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THE SANDLAPPER SINGERS ANNOUNCES 2016-2017 CONCERT SEASON

This is the first season for new artistic director Dustin Ousley

COLUMBIA, SC – The Sandlapper Singers today announced its 2016-2017 concert season, the first under the artistic leadership of Dr. Dustin Ousley. In the upcoming year, the ensemble will present three concert programs: *Mentors: A Choral Celebration* in late October; *Legends: A Christmas Celebration* in mid-December; and *Masters: A Celebration of Song* in late April.

“This is a year of celebration,” Ousley says. “It’s our motto for the season and the spirit with which I’m approaching my first year as artistic director.”

Founded in 1996, the Sandlapper Singers flourished for 20 years under the direction of its first artistic director, Dr. Lillian Quackenbush. When Quackenbush announced her retirement last year, a committee of board members and singers conducted a rigorous search for her successor. Ousley auditioned as guest conductor during the ensemble’s October 2015 program, “The Hit Parade,” and received unanimous approval from the search committee. He assumed the role on July 1, 2016.

For Ousley, the 2016-2017 concert season – a year of transition for both him and the choir – provides a unique opportunity to celebrate past achievements while looking ahead to the future. “This season is dedicated to all champions of choral music, individuals like Lillian Quackenbush who not only strive for artistic excellence themselves, but inspire young people to realize their own limitless potential.”

Mentors: A Choral Celebration

The Sandlapper Singers will begin the season with a concert honoring teachers and mentors. Founding artistic director Lillian Quackenbush will return as guest conductor, leading the ensemble in a selection of her favorite works from seasons past. Dustin Ousley will incorporate meaningful pieces from his own musical training, including Stephen Sondheim’s “Send in the Clowns” and “Ye Shall Have a Song” from American

composer Randall Thompson's choral masterpiece "The Peaceable Kingdom." The concert will also feature a special appearance by Elizabeth Joy Smith, recipient of the 2016 Katie Quackenbush Scholarship. This award is presented annually to a promising high-school vocalist. Performances of *Mentors: A Choral Celebration* will be Thursday, October 27 at Eastminster Presbyterian Church and Friday, October 28 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Legends: A Christmas Celebration

The choir's annual Christmas concert will pay tribute to legendary American conductor and choral director Robert Shaw (1916-1999). This year marks the 100th anniversary of Shaw's birth, and the Sandlapper Singers will celebrate this centenary by presenting some of Shaw's most beloved carol arrangements, as well as holiday hits from the Billboard 100. Performances will be Thursday, December 15 at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church and Friday, December 16 at St. Michael and All Angels' Episcopal Church.

Masters: A Celebration of Song

The Sandlapper Singers will conclude the season with one of its most ambitious performances to date. World-renowned composer and conductor Z. Randall Stroope will join artistic director Dustin Ousley in conducting the first-ever concert dedicated entirely to Stroope's own compositions. High school students from around the state will be invited to rehearse and perform with Stroope and the Singers, increasing the size of the choir to nearly 100 voices. Performances will be Friday, April 28 at Shandon Presbyterian Church and Saturday, April 29 at Union United Methodist Church in Irmo.

All concerts begin at 7:30 PM. Doors open at 6:30 PM. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for students with ID, and may be purchased online or at the door before the concert. Children 12 and under get in free with a paying adult; no ticket required. Group discounts are also available. For more information, visit www.sandlappersingers.org or contact info@sandlappersingers.org.

About the Sandlapper Singers

Comprised of 32 voices, the Sandlapper Singers is a professional choir and 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Columbia, South Carolina. Under the leadership of artistic director Dustin Ousley, the group is dedicated to presenting choral music of the highest caliber and ensuring the future of choral arts by mentoring young singers and educators. Founded in 1996 by Lillian and Dave Quackenbush, the Sandlapper Singers focuses on the works of American composers of the past and present, both traditional and contemporary. In addition to its annual concert series in the Columbia area, the ensemble regularly performs around the state and beyond.

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