

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Nordic Light Festival Wins
Choral Canada Award for Outstanding Innovation**

July 3, 2018 (Toronto, ON) – The Adlers Agency and the Orpheus Choir of Toronto have won the Choral Canada Outstanding Innovation Award at the national Podium Conference and Festival in St. John’s, Newfoundland for their co-production of the Nordic Light Festival, highlighting the works of Latvian composer Ēriks Ešēnvalds, in celebration of Latvia’s centenary.

The Outstanding Innovation Award is national in scope and awarded every two years to a "group or individual that provides innovative support of or an outstanding contribution to the choral art in the areas of advocacy, sponsorship or a choral event. Awards are based not only on the nature of innovative support for promoting and nurturing the choral community but also on the significance, scope and vision of the project or event itself."

According to the jury, "The Nordic Light Festival premiered and showcased a major composition which in itself provides an important contribution to the choral cannon. More importantly, through workshops in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Kitchener-Waterloo, this event gave many other choirs the opportunity to interact with Ēriks Ešēnvalds and exposure to more of Ešēnvalds repertoire. It was another example of Orpheus’ commitment to disseminating major international choral repertoire, and to building community through choral music."

The Nordic Light Festival was led by a "Dream Team": Latvian composer Ēriks Ešēnvalds, Co-Producer Laura Adlers of The Adlers Agency, the Orpheus Choir’s Artistic Director Robert Cooper, and the Choir’s Managing Director Lisa Griffiths.

Three years in the making, the original plan to host Ešēnvalds evolved from a single concert to a two-week-long, four-city tour. Events included public workshops for choral singers led by the composer himself in Toronto, Kitchener, Ottawa and Montreal, lectures at university faculties of music, private meetings with Ešēnvalds and local choral leaders in each city, and an exclusive opportunity for each group to explore Ešēnvalds' and other Baltic composers’ music with visiting publisher and sponsor Solvita Sējāne and Musica Baltica from Latvia.

Cornerstone events of the Festival took place in Toronto on February 24th, starting with the Canadian premiere screening of the documentary film "Nordic Light: A Composer’s Diary", which included a post-screening audience Q & A with the composer and Robert Cooper. That same evening, a completely sold-out house heard an all-Ešēnvalds concert and experienced the Canadian premiere of the "Nordic Light" multimedia symphony, under the direction of Robert Cooper, and featuring the Orpheus Choir, guest choir That Choir, its conductor Craig Pike and full orchestra, with Ešēnvalds introducing and conducting some of his works as well.

The Festival garnered significant media attention, funding sources from local individual donors and sponsors to the Ministry of Culture in Latvia, was heavily supported by the Latvian Ambassador and the Embassy of the Republic of Latvia in Canada, and enabled wonderful collaborations to be developed with the larger Latvian-Canadian community and between choral groups and leaders across regions.

Our thanks again to our event sponsors and partners: Musica Baltica, the Embassy of Latvia in Canada, the Ministry of Culture for Latvia, Pasaules Brīvo Latviešu Apvienība, LV100, Vija and Taketo Murata, Kravis Travel, the Latvian National Federation in Canada's Education and Cultural Fund, Daugavas Vanagi (Latvian Relief Fund), Inese and Greg Flude, the sorority "Spidola", our Toronto workshop co-organizers St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Latvian Church Vocal Ensemble and workshop sponsors conductor Brigita Alks and Vitauts Alks (Toronto); Conrad Grebel College choirs, Grand Philharmonic Choir and conductor Mark Vuorinen (Kitchener-Waterloo); McGill University Music Department and Professor Dr. Jean-Sebastien Vallée (Montréal); the Montréal Choral Institute, Voces Boreales and conductor Andrew Gray (Montréal); University of Ottawa Music Department and Professor John Armstrong, Capital Chamber Choir and conductor Jamie Loback (Ottawa).

In addition, we wish to thank the Toronto Arts Council, the Jackman Foundation, and the Ontario Arts Council for their support of the Orpheus Choir of Toronto's 2017-2018 Season.

Pictures from the Festival available for media use; leaders of the project available for interview.
Nordic Light Promo Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrR3hlfgy1I>

MEDIA CONTACT: Lisa Griffiths, Managing Director, Orpheus Choir of Toronto
(416) 530-4428 | lisa.griffiths@orpheuschoirtoronto.com

