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season
46
2014 - 2015



Mark Twain: by Mike Krwit

ENSEMBLE SINGERS ON TOUR



VOCALESSENCE
PRESENTS

RIVER SONGS AND TALES

WITH MARK TWAIN

GREATER MINNESOTA TOUR | NOVEMBER 13 - 16, 2014
GATHER AT THE RIVER WITH MARK TWAIN | MAY 2, 2015

RIVER SONGS AND TALES WITH
MARK TWAIN: GREATER MINNESOTA TOUR
IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY



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This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

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Sean Dowse
Sheldon Theatre
Red Wing

Luanne Fondell
Dawson-Boyd Arts Association
Dawson

Dick Kettering
Shattuck-St. Mary's School
Faribault

Jennie Knoebel
Paramount Theatre
Austin

MUSIC EDUCATORS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARTNERS

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Dawson-Boyd High School and
Community Choir
Dawson

Mikkel Gardner
Red Wing High School
Red Wing

Brian Johnson
Austin High School
Austin

Christina Viehauser
St. Mark's Senior Living/Ecumen
Austin

Amy Williams
Ecumen

Alicia Vigness
Faribault High School
Faribault

James Yao
Shattuck-St. Mary's School
Faribault

SPECIAL THANKS

Land O'Lakes Foundation
Lydia Botham
AJ Graves
Cindy Gehrig, Jerome Foundation
David L. Mona



VOCALESSENCE

2014-2015
OUR 46TH SEASON

RIVER SONGS AND TALES WITH MARK TWAIN GREATER MINNESOTA TOUR

Don Shelby, *actor*

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, *conductor*

Jon Cranney, *production director*

Molly Sue McDonald, *fiddle*

Charles Kemper, *piano*

Thursday, November 13, 2014 at 7:30 pm

Newhall Auditorium

Shattuck-St. Mary's School

Faribault, Minnesota

Friday, November 14, 2014 at 7 pm

Austin High School Knowlton Auditorium

Austin, Minnesota

Saturday, November 15, 2014 at 7 pm

Sheldon Theatre

Red Wing, Minnesota

Sunday, November 16, 2014 at 7 pm

Dawson-Boyd Memorial Auditorium

Dawson, Minnesota

GATHER AT THE RIVER WITH MARK TWAIN FUNDRAISER

Saturday, May 2, 2015 at 3:30 pm and 7 pm

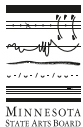
The Minnesota Centennial Showboat

Harriet Island Road, St. Paul, Minnesota

2014-2015 SEASON SPONSORS



GENERAL MILLS



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund, and a grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation Minnesota.

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VocalEssence is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



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**In remembrance*



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Please Note

- This concert may be recorded for broadcast — please help us keep the performance space quiet. Take a moment now to check that all cell phones, paging devices, wristwatch alarms and the like are turned off before the concert begins. Thank you for your cooperation.
- Recording devices and cameras are prohibited. No photography, video, or audio recording is allowed in the concert hall. Please abstain from texting, tweeting or checking your email during the concert.
- Latecomers will be seated at appropriate pauses in the concert according to the conductor's wishes. Please plan plenty of time for locating the concert venue and parking.

THE PROGRAM

RIVER SONGS AND TALES WITH MARK TWAIN

A Mark Twain Appreciation

Don Shelby as Mark Twain

Shall We Gather at the River	Hymn Tune, adapted by Aaron Copland
Wade in the Water	Spiritual, arr. Norman Luboff
Muddy Water (from <i>Big River</i>) Ensemble Singers men	Roger Miller, arr. Paul Gerike
River in the Rain (from <i>Big River</i>)	Roger Miller, arr. Paul Gerike
Shenandoah	American Folksong, arr. James Erb
My River Runs to Thee *	Michael Schachter Poem by Emily Dickinson
Sicut Cervus	G. P. da Palestrina
Roll, Jordan, Roll	Traditional, arr. Brian Tate
Down to the River to Pray Ensemble Singers women	Traditional, arr. Cheryl Lynn Helm
Mark Twain	The Kingston Trio, arr. Paul Gerike
Let the River Run	Carly Simon, arr. Craig Hella Johnson

No tobacco products are used in this performance.

