistic Director Eric Stark. "True to fashion, we have surpassed all of our early benchmarks and blew away our aggressive goal. It has been humbling indeed to have so many meaningful conversations with so many people during this campaign, and to hear how choral music and the Symphonic Choir have enriched so many lives. The generosity of so many is a gift that will benefit generations of singers and audience members whom we will never know ourselves."

For more information on the endowment campaign, visit indychoir.org/support/endowment. For the full 2019-2020 season lineup and ticket information, visit indychoir.org.

About the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir

The Indianapolis Symphonic Choir is honored to be one of the nation's established and dynamic musical institutions, marking its 83rd season in 2019/2020. Among the most active symphonic choruses in the United States, the Choir reaches in excess of 25,000 people each season with more than 25 performances and a comprehensive educational outreach program. The 200 volunteer singers demonstrate the Choir's commitment to musical excellence through their talent and dedication during each 42-week season. The choral partner of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Symphonic Choir was founded in 1937 at the ISO's request to perform the great choral-orchestral repertoire. This continued partnership exhibits the very best of collaborative ideals – two independent arts organizations combining their strengths to create beautifully lasting musical results. Following the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir's acclaimed performance at Carnegie Hall during the 2016-17 season, the group traveled to Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center as a guest of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra during the SHIFT festival in April 2018. The Choir is dedicated to excellence in the performance of choral music, the creation of new choral masterworks, and to community outreach and education throughout the community. For more information about the Symphonic Choir, visit www.indychoir.org.

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