

Notes from the Music Director



In the manuscript to the Agnus Dei of his mighty *Missa Solemnis*, Beethoven wrote the words, “a prayer for inner and outer peace.” Our concert today is offered with that same goal. Peter Relph’s *To the end, in songs* describes a search for inner peace. In the work’s preface Relph describes this piece as one “moving from a state of restlessness toward a state of peace.”

In each of the three movements, a short choral introduction is followed by dramatic music constituting the major themes of the movement, and concluding with a meditative, quiet choral blessing. Each of the three movements becomes progressively calmer, ending with the beautiful

thought, “I will lay me down in peace... thou makest me to lie down in safety.”

Jodi French’s *The Stranger Among You: Songs of Exile and Home* explores the human struggle to find outer peace; peace between peoples united in our shared humanity. Beginning with civilization’s common heritage in the Middle East’s fertile crescent (*I’ve Known Rivers*), the music explores the love of “home” (*The Road to Drumleman*); the fear of strangers (*Legends of Leaving*); the Celtic call to honor the stranger (*The Rune of Hospitality*); Emma Lazarus’ stirring *Mother of Exiles* from her poem *The New Colossus*, calling for assimilation; and concluding with Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore’s call for unity in *The Same Stream of Life*, which offers the following reason for compassion: “The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.” To turn once again to Beethoven, the beginning of the *Missa Solemnis* contained these impassioned words, “Von Herzen möge es wieder zu Herzen gehen” (From the heart may it go to the heart). Compassion makes sense but is ultimately, a matter of the heart.

Paul French

Music Director, Southern Oregon Repertory Singers

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Notes from the **Board President**



One of the poignant elements of music is its ability to serve as a bridge between cultures. The world's myriad ethnicities produce unique music, but the appeal is not limited to any particular group. The language of music is universal and transcends the arbitrary boundaries that humans devise to separate themselves from others. Once a song is sung it belongs to the world and becomes an expression of the cultural ties that have united humanity for decades.

Music transcends borders, bridging gaps between people and communities. Throughout history, music has been a defining feature of cultural identity, reflecting the values, beliefs, and

traditions of societies. From folk songs passed down through generations to classical and contemporary genres, music not only expresses individual emotions but also reinforces collective identities.

Music serves as a powerful tool for healing by allowing people to express their emotions and find solace in shared experiences through lyrics and melodies. I believe in the power of music to heal, to bring people together and to speak to our shared values and experiences. If we listen to the songs we all sing, perhaps we could reach a place of understanding. I believe music possesses the ability to move us toward a world where kindness reigns.

In a world often defined by division, music reminds us of our shared humanity. It invites us to listen, to connect, and to understand one another more deeply. May the songs we share tonight inspire reflection and a renewed commitment to compassion, unity, and the possibility of a kinder world.

Laura Rich, *President*
Southern Oregon Repertory Singers

AN EVENING WITH

Pam Tillis



MAY 17, 2026

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THE MODERN GENTLEMEN



MAY 22, 2026

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DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

NOTE FOR NOTE / CUT FOR CUT

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Notes from the **Executive Director**



As we close our 40th anniversary season, we look ahead with gratitude and purpose. The artistry you hear on stage is made possible by a community that believes deeply in the power of choral music to connect, inspire, and transform. Your support sustains our ability to present meaningful performances while championing new works and creative collaborations.

Looking forward, our vision is both ambitious and rooted in service. We aim to expand access through livestreaming and digital platforms, sharing our music beyond the concert hall and connecting with broader audiences. At the same time, we are deepening our educational outreach—strengthening school partnerships, offering workshops and mentorship, and helping cultivate the next generation of singers.

As we grow and move ahead, we will invest in the infrastructure and leadership needed to support this work, while exploring new opportunities for touring, partnerships, and innovative performance experiences. Central to all of this is a commitment to long-term sustainability—ensuring both artistic vitality and financial strength.

None of this is possible without you. Your generosity sustains not only what we do today, but what we imagine for the future. Together, we carry this music forward into the next 40 years and beyond.

NEW SEASON, NEW WEBSITE!

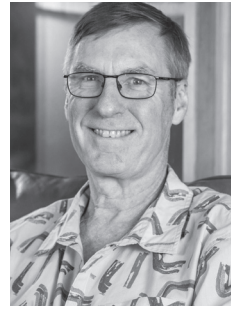
Our 2026–27 season and newly redesigned website are live, and we're excited to share them with you. We encourage you to renew your season subscription early to secure your favorite seats. If you are a returning subscriber, please note that previous subscriber seating is now reserved—contact the Box Office to renew your current seats. If you'd like to make a change, you may select new seats online or submit your order form by mail (available in our brochure or at repsingers.org). Requests will be fulfilled in the order received. Thank you for your continued support!

Kim Andresen, *Executive Director*

PAUL FRENCH

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Paul French is the Music Director and Conductor of Southern Oregon Repertory Singers and Director of Music at Trinity Episcopal Church, Ashland. Under his direction, Repertory Singers has established itself as one of the premier choral ensembles in the Pacific Northwest and is noted for its performances of Baroque major works with period orchestra, as well as the performance of commissioned choral/orchestral major works for the James M. Collier New Works Festival.



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Charlotte and
Morgan Silbaugh

A passionate advocate for choral music and choral singers, French spent 32 years as Director of Choral/Vocal Studies at Southern Oregon University, and has conducted for many Oregon music establishments (including Rogue Opera, Rogue Valley Symphony, Northwest Bach Ensemble), as well as internationally in Mexico, Germany and the Czech Republic.

