Vox Nova ∞ CHORALE ∞

A CHORAL PILGRIMAGE

Vicki Peters, Artistic Director and Conductor

Friday, August 7, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. St. Michael's Lutheran Church Roseville, MN

Sunday, August 9, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. St. Mary's Chapel at St. Paul Seminary St. Paul, MN

Free concerts-contributions welcome

www.voxnovachorale.org

Welcome from the Artistic Director

Join us on a brief historical walk through choral music through the ages! The members of Vox Nova Chorale and I are excited to present to you a program of some of our favorite choral music, touching on each musical period from Medieval to Modern, including new music presented by three emerging regional composers. You will hear how Western choral music has evolved from simple chant and plainsong into often more complex harmonies and textures.

The mission of Vox Nova Chorale is to champion emerging composers, conductors, and singers, giving them an opportunity to work with outstanding choral



clinicians. We were fortunate to have Dr. Matthew Culloton work with the conductors, Jocelyn Hagen with the composers, and Axel Theimer and Tesfa Wondemagegnehu with the entire choir. The clinicians held private lessons, rehearsed with the choir, and offered valuable insight to hone the skills of the musicians.

This summer we are proud to have singers from eight regional colleges, including Gustavus Adolphus, Century College, Bethany Lutheran, St. Olaf, Luther, Concordia, Mankato State, and Augustana. We are grateful for our experienced singers, who mentor in their sections. Our Board consists of young people learning fundraising, marketing, and arts administration.

In the fall of 2014, the Chorale was honored to be featured on a Minnesota Public Radio Regional Spotlight. This year we will be featured on MPR's *Taste of the Holidays* album with a song by one of our former composer members, Connor Koppin. We always strive for excellence, performing at the highest degree of artistry that enriches both our lives and, we hope, yours.

Please join us in furthering this goal—to give all types of choral musicians wonderful learning opportunities—with a financial gift of any amount. Your generosity allows our unique organization to continue to serve our community.

Enjoy!

Vicki Vincelli Peters Artistic Director & Conductor

A Choral Pilgrimage

Medieval, 600-1450 CE Adoro te devote

Renaissance, 1450-1600 Il est bel et bon Ascendit Deus

Baroque, 1600-1750 Cum Sancto Spiritu from *Gloria*

Classical, 1750-1820 Ave Verum Corpus, K. 618 Natalia Romero, conductor

Romantic, 1820-1900 Богородице Дѣво (Rejoice, O Virgin) from All Night Vigil, Op. 37

> O Heiland, reiß die Himmel auf, Op. 74 (O Savior Throw the Heavens Wide) Philip Rossin, conductor

Unknown Text: St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74)

Pierre Passereau (1509-47) Jacobus Gallus (1550-91)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

W.A. Mozart (1756-91)

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

Intermission

| 20 th Century | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Hodie Christus Natus Est From <i>Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël</i> Michael Johnson, conductor | Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) |
| Psalm 121 from <i>Requiem</i> Michael Johnson, Philip Rossin, soloists | Herbert Howells (1892-1983) |
| 21 st Century | |
| Sure On This Shining Night from Nocturnes | Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943) |
| Sleep | Eric Whitacre (b. 1970) |
| Afternoon on a Hill | Stephen Paulus (1949-2014) |
| New Compositions | |
| What Is This Fragrance | arr. Brian Steele (b. 1951) |
| Be Still | Michael Atwood (b. 1990) |
| Amy Erlandson, soloist | |
| Over My Head | arr. Scott Senko (b. 1993) |
| Natalia Romero, Elsa Swanson, soloists | × / |

Adoro te devote (Sung in Latin)

Unknown, Text: St. Thomas Aquinas The plainsong tradition represents some of the earliest church music (as well as the earliest western choral music). Plainsong is monophonic, consisting of a single, unaccompanied melodic line. Its rhythm is generally freer than the metered rhythm of later Western music. The exact origin of the chant melody of "Adoro Te Devote" is unknown. However, the text to this hymn of thanksgiving and adoration belongs to St. Thomas Aquinas, written in 1264. It is brighter and lighter than many chants with a smooth and lyrical line.

