



VOCALLESSENCE

50TH

ANNIVERSARY
SEASON

{2018-2019}

FALL CONCERTS

MUSIC FOR A GRAND CATHEDRAL

WELCOME CHRISTMAS

VOCAL ESSENCE

1900 Nicollet Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403
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- 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. Or, better yet, allow an extra hour and join us for Concert Conversations with the composers and artists, held one hour before most concerts.

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WELCOME



It is always a joy to share a concert with the St. Olaf Choir and my good friend Anton Armstrong. Since our first collaboration in 2001, we have sung together the music of Judith Bingham, Jonathan Dove, Frank Martin, and Dame Ethel Smyth—names that may not be familiar to you, but composers whose music made a strong impact on collegiate voices and gave us an opportunity to sing music calling for a massive, glorious sound.

This year we continue in that tradition joining forces for Ralph Vaughan Williams's magnificent *Mass in G minor* for Double Choir and Solo Quartet—and it is perfect to be singing it in this magnificent cathedral, for Vaughan Williams composed it thinking of Westminster Cathedral in London. The work was composed shortly after VW returned from France where he served in the Royal Garrison Artillery working on the front line. He was 42 when World War I began, and he volunteered for military service along with eight friends, six of whom were killed. There is no question that his life was never the same again, and after the war he divided his work into two paths—major works such as the *Mass* which involved deep personal issues, and shorter works written for special occasions or people. The *Mass in G minor* is one of Vaughan Williams's major choral works.

I asked Anton to open the concert with a set of pieces of his choosing for the St. Olaf Choir, and the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers will follow with two exceptional British works: Benjamin Britten's eloquent *Hymn to St. Cecilia* and Herbert Howells's heartfelt *Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing*. Britten composed his work on board ship returning to England from the USA, setting three poems of W. H. Auden, each concluding with a soft, pure invocation: "Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions to all musicians"—so very appropriate as St. Cecilia is the patron saint of music and her feast day is Britten's birthday! In 1963, Howells was commissioned to write a motet to be sung at a joint American/Canadian service in Washington Cathedral in memory of President Kennedy. He chose words of the 4th century poet Prudentius in Helen Waddell's translation—words that would speak on behalf of everyone.

The concert will conclude with all of us joining together in Vaughan Williams's grand setting of the 16th century psalm tune, "Old Hundredth," and the words of Thomas Kethe, "All People That On Earth Do Dwell." It was completed in 1953 and first performed at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey.

Thank you, everyone, for sharing another VocalEssence 50th anniversary concert with us!

—Philip Brunelle
Artistic Director and Founder

JOIN US FOR OUR FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

***The Wizard of Oz* Movie Sing-Along**

Friday, August 31, 2018

50th Anniversary Concert

Sunday, October 7, 2018

Music for a Grand Cathedral

Sunday, October 28, 2018

Identity

Thursday, November 8, 2018

Welcome Christmas

December 1, 7, 8, & 9, 2018

Star of Wonder – Reimagined! at Mia

Saturday, December 8, 2018

Together We Sing Festival

Saturday, January 19, 2019

Frozen Movie Sing-Along at ASI

Saturday, February 2, 2019

VocalEssence & The Avant Garde: Soul Sing

Thursday, February 7, 2019

VocalEssence WITNESS: Yet They Persist

Sunday, February 24, 2019

Candide

March 21-24, 2019

Tales & Tunes

Saturday, March 30, 2019

The Times They Are A-Changin'

Saturday, April 27, 2019

VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Community Concert 2019

Tuesday, May 21, 2019



2018-2019

50TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON



**SPECIAL THANKS
FOR THE SUPPORT
OF THIS CONCERT**

*Productivity, Inc.,
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SPECIAL THANKS

*Lawrence Lawyer
Jean Strohm Parish*

**MUSIC FOR A
GRAND CATHEDRAL**

**Sunday, October 28, 2018 at 2 PM
Cathedral of Saint Paul
239 Selby Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55102**

**VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers
The St. Olaf Choir
Anton Armstrong, *conductor*
Philip Brunelle, *conductor*
G. Phillip Shoultz, III, *conductor***

2018-2019 SEASON SPONSORS



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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.





TOGETHER WE SING FESTIVAL

SAT, JAN 19, 2019
SESSION 1: 9 AM-1 PM
SESSION 2: 12-4 PM

Minnesota History Center
 345 W Kellogg Blvd
 Saint Paul, MN 55102

Honor the legacy of MLK
 and sing songs of protest and
 progress, move your feet to
 the rhythm of justice, and
 volunteer for a cause.



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THE PROGRAM

The St. Olaf Choir

Cantate Domino

Claudio Monteverdi
(1620)

O Crux

Mark Jennings
(2004)

For God Commanded Angels to Watch Over You Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
 ed. Kenneth Jennings
(1996)

My Heart Is Longing to Praise My Savior

arr. Leland B. Sateren
(1957)

Walk Together, Children

arr. Moses G. Hogan
(2001)

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Hymn to St. Cecilia

Benjamin Britten
(1942)

Mari Scott, *soprano*; Robin Joy Helgen, *alto*;
 Anders Eckman, *tenor*; Nathan Petersen-Kindem, *bass*

Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing

Herbert Howells
(1964)

INTERMISSION

VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers and the St. Olaf Choir

Mass in G minor

Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1921)

Myrtle Lemon, *soprano*; Sadie Nelson, *alto*;
 William Pederson, *tenor*; Erik Krohg, *bass*

- I. Kyrie
- II. Gloria in excelsis
- III. Credo
- IV. Sanctus
- V. Benedictus
- VI. Agnus Dei

Audience Sing

The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune

Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1953)

TEXTS

CANTATE DOMINO

Claudio Monteverdi

Sung in Latin

O sing unto the Lord a new song, sing and praise his name: for he hath done marvellous things. Sing, rejoice, and give thanks. Sing to the harp with a psalm.

—*Psalm 96:1-2; 98:1. 5-6, translation by Myles Coverdale, 1535*

O CRUX

Mark Jennings

Sung in Latin

O cross, more radiant than the stars, celebrated throughout the earth, beloved of the people, holier than all things, which alone was found worthy to bear the light of the world.

Blessed tree, blessed nails, blest the weight you bore. Save the flock which today is gathered to praise you.

—*Venantius Fortunatus*

FOR GOD COMMANDED ANGELS TO WATCH OVER YOU

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
ed. Kenneth Jennings

For God commanded angels to watch over you, and protect you, to keep you in all your living; for their hands will uphold and guide you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

—*Psalm 91:11-12, adapted by Kenneth Jennings*

MY HEART IS LONGING TO PRAISE MY SAVIOR

arr. Leland B. Sateren

Sung in loving memory of St. Olaf Professor of Norwegian
Margaret Hayford O'Leary.

Oh how I wish I could praise my Jesus,
As in my heart I would like to do,
Because he wanted for me such grace
As to offer me his heavenly kingdom.

I thank you, Jesus, for your pain on the cross,
For your death and your many wounds,
Through which I have peace in my unworthy heart,
And my winter has turned into a glorious spring.

What blessed joy overflows my spirit,
Because Thy wondrous grace was granted me.
Thy work complete, that I may inherit
At last eternal life in heaven with thee!
—*Lars Oftedal, translation by Reidar Dittmann*

WALK TOGETHER, CHILDREN

arr. Moses G. Hogan

Oh, walk together, children, don't you get weary,
walk on, my children, don't you get weary,
just walk together, children, don't you get weary,
there's a great camp meetin' in the promised land.

Gonna walk, an' never tire, walk an' never tire,
there's a great camp meetin' in the promised land.

Gonna sing, an' never tire, sing an' never tire,
there's a great camp meetin' in the promised land.

Gonna shout, an' never tire, shout an' never tire,
there's a great camp meetin' in the promised land.

Oh, walk together, children, don't you get weary,
sing on, my children, don't you get weary,
just shout together, children, don't you get weary,
there's a great camp meetin' in the promised land.
—*Traditional Spiritual*

HYMN TO ST. CECILIA

Benjamin Britten

I In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
Moved to delight by the melody,
White as an orchid she rode quite naked
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
Came out of their trance into time again,
And around the wicked in Hell's abysses
The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

II I cannot grow;
I have no shadow
To run away from,
I only play.

I cannot err;
There is no creature
Whom I belong to,
Whom I could wrong.

I am defeat
When it knows it

Can now do no thing
By suffering.

All you lived through,
Dancing because you
No longer need it
For any deed.
I shall never be
Different. Love me.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

III O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
Where Hope within the altogether strange
From every outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

O dear white children casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,
Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin
Is drawn across our trembling violin.

O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.

O law drummed out by hearts against the still
Long winter of our intellectual will.

That what has been may never be again.

O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath
Of convalescents on the shores of death.

