

**Cantemus Welcomes Grammy Award-Winner Paul Winter in Performance of *Missa Gaia/Earth Mass*
*Chorus Bids Farewell to Artistic Director Jane Ring Frank***

Cantemus Chamber Chorus is excited to welcome Grammy Award-winner Paul Winter and the Paul Winter Consort in a performance of Winter's jubilant "Missa Gaia/Earth Mass." American gospel singer Theresa Thomason is the featured artist.

The *Missa Gaia* is a multi-media oratorio integrating the voices of adults and children with pre-recorded voices of endangered species, including wolf, whale, and loon. Cantemus will also be joined by the Greater Newburyport Children's Chorus for the performance. The concert will take place Sunday, May 1, at 4:00 p.m. at Belleville Community Church, 300 High St., Newburyport, and will also be available via live-stream. Tickets are available online only at www.cantemus.org/tickets. Current COVID-19 protocols will be observed at the live performance.

The timing of this concert is notable in many ways. It is the culmination of Cantemus' 40th Anniversary season and also marks the 40th Anniversary of the *Missa Gaia*, commissioned as a contemporary Mass by the Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, where it continues to be performed annually. The work, whose title stems from Latin (*missa* = mass) and Greek (*gaia* = mother nature), is as ecumenical as it is ecological. The composition's ecumenical character is underlined by a web of various musical traditions and styles: Liturgical texts, Gregorian chant, Protestant hymns, Romantic organ music, African instruments, Latin American rhythms, jazz, Gospel, and contemporary rock ballad.

For this concert, Cantemus is partnering with local environmental advocacy organizations to help raise community awareness of environmental issues and build connections with groups working for ecological sustainability and protection of local watersheds. Partnering local organizations are the Ipswich River Watershed Association, the Merrimack River Watershed Council, the Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center, and the Ipswich Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary. Representatives from these organizations will be at the performance to share information about their activities in advocacy, education, and science.

The concert will also be the last time Cantemus is conducted by Artistic Director Jane Ring Frank, who joined the group in 2011. "Cantemus has been extraordinarily fortunate to have been led by Jane these past 11 years," said Cantemus President Steve Miles. "The programs she's developed with us have set new standards for being adventurous, provocative, and beautiful. Her skills in preparing and conducting the chorus have enabled us to provide joyful experiences not only for our audiences but also our singers. We will miss her deeply and wish her only the best as she moves on."

"What a joy and privilege to welcome the Paul Winter Consort to Cantemus' spring concert," said Ms. Frank. "'Missa Gaia' has been an important part of my life for many years. The piece is beautiful and moving and could not come at a more poignant moment in a hurting world. I am grateful to Cantemus for providing this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Funding support for this program comes from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Local Cultural Councils of Beverly, Essex, Georgetown, Groveland, Hamilton/Wenham, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, and Salisbury.

Cantemus members come from 22 communities on the North Shore and surroundings, including Acton, Amesbury, Beverly, Cambridge, East Boston, Essex, Georgetown, Gloucester, Haverhill, Ipswich, Lynnfield, Manchester-by-the Sea, Marblehead, Melrose, Newburyport, Peabody, Rockport, Roslindale, Wenham, West Newbury, Winchester, and Durham NH.

Cantemus is a member of Chorus America, and the Greater Boston Choral Consortium, a cooperative association of diverse choral groups in Boston and the surrounding area.

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