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas, Quæ sub his figuris vere latitas; Tibi se cor meum totum subjicit, Quia te contemplans totum deficit.

Visus, tactus, gustus in te fallitur, Sed auditu solo tuto creditur. Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius; Nil hoc verbo veritátis verius.

O memoriale mortis Domini! Panis vivus, vitam præstans homini! Præsta meæ menti de te vívere, Et te illi semper dulce sapere.

Pie Pelicane, Jesu Domine, Me immundum munda tuo sanguine Cujus una stilla salvum facere Totum mundum quit ab omni scelere.

Jesu, quem velatum nunc aspicio, Oro, fiat illud quod tam sitio: Ut te revelata cernens facie, Visu sim beátus tuæ gloriæ. Amen

I devoutly adore you, O hidden God, Truly hidden beneath these appearances. My whole heart submits to you, And in contemplating you, It surrenders itself completely.

Sight, touch, taste are all deceived In their judgment of you, But hearing suffices firmly to believe. I believe all that the Son of God has spoken; There is nothing truer than this word of truth.

O memorial of our Lord's death! Living bread that gives life to man, Grant my soul to live on you, And always to savor your sweetness.

Lord Jesus, Good Pelican, wash me clean with your blood, One drop of which can free the entire world of all its sins.

Jesus, whom now I see hidden, I ask you to fulfill what I so desire: That on seeing you face to face, I may be happy in seeing your glory. Amen.

Il est bel et bon (Sung in French)

Pierre Passereau

Passereau's compositional output consists almost solely of Parisian chansons (madrigals). His chansons, of which "Il est bel et bon" is one, were of a lighter character and frequently employed onomatopoeic text painting such as the clucking chicken sounds made by the alto and bass voices at the end of the piece. Contrary to popular ideas about the strict chastity of all "old" music, Renaissance madrigals frequently contained earthy, sometimes vulgar themes. This particular song is about two gossiping women discussing their husbands.

| He is handsome and fine, my husband is, | He does the chores, |
|---|--|
| There were two gossiping women in the | He feeds the chickens |
| village, | And I take my pleasure. |
| Saying one to the other, do you have a good | Really you have to laugh |
| husband? | to hear the cries of the chicks and hens: |
| He doesn't scold me, or beat me either. | Co, co, co, co, da, little flirt, what's this? |

Ascendit Deus (Sung in Latin)

This late-Renaissance piece by Jacobus Gallus is notable for its lovely text painting. The opening gesture (on the text "God goes up on high with merry noise") features each voice part singing ascending lines followed by jubilant, soaring alleluias. In the second part of the piece and in reference to the text, the vocal lines imitate trumpets. The entire piece is thick with imitative polyphonic textures, common of the later Baroque period.

| Ascendit Deus in jubilatione, | God goes up on high with merry noise and |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Alleliua. | shouting, |
| Et Dominus in voce tubae. | Alleluia. |
| | And the Lord with the sound of trumpets. |

Cum Sancto Spiritu from *Gloria* (Sung in Latin)

This is the final movement from the most popular of three Gloria settings by Vivaldi usually sung with string orchestra. As with much late Italian Baroque music, the composition is made from a small number of basic repetitive gestures that are interlaid over each other in multiple repetitions. Vivaldi is recognized as one of the greatest Baroque composers, who influenced both Bach and Händel.

Cum Sancto Spiritu in Gloria Dei Patris. Amen. With the Holy Spirit In the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Ave Verum Corpus, K. 618 (Sung in Latin)

The Classical era saw a move away from the intense polyphony of the Baroque era in favor of lighter, cleaner textures. This lovely prayer setting (originally for chorus, strings, and organ) was one of Mozart's final compositions. It was composed during his writing of *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) less than six months before his death. The piece is interpreted in many ways, both thematically and compositionally, to foreshadow his solemn Requiem setting.

Ave, verum corpus natum de Maria Virgine vere passum immolatum in cruce pro homine. Cujus latus perforatum unda fluxit et sanguine

Esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine.

Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary, who having truly suffered, was sacrificed on the cross for mankind, whose pierced side flowed with water and blood:

May it be for us a foretaste in the trial of death.