O bless the freedom that you never chose.

O trumpets that unguarded children blow
About the fortress of their inner foe.

O wear your tribulation like a rose.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*
—W. H. Auden

TAKE HIM, EARTH, FOR CHERISHING

Herbert Howells

Take him, earth, for cherishing,
To thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee,
Noble even in its ruin.

Once was this a spirit's dwelling,
By the breath of God created.
High the heart that here was beating,
Christ the prince of all its living.

Guard him well, the dead I give thee,
Not unmindful of His creature
Shall he ask it, He who made it
Symbol of His mystery.

Comes the hour God hath appointed
To fulfil the hope of men:
Then must thou, in very fashion,
What I give return again.

Not though ancient time decaying
Wear away these bones to sand,
Ashes that a man might measure
In the hollow of his hand;

Not, though wandering winds and idle
Drifting through the empty sky,
Scatter dust was nerve and sinew,
Is it given to man to die.

Once again the shining road
Leads to ample Paradise;
Open are the woods again
That the Serpent lost for men.

Take, O take him, mighty Leader,
Take again thy servant's soul.
Grave his name, and pour the fragrant
Balm upon the icy stone.

Take him, earth, for cherishing,
To thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee,
Noble even in its ruin,

By the breath of God created,
Christ the prince of all its living.
Take him, earth, for cherishing.

—Prudentius, translated by Helen Waddell

MASS IN G MINOR

Ralph Vaughan Williams

PROGRAM NOTE

The early 1920s marked a pastoral interlude for Vaughan Williams. As well as the opera, *Sir John in Love*, the period also saw the composition of *The Lark Ascending*, *The Pastoral Symphony* and *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*. In 1921, the same year as the latter two pieces, Vaughan Williams also wrote his *Mass in G minor*. Its musical link with the pastoral works is unmissable, as the piece is full of the rich harmonies associated with the composer in his most 'English summertime' moments, but the origins of the piece are also, as with Howells's Requiem, in the revival of English polyphony and with Vaughan Williams's identification of his music with 'the imperishable glories of English prose.'

The musical setting of the Ordinary of the Mass has appealed to composers for hundreds of generations, regardless of their individual religious convictions. The mass text expresses a spirituality—from the invocation of the Kyrie, to the Gloria's thanksgiving, faith in the Credo, worship in the Sanctus and supplication in the Agnus Dei. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) did not subscribe to any religious denomination, but that never stopped him from writing one of the most beautiful and effective masses of the 20th century. He once said to his wife, "There is no reason why an atheist could not write a good mass." This, combined with his knowledge and love for the great English choral tradition, dating back to the Tudor period, were the influences on his *Mass in G minor*, composed in the early 1920s.

Although it was dedicated to Vaughan Williams's friend Gustav Holst (1874-1934) and the Whitsuntide Singers, a choir known for their performances of English Tudor church music by the likes of Tallis and Byrd, the mass was intended for liturgical use in London's Westminster Cathedral and its choir directed by Sir Richard Terry. Another friend of Vaughan Williams's, Terry championed the mass and performed it often. He wrote to Vaughan Williams, "I'm quite sincere when I say that it is the work one has all along been waiting for. In your individual and modern idiom you have really captured the old liturgical spirit and atmosphere." But although both Holst and Terry revered the mass, it was actually first sung by the City of Birmingham Choir on December 6, 1922, leaving the first liturgical performance to Terry in Westminster Cathedral in March, 1923. Parts of the mass were heard at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey in 1953.

—Notes adapted from the work of Rick Phillips and Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and Barry Creasy, Chairman, Collegium Musicum of London. Used with permission.

(see next page for lyrics)



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MASS IN G MINOR *(continued)*

Sung in Latin

I. Kyrie

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy.

II. Gloria in excelsis

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to all
those of good will.

We praise thee. We bless thee.
We worship thee. We glorify thee.
We give thanks to thee for thy great glory.

Jesus Christ, the only begotten son.
Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy
upon us
Thou who takes away the sins of the world, receive
our prayer.
Thou who sits at the right hand of God, have mercy
upon us.

For thou alone art holy. Thou only art the Lord.
Thou alone art the most high, Jesus Christ, with the
Holy Spirit,
In the glory of God the Father. Amen.

III. Credo

I believe in one God, almighty, maker of heaven and
earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ the only begotten Son
of God. Born of God before all ages. God from God,
Light from Light, True God from True God. Begotten,
not made, of one substance with the Father by
whom all things were made. Who for us and for our
salvation came down from heaven.

And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin
Mary. And was made human. Crucified also for us
under Pontius Pilate, He suffered, and was buried.

And on the third day He rose again, according to the
Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and sits at the
right hand of God. He shall come again with glory to
judge the living and the dead; and of His kingdom
there will be no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver
of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son
who together with them is adored and glorified, who
spoke through the prophets.

And I believe in one holy, catholic and Apostolic
Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of

sins. I await the resurrection of the dead and the life
of the world to come. Amen.

IV. Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in
the highest.

V. Benedictus

Blessed are they who come in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

VI. Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.



The poster features a background image of a rolled-up musical score and a lit candle. At the top, the Vocalescence logo is displayed above a large '50TH' with 'ANNIVERSARY SEASON' written below it. The main text reads: 'WELCOME CHRISTMAS', 'Discover your holiday soundtrack', 'DEC 1, 7, 8, & 9, 2018', 'PERFORMANCES IN APPLE VALLEY, ROSEVILLE, & MINNEAPOLIS'. At the bottom, it states: 'TICKETS: \$20-\$40 | vocalescence.org | 612-371-5656'.

ALL PEOPLE THAT ON EARTH DO DWELL

*Based on Psalm 100**William Kethe, Daye's Psalter, 1561**Adapted by Thomas Troeger and Philip Brunelle*

OLD HUNDREDTH, L.M.

*Attributed to Louis Bourgeois, 1551**Arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1953*

1 All peo - ple that on earth do dwell,
 4 Pro - claim a - gain that God is good:
 5 Cre - a - tor, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost,

Sing out your faith with cheer - ful voice;
 Whose mer - cy is for - ev - er sure;
 The God whom heav'n and earth a - dore,

De - light in God whose praise you tell,
 Whose truth at all times firm - ly stood,
 From us and from the an - gel - host

Come sing God's prais - es and re - joice.
 And shall from age to age en - dure.
 Be praise and glo - ry ev - er - more.

A - men.

BIOGRAPHIES

Anton Armstrong, Tosdal Professor of Music at St. Olaf College, became the fourth conductor of the St. Olaf Choir in 1990. A graduate of St. Olaf College, Anton earned advanced degrees at the University of Illinois and Michigan State University. He is the founding conductor of the Oregon Bach Festival Stangeland Family Youth Choral Academy. In 2001, Anton began his performing relationship with VocalEssence in a joint performance of *The Forest* by Dame Ethel Smyth.

The St. Olaf Choir, with 75 mixed voices, is the premier a cappella college choir in the United States. For over a century, the choir has set a standard of choral excellence and remained at the forefront of choral artistry. Conducted since 1990 by Anton Armstrong, the St. Olaf Choir continues to develop the tradition that originated with its founder, F. Melius Christiansen. Today marks the ninth time the choir has performed on a VocalEssence concert.

TOGETHER, VOCALESSENCE AND THE ST. OLAF CHOIR MAKE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

TWO CHOIRS WITH MORE THAN 156 YEARS OF COMBINED EXPERIENCE FIND YOUTH COMPLEMENTS EXPERIENCE

How did the relationship between these two choirs get its start?

“In the late 1980s when VocalEssence was still known as the Plymouth Music Series, the St. Olaf Choir joined in the performance of a major work by Dominick Argento,” recalled St. Olaf Choir conductor Anton Armstrong. “The conductor of our Manitou Singers, Sigrid Johnson, started working with VocalEssence as its associate conductor in 1991, which enhanced the relationship. Then, in the late 90s, Philip called me and proposed we strike up a rotating cooperative venture. One of our first big collaborations was the U.S. premiere of Judith Bingham’s *Otherworld* at Orchestra Hall in 2001.”

The two choirs have shared several notable performances over the years. Can you share some personal highlights?

“I actually have a few,” said Armstrong. “My favorite as a conductor was when we performed Frank Martin’s *Mass* for Double Choir and Philip let me conduct it with the combined forces of both choirs. But for personal reasons, the 2011 VocalEssence WITNESS concert featuring composer André Thomas was very special. I became friends with André in graduate school 40 years ago and that relationship has blossomed into one of my most meaningful friendships.”

“VocalEssence actually had the honor of performing with the St. Olaf Choir during its centennial concert season,” said Philip Brunelle. “So it’s fitting that the St. Olaf Choir is on hand to celebrate the 50th anniversary of VocalEssence. With any luck, we will last as long as they have—and sound as good at 106 as they do.”

