**For Immediate Release**

**Press Contact:** Chloe Kougias, WETA / ckougias@weta.org / 703.998.2086

Colette Greenstein, American Public Television (APT) / Colette\_Greenstein@aptonline.org / 617.338.4455 x133

**Renowned American Conductor Sir Gilbert Levine Creates Broadcast Concert In Honor of Pope John XXIII, Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis**

**Celebrating Their Spiritual Legacies Promoting Peace Through Music**

— *Concert features the Orchestra of St. Luke’s from Carnegie Hall, the Kraków Philharmonic Choir and the Washington Choral Arts Society. Will Air Spring 2015* —

WASHINGTON, D.C. — *A Celebration of* *Peace Through Music* is a special televised concert created by American conductor Sir Gilbert Levine that took place on May 5, 2014 in Washington, D.C. The concert features the Kraków Philharmonic Choir, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and theWashington Choral Arts Society. Through music, a language that supersedes all cultural boundaries, Levine leads these world-class vocal and orchestral ensembles in a moving tribute to Pope John XXIII, Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis — three spiritual leaders recognized for their devotion to promoting understanding and peace around the world.

*A Celebration of* *Peace Through Music* is a two-hour show that will be broadcast on public media stations nationwide in Spring 2015, particularly around Easter 2015 — Sunday, April 5. (Check local listings.)

A world-renowned conductor, Levine has been a major presence on Public Television, leading the U.S. television debuts of some of the most important orchestras world-wide. Known as the “Pope’s Maestro” for his decades long friendship with Pope John Paul II, Sir Gilbert is uniquely qualified to lead this musical tribute.

*A Celebration of Peace Through Music* is a celebration of music and spirit, open to people of all faiths. Conducted by Levine, the concert honors the canonizations of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II, in the spirit of Pope Francis. Each musical work performed was selected to reflect the spirit of these three great leaders and their commitment to peace and understanding among people of all faiths. This concert special also follows Sir Gilbert as he travels to Buenos Aires, Venice, Kraków, Rome, Vienna, and Washington, D.C., to show us all how music and spirit can unite our world.

The concert, performed in Washington, D.C., in May 2014, following Pope Francis’ ceremony to make Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II saints, was a joint effort by WETA Washington D.C., Georgetown University, the Archdiocese of Washington and the embassies of Poland, Italy, Argentina and the Holy See. The embassies represent the native countries of Pope John XXIII (Italy), Pope John Paul II (Poland) and Pope Francis (Argentina). The music program for *A Celebration of* *Peace Through Music* was specially selected to commemorate and celebrate historical moments of peace and understanding demonstrated by each pope.

“WETA is pleased to join our distinguished partners in bringing this broadcast celebrating people of all faiths to our viewers,” stated Sharon Percy Rockefeller, president and chief executive officer of WETA. “As the premier public broadcasting station in the national capital area, it is our privilege to bring special Washington-area arts performances to audiences throughout the United States; we are delighted to present to the public this momentous concert event and its important message of tolerance and peace.”

“This spirit of peace through music is a legacy of these three towering spiritual leaders — Saints John XXIII and John Paul II, and Pope Francis — one that all of us can build on, whatever our faith tradition,” said Levine. “Music has the power to bring people together, to bridge any difference. Through its transcendent language on this singular, historic occasion our musical tribute to these three great men, offers a powerful uplifting message for our time.”  
  
“We are pleased to partner with WETA and the Embassies of Argentina, Italy, Poland and the Holy See, to share this significant musical event,” said Paul Tagliabue, Chairman of the Board of Georgetown University. “Music is something that unites us all and helps bring meaning to the world. Current events show us that this music, and the popes’ messages of peace, needs to be heard today.”

Levine was inspired to create *A Celebration of* *Peace Through Music* when Pope Francis announced the dual canonizations of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II. The conductor envisioned putting together a concert to celebrate religious liberty, peace and understanding. The concert celebrates Pope Francis’ current efforts to promote dialogue among all people and the inspirational legacies of his two sainted predecessors who both believed in a universal bond between all religions. Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII were canonized on April 27, 2014 at a ceremony officiated by Pope Francis in Vatican City, attended by more than a million and watched by millions more around the globe.

Sir Gilbert Levine has led a distinguished international career, conducting great orchestras world-wide, and making history along the way. In North America he has conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Montreal Symphony and Toronto Symphony, among others. Levine has been hailed as “an outstanding figure in the world of international music television” by 3SAT (German-Austrian-Swiss Television), having led the U.S. television debuts of such world renowned European orchestra’s as the Staatskapelle Dresden, Royal Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, and the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Levine first made international headlines when he was named Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Kraków Philharmonic in 1987, becoming the first American to head a major orchestra behind the Iron Curtain. He conducted that orchestra on international tours to Europe, the Far East and the major concert halls of North America, including the Kennedy Center in 1993. From 1988-2005, Levine created and conducted concerts for His Holiness Pope John Paul II, at the Vatican and around the world, including the historic Papal Concert to Commemorate the Holocaust (1994), and the Papal Concert of Reconciliation (2004).

