

The Quarter Note

June 2008

The Newsletter of the Nebraska Choral Arts Society (NCAS)

KALEIDOSCOPE

Announcing the 2008-2009 Concert Season

Similar and differing visual pieces come together for a beautiful, unique and choreographed display: a kaleidoscope. A choir is also a sum of its parts where each orchestrated interaction provides a one-of-a-kind experience to the listener and the participant. The chorus, like the kaleidoscope, is the vessel for the experience transporting the holder to new vistas.

October 7 ~ Fourth Annual Benefit Concert

Featuring all choirs of the Nebraska Choral Arts Society

A kaleidoscope brings elements together creating beauty. All of NCAS comes together for the true beauty of service in its fourth year of our season opening benefit concert. Come for a sneak preview of our season in a relaxed atmosphere. A freewill donation will be collected for this year's beneficiary, the Open Door Mission.

October 18 ~ Reflections

Featuring Masterworks, Bel Canto and CAST

Some kaleidoscopes reflect the world around, creating a portal to seeing in a new way. Using music from the era of Brahms, musicians will reflect on one another in using double piano for the Liebeslieder Waltzes and by uniquely expressing the period through English and German song.

December 12 & 13

Festival of Christmas Brass and Choral Music

Featuring all choirs of the Nebraska Choral Arts Society

This treasured holiday event celebrates the spectrum of our choirs again paired with the heralding sounds of the Omaha Brass Ensemble. NCAS will host its annual carol composition contest among area youth punctuating three concerts filled with new arrangements of Christmas favorites and audience sing-a-longs.

February 28 ~ Symmetry

Featuring Masterworks, Cantori and CAST

Kaleidoscopes compare aligned scenes and objects in ways not before seen. The complexity of the pipe organ, its hymn-like structure mirroring that of choral voices, provides this concert's focus. Dana Sloan will be featured on pipe organ.

March 14 ~ Illusions

Featuring the Nebraska Children's Chorus

Though utilizing the real environment, kaleidoscopes can take you to a place imagined. This concert's evocative music paints pictures in your mind, with the pure sound only children's voices can provide.

May 3

Beethoven 9th Symphony & Brahms Schicksalslied

Featuring Masterworks, Heartland Philharmonic Orchestra, and UNO University and Concert Choirs

Truly great music maximizes the qualities of its elements. Classical masters featured on this concert bring the best of orchestra, choir and soloists together, much like a kaleidoscope meshes beautifully those in its purview.

May 9 ~ Patterns

Featuring the Nebraska Children's Chorus & CAST

One can find consistency and repetition in a kaleidoscope's refractions. This family concert emphasizes the many patterns in music --- those melodic, rhythmic and of form.

*Tickets available for purchase in August.
With the exception of the Festival of Christmas
Brass and Choral Music costing \$15 per ticket,
tickets can be purchased in advance
at \$10 for adults and \$8 for youth.*

Bidding Farewell...

NCAS Says Goodbye to Dedicated Staff Members

Our 2007-2008 Season is coming to a close, and we have had a truly fantastic year. We have performed several outstanding concerts, gone on exciting tours around the country, and have kept the music alive for all of our 400+ members. The time has come, however, to close the book on this season and look ahead to the next. This season, we must also say goodbye to some members of our NCAS family.

...from Renée Spicka, Executive Director

I honestly can't believe I am leaving all of you—I don't think the reality has quite sunk in yet. Nancy and I used to joke that I would be with NCAS until I retire—in about 30 years! But, life is full of surprises, and I must move on.

I began my journey with the Nebraska Choral Arts Society eight years ago as a sophomore in college. I had been studying with Dr. Z. Randall Stroope at UNO, and he had mentioned to me that the Masterworks Choir was looking to add some young voices. A group of friends and I quickly joined—we would jump at any opportunity to sing! Little did I know it would lead to this. I soon realized what a fantastic group of people this was, got more and more involved with the choir, and before I know it I had been offered a part-time job within the organization. The rest is history! I have advanced as far as I could within this organization, and it has all been a blessing. The last five years have been amazing. I could not ask for a better group of people to work for. We have such amazing support from the numerous parents, many of which I have gotten to know personally. Our Board of Directors is comprised of Omaha individuals passionate about the arts and choral music, and I have been fortunate to meet and work with all of them. The conductors and accompanists who keep the music going are extremely talented – we are so lucky to have that level of expertise in Omaha.

I may be leaving, but my heart is and always will be with NCAS. I have so many great memories, from pulling all-nighters working on Voce to being a chaperone on tours with our amazing singers. I hope I will be lucky enough to find a similar organization up north – the music that we create and the friends I have made will remain with me, and I hope to see all of you again soon!

Renée Spicka, the Executive Director of NCAS, will be moving to Wisconsin at the end of June, where her husband has been offered a great opportunity. Jon Gathje, the Cantori Conductor, will be heading up to Luther College in Saint Paul to go to Seminary. Although we are very sad to see them go, we know that life has something else in store for them, and we wish them the best of luck!