Antonio Vivaldi

Jacobus Gallus

W. A. Mozart

Rejoice, O Virgin from *All Night Vigil*, Op. 37 (Sung in Slavonic) Sergei Rachmaninov This selection is the Slavonic version of the Ave Maria and is set as the sixth movement from Rachmaninov's setting of the *All-Night Vigil*. His setting of the liturgy has been compared to a setting of Tchaikovsky, which was composed over twenty years earlier, particularly in their respective uses of traditional chants. Tchaikovsky's setting is considered the ignition of an era of interest in Russian sacred music while Rachmaninov's composition is seen as the ultimate culmination. He is considered one of the last Russian Romanic-era composers.

| Bogoroditse Devo, | Virgin Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| raduysya, blagodatnaya Mariye, | thee: |
| Gospod's toboyu: | Blessed art thou among women, and blessed |
| Blagoslovenna Ty v zhenakh, | is the fruit of thy womb, |
| i blagosloven plod chreva Tvoyego, | For thou hast brought forth the Savior who |
| Yako Spasa rodila yesi dush nashikh. | redeemed our souls. |

O Savior Throw The Heavens Wide, Op. 74 (Sung in English) Johannes Brahms Brahms set the melody of this chorale as a theme and variation, originally published in 1666 by an unknown composer. He effectively uses multiple polyphonic textures to paint individual pictures for each verse of the chorale melody to evoke specific textual ideas. Brahms' intent was to express strong emotions—a definitive characteristic of the Romantic era—for example, with the use of the "sigh" motif in the Adagio section.

O Savior, throw the heavens wide; Come down with speed unto our side. Unbar the gates and let us in; Unbar what once was lock and pin.

As gentle dew from heaven, fall; Descend, O Lord, and cover all. Ye rainclouds, break, and torrents bring; Let Israel receive his king. O Earth, in flow'r be seen! Let hill and dale be ever green. O Earth, bring forth one blossom rare, A Savior, from the meadow fair.

Here suffer we a heavy doom, Before us yawns the cheerless tomb. Ah, come, lead us with steady hand From exile to our native land.

So let us all be thanking Thee, For Thou hast ever set us free. So let us praise Thee o'er and o'er, From this time on and for evermore. Amen.

INTERMISSION

Hodie Christus Natus Est from Quatre motets pour le temps de NoëlFrancis PoulencThe onset of the twentieth century represented a breakdown in many compositional conventions.Composers were, more or less, free to experiment with sounds however they saw fit. Thismovement from Motets displays many of Poulenc's signature compositional techniques. Poulenc wasRoom and a colorful harmonic language in his compositions.

Hodie Christus natus est: Hodie Salvator apparuit: Hodie in terra canunt Angeli, laetantur Archangeli Hodie exsultant justi, dicentes: Gloria in excelsis Deo. Alleluia. Today Christ is born: Today the Savior appeared: Today on Earth the Angels sing, Archangels rejoice: Today the righteous rejoice, saying: Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia.

Psalm 121 from Requiem

This movement from *Requiem* is thought to have been composed to mark the death of Howells' son in 1935. However, it was initially composed in 1932 and was intended to be premiered at King's College in Cambridge, England. He reused material from this mass for his *Hymnus Paradisi* (which served as an official memorial for his son). Howells kept the *Requiem* hidden before it was published in 1980, three years before his death. His overall style is free flowing, impassioned and impressionistic, which gives the music a visionary quality.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills; From whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord: Who hath made heav'n and earth. He will not suffer the foot to be moved: And he that keepeth the will not sleep. Behold, he that keepeth Israel: Shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord himself is thy keeper: He is thy defence upon the right hand; So that the sun shall not burn thee by day: Neither the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: Yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out And thy coming in: From this time forth and forever more.

Sure on This Shining Night from Nocturnes

Morten Lauridsen

Herbert Howells

Morten Lauridsen is a pillar of contemporary American choral music. He has written a number of compositions known for their memorable melodies and lush harmonies. This selection, the third of his three *Nocturnes*, is at times sensitive and introspective and at others soaring and uplifting. In 2007 he received the National Medal of Arts from the President in a White House ceremony, "for his composition of radiant choral works combining musical beauty, power, and spiritual depth that have thrilled audiences worldwide."

