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NEWS RELEASE

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THE PHILADELPHIA SINGERS CONCLUDES 2009-2010 SEASON WITH RACHMANINOFF'S A CAPELLA CHORAL MASTERPIECE

Rachmaninoff's transcendent Vespers, Op. 37 serves as a glorious finale

PHILADELPHIA, PA - On May 1, 2010 at 8:00pm, The Philadelphia Singers will conclude its 2009-2010 concert series with Sergei Rachmaninoff's transcendent *Vespers*, Op. 37 at the Church of the Holy Trinity at 1904 Walnut Street in Philadelphia. Tickets are \$20-\$40, and may be purchased by calling 215-751-9494 or on-line at www.philadelphiasingers.org.

The Philadelphia Singers' 2009-2010 Season has showcased intricate works by J.S. Bach and Frank Martin, to newer works by Jennifer Higdon and Jan Sandström, to premieres by Philip Glass and Steve Reich. Rachaminoff's *Vespers* will serve as a glorious season finale, shining a spotlight on the musical versatility of The Philadelphia Singers.

The Philadelphia Singers will present an expanded forty-eight voice chorus to perform Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* Op.37, considered one of his greatest works and a favorite among his own works. *Vespers* is a service from the liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church. Rachmaninoff composed his setting also known as "The All-night Vigil" in January and February of 1915, in the middle of the First World War. During this period Rachmaninoff was travelling throughout Russia with conductor Serge Koussevitsky, giving concerts in aid of the war against Germany. The piece is dedicated to the scholar Stephan Vasilevitch Smolensky (1849-1909) who introduced Rachmaninoff to the repertoire of the church when he was at the Moscow Conservatory

The music of the Orthodox Church is exclusively vocal. In the a cappella *Vespers*, Rachmaninoff sets 15 movements of liturgical texts utilizing authentic znamenny and Greek chants. He uses the chorus as an instrument in a way that few composers have before or since. Voices combine and divide in a seemingly endless variety of ways, soaring heavenward and plunging into the depths.

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The Philadelphia Singers Rachmaninoff Vespers continued

On June 10, 11 and 12, the women of The Philadelphia Singers Chorale will join the Philadelphia Orchestra for Mahler's *Symphony No. 3* on the closing concerts of its 200-2010 concert series in Verizon Hall. Previous performances with the Philadelphia Orchestra this season have included Berlioz's *Te Deum* and *Resurrexit*, Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Philadelphia Singers Chorale also joined the Pennsylvania Ballet for its recent performances of *Carmina Burana* at the Academy of Music.

The Philadelphia Singers, a professional choral ensemble engages and inspires a broad range of audiences in the Philadelphia region with compelling concert experiences. The Singers has a special commitment to preserve and strengthen America's rich choral heritage through performances, commissions, and music education. It seeks to enrich the broader community through embodying the highest standards of classical musicianship and providing a platform for its musicians to serve the community in a wide variety of formats.

Founded in 1972 by Michael Korn, The Philadelphia Singers is now under the dynamic leadership of Music Director and Conductor David Hayes. For 37 years, The Philadelphia Singers has contributed to the city's vibrant cultural community through presenting choral music of the highest caliber, meaningful education and community programs, and significant collaborations with local, national and internationally recognized performing arts organizations. In 2001, The Philadelphia Singers Chorale was named Resident Chorus of The Philadelphia Orchestra, the first time in the orchestra's history that a chorus has received this distinction. The Philadelphia Singers Chorale appears on all of the orchestra's choral subscriptions concerts including performances at the Mann Center for the Performing Arts and annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*. Maestro Wolfgang Sawallisch, Conductor Laureate of The Philadelphia Orchestra, hails The Singers as "one of the musical treasures of Philadelphia."

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