

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 1/3/12

Michael French
Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator
College of Performing and Visual Arts
Southern Utah University
Office: 435-865-8667
michaelfrench@suu.edu

SUU MUSIC STUDENTS APPEAR ON GRAMMY AWARD-NOMINATED RECORDING

Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah: When this year's Grammy Award nominations were recently announced, two of SUU's talented vocal students had reason to be excited – they performed on a nominated recording. **Taliah Lee Johnson** and **Geneil Perkins** received word that their work on the recording *Brahms: Ein Deutsches Requiem* was nominated for Best Choral Performance in the Classical Music division.

Last summer, Perkins and Johnson were awarded scholarships for their work as part of the first-annual **Professional Choral Institute at the University of South Florida**. The two weeks spent with other college singers from across the country and finished with a professional recording of the Brahms' *Requiem* with **Seraphic Fire** an internationally acclaimed choir based out of Miami, Florida. The recording was a huge success on the iTunes classical charts when it was released last August. Then came word of the Grammy Award nomination.

Upon hearing the news of the nomination, Geneil Perkins said, "I was so surprised. I couldn't even believe that we actually got nominated for a Grammy! I had this huge smile on my face for at least 24 hours after I heard the news! Everyone in PCI and Seraphic Fire worked really hard because we wanted our CD to be nominated -- and now our dreams are coming true! All of our hard work really paid off. Now we can only hope that we actually win the Grammy!"

Taliah Lee Johnson recalls her reaction to the news, "I just couldn't believe that it was real; I still have a hard time believing that it's real. It's something that I never imagined would happen in my life. What an honor to be part of this recording!"

During the institute, **Geneil** and **Taliah** spent at least six hours a day rehearsing and learning techniques as well as attending workshops geared at marketing yourself as an artist and resume building. They were able to meet talented emerging singers like themselves as well as work with seasoned professionals.

The **Professional Choral Institute** (PCI) is a partnership between **Seraphic Fire** and the **University of South Florida** which focuses on ushering aspiring ensemble singers from talented amateurs to professional musicians. The two-week-long program teaches undergraduate, graduate and pre-professional singers the skills needed to move into the growing field of professional choral singing. Areas of vocational training include: vocal technique, musicianship skills, rehearsal comportment, audition skills, and résumé and headshot evaluation. PCI's participants work with Seraphic Fire to rehearse, perform and record masterworks of the Classical choral repertoire. PCI makes its home in the university's newly opened Performing Arts Teaching Facility.

Geneil Perkins is a senior Vocal Performance major from Moreno Valley, California. She has performed multiple times as a soloist for the Orchestra of Southern Utah's yearly production of Handel's *Messiah*. She has also participated in many musical productions with the SUU Music Department, in addition to earning awards in the last two NATS Las Vegas Chapter competitions. After she graduates in the spring, she plans on attending graduate school to pursue a Master's degree in Opera Studies.

Cedar City native **Taliah Lee Johnson**, mezzo-soprano, is working toward her Bachelor's degree in music education. Taliah performed multiple times as an alto soloist in the Orchestra of Southern Utah's production of Handel's *Messiah*. She has participated in numerous other concerts and productions at SUU and was awarded Third Place in the NATS Las Vegas Chapter competition.

The Grammy Awards will be presented on Sunday, February 12, 2012, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. The ceremony will be broadcast on CBS Television. It is a date that both Johnson and Perkins will be looking forward to, with great anticipation.

ABOUT THE COLLEGE

The **Southern Utah University College of Performing and Visual Arts** is comprised of nationally accredited departments of Art and Design, Music, Theatre Arts and Dance, as well as a graduate program in Arts Administration. The College offers 16 different degree areas, including liberal arts Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees; professional Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Fine Arts in art and theatre degrees; and a Master of Fine Arts in Arts Administration degree. More than 60 full- and part-time faculty and staff are engaged in teaching and mentoring over 550 majors in the College. Over 1100 students enroll each year in over 195 arts classes on the SUU campus. The College presents 100 performances, lectures, presentations, and exhibitions each year. The College's affiliate organizations include the Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery, American Folk Ballet, Utah Shakespeare Festival, and the SUU Ballroom Dance Company. For more information about the College of Performing and Visual Arts, contact the Office of the Dean at (435) 865-8561, or by e-mail at cpvamktg@suu.edu.