What do the members of the VocalEssence choir enjoy about collaborating with St. Olaf Choir?

“The VocalEssence singers love the idea of participating with young voices that have a love for singing—and know their music!” says Brunelle.

What makes a collaboration between the two organizations work?

“It begins with the fact that Anton and I respect and trust each other,” said Brunelle. “Every few years we come across a significant work that the St. Olaf Choir would not perform by themselves but would be a work that is valuable for them to learn, study, and perform. That’s where VocalEssence comes in. Of course, on each of these concerts I have also invited him to have the St. Olaf Choir perform a set of music by themselves so that audiences can understand how wonderful a college choir can be!”

“I think it works because Philip has imbued his entire organization with his extraordinary generosity,” said Armstrong. “Philip Brunelle is one of the finest musicians I’ve ever encountered, but even more notable is his generous spirit, his willingness to invite others in—a lot of organizations don’t do that. And, as a person of color, I’m especially indebted to Philip for his vision in establishing VocalEssence WITNESS, bringing out the finest in African American music, whether it’s folk, gospel, or art music.”

What values do the two choirs share?

“There are several,” said Armstrong. “Artistic excellence, the desire to explore new works, and the desire to truly communicate with the audience. The music we perform isn’t just for entertainment or pure aesthetic purposes. Both organizations seek to make the experience we share with an audience transformational. We don’t just seek a mental reaction in our audience—we want their whole beings—body, mind, spirit, and voice—to be transformed when they hear the two ensembles sing.”

VOCAL ESSENCE AND THE ST. OLAF CHOIR HISTORICAL COLLABORATIVE PERFORMANCES

There Was a Child

Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis | October 27, 2013

VocalEssence WITNESS: André Thomas

Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis | March 4, 2011

Eric Whitacre Extravaganza

Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis | March 22, 2009

Musique de France

Cathedral of Saint Paul | October 17, 2008

The Peaceable Kingdom

Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis | October 10, 2004

Minnesota Sings Farewell: Sixth World Choral Symposium Grand Finale Concert

Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis | August 10, 2002

The Forest and Otherworld

Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis | May 5, 2001

A Salute to Dominick Argento

Boe Memorial Chapel, St. Olaf College, Northfield | October 27, 1988



*VocalEssence and the St. Olaf Choir
Eric Whitacre Extravaganza, Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis | March 22, 2009*

VOCALESSENCE INAUGURAL FAMILY SERIES 2018-2019 CALENDAR

*Featuring child-centered programming with live music,
crafts, and opportunities to sing and move.*

Thurs, Nov 8, 2018

IDENTITY

*Inaugural solo concert with the new
youth choir – **Singers Of This Age***

Westminster Hall, Westminster
Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis



Sat, Dec 8, 2018

STAR OF WONDER – REIMAGINED!

*Clap, wiggle, and sing along to your
favorite holiday songs*

Reception Hall, Minneapolis Institute of Art,
Minneapolis



Sat, Feb 2, 2019

FROZEN MOVIE SING-ALONG AT ASI

*Don your best Frozen attire and sing along
to this Disney classic with Elsa and Anna*

Larson Hall, American Swedish Institute,
Minneapolis



Sat, Mar 30, 2019

TALES & TUNES

Musical story time with a twist

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SPECIAL THANKS

*John Helgen
Zoë Knight
Emily Venell*

In gratitude for the inspiration that David and Ann Buran provided to VocalEssence for so many years, we are pleased to dedicate the first Welcome Christmas concert at Plymouth Congregational Church each season in their honor. We look forward to celebrating their contributions at these performances for years to come.

WELCOME CHRISTMAS

Saturday, December 1, 2018 at 7:30 PM
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Apple Valley

Friday, December 7, 2018 at 7:30 PM
Roseville Lutheran Church, Roseville

Saturday, December 8, 2018 at 4 PM
Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis

Sunday, December 9, 2018 at 4 PM
Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis

VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers

Mary Jo Gothmann, *pianist*

Philip Brunelle, *conductor*

G. Phillip Shoultz, III, *conductor*

2018-2019 SEASON SPONSORS



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.



WELCOME



It is always a joy for us to present Welcome Christmas for the beauty and warmth that this music brings to everyone each year. Thank you for being with us!

This year, being the 50th anniversary season of VocalEssence, I want to celebrate Welcome Christmas with some of the wonderful music we have presented in the past—music we have commissioned or premiered. We are also widening the circle by including one of our VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! composers from Mexico as well as one of our VocalEssence ReMix composers. Learn more about these programs on page 32 of this program. And, for the 21st year, you will hear the music of our Welcome Christmas Carol Contest winners.

Some of the composers will be well known to you—Libby Larsen, Stephen Paulus, Conrad Susa, and Ian Kellam—while others may be new. What they share in common is a marvelous feeling for voice and text, capturing the wonder and delight of this season.

We are especially proud to present the world premiere of *The Faire Starre* by Nico Muhly, one of this country's preëminent composers, and are delighted to be sharing the commission of this work with two other outstanding choral organizations: Los Angeles Master Chorale and Trinity Wall Street; thus Nico's music will receive performances on both coasts and in the middle of the USA!

Best wishes to each of you; may this Advent and Christmas season bring you joy and happiness!

—Philip Brunelle
Artistic Director and Founder



THE PROGRAM

VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers

Hot House Carol from *In a Winter Garden*

Libby Larsen
(1982)

Jayjaykar

World Premiere

Shruthi Rajasekar
(2018)

Fum, Fum, Fum

Conrad Susa
(1993)

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Poor Thing from *A Cold Spell*

Judith Bingham
(1988)

The Heart-In-Waiting

Bob Chilcott
(2008)

The Little Cradle Rocks Tonight

Welcome Christmas Carol Contest Winner

Stephen Shewan
(2018)

The Faire Starre

World Premiere

Nico Muhly
(2018)

INTERMISSION

VocalEssence Chorus

A Light for Today from *A Light in the Stable*

Allan Bullard
(2014)

Noel, My Jesus

Robert Wetzler
(1975)

Glory, Glory, Glory to the Newborn King

Moses Hogan
(2000)

Night of Silence*

Daniel Kantor
(1984)

O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild

Welcome Christmas Carol Contest Winner

Mark Shepperd
(2018)

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Navidad Mexicana (A Mexican Christmas)

World Premiere

Rodrigo Cadet
(2018)

My Dancing Day

Richard Rodney Bennett
(2008)

VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers

Jesu, I offer to Thee Here My Pipe from *The Joly Shepherd*

Mari Scott, *soprano*

Ian Kellam
(1972)

Run, Shepherds, Run*

Jonathan Dove
(2001)

Sing, Hevin Imperial from *So Hallow'd is the Time*

Michael Fairbairn, *tenor*; Nathan Petersen-Kindem, *bass*

Stephen Paulus
(1980)

*Audience Sing



TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

HOT HOUSE CAROL FROM *IN A WINTER GARDEN*

Libby Larsen

PROGRAM NOTE:

We commissioned *In a Winter Garden* from Libby Larsen and Patricia Hampl in 1982 and subsequently recorded it. “Cut the Flowers” comes from the cantata and is called the “Hot House Carol.”

—Philip Brunelle

Cut the flowers,
carry blossoms to the altar.
violets in small bouquets,
sad as certain songs,
violet blossoms
blooming all winter long.

Drowsy gardenia,
heavy with scent,
snowy gardenia
lazy as a prayer
we meant to say.

There is a prayer of celebration
in orchids, violets, drowsy gardenia,
in red ribbon...
in all this decoration.
we gather bright bouquets,
but faith—strange mystery—
gathers all.

—Patricia Hampl

JAYJAYKAR

Shruthi Rajasekar

PROGRAM NOTE:

Shruthi was one of the VocalEssence ReMix composers in 2017. She composed this piece especially for this year’s Welcome Christmas concerts as we want to highlight some of our community programs such as VocalEssence ReMix.

—Philip Brunelle

Sung in Hindi

Victory to the Lord, Praise the Lord!
Praise for our Lord, Jesus Christ

He bestows grace, He is kind
He wants only the best for everyone
He helps everyone

Victory to the Lord, Praise the Lord!

He embodies absolute kindness
He is slow to get angry
He loves everyone

Victory to the Lord, Praise the Lord!

He lifts up those who have fallen
He removes all our burdens
Your greatness is boundless

Victory to the Lord, Praise the Lord!
Praise for our Lord, Jesus Christ

FUM, FUM, FUM!

Conrad Susa

PROGRAM NOTE:

In 1992, VocalEssence commissioned Conrad Susa to compose a Christmas work and he decided to set the carols of Mexico and Latin America. This familiar carol is the finale of the work.

