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vocal**essence**
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2010 | 2011 SEASON

WITNESS

André Thomas

Friday, March 4, 2011 at 8 pm

Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis

*Concert Conversation at 7 pm with Classical Minnesota Public Radio's
John Birge and special guest Dr. André J. Thomas*

VocalEssence Chorus

Sigrid Johnson, Philip Brunelle and André Thomas, *conducting*

The St. Olaf Choir

Anton Armstrong and André Thomas, *conducting*

Combined High School Choruses

André Thomas, *conducting*

Central High School Concert Choir, Saint Paul

Hastings High School Select Chorale, Hastings

Washburn High School Miller Voices, Minneapolis

Combined Choruses

André Thomas, *conducting*

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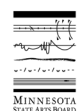
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- **Programs and artists** are subject to change without notice.



This activity is made possible in part by a grant provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature from the Minnesota arts and cultural heritage fund with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008, a grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation Minnesota, and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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Program Order

VocalEssence Chorus

Sigrid Johnson, Philip Brunelle and André Thomas,
conducting

African Noel
Deep River
Peter, Go Ring Dem Bells
I Open My Mouth
Go Where I Send Thee

The St. Olaf Choir

Anton Armstrong and André Thomas, *conducting*
Andrew Bourgoin, *piano*
Devin Orchard, Maggie Burke, Katie Burke,
Karen Hopper, *percussion*

Here's a Pretty Little Baby
Hold Fast to Dreams
Rockin' Jerusalem
The Kingdom
My Good Lord's Done Been Here

Intermission

Combined High School Choruses

André Thomas, *conducting*
Keep Your Lamps!
Barbara Allen
Swing Down, Chariot
Walk in My Shoes
I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray

Combined Choruses

André Thomas, *conducting*
Beautiful City
I Dream a World
I Hear America Singing

Introduction



Spirituals constitute one of the largest bodies of American song that have survived to our time and are probably the best-known. It is, therefore, appropriate that this year's WITNESS theme be devoted to the spiritual and its legacy and uplifting quality that touches us all. When African people were forced to come to America as slaves in the 1600s, their former lifestyles faced upheaval. It was their musical traditions, though greatly altered, that provided a semblance of consistency in the midst of their new conditions. The result was: the spiritual.

In West Africa music was a significant part of everyday life and the rhythm of work and community celebration created a shared music-making. In America spirituals came to express religious themes — both sorrow and joy, but always with a feeling of hope. By the time of Abraham Lincoln thousands of spirituals existed, passed down by oral tradition and therefore quick to adapt to the changing needs and dynamics of their creators.

Spirituals have experienced several notable surges of popularity since the end of slavery in America. During the Harlem Renaissance, spirituals thrived in the concert hall with such renowned musicians as Paul Robeson, Roland Hayes and Marian Anderson. They also inspired writers such as Langston Hughes, Claude McKay and Zora Neale Hurston. During the Great Depression spirituals reached a larger audience by means of the radio, and then the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s added a new momentum to these songs with spirituals and gospel songs being given new lyrics reflecting the ideals of the time. For example, the anthem "We Shall Overcome" came out of a gospel hymn, "I'll Overcome Someday," as well as the spiritual "No More Auction Block for Me," which predates the Civil War.

Whenever American choirs perform internationally there is always a request for spirituals, perhaps more than for any other kind of music. Spirituals possess the power to unite people across boundaries, expressing some of the most poignant of human emotions. It is in this spirit that we welcome Dr. André J. Thomas as our guest conductor, a man whose life's work revolves around this music. And it is a joy to welcome all our visiting choirs as we share together in celebrating the beauty and power of the spiritual today.

Philip Brunelle

Program Texts

African Noel

arr. André J. Thomas
(1994)

Sing Noel,
Sing we all Noel.
O come ye people, gather here to hear the news of
good cheer.
The King of kings, the Lamb of God is born today in
Bethlehem.

Deep River

arr. André J. Thomas
(2002)

Deep river, my home is over Jordan,
Deep river, I want to cross over into campground.

Oh, don't you want to go to that gospel feast,
That promised land where all is peace?

Peter, Go Ring Dem Bells

arr. André J. Thomas
(2001)

Peter, go ring-a dem bells,
Heard from heaven today!

Wonder where Mary has gone,
Heard from heaven today!

Wonder where Martha has gone,
Heard from heaven today!

Good news!
Heard from heaven today.

Wonder where's Moses?
Way down in Egypt Land,
Tell Old Pharoah
To let my people go.

Wonder where Daniel has gone?
Heard from heaven today.
Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel
And why not every man?

Wonder where Elijah has gone?
Elijah, Elijah Rock.
He's gone where Daniel has gone,
Heard from heaven today.

I Open My Mouth

arr. André J. Thomas
(1990)

Done made my vow to the Lord.
O, Lord, I'll never turn back.
I shall go to see what the end is gonna be.

I open my mouth to the Lord,
And I won't turn back.
I shall go to see what the end is gonna be.

If you don't believe that I've been redeemed,
Just follow me down to Jordan's stream,
To see what the end is gonna be.

Go Where I Send Thee

arr. André J. Thomas
(1989)

Children, go where I send thee.
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send thee one by one.
One for the little bitty baby.
Two was for Paul and Silas.
Three was the Hebrew children.
He was born in Bethlehem.

Four was the four that came knockin' at the door.
Oh sinner, why don't you answer?
Somebody's knockin' at your door.
I shall send thee five-by-five.
Five for the Gospel preachers.
I shall send thee six-by-six.
Six was the six that couldn't get fixed.
Seven went up to Heaven.
Eight was the eight that stood at the gate.
Nine was the nine that got left behind!
Ten by ten 'cause ten was the ten commandments.

How shall I send thee?
Go where I send thee.
He was born in Bethlehem.

Here's a Pretty Little Baby

arr. André J. Thomas
(1997)

Here's a pretty little baby!
Look in the manger!
Behold, believe, and be baptized.

Wise men riding . . .
Bright star shining . . .
Name is Jesus . . .
Behold, believe, and be baptized.

Hold Fast to Dreams

arr. André J. Thomas
(2006)

Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams die,
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go,
Life is a barren field frozen with snow.
—*Langston Hughes*

Rockin' Jerusalem

arr. André J. Thomas
(1986)

I hear rock-in in the land and ring-in dem bells!
I know Oh my Lord,
There's rock-in in the land and ring-in dem bells.

