

**The Annenberg Center Presents The Crossing @ Christmas,
December 20, at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse Square**

“America’s most astonishing choir.” – The New York Times

(Philadelphia – December 11, 2019) — The [Annenberg Center](#) presents “America’s most astonishing choir” (*New York Times*), acclaimed Grammy® Award-winning new music choir [The Crossing](#), conducted by Donald Nally, in **The Crossing @ Christmas, Friday, December 20, at 7:30 PM**, at **The Church of the Holy Trinity**, Rittenhouse Square, 1904 Walnut Street. Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](#) for ticket information.

The program includes **David Lang’s** Pulitzer-winning *the little match girl passion* (2008), a work championed by The Crossing and one of the few works they return to repeatedly. Recasting Hans Christian Andersen’s tale in the form of a passion, based loosely on the structure and words of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, David Lang draws a religious and moral equivalency between the suffering of the poor girl and the suffering of Jesus. The Crossing @ Christmas also features the world premiere performance of *Spectral Spirits*, a major commission from **Edie Hill** based on poems of Holly Hughes. The new 30-minute work explores the extraordinary beauty and diversity of the natural world found in birds; and it views those birds through a lens of loss and nostalgia. All of the birds in the work, once numbered in millions, are now gone.

The Crossing

The Crossing is a professional chamber choir conducted by Donald Nally and dedicated to new music. It is committed to working with creative teams to make and record new, substantial works for choir that explore and expand ways of writing for choir, singing in choir and listening to music for choir. Many of its over 70 commissioned premieres address social, environmental and political issues.

Highly sought-after for collaborative projects, The Crossing’s first such partnership was as the resident choir of the Spoleto Festival in Italy, in 2007. Since then, collaborators include the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), American Composers Orchestra, Network for New Music, Lyric Fest, PRISM Saxophone Quartet, Beth Morrison Projects, Pig Iron Theatre Company, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Mostly Mozart Festival, National Gallery of Art, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cleveland Museum, Institute for Advanced Study, Carnegie Hall, National Sawdust, Finnish National Opera, Haarlem Koorbiënnale (Netherlands) and Northwestern University. The Crossing holds an annual residency at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center in Big Sky, Montana.

With a commitment to recording its commissions, The Crossing has issued 18 releases, receiving two Grammy® Awards for Best Choral Performance (2018, 2019) and three Grammy® nominations in as many years. The Crossing, with Donald Nally, is the American Composers Forum’s 2017 Champion of New Music. They are the recipients of the 2015 Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence, three ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, and the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award from Chorus America. Visit [crossingchoir.org](#).

Donald Nally (Conductor)

Donald Nally conducts The Crossing, the internationally acclaimed, Grammy® Award-winning professional choir that commissions, premieres and records only new music. He holds the John W. Beattie Chair of Music at

Northwestern University where he is professor and director of choral organizations. Nally has served as chorus master at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Welsh National Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and for many seasons at the Spoleto Festival in Italy. Nally has commissioned over 100 works and, with *The Crossing*, has produced eighteen recordings, winning two Grammy® Awards. He was the American Composers Forum 2017 Champion of New Music and received the 2017 Michael Korn Founders Award from Chorus America; his ensembles have twice received the Margaret Hillis Award for Excellence in Choral Music. Nally has worked closely with the artists Allora & Calzadilla and composer David Lang on projects in London, Osaka, Cleveland, Edmonton and Philadelphia. In the 2018-19 season, he was a visiting resident artists at the Park Avenue Armory, music director for the world premiere of Lang's *The Mile-Long Opera*, directing 1,000 voices on the High Line in Manhattan, and chorus master for the New York Philharmonic for world premieres by Lang and Julia Wolfe.

About the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting Penn and the greater Philadelphia region through innovative human expression in theatre, music, dance, and film, serving an annual audience of over 60,000. The Annenberg Center also serves as a key resource for the arts at Penn, connecting master artists with Penn students in support of and as an enhancement to the arts curriculum. Student performing arts groups are also key users of the Annenberg Center's multiple performance and rehearsal spaces, while also staffing many operational roles throughout the academic year. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, the Annenberg Center emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence, diversity, and rigor in its presentations; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences, and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference, and meeting facilities; and stresses comprehensive event planning, production support, and customer service. The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a major provider of performing arts access for school children and actively engages a broad range of primary, secondary, and post-secondary student audiences and inclusive constituencies from the campus, community, and greater Philadelphia region. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org.

CALENDAR LISTING

The Crossing @ Christmas

Friday, December 20, 7:30 PM

The Church of the Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse Square, 1904 Walnut Street

Called "America's most astonishing choir" by *The New York Times*, multiple Grammy® Award-winning new music choir, *The Crossing*, performs its annual concert reflecting on our world in the winter holiday season. Conducted by Donald Nally, this year's *The Crossing @ Christmas* features two modern passions: David Lang's Pulitzer Prize-winning *the little match girl passion*, based on the Hans Christian Andersen story, and *Spectral Spirits*, a world premiere by composer Edie Hill, with elegiac remembrances of birds that have gone extinct.

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for ticket information.

[Photographs of The Crossing.](#)

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