For his artistic contributions to better understanding among people of all faiths, Levine was invested by Pope John Paul II as a Knight-Commander of the Equestrian Order of Saint Gregory the Great, the highest Papal Knighthood accorded a non-ecclesiastical musician since Mozart.

In addition to the televised broadcast, a radio version of the full-length concert will be made available to classical radio stations nationwide through The WFMT Radio Network. More information about the radio broadcast can be found at *www.wfmt.com/PeaceThroughMusic*.

An electronic press kit for *A Celebration of Peace Through Music*, including downloadable photos for promotional use and biographies of the popes and musical talent, is available at the WETA Pressroom, [*www.weta.org*](http://www.weta.org)*.*

*A Celebration of Peace Through Music* is a production of the Pax Per Musicam Foundation and Georgetown University, in association with WETA Washington, D.C. Executive producers are Sir Gilbert Levine and Paul Tagliabue for Georgetown, and Dalton Delan for WETA. The project executive for WETA is Jim Corbley. Major funding for the broadcast is provided by Tom and Gayle Benson; Alfred H. Moses and Fern Schad; Chandler and Paul Tagliabue; and The Hariri Foundation. The radio program is a co-production of Pax Per Musicam Foundation and Georgetown University, in association with Classical WETA.

The original May 2014 concert was funded by Tom and Gayle Benson; Alfred H. Moses and Fern Schad; Chandler and Paul Tagliabue; Nancy and Arthur Calcagnini; The Honorable John Delaney and April McClaine-Delaney and Capital Source Foundation; Barbara and Ira Lipman and Guardsmark, LLC; Tim and Linda O’Neill; Laurence and Alexandra Tosi; Teresa and Peter Clare; Cheryl and Joe Della Rosa; William J. Doyle; Hariri Foundation-USA; Ambassador and Mrs. Daniel Rooney; Kathleen and Francis Rooney; Kara and Steve Ross; Barbara and Charles Rossotti; Carole and David D. Carr; Edmund Duffy and the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation; Richard and Irma Frank; The Georgetown University Alumni Association; Ted and Lynn Leonsis; The Honorable Bonnie McElveen-Hunter; Melinda and Nelson Ortiz; Jeanne Waver Ruesch; and Victor Wright.

WETA Washington, D.C., is one of the largest producing stations of new content for public television, serving Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia, with educational initiatives and with high-quality programming. Other WETA productions and co-productions include *PBS NewsHour*, *Washington Week with Gwen Ifill*, *The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize* and documentaries by filmmaker Ken Burns, including the upcoming Ken Burns Presents *Cancer: The Emperor of All Maladies* A Film by Barak Goodman, airing March 30-April 1, 2015. More information on WETA and its programs and services is available at [*www.weta.org*](file:///C:\Users\ckougias\Desktop\www.weta.org)*.*

American Public Television (APT) has been a leading distributor of high-quality, top-rated programming to America’s public television stations since 1961. Since 2004, APT has distributed approximately half of the top 100 highest-rated public television titles. Among its 300 new program titles per year are prominent documentaries, news and current affairs programs, dramatic series, how-to programs, children’s series and classic movies, including *Rick Steves’ Europe*, *Globe Trekker, America’s Test Kitchen From Cook’s Illustrated, Lidia’s Italy, Midsomer Murders, Doc Martin,* and *BBC World News*. APT also licenses programs internationally through its APT Worldwide service. In 2006, APT launched and nationally distributed Create® – the TV channel featuring the best of public television's lifestyle programming. APT is also a partner in the WORLD™ channel expansion project including its web presence at worldchannel.org. For more information about APT’s programs and services, visit *www.*[*APTonline.org*](http://www.APTonline.org).

The WFMT Radio Network is the international syndication division of award-winning Chicago classical music station 98.7WFMT. In addition to this broadcast, the WFMT Radio Network syndicates many programs, including concerts by the Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Milwaukee Symphony Orchestras, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, as well as ongoing series such as *Relevant Tones, Fiesta!,* and *Exploring Music with Bill McGlaughlin.* The WFMT Radio Network also offers a full season of performances by American opera companies such as Lyric Opera of Chicago, Los Angeles Opera*,* San Francisco Opera, and more. In addition, exclusive programming from Carnegie Hall, Germany’s Deutsche Welle Radio, and dozens of classical, folk, jazz, documentaries, and specials are offered to radio outlets around the world, including to members of the European Broadcasting Union, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, and China. For more information, please contact Tony Macaluso at [tmacaluso@wfmt.com](mailto:tmacaluso@wfmt.com) or Estlin Usher at [eusher@wfmt.com](mailto:eusher@wfmt.com).

Georgetown Universityis the oldest and largest Catholic and Jesuit university in America, founded in 1789 by Archbishop John Carroll. Georgetown today is a major student-centered, international, research university offering respected undergraduate, graduate and professional programs in Washington, D.C., Doha, Qatar, and around the world. For more information about Georgetown University, visit *www.georgetown.edu* or connect with Georgetown on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/georgetownuniversity), [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/georgetown), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/edu/school?id=18062), or [Instagram](http://www.instagram.com/georgetownuniversity).

###