I know archangels ring dem bells.
Oh I hear dem ring-in for they are rock-in Jerusalem.
Oh Mary, Oh Martha, Oh Mary ring dem bells!
I hear archangels a-ring-in dem bells!

Church getting higher, Jerusalem
Ring dem bells!
Don't you hear the bells a-ring-in,
Don't you hear dem ring-in dem bells!

The Kingdom

arr. André J. Thomas
(1991)

Righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost,
That's the Kingdom of God.
Don't you want to be a part of the Kingdom?
Come on ev'rybody!
Oh, yes, there's joy in the Kingdom!
Oh, yes, there's peace in the Kingdom!
Oh, yes, there's Love in the Kingdom!
Come on ev'rybody!

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness therof.
We are part of the earth, and it is part of us.
The perfumed flowers are our sisters,
The deer, the horse, the great eagle,
These are our brothers.
All things are connected.
Rivers our brothers, earth our mother.
The earth is the Lord's.

—*Romans 14:17, adapted André J. Thomas*

My Good Lord's Done Been Here

arr. André J. Thomas
(2009)

My good Lord's done been here!
Blessed my soul and gone away.

When I get to heaven and my work is done,
Going to sit down with Sister Mary and chatter with
the darling son.

Going down to the river of Jordan one of these days.
Going to sit at the welcome table and see my Savior's
face.

Hold up the Baptist finger,
Hold up the Baptist hand,
When I get in the heavens, going to join the Baptist
Band.

Keep Your Lamps!

arr. André J. Thomas
(1982)

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning,
The time is drawing nigh.
Children, don't get weary 'til your work is done.
Christian, journey soon be over,
The time is drawing nigh.

Barbara Allen

arr. André J. Thomas
(2005)

In Scarlet town where I was born,
There was a fair maid dwellin',
Made every youth cry, "Well-a-day,"
Her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merry month of May,
When green the buds were swellin',
Young Jimmy Grove on his death-bed lay,
For love of Barbara Allen.

Then slowly, slowly, she came up,
And slowly she came nigh him
And all she said when there she came,
"Young man, I think you're dyin'."

When he was dead and laid in grave,
Her heart was struck with sorrow.
"My true love died for me today
And I shall die tomorrow."

(continued next page)

"Farewell," she said, "Ye maidens all,
And shun the fault I fell in,
Hence-forth take warning by the fall
Of cruel Barbara Allen."

—*Traditional English Folksong*

Swing Down, Chariot

arr. André J. Thomas
(2003)

Swing down chariot, stop and let me ride,
Rock me, Lord, calm and easy,
I've got a home on the other side.

Ezekiel went out in the middle of the field.
He saw an angel workin' on a chariot wheel.
He wasn't particular about the chariot wheel.
He just wanted to see how the chariot feels.

Ezekiel went down and he got on board.
The chariot went a-bumpin' on down that old road.
He wasn't quite particular 'bout the bumpin'
of the road.
He just wanted to lay down his heavy load.

A sinner, he went out to the middle of a field.
And then he started workin' on a chariot wheel.
He wasn't so particular 'bout workin' on that wheel.
He just wants to see how a chariot feels.

Then an angel saw the sinner workin' hard there
in the field
And said, "Hold on, believer, Ezekiel rides that wheel.
The chariot will swing on down the old and bumpy
road.
The chariot's the place to lay your heavy load."

Walk In My Shoes

arr. André J. Thomas
(2010)

When dreams you dream are different than mine,
When anger remains from a different time,
When the path you choose is a stranger's line,
I'll try to walk in your shoes.

When I don't understand what you're trying to say,
And don't see what you see, try as I may,
When things that you do are just not my way,
I'll try to walk in your shoes.

Can you walk in mine, give them a trial?
Can you think as I do, though it's not your style?
Can you try being me, just for a while?
Come dare to walk in my shoes.

If we're willing to open our minds and our hearts,
Understanding each other has a place to start.
I'll give you my shoes, wear yours as my part,
Let's step in each others' shoes.

Our differences don't tear,
But instead can be a strength we share.
Tomorrow's answers are waiting there,
The day you walk in my shoes.

Can you walk in mine?
Can you think as I do?
Can you try being me just for a while?
Come dare to walk in my shoes!

—*Neil Lorenz*

I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray

arr. André J. Thomas
(2008)

Way down yonder, way down on my knees,
Way down yonder, I couldn't hear nobody pray.

Hallelujah, trouble's over in the kingdom with my
Jesus.
I couldn't hear nobody pray.

Beautiful City

arr. André J. Thomas
(2006)

Three gates in-a the east,
Three gates in-a the west,
Three gates in-a the north,
Three gates in-a the south,
Twelve gates to the city, Hallelu.

My mother lives up in glory,
I want to live there too.
My father lives up in glory,
I want to live there too.
My sister lives up in glory,
I want to live there too.
My brother lives up in glory,
I want to live there too.

The beautiful city of God!
I want to be in that number,
The beautiful city of God!
Twelve gates to the city, Hallelujah.

I Dream a World

arr. André J. Thomas
(2002)

I dream a world
Where no other man will scorn.
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn.

I dream a world
Where all will know sweet freedom's way
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.

A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free.

Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind.
Of such I dream, I dream a world.
—Langston Hughes

I Hear America Singing

arr. André J. Thomas
(1993)

I hear America singing of its greatness,
I hear America singing strong.
I hear America singing of its beauty,
I hear America singing today.

Oh walk together, children, don't you get weary.
There's a great camp meeting in the Promised Land.

Sing together, children, don't you get weary
Shout together, children, don't you get weary
There's a great camp meeting in the Promised Land.

We're going to sing of truth and love.
Walk together, hand in hand together in peace.
We're going to sing and never tire.

There's a great camp meeting in the Promised Land.



In Memoriam Dr. Billy Taylor (1921-2010)

VocalEssence would like to recognize the recent passing of jazz legend Dr. Billy Taylor. Dr. Taylor first joined VocalEssence to perform *Peaceful Warrior* at Orchestra Hall in the 1998-1999 30th Anniversary

Season, and then again for our 2009 **WITNESS** Concert celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Encompassing a rare combination of creativity, intelligence, vision, commitment and leadership, Dr. Taylor was one of our most cherished national treasures.

