

S.L. Choral Artists to sing with 'One Joyful Voice'

By Edward Reichel

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From one choir just a few years ago to five separate and distinct ensembles today, the Salt Lake Choral Artists have seen an expansion under director Brady Allred that is astounding.

"With our Young Choral Artists and Salt Lake Vocal Artists, we now have a choir for everyone, from children to adults and professionals," Allred told the Deseret News.

The other groups under the umbrella organization are the Women's Choir, the Chamber Choir and the Concert Choir.

All five will be performing Saturday at SLCA's first concert appropriately titled "One Joyous Voice," considering the diversity of choirs taking part. "All of the choirs will be singing in separate sets during the first half," Allred said. "For the second half we'll be doing John Rutter's 'Mass of the Children.'"

Since 2004, when Allred was appointed music director, and also assumed the position of head of choral music at the University of Utah, the Choral Artists have grown and developed to become one of the premiere choral organizations in the state, and their reputation outside of Utah has been building at a steady pace. That's one of the main reasons Allred decided to start the Vocal Artists last January. "This is our professional group," he said. "It's made up of members from the Choral Artists and the Chamber Choir and also past and present members of the University of Utah Singers."

The 40 voice ensemble will be going to Spain in October to compete in an international choral festival in Tolosa. "I had (the University Singers) at the competition in the summer of 2006 where we won the European Grand Prix," Allred said, "but this is a different competition." They'll be participating in two categories, one for mixed choir and the other for vocal ensemble, which is for a smaller group. "We can only have 16 singers maximum for this category." While in Spain, the ensemble will also do four or five concerts in the Basque region of the country.

SLCA's second concert in December will be their annual Christmas program, although with Allred, the selection of works is usually anything but standard repertoire. "We're doing the 'Saint

Nicolas Cantata' by Benjamin Britten. It's very popular in England, almost as popular as 'Messiah' in the U.S., but it's not done here." Collaborating with the singers for this concert will be Utah Premiere Brass, a traditional English brass band.

In February, SLCA will focus on the music of Eric Whitacre, one of the hottest names among choral composers today. "He is a rock star in the choral music field," Allred said. "I've known him a long time. He's an excellent setter of texts and knows the voices well." The concert will feature the local premiere of one of Whitacre's more recent pieces.

Closing out the season in May will be J.S. Bach's glorious Mass in B minor with orchestra. This will be Allred's first performance of the work in Salt Lake City. "I conducted it several times in Pittsburgh, but never here."

This will be a multimedia concert. While the mass is being performed, the German film "The Sound of Eternity" will be shown on a screen behind the orchestra and singers. "It's timed to go with the music and it's very, very effective," Allred said.

Here is a listing of SLCA concerts for this season. Performances take place in Libby Gardner Concert Hall and, except where noted, there will be two performances, one at 2 p.m, the other at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 16: "One Joyous Voice."

Dec. 18: "Christmas with Saint Nicolas."

Feb. 19, 2011: "Eric Whitacre Extravaganza."

May 14, 2011, 7:30 p.m. only: "A Crowning Achievement: Mass in B minor."

If you go:

What: "One Joyous Voice," Salt Lake Choral Artists

Where: Libby Gardner Concert Hall, University of Utah

When: Oct. 16, 7:30 p.m.

How much: \$90 season tickets; \$25 general admission, \$10 students

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