* *Commission funded by the Jerome Foundation through the
VocalEssence Essentially Choral Program*

JEROME
FOUNDATION

Celebrating the
creative spirit of
emerging artists



WELCOME



Minnesotans are proud to be the state that claims the headwaters of the Mississippi, unarguably the most iconic body of water in our country! Stories and songs have flowed from the river for generations, inspiring some of our greatest writers and composers, most notably Mark Twain. VocalEssence is proud to celebrate that inspiration with this program of “River Songs and Tales.” Conceived by Jon Cranney, Don Shelby and Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, the program celebrates the Mississippi and many other rivers that are so important to the lives of Minnesotans. VocalEssence is grateful to the Minnesota State Arts Board, Land O’Lakes Foundation, and all the citizens of our state for the funding that makes this tour possible. In addition to public performances, we are committed to engaging students, singers, and community members in every town we visit celebrating the uplifting spirit of the choral art form.

—*Philip Brunelle, Artistic Director*

—*Mary Ann Aufderheide, Executive Director*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Samuel Langhorne Clemens
Hal Holbrook

BIOGRAPHIES



Don Shelby is considered the most decorated local journalist in the country, having won all five of the top national journalism awards and several multiple times: National Emmies,

the Society of Professional Journalists Distinguished Service Award, and twice the recipient of the George Foster Peabody Award, the broadcast equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize.

He has been a broadcaster for more than 45 years and has reported from 22 countries and three war zones as a combat journalist. Don has been named the Rev. Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian of the Year, the Winner of the American Spirit Honor Medal, the Great American Traditions Award, is in the broadcast Hall of Fame, the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Silver Circle, and as an athlete was inducted into his home county's sport Hall of Fame. He was also honored by Minnesota's High School Basketball Coaches Association with membership in that Hall of Fame. He is the author of a book on basketball and the lessons of life titled *The Season Never Ends*.

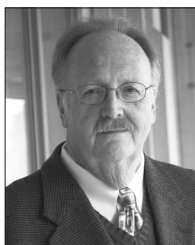
An outdoorsman, survival specialist and mountain and ice climber, Don has been married to Barbara Shelby for nearly 40 years and they have three daughters and three grandchildren.



Tesfa Wondemagegnehu
Conductor

Conductor of the APM Radio Choir and Manager of the Choral Works Initiative for American Public

Media, Tesfa Wondemagegnehu previously served as Assistant Artistic Director of VocalEssence. As a high school teacher, he was named Orange County Public School's Teacher of the Year (2013) and received the Macy's National Magic of Teaching Award (2013). Tesfa is widely in demand as a guest conductor and lecturer. He has presented workshops and conducted honor choirs in Florida, Tennessee, Ohio, Minnesota, Iowa and Costa Rica. As a tenor soloist, he has performed both in the United States and internationally in Germany, Austria, and Hungary, and Costa Rica.



Jon Cranney has been a member of the Twin Cities theatre community for over four decades. He was a member of the Guthrie Theatre Company in its early years and served as the Artistic Director

of the Tony Award-winning Children's Theatre Company in the 1980s and '90s. He has directed for many Twin Cities theatres as well as others across the nation.

For VocalEssence he has created many staged works, including Libby Larsen's opera, *Barnum's Bird*, a multimedia version of William Bolcom's celebrated oratorio, *The Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, and the **WITNESS** program celebrating contralto Marian Anderson.

Jon has also performed as an actor at the Guthrie Theater, the Children's Theatre Company, Chanhassen Dinner Theatre, Park Square Theatre and recently at Yellow Tree Theatre.



Molly Sue McDonald is familiar to audiences through her work at the Guthrie, Chanhassen, Cricket, Nautilus, 10,000 Things, Frank, Park Square, Mixed Blood, Old Log, History and Illusion Theaters.

Other regional credits include the Arizona Theater Co., and Chicago's Goodman and Marriott Lincolnshire Theaters. She has sung with the Plymouth Music Series, Ex Machina Baroque Theater, Dorian Opera and the Symphony Orchestras of Minnesota, Columbus, Kansas City, Duluth, South Dakota, South Bend, and others. Across the U.S., Canada, France and Belgium, she has worked with such luminaries as Bobby McFerrin, Garrison Keillor and Maureen McGovern, and has enjoyed 10 seasons of *Sopranorama!* at the Southern Theater. Her lullaby collection, *Child of Mine*, received the ALA Notable Children's Recording Award. Molly most recently appeared in the Guthrie Theater's *My Fair Lady*.