Playing the piano professionally since 1944, he got his start with Ben Webster's Quartet on New York's famed 52nd Street. He then served as the house pianist at Birdland, the legendary jazz club where he performed with such celebrated masters as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis. Since the 1950s, Billy Taylor led his own Trio and performed with the most influential jazz musicians of the twentieth century.

Dr. Taylor was not only an influential musician, but a highly regarded teacher as well, receiving his master's degree and Ph.D. in music education from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and serving as a Duke Ellington Fellow at Yale University. We will always be grateful for Dr. Taylor's commitment to **WITNESS** and VocalEssence, and will miss him deeply.

vocalessence
Philip Brunelle, Artistic Director

the SOUND of ETERNITY
Bach Mass in B minor
performed with 27 short films by Bastian Cleve

Friday, April 8, 2011 at 8 pm
Saturday, April 9, 2011 at 8 pm
St. Olaf Catholic Church, Minneapolis

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers
The Lyra Baroque Orchestra
Philip Brunelle, conductor

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Biographies

Dr. André J. Thomas



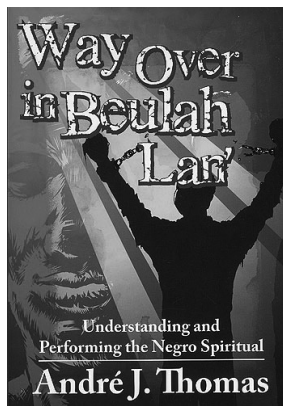
Revered for his world-class settings of spirituals and gospel music, distinguished composer, educator, and conductor Dr. André J. Thomas has set the gold standard for the performance of African American spirituals through his book, *Way Over in Beulah Lan'*, a practical, heartfelt guide to understanding spirituals and

performance practice. In the book, he explores the beginnings of the spiritual, its role in society, and its transition into art music. He also addresses issues of interpretation — text, diction, rhythm, and tempo.

André has also distinguished himself as a composer/arranger and his works are particularly beloved by high school and college choirs. Hinshaw Music, Mark Foster Music, Fitzsimmon Music, Lawson Gould, Earthsongs, and Heritage Music publish his compositions and arrangements.

He has been the guest conductor of such distinguished orchestras and choirs as the Birmingham (England) Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Radio Choir, the Netherlands Radio Choir, the Charlotte Symphony, Tallahassee Symphony and the Chinese People's Liberation Orchestra. He is also in demand as a choral adjudicator, clinician, and director of Honor/All-State Choirs throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, New Zealand and Australia.

André is the Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Choral Music Education at Florida State University in Tallahassee. He earned degrees from Friends University



(B.A.), Northwestern University (M. M.), and the University of Illinois (D.M.A). Florida State University honored him with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding scholarly excellence and strong commitment to Dr. King's ideals.



Anton Armstrong

Anton Armstrong is the Harry R. and Thora H. Tosdal Professor of Music at St. Olaf College and Conductor of The St. Olaf Choir, a position he assumed in 1990. He came to this position following ten years in Grand Rapids, Michigan where he served on the faculty of Calvin College and conducted the

Campus Choir, the Calvin College Alumni Choir and the Grand Rapids Symphony Chorus.

A graduate of St. Olaf College, Anton Armstrong earned a master of music degree at the University of Illinois and a doctor of musical arts from Michigan State University. He holds membership in several professional societies including the American Choral Directors Association, Choristers Guild, Chorus America, and the International Federation for Choral Music. He also serves as editor of a multicultural choral series for Earthsongs Publications and co-editor of the revised St. Olaf Choral Series for Augsburg Fortress Publishers.

Dr. Armstrong is widely recognized for his work in the area of youth and children's choral music. He served for over twenty years on the summer faculty of the American Boychoir School, Princeton, New Jersey. He is the founding conductor of the Troubadours, 30-voice boys' ensemble of the Northfield Youth Choirs since 1991. He currently serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Boychoir School, the Board of Chorus America and the Board of Choristers Guild. In June 1998, he began his tenure as founding conductor of the Oregon Bach Festival Stangeland Family Youth Choral Academy.

The St. Olaf Choir

The St. Olaf Choir, with 75 mixed voices, is the premiere a cappella college choir in the United States. Conducted since 1990 by Anton Armstrong, The St. Olaf Choir continues to develop the tradition that originated with its founder, F. Melius Christiansen.



Since its founding in 1912, The St. Olaf Choir has set a standard in the choral art, serving as a model for choirs of all levels. The ensemble's annual tour brings its artistry and message to thousands of people across the nation and around the world. The St. Olaf Choir has taken thirteen international tours and performed for capacity audiences in the major concert halls of Norway, France, South Korea, New Zealand, Australia, New York City, Washington, DC, Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, and the Twin Cities.

In addition to being an artistic force, The St. Olaf Choir has a full calendar of events and a growing library of recordings. The choir's mission is to provide music of the highest quality that lifts people's hearts and spirits, incorporating a diversity of voices and cultural traditions into the chorus of the Christian faith. Many people experience this message through the annual St. Olaf Christmas Festival. But perhaps nowhere is the essence more clearly proclaimed than in the work that has become the choir's signature piece, "Beautiful Savior."

Central High School Concert Choir

Central High School, the largest public high school in Saint Paul, is a model for public education, serving diverse populations. The student body is 33% European-American, 32% African-American, 29% Asian American, 5% Hispanic American, and 1% Native American. Forty languages are spoken in students' homes.

Performing ensembles at Central include Concert Choir, Central Men, Central Women, Concert Band, Varsity Band, and Orchestra. Co-curricular opportunities include Central Singers, Minnesingers, Meistersingers, Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, and Jazz Band.

The Central High School Concert Choir has performed Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*, Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Brahms's *Nänie* with the Central Orchestra. They have collaborated with Kantorei, Oratorio Society, Minnesota Chorale's Bridges Program, One Voice Mixed Choir, Two Rivers Chorale and The Singers. In November 2005, they performed for the Minnesota ACDA fall convention. In 2008, the Concert Choir performed at The St. Olaf College Choral Day. In 2008-2009 they participated in the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! program, working with Mexican composer Jorge Cózatl.



