

Christine Goerke elected to Board of Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival

DETROIT (July 1, 2020)— The Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival is pleased to announce that dramatic soprano Christine Goerke has accepted a seat on its Board of Directors.

Goerke has appeared in the major opera houses of the world. She has sung much of the great soprano repertoire, starting with the Mozart and Handel heroines and now earning critical acclaim for the dramatic Strauss and Wagner roles. This summer, she established roots in Michigan with her new leadership position with the Festival.

“There are many organizations of prominence in the performing arts world, but in experiencing the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival last year, I found an intimate feeling, as if I were welcomed into a family. I knew at once that I wanted a long-term relationship with this festival,” Goerke said.

With the breadth and depth of her professional experiences, Goerke will enhance the Board’s leadership capabilities in the areas of strategic planning, development and community engagement. The Festival Board believes that Goerke’s passion will also expand its reach to new audiences.

“I would like to strengthen the bond between the community and the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival. The Festival already enjoys such a high level of artistic importance and I want to build on that to enhance the organization’s presence in the local community,” she said.

Goerke’s connection to the Festival stems from her relationship with Festival board chairs Michael and Virginia Geheb that began in 1992 when Christine was a voice student at SUNY Stony Brook. Virginia Geheb, who was then working in the university’s opera program, quickly took notice of Christine’s voice. It was apparent then that Christine’s voice is unique in capability as is her artistry.

"It is the beauty of her soul that you hear in her remarkable singing," Michael Geheb said.

Last year marked her debut at the Festival, where Goerke performed at the closing night finale, alongside Festival Artistic Director Paul Watkins, as well as performers Philip Setzer and Lawrence Power.

"I am absolutely delighted that Christine Goerke has graciously agreed to join the board of the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival," said Watkins. "Michael and Virginia Geheb, our board chairs, introduced me to her stunning artistry several years ago and I was immediately entranced. When we met and worked together, it became clear to me that Christine was not

just one of the most extraordinary singers of her generation, but also a passionately eloquent communicator and advocate for the arts."

Watkins has held the role of artistic director for over five years. His position began following the retirement of founding Artistic Director James Tocco. The cellist of the Emerson String Quartet, Watkins is an accomplished instrumentalist and conductor. In his role as Festival artistic director, he has continued the Festival's tradition of engaging world-class musicians and creating imaginative projects.

With the 2020 Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Watkins and Goerke will focus on the June 2021 Festival, as well as several innovative 2020 Festival projects.

About the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival

The Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival was born in 1994 of a remarkable relationship between religious and cultural institutions. A secular event, the Festival is sponsored by three religious institutions (representing Catholic, Jewish and Protestant faiths) and Detroit Chamber Winds & Strings, a prominent musical ensemble that is an administrative partner for the Festival. For two weeks each June, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival presents more than 20 concerts in southeastern Michigan. Many of these performances occur in the venues of the Festival's sponsors - St. Hugo of the Hills Catholic Church, Temple Beth El and Kirk in the Hills.