—Philip Brunelle

On December five and twenty,
Fum, Fum, Fum!
For the love of us is given
The Holy Infant, son of Heaven.
Of the Virgin, Joseph’s bride,
To all the earth good will be tiding.
Fum, Fum, Fum!

Little birds from out the forest,
Fum, Fum, Fum!
All your fledglings leave behind,
Go seek the Savior kind,
Come and build a lovely nest
To warm the lovely Baby blessed.
Fum, Fum, Fum!

—Traditional Catalan Carol

POOR THING FROM A COLD SPELL

Judith Bingham

PROGRAM NOTE:

This is the second movement from the choral cycle, *A Cold Spell*, and when the Ensemble Singers performed the entire cycle in 1996 it marked the first choral work of this English composer to be heard in the USA!

—Philip Brunelle

The North Wind shall blow and we shall have snow
And what will poor robin do then? Poor thing!
He’ll sit in a barn, to keep himself warm,
And hide his head under his wing! Poor thing!

—Anonymous

THE HEART-IN-WAITING

Bob Chilcott

PROGRAM NOTE:

Bob Chilcott composed this work in 2008 for my 40th anniversary at Plymouth Congregational Church. I am very happy that I was able to introduce him to the poet, Kevin Crossley-Holland, and since that time Bob has used many of his poems for other choral works!

—Philip Brunelle

Jesus walked through whispering wood:
'I am pale blossom, I am blood berry,
I am rough bark, I am sharp thorn,
This is the place where you will be born.'

Jesus went down to the skirl of the sea:
'I am long reach, I am fierce comber,
I am keen saltspray, I am spring tide.'
He pushed the cup of the sea aside

And heard the sky which breathed and blew,
'I am the firmament, I am shape changer,
I cradle and carry and kiss and roar,
I am infinite roof and floor.'

All day he walked, he walked all night,
Then Jesus came to the heart at dawn.
'Here and now,' said the heart-in-waiting,
'This is the place where you must be born.'
—Kevin Crossley-Holland

THE LITTLE CRADLE ROCKS TONIGHT

Stephen Shewan

If anybody asks you who I am,
Tell him I'm a child of God.
Glory, the Christ child born in glory.

The little cradle rocks tonight in glory,
The little cradle rocks tonight in glory,
The Christ child born in glory.

Peace on earth, Mary rock the cradle,
Peace on earth, Mary rock the cradle,
The Christ child born of glory.

The Christ child passing, singing softly,
The Christ child passing, singing softly,
The Christ child born in glory.
—Spiritual from Georgia

THE FAIRE STARRE

Nico Muhly

PROGRAM NOTE:

When I approached Nico Muhly about composing something for Christmas I knew I was dealing with an American composer who has composed for the Metropolitan Opera, the Philadelphia

Orchestra, for Björk, and who loves the Anglican choral tradition! Nico was delighted with the idea of composing a work for the Christmas season, calling it "The Faire Starre," and setting two nativity-based poems by the metaphysical poets Richard Crashaw and Thomas Traherne which surround an extended 15th century lullaby in which the infant Christ foretells his future to his mother in song.

Knowing the importance of this work, I felt it would be wonderful to engage two partners from both coasts — and the Los Angeles Master Chorale (Grant Gershon, conductor) and Trinity Wall Street (Julian Wachner, conductor) enthusiastically signed on to the commission. How marvelous to celebrate our 50th anniversary season with such a prestigious premiere for "Welcome Christmas"!
—Philip Brunelle

PART ONE

SWEET Infancy!
O fire of heaven! O sacred Light
How fair and bright,
How great am I,
Whom all the world doth magnify!

O Heavenly Joy!
O great and sacred blessedness
Which I possess!
So great a joy
Who did into my arms convey?

From God above
Being sent, the Heavens me enflame:
To praise his Name
The stars do move!
The burning sun doth shew His love.

O how divine
Am I! To all this sacred wealth,
This life and health,
Who raised? Who mine
Did make the same? What hand divine?
—Thomas Traherne

PART TWO

Lullay, lullay, la, lullay,
My dere moder, lullay.

As I lay on Yoolis night,
Alone in my longynge,
Me thoughte I saw a well faire sight,
A maid hir child rockynge.

The maiden wolde withouten song
Hire child aslepe bringe;
The childe thoughte she ded him wrong,
And bad his moder singe.

"Singe now, moder," seide that child,
"What me shalle befall
Hereafter whan I cum to eld
So don modres alle.

“Ich a moder truely,
That can hire credel kepe
Is wone to lullen lovely
And singen hire child aslepe.

...

“Swete son,” seide she,
“Wherof shud I singe?
Wist I nevere yet more of thee
But Gabrieles gretinge.”

“He grette me godly on his kne
And seide, ‘Heil, Marye,
Full of grace, God is with thee.
Beren thu shalt Messye.’

“I wondred michil in my thoghte
For man wold I right none.
‘Marye,’ he seide, ‘drede thee nought:
Lat God of Hevene alone;

‘The holy ghost sal don al this.’
He seide withouten wone
That I suld beren mannis blis,
Thee, my swete sone.

...

“Ther, as he seide, I thee bare
On midwenter night,
In maidenhed, withouten care,
By the grace of God almight.

“The shepperdis that wakkeden in the wolde
Herden a wonder mirthe
Of angles ther, as they tolde,
In time of thy birthe.

“Swete son, sikirly,
No more can I say;
And, if I coude, fawen wold I
To don all at thy pay.”

“Moder,” seide that swete thing,
“To singen I shall thee lere
What me fallet to suffring
And don whil I am here.”

“Wanne the tuelue dayes ben do,
Be leding of a stere
Three kingges me sul seke tho
With gold, ensens, and mirre.

“The fourti day, to fille the lawe,
We solen to temple ifere;
Ther Simeon sal thee sey a sawe
That changen sal thi chere.

“Wan I am tuelue yer of elde,
Joseph and thu, murningge,

Solen me finden, moder milde,
In the temple techingge.

“Til I be thretti at the leste
I sal neuere fro the suerue,
But ay, moder, ben at thin heste,
Joseph and the to serue.

“Wan the thretti yer ben spent,
I mot beginne to fille
Werfore I am hidre sent,
Thoru my fadres wille.

...

“I sal ben so simple
And to men so conning
That most partiye of the puple
Sal wiln maken me king.”

“Sute sone,” than seyde sche,
“No sorwe sulde me dere,
Miht I yet that day see
A king that thou were!”

“Dowey, moder,” seide that sute,
“Therfor cam I nouth,
But for to ben pore and bales bete,
That man was inne brouth.

“Therefore wan to and thretti yer ben done
And a litel more,
Moder, thou salt maken michil mon
And seen me deye sore.

“Samfuly for I sal deye
Hangende on the rode,
For mannis ransoun sal I paye
Myn owen herte blode.”

“Allas! sone,” seide that may,
“Sithen that it is so,
Whorto shall I biden that day
To beren thee to this wo?”

“Moder,” he seide, “tak it lighte,
For liven I shall ayeine,
And in thy kinde, thoru my might,
For elles I wroughte in veine.

...

“I shall thee taken, whan time is,
To me at the laste,
To ben with me, moder, in blis:
All this, than, have I caste.

...

Swete moder, here is all
That I wile now sing.”

As I lay on Yoolis night
This song I herde singe,
As I lay on Yoolis night
Alone in my longing.
—Anonymous

PART THREE

That on her lap she casts her humble Eye;
'Tis the sweet pride of her Humility.
The faire starre is well fixt for where, o where
Could she have fixt it on a fairer Spheare?
'Tis Heav'n 'tis Heav'n she sees Heavens God there lyes
She can see Heaven and ne're lift up her eyes:
This new Guest to her Eyes new Lawes hath given,
'Twas once looke up 'tis now looke downe to Heaven.
—Richard Crashaw

A LIGHT FOR TODAY FROM A LIGHT IN THE STABLE

Allan Bullard

PROGRAM NOTE:

We gave the U.S. premiere of Alan's cantata, *A Light in the Stable*, in 2014 and the composer traveled from England to be with us. This is a charming movement from the cantata, based on a poem of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

—Philip Brunelle

A light in the stable, a light for today:
A heavenly marvel, this joyous birth;
The Son of God in a bed of hay,
The child, who on this sacred day
Brings a kingdom that stretches from heaven to earth.
A light in the stable so bare; a light for today.

The wise men's gifts lie at Jesus' feet:
The gold a tribute to a King,
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,
Drifts heav'nwards in the rising heat,
The myrrh for the body's burying.
A light in the stable so bare; a light for today.

And Mary wonders and bows her head,
And sits as still as a statue of stone;
Her heart is troubled yet comforted,
Remembering what the angel had said
Of an endless reign, and of David's throne.
A light in the stable so bare; a light for today.
—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *altd.*

NOEL, MY JESUS

Robert Wetzler

PROGRAM NOTE:

Minneapolis composer, Bob Wetzler, composed a Christmas suite, *Wondrous Nativity*, and added an orchestration for me for this middle movement—which he thinks of as a Christmas hoe-down!