Martha Graber

Martha Graber has taught music for eleven years at Central High School. She received her bachelor of music education from Illinois Wesleyan University and her master of music in choral conducting from University of Minnesota, where she studied

voice with Lawrence Weller and Emma Small. She has been a performing member of Thursday Musical and has performed many recitals and solo performances, including appearances with Minnetonka Choral Society, Oratorio Society, Macalester Festival Chorale and Minnesota Chorale. Martha is a member of Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA) and the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). Martha currently serves as Standards and Repertoire Chair for Multi-Cultural and Ethnic Music for ACDA, and has published two articles in its journal, *Star of the North*. Her article titled "Cultural Awakenings" was also published in the North Central ACDA Journal and the ACDA Journal of California.

Hastings High School Select Chorale

Hastings High School has an enrollment of 1800 students grades 9-12. The vocal music department has over 600 students singing in one or more of the nine choirs. Two of the four auditioned choirs — Bel Canto Singers and Select Chorale — rehearse every day for 45 minutes while the other two — Concert Choir and Women's Chorus — the two non-auditioned choirs, also rehearse every other day. The choirs at Hasting High School are under the direction of Kathleen Hanson, Tatum Mahlen and Lin Warren.

The 116-member Hastings High School Select Chorale is comprised of juniors and seniors. This choir's selection is based on a premise of inclusion and enjoyment of the arts. Juniors and seniors that display a good work ethic and a love of the arts are included in this ensemble. These students are exposed to a wide variety of literature throughout the year as many prepare to sing in college ensembles.



Lin Warren

Lin Warren has taught vocal music for 27 years at Hastings High School. He received a bachelor of music from Hastings College, Hastings, Nebraska and a master of arts in music from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

In 1988 he received the Outstanding Young Choral Director Award from the Minnesota chapter of American Choral Directors Association. In 1989 was selected as "Teacher of the Year" and in 2009 he was selected "Employee of the Year" for the Hastings Public School System. His choirs have been selected to appear at the Minnesota Music Educators Association Convention, the American Choral Director Association of Minnesota Convention, the Divisional Music Educators National Conference Convention and the 2010 Choral Arts Finale. He has held many positions in the American Choral Directors Association. He served as assistant convention chair for the 2005 American Choral Directors Association national convention in Los Angeles and is currently the assistant convention chair for the 2011 American Choral Directors national convention to be held in Chicago.

Washburn High School Miller Voices

Washburn High School, located in south Minneapolis, opened in 1925 with an enrollment of 1031 students, grades 7-12. Even though the number of students enrolled at Washburn remains close to 1000, the demographics have changed significantly over the years. 50% of the student population is African-American, 30% European-American, and 4% Hispanic. Three years ago the Minneapolis school district decided to make a "fresh start" at this diverse under-achieving high school. Principal Carol Markam-Cousins had the job of rebuilding the school from the ground up. One of her first decisions was to invest in the arts. Today, academics, athletics and the arts are equally valued components of a Washburn education and Washburn is an official International Baccalaureate school. As a result, the choirs, including two mixed choirs and a treble choir, have seen tremendous growth in the past three years. Musical theater, band, orchestra, and jazz band are offered as curricular classes, along with a variety of theater and visual arts courses. Last year the Washburn Miller Voices choral ensemble worked with composer-in-residence Diana Syre Valdés through the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! program.

Nancy Lee

Director Nancy Lee was hired as part of the fresh start initiative. Before coming to Washburn she spent eight years at Minneapolis-Southwest High School. Other teaching experiences include Villa Victoria Academy in Trenton, NJ; Milwaukee Public Schools, WI; and Prior Lake High School, MN. Nancy received her bachelor's degree from Luther College and will finish a master of music education from Boston University this spring. Her choirs have performed at the regional MENC conference and Minnesota Opera's "Viva Verdi" concert, and have toured Chicago, Nashville, Boston and New York. Since 2007, she has taught the secondary choral methods course at St. Olaf College. She sits on the Hennepin Theatre Trust's SpotLight advisory committee and serves on numerous committees with Minneapolis Public Schools.



vocalessence

Philip Brunelle, Artistic Director

**Grab your passport...
It's time to join
Philip Brunelle
and VocalEssence
for another year
of musical adventures!**

The Gift of Fire

October 9, 2011 • Orchestra Hall

North Star Tour: Homecoming Concert

November 6, 2011 • The Fitzgerald Theater

Welcome Christmas

December 3, 4, 9, 10 & 11, 2011

Edina, Minneapolis, Apple Valley & Stillwater

WITNESS: In the Spirit of Being

February 19, 2012 • Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Música de México

March 9 & 10, 2012 • Ted Mann Concert Hall

Brits & Brass

April 13, 2012 • Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis

**Chorus America Conference:
Opening Gala Concert**

June 13, 2012 • Orchestra Hall

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vocalessence WITNESS

The WITNESS School Program

The WITNESS School Program is an exciting opportunity for students and teachers to learn more about the past and present contributions African Americans have made to the fine arts. The 2010-2011 WITNESS School Program has explored the impact and influence spirituals have had on American culture. The program has three components: Artist Workshops, Teacher Resources, and Young People's Concerts.

WITNESS Artist Workshops

Our WITNESS partner schools host two visits from a WITNESS Teaching Artist who interacts with students for a 50-minute class period. This year, the Teaching Artists have explored an artistic discipline using the American Spiritual as a framework. Depending on the artist, workshop activities may include composing a song; expressing a poem through movement; or painting a mural about hope and courage. VocalEssence provides workshops free of charge to all partner schools.

Teacher Resources

Participating teachers attend a half-day orientation seminar, which includes an introduction to the VocalEssence WITNESS School Program, an overview of the VocalEssence Teacher Resource Guide, the opportunity to engage with WITNESS Teaching Artists and strategies on incorporating WITNESS materials in the school curricula.

WITNESS Young People's Concerts

Three 50-minute concerts designed to engage students in the music of American Spirituals occurred for over 5000 students March 2 and 3. Special Guest Dr. André Thomas led the VocalEssence chorus and special guest choirs in singing what some have called "America's greatest art form."

For more information, contact Kimberly Meisten at kmeisten@vocalessence.org or 612-547-1456.

WITNESS Artist Workshops and IFP-MN Partnership

This year, VocalEssence embarked on an exciting partnership with IFP-Minnesota to produce a video about the WITNESS School Program and Young People's Concerts. In February and March 2011, Washburn High School students filmed three select artist school workshops, choir rehearsals, and the Young People's Concert on March 2nd. Many of these students are also performing on the concert, which gives them the unique perspective of being a performer as well as a filmmaker in the project. The resulting video will be available through the VocalEssence website at www.vocalessence.org.