Paul Gerike, of Chaska, Minnesota, keeps busy as a composer, arranger and performer. He frequently has written for VocalEssence and for the nationally acclaimed *A Prairie Home Companion* with Garrison Keillor. His arrangements have been performed by major orchestras including the Minnesota Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Albany (New York) Symphony, and many others.

Michael P. Kittel (Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be on tour with VocalEssence. Since 1990, Michael has designed lighting for over 300 theatre, dance and music productions in the Twin Cities area. Credits include the Ordway Music Theatre, Park Square Theatre, Frank Theatre, Macalester College, the St. Olaf Christmas Festival, and many others.

ABOUT VOCALESSENCE

The Mission of VocalEssence

As a leading Minnesota arts organization, VocalEssence uses the power of choral music to enhance our community by producing innovative vocal music events that stir people's souls.

Minneapolis-based VocalEssence has decades of history as one of the world's premier choral music organizations. But despite its global influence, VocalEssence has kept its focus local—consistently pioneering ways to strengthen Minnesota's community through thrilling musical experiences. We engage people of all ages and cultures through innovative, enticing choral music programming, such as performing ensembles, school curricula, elder learning initiatives and advocacy projects.

Called “one of the irreplaceable music ensembles of our time” by Dana Gioia, past chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, our two performing groups—the Ensemble Singers (32 professionals) and the VocalEssence Chorus (100 volunteers)—are made up entirely of local residents.

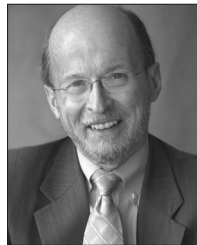
VocalEssence is renowned for its innovative exploration of music for voices and instruments under the enthusiastic direction of Artistic Director and Founder Philip Brunelle. Each season, VocalEssence presents an eclectic series of concerts featuring the VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers and an array of guest soloists and instrumentalists.

VocalEssence was founded in 1969 as the Plymouth Music Series, an arts outreach program of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis and incorporated as a separate 501(c)(3) non-profit in 1979. In 2002, the Plymouth Music Series changed its name to VocalEssence, capturing the essence of its mission to explore music for the human voice.

In addition to championing lesser-known works of the past, VocalEssence has an unwavering commitment to today's composers, which has resulted in more than 160 world premieres to date. The organization has received the ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music six times and has been honored with more Chorus America awards than any other ensemble nationwide, including the once-in-an-organizational-lifetime Margaret Hillis Achievement Award for Choral Excellence.

VocalEssence reaches into the community with programs that impact thousands of students, singers and composers every year. **WITNESS** celebrates the contributions of African Americans and **iCantaré!** brings the talents of composers from Mexico into Minnesota classrooms. VocalEssence partners with American Composers Forum to offer the annual **Welcome Christmas Carol Contest**.

At VocalEssence, we believe when we sing together, we succeed together. We invite you to be a part of it.



Philip Brunelle

Artistic Director and Founder

Philip Brunelle, artistic director and founder of VocalEssence, is an internationally renowned conductor, choral scholar and performer. Believing that listeners and musicians alike must experience music of many genres and styles, he has worked enthusiastically—and tirelessly—to expand audiences for rarely heard works of the past and worthwhile new music. In addition, to date VocalEssence has commissioned more than 160 works. Philip has conducted symphonies (New York Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, and Minnesota Orchestra among others) as well as choral festivals and operas on six continents.

Over the past decade Philip has been deeply involved with the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM). He served as president of the Sixth World Symposium on Choral Music held in Minneapolis (2002), was on the Artistic Committee for the Eighth Symposium, held in Denmark (2008), and the Ninth Symposium, held in Argentina (2011). He is a Vice President of the IFCM Board and served as Executive Director for the 2014 World Symposium on Choral Music held in Seoul, South Korea.

Philip holds five honorary doctorates, was invested as an Honorary Member of the Order from the British Empire (MBE) in 2005 for his services to music, and Commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit in 2007. The governments of Sweden, Hungary, and Mexico have also honored him.