—Philip Brunelle

O sheep in meadow raise your head to see the Lord in infant bed;
Make soft and warm the places cold, enfold the Child in the manger.

Refrain:

*Alleluia, everybody sing to the Lord on high and Savior King;
Alleluia, everybody cheer for the Lord on high is a Baby here.*

O child go singing through the earth, O sister, brother, praise
the birth;
With heart and eyes behold the Child so mild within the manger.
Refrain

O lamb go skipping in the night with the star and angels your delight;
O shepherd run with nimble feet to greet the One in the manger.

Refrain

—Herbert Brokering

GLORY, GLORY, GLORY TO THE NEWBORN KING

Moses Hogan

What will we call that pretty little baby? Baby born in Bethlehem.
What will we call that pretty little baby? Christ the Lord, the
newborn King.

Where was He born, this pretty little baby? Down in a lowly manger.
Where His birth was in a stable. Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Born this night, the Son of Mary. Hail the heav'n born Prince of peace.
Glory to the newborn King. Glory, glory, glory to the newborn King.

Children, Go and tell it on the mountain, Lord, over the hills and
ev'rywhere.
Why don't you go tell it on the mountain, Lord, that Jesus Christ
is born.

Glory, glory, glory to the newborn King. All praise to the newborn King.
We're singin' over hill and mountain. We're singin' glory, glory,
glory to the newborn King.
—Traditional

NIGHT OF SILENCE

Daniel Kantor

PROGRAM NOTE:

Twin Cities composer Daniel Kantor has composed several pieces for audience and choir that have become synonymous with this season and this charming work is now sung worldwide.

—Philip Brunelle

Cold are the people, winter of life,
We tremble in shadows this cold endless night,
Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping,
Flowers that will echo the sunrise
Fire of hope is our only warmth,
Weary, its flame will be dying soon.

Voice in the distance, call in the night,
On wind you enfold us, you speak of the light,
Gentle on the ear you whisper softly,
Rumors of a dawn so embracing
Breathless love awaits dark-ended souls,
Soon will we know of the morning.

Spirit among us, shine like the star,
Your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar,
Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely,
Rising in the warmth of your Son's love,
Star unknowing of night and day,
Spirit we wait for your loving Son.
—*Daniel Kantor*

Audience:

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild.
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

O JESUS SO SWEET, O JESUS SO MILD

Mark Shepperd

O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
For sinners You became a child.
You came from heaven down to earth
In human flesh through human birth.
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!

O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
With God we now are reconciled.
You have for all the ransom paid,
Your Father's righteous anger stayed.
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!

O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
Joy fills the world which sin defiled.
Whate'er we have belongs to You;
O keep us faithful, strong, and true.
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
—*Valentin Thilo, translated by G. W. Daisley*

NAVIDAD MEXICANA (A MEXICAN CHRISTMAS)

Rodrigo Cadet

PROGRAM NOTE:

For the past 11 years VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! has been bringing composers from Mexico to Minnesota to compose music for young people in our schools. Rodrigo was a ¡Cantaré! composer in 2011-12, 2014-15, and 2016-17 and was invited to compose a new work for this 50th anniversary season.

—Philip Brunelle

Desde temprano vienen llegando
todas las mulas y los rebaños,
han escuchado que viene un niño
que las desgracias irá sanando.

Llegan los bueyes y los caballos
y uno que otro tlacuache pardo,
llevan piñatas llenas de frutas
y algunos llevan mezcal del caro.

De los cerritos y los cerrotes
saltan y brincan los tejocotes,
vienen cantando los xoloescuintles
con su mariachi y traje de charro.

Todos rodean al niño lindo
le cantan nanas, le dan regalos.
¡Que viva el niño y la virgen santa
que con su gracia nos han salvado!

Desde las doce canta y canta
este ceniztle con su jarana,
Es día de fiesta y en el fandango
los ajolotes andan bailando.

Todos rodean al niño lindo
le cantan nanas, le dan regalos.
¡Que viva el niño y la virgen santa
que con su gracia nos han salvado!

—*Rodrigo Cadet*

All of the mules and the flocks of sheep
Began arriving early on
They heard that a Child has come
To ease hardships.

Here come some horses and oxen
And a brown opossum or two,
Bringing piñatas filled with fruit
And others bring the expensive kind of mezcal.

Tejocote berries come bouncing and rolling
Down hills big and small,
Xoloescuintle dogs show up singing
With their mariachi and wearing charro suits.

They all gather around the sweet Baby
They bring him gifts and sing lullabies.
Long live the Child and the Blessed Virgin
By whose grace we have been saved!

Since twelve o'clock that *cenxontle* bird
Has been singing and playing his guitar,
This is a day of celebration, and in all the commotion
The salamanders are dancing around.

They all gather around the sweet Baby
They bring him gifts and sing lullabies.
Long live the Child and the Blessed Virgin
By whose grace we have been saved!
—translated by Katie Villaseñor

MY DANCING DAY

Richard Rodney Bennett

PROGRAM NOTE:

Longtime Ensemble Singer, Jerry Johnson, commissioned this carol in memory of his mother, and it was premiered as part of the 40th anniversary season in 2008.
—Philip Brunelle

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance;

*Refrain: Sing, oh! my love, oh! my love, my love, my love,
This have I done for my true love.*

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance
Thus was I knit to man's nature
To call my true love to my dance. *Refrain*

In a manger laid, and wrapped I was.
So very poor, this was my chance,
Between an ox and a silly poor ass,
To call my true love to my dance. *Refrain*

Then afterwards baptized I was;
The Holy Ghost on me did glance,
My Father's voice heard from above,
To call my true love to my dance. *Refrain*

Into the desert I was led,
Where I fasted without substance;
The Devil bade me make stones my bread,
To have me break my true love's dance. *Refrain*

Then on the cross hangèd I was,
Where a spear my heart did glance;
There issued forth both water and blood,
To call my true love to my dance. *Refrain*

Then down to Hell I took my way
For my true love's deliverance,
And rose again on the third day,
Up to my true love and the dance. *Refrain*

Then up to Heav'n I did ascend,
Where now I dwell in sure substance
On the right hand of God, that man
May come into the general dance. *Refrain*
—Traditional

JESU, I OFFER TO THEE HERE MY PIPE FROM THE JOLY SHEPHERD

Ian Kellam

PROGRAM NOTE:

The English composer, Ian Kellam, has composed many pieces dedicated to Philip Brunelle, but not this one! The U.S. premiere was given at the Welcome Christmas concerts in 1991 with the composer present. It is the final movement of the cantata, *The Joly Shepherd*.
—Philip Brunelle

'Jesu, I offer to thee here my pipe,
My skirt, my tarbox, and my scribe;
Home to my felowes now will I skipe,
And also look unto my shepe.'
'Till I may come to thee.'

Now may I well both hope and sing,
For I have bene at Christes Bearing;
Home to my felowes now will I fling.
Christ of heven to his bliss us bring!
'Till I may come to thee.'

<i>Ave, maris stella,</i>	Hail, Star of the Sea
<i>Dei Mater alma,</i>	Loving Mother of God
<i>Atque semper Virgo,</i>	And Virgin immortal,
<i>Felix caeli porta.</i>	Heaven's blissful portal!

Now syng we of this childes birth
A carol of mirth;
To angels bright in heav'n on loft,
And syng it not soft!

In Bethlehem, in that fair city,
A child was born of a maiden free,
That shall a lord and prince be,
A solis ortus cardine. From the direction of the sun's rising

As sunne shineth through the glass,
So Jesu in his mother was.
Thee to serve now grant us gras,
O lux beata trinitas! O Trinity, blessed light

Now God is comen to worship us,
And now of Mary is born Jesus.
Make we merry amonges us,
Exultet, celum, laudibus. Let heaven rejoice in praises
—words from medieval carols

RUN, SHEPHERDS, RUN

Jonathan Dove

PROGRAM NOTE:

Finding interesting music for audience and choir is a challenge—and this was one of the most challenging for the audience! The audience at the first performance heard the choir sing the audience part and burst into laughter at the idea of them singing it...but they did...for the U.S. premiere.

—Philip Brunelle

Run, shepherds, run!

Text by

William Drummond of Hawthornden

Music by

Jonathan Dove

Energetic ♩ = 90

Run, shep - herds, run, shep - herds, run to Beth - le - hem!_____

Run, shep - herds, run shep - herds, run to Beth - le - hem!_____

Run, shep - herds, shep - herds, run! Run, shep - herds, shep - herds, run!

Shep - herds, run, run, shep - herds, run, run, shep - herds run,

run, shep - herds run, run, shep - herds run, run, run, run, run, run!