These are photographs from the filming at St. Helena Catholic School in Minneapolis, where Teaching Artists T. Mychael Rambo and Anita Ruth worked with an eighth grade music class. During their visits, T. Mychael and Anita explored the heart of the African American spirituals that gave birth to the great river of American popular music. After experiencing the connective flow of these genres, students created and recorded their own songs in tribute to the enslaved Africans and their fight for freedom.

We are grateful to Deacon Warner, Youth Coordinator at IFP-MN and Nancy Lee, Choir Director of Washburn High School for their work on this project, and as well as the following participating student filmmakers from Washburn High School:

Mikala Ferguson
Miranda Harincar
Tianna Jones
Patricia Thao
Chris Todd
Dre Ransom



PHOTOS: STEPHEN MATUREN



**St. Helena Catholic School
in Minneapolis with
WITNESS Teaching Artists
T. Mychael Rambo and
Anita Ruth**



2010-2011 WITNESS Teaching Artists

Ta-coumba Aiken: Visual Artist



- Applies his artistry to public projects including murals in public spaces, tiles adorning a fireplace in the Minneapolis Central Library and an installation at the Chicago and Lake Metro Transit Station.
- Has created set designs for theaters in Minnesota and California.
- Serves on boards for Minneapolis Arts Commission and Intermedia Arts and advisor to cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

Timothy Berry: Vocalist, Composer, Percussionist



- Eclectic performances include his Afro-Latin band, Soul Drums, Grammy Award Winner Larnelle Harris, Leigh Morris Chorale, Minnesota State University Repertory Dance Theater and Robert Robinson.
- 2009 Essentially Choral Competition winner for emerging American Composers sponsored by VocalEssence and the American Composers Forum.

- Teaches vocal and classroom music and High School Kantorei Chorus in Hopkins School District.

Patricia Brown: Dance Instructor, Choreographer



- African-based movement styles.
- Schools (K-12), organizations and theater companies including: Pillsbury House, Penumbra, Stepping Stone, Children's, and In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatres.
- Teaches at Macalester College and the University of Minnesota where she was awarded the 2004 College of Continuing Education Distinguished Teaching Award and the 2007

Century Council Diverse Community Award.

Ginger Commodore: Singer, Songwriter, Actress



- Has sung with The Sounds of Blackness, Twin Cities Gospel Ensemble, the JD Steele Singers, Women Who Cook, and Moore by Four.
- Acting/singing credits include *Death In The Family* (Minnesota Opera), *Black Nativity* (Penumbra), *Black Belts* (Mixed Blood), *Stamping, Shouting & Singing Home* (Children's Theatre Company), and *Smokey Joe's Cafe* (Hey City Theatre).

Beverly Cottman: Storyteller, Performance Artist



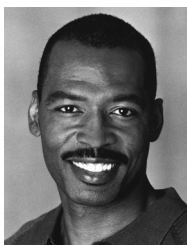
- Known as "Auntie Beverly," she uses storytelling and other artistic disciplines to educate and inspire audiences about history, culture and heritage.
- Combines tales of the African Diaspora with participatory activities to impart knowledge, explore cultural history and teach positive values.

Danielle Daniel: Storyteller, Writer



- Uses storytelling to help students build reading and critical thinking skills, enhance writing, stimulate creativity and imagination and to teach character education.
- 19 years of classroom experience.
- Author of the children's book *The Ghost of Old Man Willie*.
- Often accompanied by guitarist Alphonse Bolden.

Kelechi Jaavaid: Writer, Poet, Comic



- Worked in the Minneapolis Public Schools as an educator, mentor and tutor.
- Has performed as a poet, comic and spoken word artist for the National Association of Black Journalists, First Avenue, Acadia Theater, Acme Comedy Club and various comedy venues.
- He has also performed poetry in Ghana, West Africa.

Rose McGee, M.Ed: Storyteller, Poet



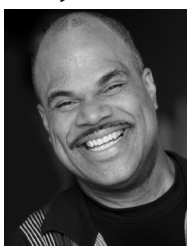
- Storyteller, poet and playwright who authored *Kumbayah...The Juneteenth Story*.
- Featured in national and local TV and print ads as model and actor.
- Owns Deep Roots Gourmet Desserts.
- B.S., Lane College in Jackson, TN; Master's of Education Degree with Specialization in Creative Arts in Learning, Lesley University, Cambridge, MA.

Louis Porter II: Memoirist, Poet, Journalist



- Has performed with several theater companies and conducted workshops and classes in a variety of settings from elementary school through college age.
- His short story "Reminders" won Ebony Magazine's Gertrude Johnson Williams Literary Award.
- Awarded a fellowship to attend "American Literary History in a New Key" in Salzburg, Austria.

T. Mychael Rambo: Musician



- Emmy Award winning actor, vocalist and arts educator.
- Affiliate Professor, Theatre Arts and Dance Department at the University of Minnesota.
- Artist in residence in theatre, creative dramatic and creative writing.
- Dedicated arts activist, volunteer and community organizer.
- Recipient of the Ordway's 2010 Sally Award in

Arts Education and 2010 Minnesota Black Music Award.

Anita Ruth: Musician



- Co-presents with T. Mychael Rambo.
- Directed music for over 200 shows in the Twin Cities Area.
- 8 years at Children's Theater Company in both theatrical and educational capacities.

Roxane Wallace-Patterson: Dancer, Choreographer



- BA in Philosophy with Ethnic Studies minor, University of California at Berkeley.
- 2004 named "Best Dancer" by City Pages.
- 2006 wrote, choreographed, directed and produced "Evolution of a Soul Sista."
- 2007 "REvolutionary Soul Sistas" presented by Red Eye Theater.
- 2008 named a McKnight Fellow in Dance.

