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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Houston Chamber Choir's "Durufle: Complete Choral Works" receives GRAMMY® Award for "Best Choral Performance"**

**HOUSTON, January 29, 2020** – Houston Chamber Choir's has won the GRAMMY® Award for "Best Choral Performance" for its Signum Records recording of "Durufle: Complete Choral Works," a performance of music by 20th century French composer Maurice Durufle. Houston Chamber Choir founder and artistic director Robert Simpson conducted, with Ken Cowan on organ. Simpson accepted the award at the Jan. 26 ceremony, along with his wife, Marianna Parnas-Simpson, a Houston Chamber Choir member.

The recording was also part of a second GRAMMY®: Blanton Alspaugh won for Producer of the Year, Classical, for his work on eight recordings, including Houston Chamber Choir's Durufle recording. The awards were given at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual GRAMMY® Awards ceremony in Los Angeles.

"I see this as a win for the Chamber Choir, Houston's vibrant artistic community, and the entire City," says Simpson. "It is not uncommon for elite American choirs to draw their singers from many parts of the country. I am proud that we are all Houstonians, and that our name identifies us with this great City."

Featured on the Houston Chamber Choir's Durufle CD are:

1. Requiem  
Ken Cowan, organ (Professor of Organ at The Shepherd School, Rice University)  
Norman Fischer, cello (Professor of Cello at The Shepherd School, Rice University)  
Cecilia Duarte, mezzo-soprano  
Eduardo Tercero, baritone
2. Messe "Cum Jubilo" (men's voice)  
Ken Cowan, organ
3. Notre Père (a cappella)
4. Quatre Motets (a cappella)  
Ubi caritas  
Tota pulchra es  
Tu es Petrus  
Tantum ergo

Additionally, Houston Chamber Choir acknowledges the contributions of Rice University's Shepherd School of Music, including Robert Yekovich, Dean and Gary Smith, Associate Dean.

Houston Chamber Choir continues to be recognized for its outstanding work. In 2018, the organization received the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence from Chorus America, the advocacy, research and leadership development organization that advances the choral field. Most recently, the Choir was invited to participate in the prestigious World Symposium on Choral Music 2020 (WSCM2020), to be held in Auckland, New Zealand in 2020, where 24 of the best choral ensembles in the world will perform. The festival, held every three years in different locations across the globe, received a record 179 entries this year. This is the first such invitation for the Houston Chamber Choir.

For more information about Houston Chamber Choir or to purchase tickets for concerts, visit us at [houstonchamberchoir.org](http://houstonchamberchoir.org).

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Link to [music here](#).

Link to [photos here](#).

**Photo Caption:** The Houston Chamber Choir's recording of "Durufle: Complete Choral Works," has won a 2020 GRAMMY Award in the "Best Choral Performance" category. Artistic director Robert Simpson and wife Marianna Parnas-Simpson attended the ceremony to accept the award.

*Photos by B. Bender and Robby Klein.*

#### **About Houston Chamber Choir**

The Houston Chamber Choir has established itself as one of the premier professional choirs in the United States, serving Houston through concerts and educational initiatives that enlighten, entertain, and educate people of all ages. The Chamber Choir released its fifth CD, "Durufle: Complete Choral Works," with organist Ken Cowan in April 2019, which won a GRAMMY Award in the category of "Best Choral Performance" at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual GRAMMY Awards in January 2020.

Winner of Chorus America's 2018 Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence, the Choir has been described by The Tallis Scholars founder Peter Phillips as "one of this country's leading ensembles." It also received The American Prize for best choral performance in the country and its Artistic Director Robert Simpson received the award in the conducting category in 2015. Additionally, Houston Chamber Choir was selected as one of 24 choirs to participate in the prestigious World Symposium on Choral Music in Auckland, New Zealand in July 2020.

Led by Artistic Director Robert Simpson, the Houston Chamber Choir is composed of 25 professional singers, most of whom have studied at the top music schools and conservatories in the United States including Julliard, New England Conservatory, University of Houston, and the University of Texas. These musicians are selected through rigorous auditions from the finest singers in our region and are compensated for all rehearsals and performances. Simpson was honored by Chorus America with the Michael Korn Founders Award in 2015 for his contributions to developing the professional choral art.