Sure on this shining night Of starmade shadows round, Kindness must watch for me this side the ground. The late year lies down the north, All is healed, all is health. High summer holds the earth. Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night I weep for wonder wandering far alone Of shadows on the stars.

Sleep

Eric Whitacre

Eric Whitacre's music came quickly into prominence around the turn of the 21st century, and is one of the most performed composers of our time. This particular composition was originally intended to be a setting of Robert Frost's "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening" and was premiered as such in Austin, Texas in 2000. Due to disputes over the copyright of the text, Whitacre was unable to publish the piece under that title. However, he was so fond of the work that he was compelled to reach out to his friend, poet Charles Anthony Silvestri, to write a new text mirroring the structure of the Frost poem. The result was "Sleep."

| The evening hangs beneath the moon, | If there are noises in the night, |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| A silver thread on darkened dune. | A frightening shadow, flickering light, |
| With closing eyes and resting head | Then I surrender unto sleep, |
| I know that sleep is coming soon. | Where clouds of dream give second sight, |
| Upon my pillow, safe in bed, | What dreams may come, both dark and deep, |
| A thousand pictures fill my head. | Of flying wings and soaring leap |
| I cannot sleep, my mind's a-flight; | As I surrender unto sleep, |
| And yet my limbs seem made of lead. | As I surrender unto sleep. |

Afternoon on a Hill

Stephen Paulus, music; Edna St. Vincent Millay, text Stephen Paulus was a Minnesotan composer who had a profound effect on the American music community for much of the late-20th Century and early 21st. In addition to being a prolific composer of opera, vocal, instrumental, and symphonic music, Paulus was a co-founder of the American Composers Forum, the largest organization for composers in the United States. Originally scored for chorus and harp, "Afternoon on a Hill" is an exhilarating piece with a flowing, energetic accompaniment and sharp, sparkling harmonies.

I will be the gladdest thing Under the sun! I will touch a hundred flowers And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds With quiet eyes, Watch the wind bow down the grass, And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show Up from the town, I will mark which must be mine, And then start down!

What Is This Fragrance

"What Is This Fragrance" has always been an attractive tune to me, the lilting melody that flows so easily. The text of this 17th-Century French carol is apt to evoke something of great importance and I try to bring the words to life with this setting. The first two verses ask the questions while the last verse provides the answer: starting with the women, and then the whole choir, making a final unified statement that embodies the Christmas story. - Steele

What is this fragrance softly stealing? Shepherds! It sets my heart a-stir! Never was sweetness so appealing Never were flow'rs of spring so fair! What is this fragrance softly stealing? Shepherds! It sets my heart a-stir! What is this Light around us streaming? Out of the dark with blinding ray, Purer than Star of Morning's seeming Showing our path as plain as day! What is this fragrance softly stealing? Shepherds! It sets my heart a-stir!

There, in a Manger with His Mother, Lieth our Saviour, Born today! Oh Come let us hasten to adore Him And there to Him our praises sing. In Bethlehem in lowly manger Lies our Redeemer Lord and King!

Michael Atwood

"Be Still" holds a special place in my heart as it was written in memory of my father, who, after battling kidney cancer for several years, passed away on August 9th, 2013. As I worked my way through the grieving process, the music acted as both an outlet and a guide. Throughout the work, the theme recurs as a means of self-soothing, grounding the emotions whenever feelings of doubt, sadness, bitterness, or anger arise. With the climax comes the realization that all things, both in heaven and on earth, are the product of God's plan, the "prime foundation." If you look beyond the initial helplessness, there is comfort in knowing the things that are out of your own control and giving them up to a higher power. Now, two years later, I find that the work moves me in a completely different way. Its poignancy is still sharply present, but it is the moments of joy in the work that I connect with the most, finding comfort in the nostalgia it provides. - Atwood

Be still, my soul, be still; The arms you bear are brittle, Earth and high heaven, fixt of old, Earth and high heaven are founded strong.

Think rather, call to thought, If now you grieve a little, The days when we had rest, O soul, For they were long.