2010-2011 WITNESS Partner Schools

Alice Smith Elementary	Partnership Academy
Anoka Middle School	Pilgrim Lutheran School
Bancroft Elementary	PYC Arts & Technology High School
Birch Grove Elementary	Ramsey International School
Blessed Trinity Catholic School	Richfield High School
Boys Totem Town	Rockford Elementary
Brooklyn Center High School	Sanford Middle School
Carondelet Catholic School	Sheridan Arts Magnet
Diamond Path Elementary	St. Helena Catholic School
Evergreen Park Elementary School	St. John's Catholic School
FAIR School Crystal	St. Mark's Catholic School
FAIR School Downtown	St. Peter Claver Catholic School
Franklin Music Magnet	St. Peter's Catholic School
Glen Lake Elementary	Stonebridge Community School
Hancock-Hamline Elementary	Trinity School at River Ridge
Highland Elementary	Twin Cities Academy
Jenny Lind Elementary	Valley View Elementary
Lake Harriet Upper Campus	WISE Charter School
Lincoln Elementary School for the Arts	World Cultures School
L. H. Tanglen Elementary School	
Lyndale Community School	
Lynwood Monroe A+ Elementary	
Maplewood Middle School	
Nativity of Our Lord School	
North Park Elementary	
Northern Lights Community School	

In Memory of Joe Carter (1949-2006)

As WITNESS focuses on the legacy of spirituals, VocalEssence would like to recognize Joe Carter, celebrated Minnesota performer, educator, and traveling humanitarian who took the African American spiritual to audiences around the world, from Novosibirsk to Nigeria. WITNESS Teaching Artist Louis Porter II provides the following tribute:



Grateful

Joe
we still hear
your voice
booming, brave and beautiful
singing spirituals across the globe
on the grandest stages of the land
that was wonderful
of course
but perhaps even grander
was the way the children
listened when you sang and
when you talked about the
spirituals you loved so much
as you gave them
a forgotten history
filled in the gaps
made them
see/feel/understand
later, in an interview
you helped the so-called
grown-ups
understand, too
you said it so they could
get it
of slaves you said:
"in the midst of all of the most horrible pain,
some of these powerful individuals lived
transcendent, shining lives"
and more people began to
get it
if they still didn't
get it
you let forth that
voice and we all understood
and were
blessed

—Louis Porter II

Special Thanks

Anton Armstrong
Augsburg College
Bruce Becker
John Birge, Minnesota Public Radio
Dennis Blubaugh, Musical Resources
Education Advisory Committee
 Rob Estrine
 Debbie Hagberg
 Della Harr
 Teri Larson
Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church
 James Burroughs
 Rose McGee
 Kevin Middlebrook
 Sanford Moore
 Rev. Dwight Seawood
General Mills
 Susan J. Crockett, Ph.D.
 Sandy Stelflug
Hastings High School
 Mike Johnson
 Lin Warren
Bob Hulteen, Metro Lutheran
Lorenz Corporation
 Kris Kopf
 Geoff Lorenz
 Larry Pugh
 Jared Wolfgang
Rohan Preston, StarTribune
Keith Timmons, Doubletree Hotel
Unisys
 Judy K. Bornetun
 Dan Browning
Deacon Warner, IFP-MN
Washburn High School
 Nancy Lee
 Carol Markham-Cousins
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Roberta Whittington, Hinshaw Music

Thanks for special support of WITNESS

Charles Denny
Janice Marturano & Peter Thompson
Walt McCarthy & Clara Ueland
Ben Manning

VocalEssence presents fifth annual "Reatha Clark King Award" to Sharon Sayles Belton

The Reatha Clark King Award for Excellence and Youth Motivation through the Cultural Arts was developed by VocalEssence to honor those who provide the resources to help organizations come closer to their vision, and those who are in the field empowering youth through direct contact, making a way for young people to be as successful as they can be.



At today's concert, **Sharon Sayles Belton** (pictured) will be honored with the Reatha Clark King Award. Artist Ta-Coumba Aiken has created a one-of-a-kind painting which will be presented to her as a memento of the award.

Sharon Sayles Belton's career has been forged on a lifetime dedicated to public service and creating public-private opportunities. In 1993, Sayles Belton was the first African American and the first woman to be elected mayor of Minneapolis in the city's 140-year history. She is a senior fellow at the Hubert Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota and is a nationally recognized expert on public safety, neighborhood livability and economic development. She is currently vice president of Community Relations and Government Affairs for Thomson Reuters, where she focuses on key issues that impact the legal businesses of Thomson Reuters as well as its customers and employees.

"We recognize Sharon Sayles Belton for her work with neighborhood revitalization. Her work as co-founder of the Harriet Tubman Shelter for Battered Women and the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault is invaluable. In addition, she was instrumental in getting the City of Minneapolis to support the World Choral Symposium held here in 2002. We were especially grateful to have had her serve on the board of VocalEssence from 2002 to 2008," said VocalEssence Artistic Director Philip Brunelle.

Past winners of the Reatha Clark King Award for Excellence and Youth Motivation through the Cultural Arts are **Ossie Brooks James**, principal of Lyndale Community School in Minneapolis; **Patricia Harvey**, former superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools; Minnesota Supreme Court Justice **Alan C. Page** and **Diane Sims Page**, co-founders of the Page Education Foundation; and **Laysha Ward**, President of Community Relations and the Target Foundation.

VocalEssence Chorus

Soprano

AnnaLisa Anderson
Barbara Anderson
Erin Anhut
Mary Baremore
Sarah L. Bassett
Dana Brinton
Rachel Daddio
Judy Drobeck
Kaia Ellis
Karen Esbjornson
Joanna Rinn Fulton
Kristina M. Guiffre
Elizabeth Jefferson
Sharanya Johnson
Jan Kilton
Stacey Kilton
Kartra Kohl
Merilu Narum
Sarah Jane Nichols
Mary Palazzolo-Rudquist
Christina Pederson
Rebecca Poppke
Ann M. Sather
Allison Schulz
Sandra Shallcross

Kate Speer
LeAnn Stein
Annika Lister Stroope
Jean Thompson
Jennifer Vickerman
Jennifer E. Wallis
Sharon Williams

Alto

Jo Michelle Beld
Shannon Berns
Anne-Marie Black
Jessica Brooks
Patty Campbell
Sarah Fincham
Elizabeth M. Foss
Anne K. Gleeman
Whitney Hanson
Dee Hein
Kirkja Janson
Jennifer Kisner
Siri Kristenson
Heather McDougall
Amreitha R. Miller
Rebecca Modert
Kristi Mueller

Laura J. Nelson
Jamie Ohrt
Anne Pionkowski
Brandee Polson
Andrea Roeger
Diane Schroeder
Lily Vasquez
Elizabeth Vogel
Anna Wieser

Tenor

Steve Aggergaard
Scott Berger
Rick Cedergren
Lloyd Clausen
Gustav Gedatus
Tim Griffin
Kevin Hansen
Ross Janke
Phillip Livers
R. Craig Shulstad
Bryan Oliver Smith
Daniel V. Sola
Matthew Tollefsrud
Tor Tuseth

