

Utah choral group to sing music written for them at worldwide symposium

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SALT LAKE CITY — The Internet has propelled a Utah choral group to international recognition. As a result, the group will soon be performing in Argentina with music specifically written for them by international composers.

Brady Allred and his award-winning touring group, the [Salt Lake Vocal Artists](#), are busy rehearsing for an important series of concerts at a worldwide symposium in Argentina. They will be in the country from July 28 through Aug. 14.

Allred, the artistic director and conductor of the choral group, feels very good about this invitation.

"We're the only American mixed choir, so it's a great honor and choral conductors come from all over," Allred said. "We network and we listen to all of the performances and meet composers from all over."

And one of the joys of this upcoming concert tour will be performing a commissioned work by a Japanese composer. He wrote the music soon after the devastating earthquake and tsunami in his country.

"He organized it from almost a point of despair to finding hope in the end, and he does this very beautifully in the music and the harmony," Allred said.

Allred said he left the University of Utah as a professor and director of choral studies last year to concentrate on this international work.

He credits YouTube with growing this choir's audiences. It has become one of the ways in which international composers find them and then communicate with Allred about writing works for them.

Earlier this year, he traveled to Israel and, through the U.S. Embassy, taught an Arab-Jewish Children's Choir. That video and others have brought a million hits for the choral group.

"I thought what a wonderful thing to have such an organization in such political unrest. And what better than children singing together," he said. "I taught them some easy songs that they could pick up quickly — a Native-American song, an Israeli folk song, and we just had a great time."

Allred said choral music remains relevant in the 21st century. "Singing really brings people together, and I've watched over my life and career how powerful singing together can be," he said. "It can break down so many barriers."

The Salt Lake Vocal Artists are part of a larger organization called Salt Lake Choral Artists. Five choirs include a 150-voice concert choir that sing with an orchestra, a chamber choir from that group, a women's choir and a children's choir. The choir focuses on classical, contemporary, and culturally diverse music.

"I moved from San Diego to Salt Lake City specifically to sing for Brady," said Austin Thorpe, a baritone in the Salt Lake Vocal Artists. "And I've been doing that now for five years, and I have never regretted for a second doing so."

This is Thorpe's fifth international tour. "We have the opportunity to see different audiences and to make that connection through music," he said. "The audiences sense that, they can feel the passion." He says he relishes every moment.

"Dr. Allred's mission and part of the Salt Lake Vocal Artists' mission is expressing music and bonding through music, because the messages are all the same," explained Aimee Frederick Lunt, the associate conductor of the Salt Lake Vocal Artists. "Just being able to sing with a group like this, people who are high-level musicians but not necessarily by profession, who all work really hard, is just personally satisfying."

The group started rehearsing for this tour in January, once a week. Then it was twice a week. "Right now, it's about three nights a week, but even the rehearsals are satisfying," Lunt said.

Lunt and Thorpe say wherever Salt Lake Vocal Artists perform, they share not only a love of music with each other and the audience but always extend the hand of friendship.

"Since we can't take the community here in Salt Lake with us to Argentina, at least we can give them a sampling of what we're going to do down there for the people." Allred said. And, yes, they will videotape those concerts and put them on their YouTube channel.

The Salt Lake Vocal Artists' "Bon Voyage" concert is Tuesday night in Libby Gardner Hall at the University of Utah at 7:30. Tickets are \$10. Go to www.saltlakechoralartists.org/concerts_events for more information.

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