SING, HEVIN IMPERIAL FROM SO HALLOW'D IS THE TIME

Stephen Paulus

PROGRAM NOTE:

Though we did not give the premiere of Stephen's cantata, *So Hallow'd is the Time* (of which this is the finale), we did record the work for Pro Arte Records—the first of many Paulus pieces performed by VocalEssence.

—Philip Brunelle

Sing, hevin imperial, most of hicht!

Regions of air mak armony!

All fish in flud and fowl of flicht

Be mirthful and mak melody!

All *Gloria in excelsis* cry!

Heaven, erd, se, man, bird, and best, —

He that is crownit abone the sky

Pro nobis Puer natus est! A child is born to us!

Celestial foulis in the air,

Sing with your nottis upon hicht,

In firthis and in forrestis fair

Be mirthful now at all your mycht;

For passit is your dully nicht,

Aurora has the cloudis perst,

The son is risen with glaidsum licht,

Et nobis Puer natus est.

Now spring up flouris fra the rute,

Revert you upward naturally,

In honour of the blissit frute

That raiss up fro the rose Mary;

Lay out your levis lustily,

Fro deid take life now at the lest

In wirschip of that Prince worthy

Qui nobis Puer natus est.

Sing, hevin imperial, most of hicht!

Regions of air mak armony!

All fish in flud and fowl of flicht

Be mirthful and mak melody!

All *Gloria in excelsis* cry!

Heaven, erd, se, man, bird, and best, —

He that is crownit abone the sky

Pro nobis Puer natus est!

—William Dunbar, from "On the Nativity of Christ"

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This year's VocalEssence Welcome Christmas broadcast features music from our 2017 concert, with a salute to the many composers that call Minnesota home.

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BIOGRAPHIES

The **American Composers Forum** is committed to supporting composers and developing new markets for their music. Through granting, commissioning, and performance programs, the Forum provides composers at all stages of their careers with valuable resources for professional and artistic development. By linking communities with composers and performers, the Forum fosters a demand for new music, enriches communities, and helps develop the next generation of composers, musicians, and music patrons. <https://composersforum.org/>

Rodrigo Michelet Cadet Díaz (b. 1983) started his musical studies at the age of eight. He earned his degree in Musical Composition at the Bellas Artes School in Mexico City, Mexico. His works include orchestral, small ensemble, choral music, and arrangements, many of which have been performed in the most important halls of Mexico. He was a resident composer for the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! program in the Twin Cities and Rochester, as well as ¡Cantaré! Chicago.

Nico Muhly (b. 1981) is an American composer and sought-after collaborator whose influences range from American minimalism to the Anglican choral tradition. The recipient of commissions from The Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, St. Paul's Cathedral, and others, he has written more than 80 works for the concert stage, including the opera *Marnie* (2017). Born in Vermont, Muhly studied composition at the Juilliard School before working as an editor and conductor for Philip Glass.

Shruthi Rajasekar (b. 1996) is a Minnesotan composer and vocalist. Shruthi was a 2016 winner of Vox Nova Chorale's Emerging Composers Competition; her work was featured on Classical MPR's Regional Spotlight. She was awarded a Marshall scholarship to enroll in postgraduate study at any university in the United Kingdom. She is also a disciple of Nirmala Rajasekar in Carnatic (South Indian classical) music. A graduate of Wayzata High School, Shruthi is currently a senior at Princeton University. <https://composersforum.org/members/shruthirajasek/>

Mark Shepperd has served as a church musician throughout his professional life, as choral conductor, organist, pianist, and composer. A native of the Twin Cities, Mark earned a music degree at Augsburg University, Minneapolis, has done graduate study at the University of Minnesota, and was a 2010 carol contest winner. His compositions, both choral and instrumental, are represented in the catalogs of more than a dozen American music publishers. <https://www.markshepperd.com/>

Called by John Rutter as “a considerable composer who deserves a wide audience,” **Stephen Shewan** has composed music for everything from orchestras to solo voice, and his music has been broadcast on more than 200 radio stations in America on Performance Today. He received his BS in Music Education from Roberts Wesleyan College, an MM in French Horn Performance from Ithaca College, and a DMA in Music Education/Composition from the Eastman School of Music. <http://jubal-press.com/>

Michael Dayton grew up in rural North Dakota and started playing the oboe at age 14. He holds degrees from Augsburg College and the Eastman School of Music. Mike is principal oboe of the MN Opera Orchestra and Duluth Symphony, as well as an active free-lance musician in the Twin Cities. He lives in Menomonie, WI with his family.



THE 21ST ANNUAL WELCOME CHRISTMAS CAROL CONTEST

Every December, VocalEssence and the American Composers Forum celebrate the tradition of caroling by championing today's composers, exploring new works, and rediscovering lesser-known works of the past. Through the **Welcome Christmas Carol Contest**, VocalEssence and the Forum provide composers with the opportunity to compose a modern-day carol. This year marks the 21st annual carol contest. Each composer receives a \$1,000 prize and the performances will be recorded for national broadcast in 2019 via American Public Media.

2018: Carols with oboe

Mark Shepperd (Woodbury, MN) *O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild*
Stephen Shewan (Medina, NY) *The Little Cradle Rocks Tonight*

2017: Carols for a cappella chorus

Nancy Gifford (Doylestown, PA) *Fill the Sky*
David Evan Thomas (Minneapolis, MN) *Carol of the Night*

2016: Carols with vibraphone

Lee Blaske (Excelsior, MN) *A Cradle Song*
Sean Sweeden (Kansas City, MO) *Adam Lay Ybounden*

2015: Carols with trumpet

Josh Bauder (Crystal, MN) *Sleep Softly, Lullaby*
Laura Caviani (Minneapolis, MN) *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

2014: Carols with folk fiddle

Justin Merritt (Northfield, MN) *Miles and Miles*
Rachel DeVore Fogarty (Long Island City, NY) *The Song of a Shepherd*

2013: Carols with piano

William V. Malpede (West Hollywood, CA) *Sound Over All Waters*
Dale Trumbore (Los Angeles, CA) *Ring Out, Ye Bells!*

2012: Carols with concert C flute

David Biedenbender (Ann Arbor, MI) *This Night*
Sheena Phillips (Trenton, NJ) *The Christmas Bird*

2011: Carols for men's voices (TTBB) with English horn

James Kallembach (Chicago, IL) *That Yongë Child*
Robert Sieving (Minnetonka, MN) *O Stella de Bethlehem*

2010: Carols with handbells

J. David Moore (St. Paul, MN) *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*
Mark Shepperd (Woodbury, MN) *Come Join Their Song*

2009: Carols with viola

Michael J. Glasgow (Raleigh, NC) *Welcome the King*
Robert Sieving (Minnetonka, MN) *See Amid the Winter's Snow*

2008: Carols with French horn

Scott Ethier (Astoria, NY) *A Mother's Carol*
Peter Hilliard (Roslyn, PA) *Christ's Nativity*

2007: Carols with celeste

Matthew Brown (Los Angeles, CA) *Sweet was the Song*
Stephen Main (San Francisco, CA) *The Darkest Midnight in December*

2006: Carols with solo acoustic guitar

Diego Luzuriaga (Ardmore, PA) *Un Nacimiento (A Nativity Scene)*
John Rommereim (Grinnell, IA) *Calm on the Listening Ear of Night*

2005: Carols with cello

Paul Gibson (Downey, CA) *It Fell Upon the High Midnight*
Jocelyn Hagen (Minneapolis, MN) *See Amid the Winter Snow*

2004: Carols with recorder

Keith Bradshaw (Lexington, VA) *Soft, the Light*
James Sclater (Clinton, MS) *Piping Carol*

2003: Carols with solo instrumental accompaniment

Thomas Fielding (Bloomington, IN) *Behold the Dark and Bitter Night*
Alan Higbee (Beechwood, OH) *In the Bleak Midwinter*

2002: Carols with percussion

Mary Lynn Place Badarak (Cochiti Lake, NM) *Brightest and Best*
Paul Lohman (Minneapolis, MN) *Angels Heard on High*

2001: Carols with string orchestra

Clive Muncaster (Princeton, NJ) *Shepherds, Shake Off Your Drowsy Sleep*
Sergey Khvoshchinsky (St. Paul, MN) *The Christmas Silence*

2000: Carols with harp

Brian Holmes (San Jose, CA) *The Shepherd and the King*
Emily Maxson Porter (Fridley, MN) *I Sing the Birth*

1999: Carols with audience participation

Robert A.M. Ross (Philadelphia, PA) *What Child Is This?*
Jonathan Santore (Plymouth, NH) *This Holy Christmas Night*

1998: Carols for a cappella chorus

Joan Griffith (Minneapolis, MN) *Sweet Noel*
Richard Voorhaar (St. Paul, MN) *The Virgin's Cradle Hymn*

PHILIP BRUNELLE REVEALS THE MAGIC THAT MAKES COMMISSIONS COME TOGETHER

Since 1973, when the first commission by VocalEssence led Dominick Argento to compose *Jonah and the Whale*, the organization has ardently supported new music. More than 300 commissions later, VocalEssence Artistic Director and Founder Philip Brunelle explains how commissioning works.