Bass

Steven Blank
Cameron Boman
Kevin Borgendale
Phil Davis
Elwyn A. Fraser Jr.
Andrew Gaylord
Reid Henderson
John R. Henrich
Michael Knoll
Benjamin Kucera
Philip Lowry
Milo Oien-Rochat
David Olson
Jonathan Pinkerton
Steve Rosas
Brian D. Ruhl
Jorge L. Salvatierra
William B. Smale
Christopher Thompson
Michael Winikoff

The St. Olaf Choir

Anton Armstrong, conductor
B.J. Johnson, manager

SOPRANO I

Kathryn Baber, Phoenix, Ariz.
Susan Boyle, Marquette, Mich.
Maggie Burk, Lawrence, Kan.
Kata Calahan, Edina, Minn.
Anna Christofaro, Plymouth, Minn.
Rachel Dahlen, Northfield, Minn.
Annie Deering, University Place, Wash.
Heather Eikenbary, Waupaca, Wis.
Erin Thiesen, Lake City, Iowa
Marin Werdahl, Chaska, Minn.

SOPRANO II

Stephanie Abbas, Worthing, S.D.
Katie Burk, Lawrence, Kan.
Iselin Donaldson, Northfield, Minn.
Meg Granum, Athens, Ga.
*Katelyn Larson, Stillwater, Minn.
Elizabeth Rollins, Denver, Colo.
Anna Shevik, White Bear Lake, Minn.
Lynnette Simpson, Louisville, Ky.
Kate Swee, Oakland, Calif.
Coraine Tate, Columbus, Ga.

ALTO I

Jessica Ballard, Los Angeles, Calif.
Cassandra Bogh, Coralville, Iowa
Kira Fenstermacher, Dayton, Ohio
Johanna Hilfiker, Holtville, Calif.
Katharine Jenks, Greenlawn, N.Y.
*Elizabeth Kerstein,
Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.
Laura Kyle, St. Paul, Minn.
Kristin Sandness, Export, Pa.
Becca Tobin, Greenfield, Minn.
Sara Ziegmeier, Rothschild, Wis.

ALTO II

Amanda Balgaard, St. Louis Park, Minn.
Maren Beckman, Shorewood, Minn.
Caitlin Block, Appleton, Wis.
Sarah Dean, Flower Mound, Texas
Kelsey Fahy, Gig Harbor, Wash.
Karen Hopper, Longmont, Colo.
Siri Jorstad, Golden Valley, Minn.
Jenny LaRoy, Minnetonka, Minn.
Eliza Snortland, Fargo, N.D.

TENOR I

Riley Bruce, Wichita, Kan.
Phinehas Bynum, Salt Lake City, Utah
Gus Connelly, New Brighton, Minn.
Nathan Dougherty, Lakewood, Colo.
Devin Hair, Prosper, Texas

*Joseph Kemper, Portland, Ore.
James Ribe, West Chicago, Ill.
Bryan Wells, Cambridge, Minn.

TENOR II

Danny Dahlquist, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Russell Draeger, Owatonna, Minn.
Sam Engelsjerd, Sartell, Minn.
Ben Henschel, Minnetonka, Minn.
Aaron Holmgren, Willmar, Minn.
Will Mclean, Duluth, Minn.
Zachary J. Schwalbach, Hudson, Wis.
Martin Shedd, Ashburnham, Mass.

BASS I

Scott Hansen, Lee's Summit, Mo.
Paul Henderson, Glenview, Ill.
Jeremy Krahn, Manitoba, Canada
James Leavell, St. Cloud, Minn.
Cody Miller, Fairview, N.C.
Devin Orchard, Hastings, Minn.
Zachary Rygiel, Largo, Fla.
*Stanford Scriven, Beaverton, Ore.
Khashiar Shahbazi, Union, Ohio

BASS II

Jordan Boucher, Overland Park, Kan.
Andrew Bourgoin, Conway, Ark.
Timothy Brendler, Seaside Park, N.J.
Mark Donlin, Andover, Minn.

Caleb Eboch, Fairfax, Va.
Will Esch, Stillwater, Minn.
Isaac Lewis-O'Connor,
Lawrence, Kan.
Ian McPherson, Westminster, Colo.
Chris Mode, Edina, Minn.
Benjamin Simmons, Sheboygan, Wis.
Samuel Willodson, Mankato, Minn.

**Denotes section leader*

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VocalEssence

In 2010-2011 VocalEssence celebrates its 42nd season as a unique choral music organization, distinguished by its innovative exploration of music for voices and instruments. Every year, VocalEssence presents an engaging collection of concerts featuring the 130-voice VocalEssence Chorus, the 32-voice Ensemble Singers, guest soloists, and instrumentalists. The organization has enjoyed tremendous success with world, United States, and Midwest premieres; famous guest artists; commissions of new works; and a reputation for surprise.

In addition to championing lesser-known works of the past, VocalEssence has an unwavering commitment to today's composers, resulting in more than 130 world premieres. The organization has received the ASCAP/Chorus America Award for adventurous programming of contemporary music an unprecedented five times. VocalEssence 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.

Last fall, VocalEssence released a new Christmas CD, *Behold This Heavenly Night*, on the Clarion label. Previous Clarion releases include *The Songs We Sang — Favorite American Folksongs* and the world premiere recording of *The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass*. VocalEssence has also recorded **The WITNESS Collection**, a series of four compact discs of music by African American composers and artists. The Chorus & Ensemble Singers are featured on three CDs with Garrison Keillor: *Over the River & Through the Woods*; *Hymn to Potatoes (and other choral masterpieces from A Prairie Home Companion)*; and their newest concert recording, *Gratitude, Gravy & Garrison*.

VocalEssence was founded in 1969 as the Plymouth Music Series, an arts outreach program of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis. In the very first season, Aaron Copland came to conduct a program of his own choral music—the first time he had ever been asked to do so! In May of 2002, the organization changed its name to VocalEssence, recognizing its status as one of the nation's most innovative ensembles and capturing the essence of its mission to explore music for the human voice, from the spoken word to choral singing.

VocalEssence Chorus

The VocalEssence Chorus is an exceptional group of talented, committed singers from many walks of life: doctors, lawyers, nurses, educators, homemakers, business people, and others. Most have college level or higher training in classical music and voice. Chorus auditions are held every spring, and returning members of the Chorus re-audition every two years.



