

Ann
Stookey
FUND FOR NEW MUSIC

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ANN STOOKEY FUND FOR NEW MUSIC ANNOUNCES COMMISSIONING GRANT FOR MAJOR NEW CHORAL WORK BY COMPOSER GREGORY SPEARS

Los Angeles, California (February 2, 2017): The Ann Stookey Fund for New Music ("ASFNM") today announced that it has awarded a grant in the amount of \$25,000 to underwrite the commissioning of a new choral work by Gregory Spears (www.gregoryspears.com).

The new work will be a cantata for mixed choir and obligato chamber ensemble, approximately 30 minutes in length, and will premiere during the 2018-19 performance seasons of the four choral organizations in the consortium.

Spears attended the Eastman School of Music, earned a master's degree at Yale, and took his Ph.D. at Princeton. Of his recent work, *The Wall Street Journal* said, "Mr. Spears writes brilliantly for vocal ensembles." The *Philadelphia Inquirer* said his "Requiem" bore "a modern sense of theatrical timing that keeps your ears on edge until the last note."

"We are delighted to work with a consortium of highly regarded, leading edge choral organizations to identify the next generation of great choral composers and to support efforts to bring their work to audiences," said Joe Waz, ASFNM chair. "With this latest commission to Gregory Spears, who has been hailed for his 'exquisite, distinctive (compositional) voice', the Fund is pleased to continue its unique role in expanding the choral arts in Ann's memory."

From Donald Nally, Conductor of The Crossing:

The opportunity to commission another substantial work through the support of the Ann Stookey Fund for New Music is extraordinary; we are so grateful for the generosity of Joe and his family in making this possible. I

know that Ann would have fully embraced Greg Spears' music – it speaks so directly to us and is crafted with such thought, contemplation, and courage. He is a true match to the mission of the Fund as well as the missions of the four wonderful ensembles who will premiere the work in their hometowns.

From Mark Shapiro, Artistic Director of Cantori New York:

Cantori New York and I are delighted and honored to be part of this prestigious consortium — and in such distinguished company. The Ann Stookey Fund for New Music is providing significant leadership in the creation of important new work for our art form; with this project ASFNM identifies a promising composer of a rising generation and affords him a precious opportunity to receive multiple performances, before multiple audiences, in cities across the United States, of this major new composition.

From Robert Geary, Artistic Director of Volti:

Bravi to the Ann Stookey Fund for New Music and Joe Waz for inspiring new choral music and a substantial platform for its dissemination. Volti is happy to be part of this project and honored to be counted with The Crossing, Cantori New York, and Notre Dame Vocale as leading proponents of new choral music in the United States.

From Carmen-Helena Tellez, Director of Notre Dame Vocale:

For Notre Dame Vocale, the research and special project ensemble at the University of Notre Dame, it is a distinct honor to collaborate with The Crossing, Volti, and Cantori New York, ranked among the most distinguished choral groups in the U.S., as we join forces to commission and premiere a new work by the gifted composer Greg Spears. The Ann Stookey Fund for New Music has built a visionary American repertoire through its focused support of collaborations between choral ensembles and composers. The exciting new consortium model will generate the necessary synergy for the dissemination of the new compositions among diverse regions and audiences in the country.

From Gregory Spears:

I am very excited and honored to write a major new work for this brilliant consortium of choirs that explores the expressive power of the choral idiom.

Having the chance to develop a large-scale work for such an accomplished group of artists will allow me to dream big and create a strong personal statement that speaks directly to contemporary audiences.

The commission was proposed by members of the Fund's advisory board and chosen by the board of ASFNM (<http://annstookeyfund.org/boards/>).

The Ann Stookey Fund for New Music was established in celebration of the life of Ann Stookey, an avid choral singer and strong supporter of new music, who passed away in 2012. A number of works commissioned by the Fund have received their world premieres. Learn more at <http://annstookeyfund.org/our-work/>. Follow the Fund on Facebook (Ann Stookey Fund for New Music) or Twitter (@AnnStookeyMusic).

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