Charles Kemper

Accompanist

Charles Kemper, pianist, has taught at St. Olaf College, Northwestern College and Bethel University, and is currently organist for Calvary Baptist Church in Roseville, MN. A native of Houston, Texas, Charles made his debut with the Houston Symphony at the age of 17, playing Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto. He has earned several degrees in piano performance, including a doctor of musical arts degree from Yale University. He has appeared as a soloist with the New Haven Symphony, University of Houston Orchestra, Yale Philharmonia, and the Jacksonville Symphony. Charles has been the VocalEssence staff accompanist since 1993.

VOCALESSENCE ENSEMBLE SINGERS

Minnesota is home to one of the truly international gems in choral music—the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers. This 32-voice professional chorus is a beloved national treasure that has been enjoyed by millions in Minnesota, around the country, and indeed, around the world. On their recent Asia Pacific Tour in August, the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers traveled to Seoul, South Korea, to perform at the 10th World Symposium on Choral Music, then continued on to Shanghai and Nanjing, China, for more concerts.

The Ensemble Singers serve as the core of the larger VocalEssence Chorus, and returning members of the Ensemble Singers audition every year. The Ensemble Singers are renowned internationally, nationally and locally. Recently, they were featured at the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota and at the National Conference of the American Choral Directors Association in Dallas, Texas, where they received standing ovations for their performances of music by Mexican composers.

VOCALESSENCE ENSEMBLE SINGERS

SOPRANO

Jennifer Bevington
Angela Grundstad
Margaret Sabin
Ann L. Schrooten
Mari Scott
Carolyn M. Steele
JoAnna Swantek

ALTO

Robin Joy Helgen
Marita J. Link
Judith McClain Melander
Anna George Meek
Anna Mooy
Clara Osowski
Erin Peters
Sandra Schoenecker

TENOR

Kevin L. Bailey
Chase Daniel Burkhart
Anders Eckman
Robert J. Graham
Curtis Kettler
James M. Marshall
John H. Notermann
William Pederson

BASS

Eric Bartlett
Nicholas Budden
Joseph Ellickson
Seth Keeton
Robert C. Smith
Timothy C. Takach
Josiah Telschow



VocalEssence would like to thank Land O'Lakes for its generous support of **River Songs and Tales with Mark Twain: Greater Minnesota Tour**.

ABOUT THE LAND O'LAKES FOUNDATION

The Land O'Lakes Foundation was established in 1996 and is made possible by support from Land O'Lakes, Inc. The Foundation awards community grants to projects that develop and strengthen organizations dedicated to hunger relief, education and the community.

ABOUT LAND O'LAKES, INC.

Land O'Lakes, Inc., one of America's premier agribusiness and food companies, is a member-owned cooperative with industry-leading operations that span the spectrum from farm production to consumer foods. With 2013 annual sales of more than \$14 billion, Land O'Lakes is one of the nation's largest cooperatives, ranking 199 on the Fortune 500. Building on a legacy of more than 93 years of operation, Land O'Lakes today operates some of the most respected brands in agribusiness and food production including LAND O LAKES® Dairy Foods, Purina Animal Nutrition and WinField. The company does business in all 50 states and more than 60 countries. Land O'Lakes, Inc. corporate headquarters are located in Arden Hills, Minn.



LAND O'LAKES, INC.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: FRED AND ANN MOORE

COUPLE FIND QUALITY, COMMUNITY AND STAYING POWER IN VOCALESSENCE



Fred and Ann Moore aboard a ferry on their way to Holly Loch, Scotland, where they would board a converted trawler for a week of sightseeing and exploring.

When Fred and Ann Moore lived in Wisconsin, they were familiar with VocalEssence, having attended several holiday concerts over the years. “But our association began in earnest when we moved to Minnesota seven years ago and started going to almost every concert,” said Fred, who recently joined the VocalEssence board of directors.

With such faithful attendance at VocalEssence events, it isn’t difficult for the Moores to think of a favorite experience or two. One that “really popped out” for Fred was **Musique de France** at the Cathedral of Saint Paul several years ago. “It truly was a memorable night—a dozen harps arrayed across the altar space, French music on a very large scale, the St. Olaf choir. ... It was a splendid night, and I can still hear it. One of the crowning moments was in the Berlioz *Te Deum*, with all the choirs and orchestra performing—to say the music filled up the space would be a huge understatement,” he reflected.