Philip Brunelle

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 a variety of music, he works enthusiastically—and tirelessly—to expand audiences for rarely heard works of the past as well as worthwhile music of the present. His conducting engagements have taken him across the United States, South America and Europe. Recently he has conducted the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic and the Berkshire Choral Festival.

Over the past decade Philip has been deeply involved with the International Federation of Choral Music (IFCM). He served as president of the Sixth World Symposium on Choral Music, held in Minneapolis (2002), on the Artistic Committee for the Eighth Symposium, held in Denmark (2008), and is currently active in planning the Ninth Symposium, to be held in Argentina in 2011. In 2009 he was elected Vice President/Treasurer of the IFCM Board.

In 2006, Philip served as artistic director for the NEA initiative, *American Masterpieces: Choral Music*. He serves on the boards of Chorus America and Musica, and previously served on the St. Olaf College Board of Regents. He is also in his 42nd year as Organist-Choirmaster at Plymouth Congregational Church.

Among his many awards are honorary doctorates from St. Olaf College, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. John's University and United Theological Seminary. Chorus America honored Philip with its most prestigious award, the Michael Korn Founder's Award for Development of the Choral Art, and he has also been recognized with the F. Melius Christiansen Lifetime Achievement Award by the Minnesota chapter of the American Choral Directors Association, its highest honor. In December 2005, Philip was invested as an Honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire in recognition for his service as an "ambassador for the United Kingdom within the music world."

The American Composers Forum named Philip Brunelle "2007 Champion of New Music" and in December 2007 he was invested as a Commander of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit for his promotion

of Norwegian music in the United States. In January 2010, Philip was honored with a "Local Legend" award at the 20th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Breakfast.



Sigrid Johnson

As the associate conductor of VocalEssence, Sigrid Johnson provides invaluable input

on repertoire decisions, choral blend and balance, and in the audition process. Her unique ways of working to achieve excellence in choral blend and intonation have garnered her great praise.

Sigrid is a member of the voice and choral faculty of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and the conductor of the Manitou Singers, St. Olaf's 100-voice first-year women's chorus. Sigrid Johnson maintains an active schedule as a guest conductor and clinician at choral festivals, workshops and all-state music festivals across the country. She is known internationally for her work with musicians at all levels, having conducted workshops in Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland. In August 2008, she was one of the featured lecturers for the Eighth World Symposium

on Choral Music in Copenhagen; in 2011, she will be featured in the Ninth World Symposium to be held in Argentina.


Sigrid is active in the American Choral Director's Association, the Music Educator's National Conference, the International Federation for Choral Music, and Chorus America.




Charles Kemper

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.



The Lyra
BAROQUE ORCHESTRA



Jacques Ogg
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

2010-2011 26th Season Concerts in the Twin Cities

Saturday, September 18, 2010
Saturday, October 30, 2010
Saturday, December 4, 2010
Saturday, February 12, 2011
Friday, April 15, 2011

8:00 P.M. • Sundin Hall • Hamline University • St. Paul

For tickets/info: www.lyrabaroque.org
info@lyrabaroque.org

Donor Spotlight: Jo Beld, Chorus Member, Singer Liaison to the VocalEssence Board



"My husband and I make it a top priority to contribute to VocalEssence. The scope of new work every year, the consistent innovation through the years that Philip Brunelle brings to VocalEssence, and the extensive involvement in schools make it unique among all other arts groups."
—Jo Beld

A life-long choral singer has a treasure of musical memories. But for Jo Beld it is the special period in her life with VocalEssence that is filled with not only the fondest remembrances but also with the powerful emotional impacts that VocalEssence has on all those that it has touched. A singer since

2002, Beld today also serves as the Chorus Representative on its Board of Directors.

Through her active participation in both the chorus's musical brilliance and organizational governance, she has seen VocalEssence live up to its mission at many levels. But it's "the relational power" of this prominent Twin Cities arts organization that ultimately inspires her, even though she can happily recall many of her most favorite pieces through the years, from the 2004 program featuring African-American composer Undine Smith Moore to Handel's oratorio *Israel in Egypt*, performed with The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

"Every choir strives to have a relational experience with its audience, but VocalEssence really works to engage and connect all the time with everyone involved," she reflects. "The chorus members strive to connect with both their conductor and the music — and sometimes you can even connect with the composer back in time. As singers we try to connect with each other through singing, and as individuals we can even connect with God through the choral experience."

"But then you have this further engagement in the broader community," she adds. "The educational component — like the more recent ¡Cantaré! events in the spring of 2010 — really speaks to the heart of what VocalEssence does."

VocalEssence reaches more than 7,000 students, adults and seniors each year through its education programs and outreach activities. WITNESS celebrated its 20th year in 2010, and ¡Cantaré!, its newest initiative, had a successful second year. Beld, along with the entire chorus, performed alongside these choirs at the ¡Cantaré! Community Concert last May at the Basilica of Saint Mary. "It was an amazing experience," said Beld. "We connected with not only local students, but also with Mexican music and culture."

Like many who sing in the internationally renowned group, Beld began choral singing in grade school and high school. Her church choir, "where you got to sing with and learn from the adults," was also another big influence in her ongoing engagement with choral music. She describes choral music in general as a wonderful vehicle "to help one feel, reflect and connect with others." It is no wonder — or maybe it is — that she devotes more than 20 hours each month to the organization as both a singer and a board member, and she also makes a generous financial contribution to sustaining VocalEssence. It is a time and monetary commitment that she — and her spouse Tim Delmont, a Political Science professor at St. Olaf — eagerly make despite the sacrifices required to do both.

"My husband and I make it a top priority to contribute to VocalEssence," Beld says, "even with all the other wonderful organizations this arts-rich area provides. The scope of new work every year and the consistent innovation through the years that Philip Brunelle brings to VocalEssence make it unique among all these other arts groups. And when you look at the extensive involvement in schools, teaching the intrinsic value of music — and the number of people it touches annually — it readily stands apart from the rest."

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 \$2.3 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.

Mrs. Fred C. Andersen*
Athwin Foundation
Carol A. Barnett
Alice Baver*
Ronald & Joyce Beauchane
Warren & Donna Beck
Judson Bemis Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation
Judy Blaseg & John Engelen
Charlie Boone & Carol Heen
William & Margee Bracken
David Brink
Lucile Brink
Wayne & Marilyn Brock
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