Men loved unkindness then, But lightless in the quarry I slept and saw not; tears fell down, I did not mourn. Now, I muse for why and never find the reason, I pace the earth and drink the air and feel the sun.

Ah, look: High heaven and earth ail from the prime foundation; It is for but a season; Let us endure an hour...and see injustice done.

Be Still

arr. Brian Steele

Over My Head

arr. Scott Senko

"Over My Head" is a setting of an African American slave song born from their horrific and dehumanizing conditions. Slaves preserved their traditional music to ease their workload, communicate covertly, cry for justice, and affirm and assert their humanity. For me, this spiritual exemplifies the assertion of humanity. Stripped of all else, the two things that seem to remain are music and a hope for liberation, as in The Exodus. Even when the world is silent, I hear music in the air. There *must* be a God, somewhere. – Senko

Oh when the world is silent I hear music in the air. There must be a God somewhere.

And when I'm feeling lonely I hear music in the air. There must be a God somewhere. Over my head, I hear music in the air. Over my head, I hear music in the air. There must be a God somewhere.

But when I think of Jesus, I hear music in the air. There must be a God somewhere.

About the Chorale

Vox Nova Chorale is a non-profit summer choir based in St. Paul, Minnesota, founded in 2013. With the goal of encouraging educators, singers, and composers, the Chorale empowers and provides opportunity for musicians of diverse backgrounds to perform excellent choral music at the highest degree of artistry that enriches their lives and the community.

Learning and singing together are the goals of the 31 musicians joining the Chorale in its third season. The diverse musical and educational backgrounds of each member—from current undergraduate students to community and professional singers—creates an environment in which ideas converge into a shared expression of artistry. In this spirit, we are proud to feature 3 emerging composers and 3 student conductors to lead the Chorale in rehearsal and performance.

Vox Nova Chorale is regularly featured on Classical Minnesota Public Radio. In 2015, the Chorale was one of a few regional ensembles selected to be included on MPR's *Taste of the Holidays*, its annual holiday album distributed nationally.

Personnel

Soprano Amy Erlandson Kelsey Letourneau Natalia Romero Samantha Spalding Sarah Stevens Caroline Swanson Elsa Swanson Sarah Wiechmann Alto Christy Emanuelson Emily Hill Alexandra Nyman Joan O'Donnell Katrina Rohr Melani Schwartz Abby Wegner Suzanne Wiebusch Tenor Ben Dulak Kevin Fraley William Haugen Miller LaMotte Philip Rossin Scott Senko Benjamin Wegner Bass Mark Donlin Gabe Hanson Steven Heaton Michael Johnson Josh LaGrave Chris Paulson Peter Sepulveda Joe Turner

Vicki Peters, Artistic Director

Vicki Peters enjoys an active career of conducting, teaching, and singing. Vicki co-founded Vox Nova Chorale in 2013 with the idea of bringing emerging choral musicians together to collaborate and hone their skills with other excellent choral musicians. She directed The Summer Singers for eight summers, including appearances at the 2010 North Central ACDA and 2008 Minnesota State conventions. Vicki is a private voice teacher, was a project singer for the Dale Warland Singers, and currently is a singer and soloist for the professional choir, The Singers, under the direction of Dr. Matthew Culloton. In the summer she also sings in the Minnesota Beethoven Festival Chorale under the direction of Dale Warland. She has taught choral music at Fridley High School, and developed and led excellent church choirs, hand bell choirs, and orchestral groups at various churches for sixteen years. In addition, she was the assistant director for the Two Rivers Chorale under the direction of Bruce Phelps and the North High Alumni Choir under the direction of Carl Lipke, and a soloist on European tours with both directors.

Vicki graduated with a Vocal Music Education degree from St. Cloud State University receiving choral, vocal, and opera scholarships and Phi Kappa Phi membership, and is listed as an Outstanding Alumni of the music department. She studied voice, choir, and opera with Charles (Chuck) Peterson. Vicki is also a choral and vocal clinician and judges State Large Group and Solo/Ensemble contests, is a member of ACDA, and serves on the State High School League Contest Music Selection and Review Committee.