Why does VocalEssence commission so much original work?

Just as we don't want to lose sight of the composers of the past who show where we've been, we are always interested in what composers today are writing; they show us where we're going. Commissioning creates a rewarding challenge for everyone! The composers must use discipline as they write something for a specific group with a specific text. The singers push themselves to learn a piece that no one has ever experienced. And the audience volunteers to act as the first listeners, hoping to hear the world's next masterpiece!

How does VocalEssence find financial support for commissions?

There are several different paths. When we put together our annual budget, we always set aside money for funding new work. If I believe a VocalEssence supporter is interested in being involved in a commission—and the right idea comes along—I might start that conversation. And, occasionally, someone approaches me with a desire to commission a piece.

What situations lead to the birth of a commission?

It can happen in many ways. We might be planning a special concert and decide it needs something truly unique. We might finally be acting on our interest in a composer we've long wanted to encourage. Someone might commission a piece to honor a birthday or anniversary. Sometimes it's a hunch: I sense it's the right time and the right composer for a commission to create a special moment.

What aspects of the work do you control?

The composer and I agree at the outset on the length of the work, the text, and who will perform the piece. We talk about the work enough to make sure we're on the same page, and I stay in contact during the writing process to see how things are progressing. Ultimately, the composer may come to look at the text in a different way and the result may be a surprise—but it is always wonderful!

Are there any recent commissions you've found especially rewarding?

They are each so individual and special. The most recent was John Rutter's beautiful anthem "When Music Sounds," which he composed for our concert last April. He knew the refined sound of the Ensemble Singers and chose a Walter de la Mare text that fit them wonderfully. Then the work received funding from a woman who wanted to celebrate her husband's 90th birthday—a perfect match!

Add sparkle to your holiday season with original carols alongside outstanding arrangements of your favorite melodies.

Welcome your Christmas with glorious music ranging from "Jingle Bells" to Nordic carols—plus John Rutter's "Carol of the Magi" for chorus and cello.

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via vocalessence.org.**

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concert
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FREE!**



VOCAL ESSENCE IN THE COMMUNITY



VOCAL ESSENCE ¡Cantaré!

Celebrating its 11th anniversary, VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! has engaged singers of all ages in the celebration of Mexican culture by connecting composers from Mexico with school choirs and community choruses. Each year, a composer works directly with Minnesota students and community members for four weeks, becoming familiar with the ensembles and writing a new song specifically for each.

In May of each year, all singers come together to present world premieres of the new music in concert at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. More than 5,000 singers have participated in VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! since its inception. Nearly 150 new Mexican songs have been created, and many are published by VocalEssence Music Press making them accessible to choirs around the world.

This season, Mexican composer Pablo Mendoza Halliday is working with the following Twin Cities schools and community partners: ComMUSICation, Border CrosSing, VocalEssence Singers Of This Age, Field Community School in Minneapolis, Harding Senior High School in Saint Paul, and Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion School in Robbinsdale. The culminating concert will be at the Ordway Music Theater on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 7 PM. More information at vocalessence.org.

In addition, for the third year, VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! is extending to Chicago, IL. VocalEssence is supporting Chicago a capella as they implement ¡Cantaré! with Julio Morales in the Chicago metro area, premiering new songs at the ¡Cantaré! Chicago Community Concert in May 2019.

“I have found VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! to be the perfect way to bring families and students of different backgrounds together, as I believe that is the key in the development of any community.”

—Ana Luisa Fajer Flores, former Consul of Mexico, St. Paul, MN



Founded in 1969, VocalEssence has decades of history as one of the world's premier music organizations. While mindful of our global influence, we recognize the power of singing together, and routinely pioneer ways to strengthen Minnesota's singing community.

As we begin our 50th year, we celebrate our recognition not only locally and regionally, but nationally and internationally for innovation, leadership, and advancement of this art form. Within the strength of our position as a leader in this field, our challenge is to remain relevant and responsive within the rapidly changing demographic landscape.

This Strategic Plan is reflective of these times of change and the exciting opportunities before us. It reflects new organizational directions and tests new strategies around program development and constituent engagement. It sets us on a course of strategic experimentation, learning, and adaptation to ensure our future and enhance the lives of thousands of people in our community and beyond.



MISSION

M

VocalEssence champions choral music of all genres, celebrating the vocal experience through innovative performances, commissioning of new music, and engaging with diverse constituencies.

VISION

V

We transform lives by singing together, assuring a place for everyone's voice.

We live out our artistic vision by:

- Championing singing together
- Engaging diverse constituencies
- Creating innovative performance and learning experiences
- Commissioning new music

CORE VALUES

C

V

- Ensuring a culture of excellence
- Engaging people across race, culture, and age
- Celebrating many traditions of music
- Fostering a collaborative environment
- Stewarding our resources

THREE KEY AREAS FOR ADVANCEMENT

1

STRENGTHEN ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE & REPUTATION:

Push our artistic boundaries through new creative and engagement opportunities.

2

ADVANCE INCLUSION, ACCESS, & EQUITY:

Develop future singing generations in ways that are reflective of and responsive to diverse constituencies.

3

SECURE A SOLID FUTURE:

Ensure our capacity to carry out our vision through attention to fiscal health, operating capacity, and leadership development.

ABOUT VOCALESSENCE

VocalEssence, called “one of the irreplaceable music ensembles of our time” by Dana Gioia, past chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts—and the choir that Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones says “sings magnificently”—impacts thousands of students, singers, and composers each year through its initiative programs, contests, and support for innovative art. VocalEssence was founded in 1969 and has debuted more than 300 commissions and world premieres. For more information, visit www.vocalescence.org.



PHILIP BRUNELLE

Artistic Director and Founder

Philip Brunelle, artistic director and founder of VocalEssence, is an internationally-renowned conductor, choral scholar, and visionary. Philip has conducted symphonies, choral festivals, and operas on six continents. He recently completed 9 years as Vice President of IFCM (International Federation for Choral Music), holds five honorary degrees, and has been recognized for his commitment to choral music by the governments of Norway, Hungary, Sweden, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. His thoughts on music are at RenaissanceManpodcast.com. vocalescence.org/philipbrunelle.



G. PHILLIP SHOULTZ, III

Associate Conductor and Director of Learning, Engagement, and Community Programs

Known for his innovative pedagogy and ability to inspire singers, **G. Phillip Shoultz, III**, serves as the Associate Conductor and Director of Learning, Engagement, and Community Programs at VocalEssence. Phillip completed doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota and also earned degrees from the University of Georgia and Georgia State University. The winner of the 2015 American Choral Directors Association Graduate Student Conducting Competition, Phillip appeared as a Conducting Fellow with the Oregon Bach Festival. www.vocalescence.org/gps.



MARY JO GOTHMANN

Accompanist

Mary Jo Gothmann joined VocalEssence as staff accompanist in 2015. She enjoys a varied career as a chamber musician, soloist, opera coach, and organist. Mary Jo performs frequently with the Minnesota Orchestra and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and is a graduate of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Program, University of Minnesota, New England Conservatory, and St. Olaf College. Mary Jo is the founder and Artistic Director of the Joya Chamber Music Series at Zion Lutheran Church in Anoka.

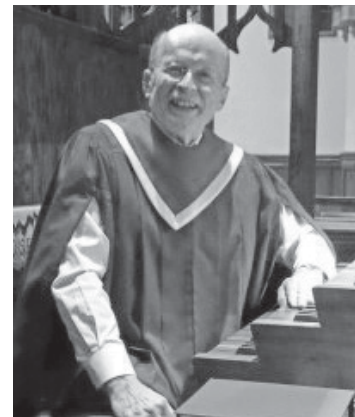
Celebrate Philip Brunelle's 50th year as Organist and Choirmaster at Plymouth Church

Sun, Nov. 18, 2018 at 2 PM
King David by Arthur Honegger
Plymouth Congregational Church
Choir, St. Mark's Cathedral Choir,
soloists, orchestra, and actors combine
for a special production.

Thurs, Jan. 31, 2019 at 7:30 PM
Piano Recital: Angela Hewitt
A great treat to hear this international
artist in an all-Bach concert!