...from Jon Gathje, Cantori Conductor

As I look back on the past year as the conductor of Cantori, many memories jump into my mind. I remember the first time I guest-conducted Cantori for a conducting clinic while Sharon Smith was still here. I remember the first time I heard Cantori and their wonderful music-making. As I leave for new adventures in my life, I will have a huge void left by these wonderful singers and the work they do to make great music. The kids made this worth everything. Their hard work and dedication encouraged me to work harder, and I know that they will continue on a successful path for years to come.

I look forward to seeing (and hearing!) many of you again in the future. Thank you and God bless!

...From behind the piano

NCAS is also saying goodbye to two wonderful accompanists this year. Amy Nunamaker, CAST accompanist, has been with NCAS for seven years—since CAST was reformed in 2001. She is extremely talented, and I know CAST and NCAS will miss her greatly. She does have two beautiful children at home, and is going to spend more time with family.

Kristi Treu, Ragazzi Accompanist, is also leaving us this season. She has played for the two Ragazzi Choirs for the last three years, and also has a daughter who sings in the choir. She is a very talented pianist and vocalist, and we wish her the best in her new endeavors.

Thank you both for all your hours of rehearsals, practicing, chaperoning on choir tours, and support of the choirs and NCAS as a whole. We were very lucky to have you work with us, and wish you the best!

Bel Canto Sightings...Beyond Borders...

Dr. Sean M. Burton, Bel Canto Conductor

This past spring has been very busy for the dedicated singers of Bel Canto. Following a whirlwind trip to Milwaukee, Wisconsin for an invited performance at the 61st National Biennial In-Service Conference of MENC: The National Association of Music Education on April 10th, Bel Canto performed the Pre-Concert for Anonymous 4 (an internationally acclaimed women's vocal quartet) at Omaha's Holland Performing Arts Center on April 11th. A couple weeks later, Bel Canto teamed up with NCAS' Masterworks adult chorus to present *Composers of the Americas* on April 26th. Soon thereafter, Bel Canto delighted in the revelry of NCAS' *American Pops!* concerts on May 17th. The next day, May 18th, Bel Canto embarked upon a journey to the distant land of Lincoln, Nebraska to present *Ruffles and Flourishes* with the Lincoln Civic Choir (a sixty-five voice adult community chorus similar to Masterworks) in downtown Lincoln's St. Paul United Methodist Church. In addition to singing an hour-long set of repertoire from this season, Bel Canto joined forces with Dr. Bill Wyman and the Lincoln Civic Choir to perform the opening chorus from Johann Sebastian Bach's epic choral masterpiece, the *St. Matthew Passion*.

During the first week of June, Bel Canto will diligently prepare for their international tour to Mexico, engaging in the annual *Crunch Week* rehearsal sequence, complete with a performance at the University of Nebraska Medical Center on Thursday June 5th as part of the *Music as Medicine* concert series. On Sunday June 8th, Bel Canto will perform an appreciation service at Faithful Shepherd Presbyterian Church in the morning before

decorating UNO's Strauss Recital Hall and presenting the annual Bon Voyage concert, entitled *Beyond Borders*, at 3 p.m.

Bel Canto's international tour to Mexico looks particularly exciting with performances at major concert and cathedral venues including Mexico City's Catedral Metropolitana and Basilica de Guadalupe, universities in Puebla and Xalapa (Omaha's sister-city), the acoustically magnificent Iglesia de San Sebastian y Santa Prisca in Taxco, and Acapulco's historic Fuerte de San Diego. Besides singing in beautiful venues, Bel Canto will perform at a school in Xalapa and present a joint-concert with Mexico's finest children's choir, the Niños Cantores de la Escuela Nacional de Música of Mexico City.

Bel Canto's varied activities this season have been invigorating and rewarding to all associated with this outstanding ensemble. Thank you so much to all the singers, their parents, the NCAS Staff and Board of Directors, and most especially to Bel Canto accompanist John Bennett and PICs Mary Kay Jensen and Tammy Sveum for a fantastic year!



Bel Canto performs at Holland Center

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The mission of NCAS is to share the gift of great choral music, to inspire new generations with the love of singing, and broaden our reach to all ages and cultures.

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Kat Doebel, CAST Conductor

Jon Gathje, Cantori Conductor

Tim Marsden, Masterworks Conductor

Cody Talarico, Ragazzi Conductor

NCAS Administrative Staff

Renée L. Spicka

Executive Director

Rachel Aalund

Operations Manager

TOUR UPDATE

Tour season is in full swing, and choirs will continue their tours through June. By the time we're finished, NCAS will have traversed much of North America! Thank you to all the conductors, PICs, parents and supporters who make these opportunities possible!

Completed Spring Tours

Jubilate & Ragazzi Children - Worlds of Fun, Kansas City
Camerata - Colorado Springs, CO
Ragazzi Youth - Ames and Des Moines, IA



Upcoming Summer Tours

CAST - Boone, NC
Bel Canto - Mexico
Cantori - Chicago, IL

New Member Auditions

August 28, 2008

Auditions for all eight choirs will be held on August 28 at the Strauss Performing Arts Center.

Auditions are by appointment only!

Please call the NCAS office at 342-6753 to set up your 10-minute audition time.

Thank You!!

NCAS is grateful for all the amazing individuals we have to help us through each season. A special thank you goes out to all of our conductors, accompanists, Parents-in-Charge, and volunteers who helped make this season a success! We couldn't have done it without you!!



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