



Side Note

Birdies for Charity, Principal grant fund DMVAE projects

As part of the 2011 Principal Charity Classic, Birdies for Charity raised over \$170,000 for participating non-profits, nearly double the amount raised in 2010. DMVAE raised over \$2,600 thanks to the generous pledges and donations from our supporters and individuals in the community! The money will be used to further the ensemble's efforts in enriching the arts community and supporting arts education in and around Des Moines.

DMVAE has also been awarded with a \$2,500 grant from the Principal Financial Group Foundation, which will be used to fund the ensemble's inaugural student composition contest.

Students grades 10 through 12 in Polk and the immediately surrounding counties will compete in one division and post-secondary students throughout Iowa in another. Contestants will have their works evaluated by notable figures in choral music and composition, including DMVAE's artistic director, Dr. Timothy McMillin.

Noteworthy

Ensemble prepares for holiday season, releases Christmas CD

Halloween is behind us. Daylight Savings has come and gone. As Thanksgiving draws near and plans are made for annual holiday celebrations, DMVAE is preparing for an annual tradition of its own: Christmas with Vocal Arts. The popular holiday performance will be held this year on Sunday, December 18, at 4 p.m. at Central Presbyterian Church in Des Moines.

In conjunction with this performance, DMVAE will be releasing a "Christmas with Vocal Arts" CD, a collection of works performed by the ensemble from the last three Christmas concerts.

"The reason for the CD now is in response to numerous requests from patrons who would like to take a bit of DMVAE home with them," said Dr. Tim McMillin, the ensemble's conductor and artistic director.

"The Christmas theme seemed most desirable because we've celebrated the season with 'Christmas with Vocal Arts' concerts over the past three years, and they have been wonderfully popular with our audience."

And in a year dedicated to remembering 20 seasons of music making, McMillin thought it was appropriate to commemorate the occasion with the release of a CD that

would be a historic, rather than live, recording.

"In a year when we are celebrating the history of the ensemble, it is wonderful to hear what we are celebrating—the music! So many people, their passion, and their artistry are represented in these tracks. What a wonderful way to celebrate 20 years of music making!"

The album will feature contemporary choral works from Eric Whitacre, René Clausen, and David Dickau; religious classics including "Ave Maris Stella," "A Hymn to the Virgin" and two renditions of "Bogoroditse Devo"; and favorites such as "The Christmas Song," "Still, Still, Still," "Jingle Bells," "Coventry Carol" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

The album will be released at DMVAE's performance on December 18 and will be sold for \$12. Season ticket purchasers are eligible to pre-order the CD for \$10.

2011-2012 season tickets can be purchased through December 18. The \$25 base package includes discounted admission to Christmas with Vocal Arts and DMVAE:Celebrating 20 and Looking Forward. To purchase your season tickets, or to pre-order "Christmas with Vocal Arts," please visit our website, www.dmvae.org.



Take Note

DMVAE, Drake Choir premiere new choral work

While many Iowans were out enjoying the sunshine and warm temperatures the first week of October, the members of the Des Moines Vocal Arts Ensemble and the Drake University Chamber Choir were hard at work preparing for the final concerts in a series presented by the Catholic Diocese of Des Moines.

The concerts were part of a year-long celebration of the Diocesan centennial and were performed at the St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines and Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Atlantic. In addition to performing Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem, Op. 48*, the combined choir also premiered *Effortlessly*, a piece written by Dr. David Dickau, composer and director of choral activities at Minnesota State University.

The work was commissioned by John and Barb Cortesio in commemoration of the 2011 centennial year of the Diocese, which serves central and southwest Iowa.

"It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for both of us, each in our own way," Barb said. "It was so beautifully done by the combined choirs. A stunning moment."

Barb, now a member of DMVAE, was able to travel with the group

to Atlantic to perform the work on Sunday, October 9.

And it was Sunday's performance that was most meaningful to many members of DMVAE.

"I think outreach is really important and I feel like our presence there was truly appreciated," alto Sue Hoss said.

Soprano Carol Palmer said that when the audience in Atlantic jumped to its feet at the conclusion of Sunday's performance, it made her realize "that they really enjoyed and appreciated [our being there]."

Other members saw multiple benefits from singing with the members of the Drake Chamber Choir and their director, Dr. Aimee Beckmann-Collier.

"I think it's good for any ensemble to work with another group and another director because it brings something fresh into the ensemble," Jade Fox, soprano, said. "Plus, I think it is good for young community

members to know who DMVAE is and to know that there is musical life after college and that there are multiple opportunities for young singers if they look for them."

Long-time DMVAE tenor, Tim Vermillion, stayed positive, despite the extra work and long rehearsals.

"It's great to see young people learning to love great choral music," he said. "It was cool to see both VAE and Drake working so hard together for a common goal. My feet got tired, but that's a small price to pay."



Dr. Timothy McMillin conducts the combined choirs in preparation for the world premiere of *Effortlessly*.

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