Sun, Feb. 10, 2019 at 4 PM
Organ Recital: Daniel Roth
Known for his thrilling improvisations,
he is head organist of St. Sulpice
in Paris

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VOCALESSENCE CHORUS



The VocalEssence Chorus is an exceptional group of talented, committed singers from many walks of life. A staple on the VocalEssence season, the Chorus also performs at community events including the VocalEssence WITNESS Young People's Concerts at Orchestra Hall and the VocalEssence iCantaré! Concert at the Ordway. Last November, the VocalEssence Chorus was selected to perform at the 2017 Fall Convention for the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota.

www.vocalescence.org/what-we-do/performing-ensembles/vocalescence-chorus/

SOPRANO

Amanda Allen
Laura Amos
AnnaLisa Anderson
Barbara Anderson
Libby Anderson
Jessica Belt
Whitney Al Bembenek
Ali Biatek
Julia Braaten
Jennica Date
Regan Debban
Judy Drobeck
Maria Gisselquist
Kristina M. Guiffre
Tommie Hollingsworth
Rebecca Hovsepian
Sally Jaffray
Lisa Kapsner-Swift
Jeanne Kenney
Kartra Kohl
Joy MacArthur
Erin Meyer
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Naomi Porter
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Alexa Rosenbaum
Cheryl Roberts
Saunders
Susan Scofield
LeAnn Stein
Abbie Sulik

Dana Terres

Amanda Troolin
Katherine True
Jennifer S Vickerman**
Laura Walklet
Hilary Wiek
Dannika Wright

ALTO

Akosua Obuo Addo
Kellie Asher
Jo M. Beld
Alyse Carbonell
Constance Chen
Becky Gaunt
Judy Gaunt
Yvonne Grover†
Autumn Gurgel
Mary Haasl
Marjorie Hakala
Meghan Hanna
Shannon Hart
Dee Hein
Susan E. Hill
Kristin Howlett
Aileen Rosa Kasper
Jenny Kisner
Jeene Lee
Rebecca Modert
Kristi Mueller
Emily Nelson
Nadia Pedersen
Samantha Phillippe
Ana Lucía Piedrahita
Fernández

Marty Raymond

Miriam Sahouani
Coral Sampson
Debra Samuelson
Erin Sandsmark
Katie Sandsmark
Heidi Schleif
Forrest Schrader
Johanna Smith
Kelsey Stout
Sandra Swami
Laura Tanner
Rosita Tendall
Cassandra Warn
Allie Wigley

TENOR

Steve Aggergaard
Andrew Alness
David Andrew Beccue
Larry Brandts
Josh Brockbank
Ryan Coopergard
Ben Demaree
Blake Downing
Samuel Fouts†
Flynn Franzen
Jason Kaiser
Reagan Lee
Andrew Leshovsky
David Paese
Jonathan Posthuma
Rabindra Tambyraja
Adam Van der Sluis

BASS

Robert Atendido
Haskel Black
Phil Bratnober
Max Cerny
David Erickson
Matt Ferguson
David Fillman
Tim Graham
Alex Halverson
John Henrich
Ward Jacobson
James LeVoi
Philip Lowry
Walker MacSwain
Nicholas Mroczek†
Milo Oien-Rochat
David Olson
Thomas Paulson
Brian Ruhl
Joseph Scheller
Richard L. Shallbetter
William B Smale
Trent Stenoien
Timothy Supol
Stephen Tendall
Matthew Terhaar
David Toht
Brady Toone
Liam Vance
Christopher John
Wallace

*Board liaison

†Section leader

VOCALESSENCE ENSEMBLE SINGERS



Minnesota is home to an international choral music gem—the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers. Declared by the Oxford Times (UK) as having “a blend that could—and should—be the envy of every choir in the business,” this 32-voice professional chorus is enjoyed by millions from Duluth, Minnesota to Shanghai, China. The VocalEssence Ensemble Singers are equally at ease premiering music by Pulitzer Prize winning composers as well as teen moms in our Lullaby Project. www.vocalescence.org/what-we-do/performing-ensembles/vocalescence-ensemble-singers/

SOPRANO

Jennifer Bevington
Jenny French
JoAnna Johnson
Chloe Johnson
Myrtle Lemon
Meghan Lowe
Natalia Romero
Margaret Sabin
Mari Scott

TENOR

Eli Baumgartner
Dan Dressen
Anders Eckman
Michael Fairbairn
Robert J. Graham
William Pederson
Kyle Schwartz

BASS

Joshua Conroy
Ben Dyleuth
Joseph Ellickson
David Gindra
Erik Krohg
A.J. Lund
Nicholas R. Mattsson
Nathan Petersen-Kindem
Tim Takach

ALTO

Robin Joy Helgen*
Marita J. Link
Anna George Meek
Judith McClain Melander
Sadie Nelson
Erin Peters
Kristina Rodel Sorum

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: TIM TAKACH AND JOCELYN HAGEN

MARRIED COMPOSERS AND ENTREPRENEURS WITH ARTISTIC TIES TO VOCALESSENCE DELIGHT IN DISCOVERING THE ORGANIZATION'S OTHER SIDE—COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POWERHOUSE



Photo Credit: Bruce Silcox

When composer Tim Takach joined the VocalEssence board, neither he nor his wife, the composer Jocelyn Hagen, were strangers to the organization. But they found themselves surprised to learn how many different initiatives were powered by the engine of VocalEssence.

“I was amazed at how many programs I didn’t know about,” said Tim, whose first encounter with the group came in his college days at St. Olaf in Northfield when he sung with the Ensemble Singers at the invitation of choir director Sigrid Johnson (at that time also the VocalEssence associate conductor). “When I joined the board there were about ten outreach programs that all addressed different needs within the choral community.”

It was an “A-ha!” moment for his wife Jocelyn, too, whose biggest revelation has been that VocalEssence is “a much broader organization than just a performing ensemble.” Jocelyn, like her husband, is a St. Olaf alum, but she had an even more memorable first encounter with VocalEssence: In 2006, she won the Welcome Christmas Carol Contest, where VocalEssence and The American Composers Forum give composers the chance to create a modern-day carol and reward the winners with both prize money and a premiere. “I was 25 years old, and my piece *See Amid the Winter Snow* was given beautiful performances by VocalEssence and Minnesota Orchestra cellist Tony Ross,” she said.

2006 was an auspicious year for the couple: it was also when they co-founded Graphite Publishing, a vocal music publisher selling digital scores that occasionally works with VocalEssence. The two Midwesterners had moved from Northfield to Minneapolis, where Jocelyn went to graduate school for composition while Tim helped to build the choral group he co-founded in college, Cantus, from a student group into a much-respected professional vocal ensemble. Neither of them had any difficulty finding their way to the life-enriching power of vocal performance, as both came from families that valued music. “My mother and her two sisters have been singing in three-part harmony since I was a kid,” said Jocelyn. “They’ve done a few recordings, sung in bands, and performed jingles on the radio.”

“My parents are both lifetime amateur musicians,” added Tim. “They always supported me at concerts. In fact,” he remembered, “when I was in 4th grade, already a singer at church, my mother wanted me to hear a local children’s choir, to see if I was interested in joining. But the concert was during the day, when I was supposed to be in school. So she lied, telling the school I had a doctor’s appointment! When I heard the choir, I immediately decided that I wanted to become a part of it.”

When they had sons Oscar, ten, and Milo, seven, there was no doubt they’d have the full advantage of growing up with music in their lives. “We bring our kids to many rehearsals and concerts,” said Tim, “So they are getting used to the lifestyle. When my oldest son was three, I once told him, incorrectly, that I was listening to guitar music. ‘Dad, that’s a banjo,’ he said. My mistake.”

But unfortunately, not everyone gets a chance to connect with music so effortlessly. That’s why Jocelyn has been so impressed with the outreach side of VocalEssence. “They truly care about bringing choral music to everyone—they’re dedicated to spreading the joy of singing!”

“VocalEssence is always trying to think outside the box to find ways to introduce choral music into the lives of people who might benefit from it but who otherwise wouldn’t get the chance to try,” says Tim. “Under-supported inner city schools? Check. Nursing home residents? Check. Community members looking for a larger outlet for song? Check. I had thought that VocalEssence was a performing organization with some outreach, but my mental image of this organization has been turned upside down. VocalEssence is a pillar of community and education... that also performs top-notch music!”

THANK YOU, VOCALESSENCE DONORS

THE ENDOWMENT HONOR ROLL

VocalEssence salutes the individuals and corporate and private foundations whose generosity and leadership sparked the creation of the Endowment Fund. This permanent fund was established in 1987 and is now valued at \$3 million. Its interest income provides ongoing support to VocalEssence. We welcome new contributions to the Endowment Fund and extend our deepest appreciation to the following for their generous gifts.

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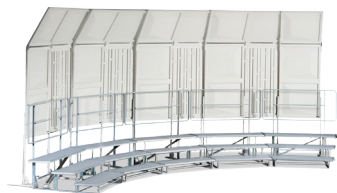
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