BOISE PHIL MASTER CHORALE ANNOUNCES NEW INTERIM DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR EMERITUS ROLE

Boise, ID (June 4, 2021) – After 25 years of leadership, the Boise Philharmonic Association announces that Dr. Jim Jirak will be stepping down from his position as Boise Phil Master Chorale Music Director and will become the Boise Phil Master Chorale Music Director Emeritus. Grant Farmer will be joining the Boise Phil Master Chorale as Interim Music Director for the 2021-2022 season.

Since 1996 Dr. Jirak has been instrumental in growing the reputation and impact of the Master Chorale in this community. Jirak has led the Master Chorale in partnerships with the Boise Philharmonic, Boise
Baroque, the Treasure Valley Concert Band, and many other organizations. His work has expanded the repertoire performed by the Chorale, he has left an incredible legacy.

Kevin Richert, Boise Phil Master Chorale president, shares, "The Master Chorale’s growth and success is a reflection of Dr. Jirak’s vision, his musicianship and his talent for teaching. Boise singers and music lovers owe Jim a debt of gratitude. And as we begin a new chapter, I just want to say thank you."

Boise Phil Music Director Eric Garcia reflects on his experience working with Dr. Jirak. “Jim Jirak is an invaluable member of the Treasure Valley artistic community. His incredible work with the Boise Phil Master Chorale over the last 25 years has led the ensemble to great heights of musical achievement. We will miss him greatly but are immensely happy that he will assume the Boise Phil Master Chorale Music Director Emeritus role. During my tenure with the Boise Phil, Jim has been an inspiring partner, and I am eternally grateful.”

Grant Farmer, who is also serving The College of Idaho as their Director of Choral Activities, will take the lead as the Interim Music Director of the Boise Phil Master Chorale for the 2021 – 2022 concert season. Farmer brings years of experience preparing major works with choral ensembles and has led The College of Idaho’s choral ensembles through a successful transition to singing through the pandemic.

“We are very excited to welcome Grant Farmer, Director of Choral Activities at the College of Idaho, as the Interim Music Director of the Boise Phil Master Chorale for the 2021 – 2022 season. Grant’s infectious enthusiasm and extensive musical background in choral and orchestral conducting make him an ideal leader for the 2021-2022 season!” shares Eric Garcia.

Farmer adds, “I am thrilled to join the long-standing tradition of excellence with the Boise Philharmonic Master Chorale. I am grateful to Dr. Jim Jirak for his masterful tenure and leadership, and I am honored to build upon his work. I look forward to collaborating with all of the wonderful musicians to create meaningful performances as a part of the cultural tapestry that is the Treasure Valley.”

The Boise Phil will announce its 2021 – 2022 concert season, including performances featuring the Boise Phil Master Chorale, on June 15, 2021.

DR. JIM JIRAK | BOISE PHIL MASTER CHORALE DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Dr. James Jirak has been teaching music at Boise State University since 1994. Additionally, his music teaching experience includes eleven years for the K–12 public school system in Teton County, Wyoming. Prior to his arrival at Boise State, he served four years at Illinois State University as Assistant Director of Choral Activities.

Jirak teaches the University Foundations course, Intro to Jazz. He directs the Boise State University Singers, and since 1996, Dr. Jirak has served as the artistic director for the Boise Philharmonic Master Chorale. He sings with the Gib Hochstrasser Big Band, the Critical Mass Vocal Arts Ensemble, and is a member of the Opera Idaho Resident Company.

Jirak holds a Doctor of Arts degree in Choral Conducting with a secondary emphasis in Jazz Pedagogy from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Wyoming in Laramie, and a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Colorado State University in Ft. Collins.
GRANT FARMER | BOISE PHIL MASTER CHORALE INTERIM MUSIC DIRECTOR

Grant Farmer has served as conductor and chorus master for a variety of collegiate and semi-professional choral ensembles across the country, repeatedly recognized for their brilliant sound and inspiring performances. Currently, the Director of Choral Activities at The College of Idaho, Grant conducts multiple choral ensembles and teaches courses in conducting, music education, and choral pedagogy.

Beginning July 2021, Grant will begin serving as Interim Music Director with the Boise Philharmonic Master Chorale. Preparing choral ensembles for major works is one of Grant’s great passions. He has prepared works such as Britten’s War Requiem, Brahms’ Schicksalslied, Penderecki’s St. Luke Passion, Bernstein’s Mass, and Handel’s Messiah. Beyond the traditional Canon, Grant has also collaborated in preparing exciting new works like Julia Wolfe’s Anthracite Fields and numerous debuts of smaller octavos by various young composers.

Grant has performed under the baton of several major conductors such as Simon Rattle, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Jane Glover, Alan Gilbert, Charles Dutoit, and Franz Welser-Möst. He studied conducting with Joe Miller, Amanda Quist, Betsy Burleigh, Dominick DiOrio, and Walter Huff. Grant is a doctoral candidate at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University and holds a master’s degree in choral conducting from the Westminster Choir College.

Grant and his wife, Elizabeth, are fulfilling a “West-bound” dream as recent East Coast transplants to the Treasure Valley. They currently live in Meridian with their three dogs – Mae, Lilah, and Remy – and enjoy exploring the great outdoors as well as the vibrant city of Boise.

BOISE PHIL

The Boise Phil’s mission is to reflect the energy and heartbeat of our communities through invigorating musical experiences that touch the human spirit. Serving the Treasure Valley, the Boise Phil was established over 60 years ago but traces its artistic roots back to 1885. It is the longest continuously running cultural organization in the state, and one of the longest in the country. In addition to the professional orchestra, the Boise Phil also includes the Boise Phil Master Chorale and the Boise Phil Youth Orchestras.

###