Composer & Conductor Biographies

Michael D. Atwood is a composer living in southern Minnesota. As a recent graduate from the music department at Minnesota State University - Mankato, he has taken advantage of the opportunity to study composition privately with Dr. David C. Dickau. Holding a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance, Michael currently teaches voice out of his private studio, and serves as Director of Music for his local church. He is currently in pursuit of a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting.

Michael Johnson is an active singer/director in the south metro, where he hangs out with his lovely wife, Kelsey, and his French bulldog, Dot. A Luther alum, Michael enjoys conducting the young men and women of the Farmington High School choral program! He looks forward to directing both the McGuire Middle School program in Lakeville and Twin Cities based choir, Painted Harmony. He feels honored to conduct and perform with such a fantastic choir as this and plans to celebrate after the concerts with a well-earned trip to the BWCA.

Natalia Romero is a recent graduate of St Olaf College, where she earned a Music Education degree. She pursued a passion for conducting and musical theater and has directed In the Heights, Big Fish, and the 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee at St Olaf. In the falls she begins teaching music and choir at Community of Peace Academy in St. Paul. Natalia is also serving as musical director for Shakopee High School's production of Camelot. This is her second year with Vox Nova and is very excited to conduct this year!

Philip Rossin is a recent graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN and left with a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Music Education. Philip is a tenor and has been singing with a few

choral ensembles and church programs since graduating. Some of these ensembles include Exultate, The Singers and the MN Beethoven Festival Singers. He has served as the assistant director for the Minnesota All-State Lutheran Choir for a number of years and has recently started teaching voice. Philip plans to further his education in the future and continue on a musical career path. In his free time he enjoys skateboarding and snowboarding, playing piano and spending time with family and friends.

Scott Senko is a recent graduate of Luther College where he studied composition with Brooke Joyce and voice with Andrew Whitfield. This is his third year singing with Vox Nova and he will begin singing with Magnum Chorum in the fall.

Brian Steele studied music at Indiana Wesleyan University and the University of Minnesota, and broadcasting at Brown Institute. A singer/songwriter, he has worked as a solo performer, a church soloist, as voice-over talent in commercial and industrial projects, on-air talent at Classical MPR, and recording artist with Augsburg, KJOS and MorningStar Publishers, the Montana Chorale, the Grammy Award-winning Oregon Bach Festival Choir, the Dale Warland Singers, and The Singers. When not singing, teaching voice, or dabbling in composition, Brian works as a remodeler focused on historic restoration.

Acknowledgements

St. Michael's Lutheran Church St. Mary's Chapel and St. Paul Seminary Matthew Culloton, Conductor Clinician Axel Theimer, Choral Clinician Jocelyn Hagen, Composer Mentor Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, Choral Clinician Brad Habersma, Performance Accompanist Steve Swanson, Rehearsal Accompanist Jan Gilbertson, Rehearsal Accompanist William Haugen, Program Scott Senko, Program Notes Our generous music lenders: Augsburg College House of Hope Presbyterian Church The Singers-Minnesota Choral Artists The Summer Singers

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Audition for 2016

Interested in conducting, having your music performed, and/or singing with us? Those interested in participating should e-mail a music resume to Vicki at vickipeters@voxnovachorale.org by **May 1**, **2016**. Compositions must be submitted in PDF format along with an MP3 or MIDI recording. Rehearsals are held Monday and Thursday nights, 7-10 p.m. at St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Roseville beginning in mid-June

Mission

Vox Nova Chorale exists to educate, empower, and provide opportunity for singers, emerging conductors, and composers, to collaborate and perform excellent choral music at the highest degree of artistry that enriches their lives and the community.

Contribute

We are grateful for your generous financial contributions, 100% of which supports Chorale operations such as securing rehearsal and concert venues, music, accompanists, clinicians, program printing, and more. You may use the envelope enclosed in this program to donate today, or mail your contribution to:

Vox Nova Chorale 1480 Myrtle Court Maplewood, MN 55119 Checks payable to Vox Nova Chorale

Vox Nova Chorale is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Contributions are taxdeductible to the extent allowed by law.

Grants funded by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund: "This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund."