Ann said she especially enjoys the VocalEssence spring concerts “where they bring together a lot of American composers.” She also finds the **WITNESS** programs, which celebrate the contributions of African Americans, very illuminating. “They demonstrate so clearly how people dealt with trials and tribulations,” said Ann. The brief introduction by Philip Brunelle, VocalEssence artistic director and founder, “is so helpful on what to listen for and why it was included in that grouping.”

COUPLE HAD DIFFERENT INTRODUCTIONS TO MUSIC

Ann, who says she didn’t have much exposure to music during her public education, came to her love of music and singing through the church and Girl Scouts. “I picked up a lot through sing-alongs and in small church choirs, and have learned a lot more since attending the VocalEssence series,” she said.

Fred, on the other hand, had an aunt who was a skilled pianist and choir director. “I showed an interest in chorus and performed fairly well in choir and high school band,” he said, adding that between his aunt’s influence and his music teachers in school, “it was a pretty good introduction” to music. He also credits his mother, a single parent, for her contribution: “She really liked classical music. Pittsburgh had a classical station and she had it on a lot. On Sunday afternoons we would go to local major concerts, and it just was always part of my life as a kid,” Fred said.

After drifting away from performance in college, he came back to it in church at St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral in Des Moines, Iowa. There Fred became part of an association that eventually included a choral residency in Salisbury, England.

WHY CHORAL MUSIC? IT CREATES COMMUNITY

Choral music “is something you do together. It brings people together,” Fred said. “You share an artistic experience with a broad range of people who not only perform but listen as well. Sometimes it’s deeply spiritual, sometimes raucous fun, but it’s all a function of the atmosphere and culture that is created.”

Ann finds that choral music “encourages a lot of proactive listening, not just among chorus members but from the audience—listening for the different parts and what that means.” She also noted the community-building aspect: “People are coming together to work in a cooperative manner and are making something bigger than themselves.”

Fred sums it up this way: “It’s not just a collection of soloists but is a collection

of talented collaborators who listen to one another.”

VOCALESSENCE DRAWS ARE QUALITY, HEALTH AND INCLUSION

There are several attributes that set VocalEssence apart from other performing arts organizations, according to Fred. One is the quality of performances, he said. “The ensembles are superbly prepared and know the literature and how to present it. They are incredibly focused on the time of the performance—in the moment—more than many others.”

Another is the health of the organization, said Fred. VocalEssence has a small staff “who work hard and bring to the jobs the skills they need, and punch beyond their weight.” This creates staying power, he said. “Others have come and gone, and VocalEssence is not one of those.” In its 46th season, VocalEssence is here to stay.

Ann appreciates what she terms the “welcoming” nature of VocalEssence programming, including music the couple would not otherwise be aware from outside their social circles and cultural experience. “It isn’t the same old same old, supporting existing prejudices and outlooks; it encourages us to go beyond our borders and find the commonality. ... Music can help us in that regard, get us all in the same register.”

“MORE THAN THE TICKET PRICE”

Fred has done a lot of recruiting for business, and many of those recruits want to know what’s available in the arts. “VocalEssence adds a lot to our community ... and belongs at the top of the list,” he said. “I thoroughly enjoy what they deliver from the stage, and for me, supporting that quality of performance has to be more than the ticket price.”

He encourages others to support VocalEssence because without that external support beyond ticket revenue, “performing arts organizations can’t be on sound footing. Anyone who cares about them has to know that and has to be willing to pitch in.”



VOCAL ESSENCE

PRESENTS

GATHER AT THE RIVER WITH MARK TWAIN



Mark Twain: by Mike Krivit / Showboat: by Riverides

FUNDRAISER

Enjoy river songs and tales with Mark Twain aboard the historic **Minnesota Centennial Showboat**. Step into the past to support the future of choral music education programs at VocalEssence.

Don Shelby, actor

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, conductor

Jon Cranney, production director

Molly Sue McDonald, fiddle

Charles Kemper, piano

Join the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers and guest artist Don Shelby as Mark Twain for a celebration of the Mississippi on the river itself. Sip cocktails and enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres on the showboat's Victorian deck, then head to the auditorium, where listeners will be taken on a musical journey of the past and present—choral masterpieces, favorite folksongs, traditional spirituals, and Americana.

MORE INFORMATION AT
vocalessence.org

SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2015 AT 3:30 PM AND 7 PM

**The Minnesota Centennial Showboat
Harriet Island Road, Saint Paul, MN 55107**