JODI FRENCH

PIANIST/COMPOSER IN RESIDENCE

Jodi French has been playing piano since the age of three and working as a professional accompanist since age ten. Proficient at many instruments, she has always considered piano to be the most apt for sharing emotion and telling stories. Her early training was music reading at home and playing everything she heard, making her equally comfortable at both sight-reading and playing by ear. Her favorite hobby as a child was transposing every piece she played into every possible key, a practice she still indulges in occasionally to torment friends with perfect pitch.



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Charlotte and
Morgan Silbaugh
Pratibha Eastwood

Her interests in recent years have expanded to include composition; she has had several sacred works published and introduces many new choral pieces each year. She studied piano performance with Dr. Alexander Tutunov at Southern Oregon University. She is the pianist with Southern Oregon Repertory Singers and organist with Trinity Episcopal Church in Ashland.

Core Singers

SOPRANOS

Section Sponsored by Chris & Bob Panero

Katie Boehnlein has been performing music since the age of five and has sung in many renowned choral groups on the West Coast including the Oregon Repertory Singers in Portland, San Francisco Bach Choir, and Seattle University Choirs. She also loves folk music and is an avid volunteer with the Ashland Folk Collective concerts. Katie is currently a teacher at Logos Public Charter School in Medford where she teaches science and coordinates outdoor education programs.



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Muriel Garcia-Hart teaches early childhood music through Kindermusik at Rogue Music Academy, along with voice and beginner piano. She sings primarily with the Southern Oregon Repertory Singers, where she also serves on the board as chair of the Community Connections Committee. Muriel is the mezzo-soprano cantor at Trinity Episcopal Church. With extensive experience in opera, oratorio, concert, and sacred music, Muriel has performed with ensembles such as the Rogue Valley Symphony. She holds a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the Oregon Center for the Arts at Southern Oregon University and a BA in Music and International Studies from Southern Oregon University.



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Amanda Gerig has a BA in Vocal Performance from Oregon State University. She loves living in Southern Oregon for its many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors as well as the thriving arts community. She lives with her husband and three beautiful children on a 3-acre hobby farm which provides bountiful inspiration and plenty of good work. Amanda has been singing with the Southern Oregon repertory Singers since 2009, and has also performed various operatic and theater roles with Camelot Theater, Brava! Opera, and Rogue Opera. She has experience teaching private voice and piano lessons, choir and general music to grades 4-8 at Madrone Trail Public Waldorf School, and is currently teaching music to children in preschool through fifth grade at Medford Montessori School.



Sponsored by:
Cydne Collins

CORE SINGERS (CONTINUED)

Lindsay Kuzmitz holds degrees in Vocal Performance and Music Education from Southern Oregon University, where she was named the 2011 Outstanding Woman Graduate in Music Performance. She studied classical voice under the direction of Dr. Fredna Grimland, Laurie Anne Hunter, and Dr. Paul French, and has participated in masterclasses with lyric diction specialist Marcie Stapp, lyric soprano Barbara Bonney, and early music soprano Julianne Baird. She has performed as an ensemble member and soloist with SOU's Concert and Chamber Choirs, Brava! Opera, Rogue Opera, the Rogue Valley Symphony, and Jefferson Baroque Orchestra. Lindsay lives in Ashland with her husband and young family.



Sponsored by:
Laura Lawrence

Jennifer Matsuura completed degrees in Psychology, Music, Music Therapy, and a Master's in Mental Health Counseling from SOU and ASU. She is a soloist with the Southern Oregon Repertory Singers, the Rogue Valley Chorale, and has performed on numerous occasions with the Rogue Valley Symphony, including their staged performance of Arvo Pärt's *Passio*. She has appeared in five operas here in the Rogue Valley. She also loves singing early music, and performing with the Jefferson Baroque Orchestra. Ms. Matsuura was a featured vocalist in Britt Festival Orchestra's world premiere installation of *Brush*, a commissioned work by Pulitzer Prize winning composer, Caroline Shaw. She has performed and recorded many new works by composers of the Southern Oregon chapter of NACUSA, one of which was recognized by the American Prize for Vocal Chamber Music in 2024. She is the soprano cantor at Trinity Episcopal Church in Ashland, where she can often be heard singing new works by Jodi French.



Sponsored by:
Paul & Priscilla Arnold

Mikaeli Nootenboom is a soprano who began in jazz and pop before finding a home in classical music. She performed with the Pacific Youth Choir, appearing alongside Pink Martini and the Oregon Symphony. She studied at Southern Oregon University under Paul French, where she sang with several university ensembles, participated in masterclasses, and performed as Lily in the theatre department's production of *The Secret Garden*. Now back in Southern Oregon with her husband and daughter, music remains a constant love and a meaningful part of her life. She is grateful to share that passion with the Repertory Singers and their audience.



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Claypool

CORE SINGERS (CONTINUED)

Taylor Pulsipher is a Rogue Valley native. She has directed choirs, provided private vocal coaching in a variety of states and countries, and has worked with internationally known artists: Kristen Chenoweth, Voces 8, Frederica von Stade, David Archuleta, and others. Taylor earned her Music Education degree from Brigham Young University-Idaho. She is currently earning a Master's degree and is in her third year of teaching at Grants Pass High School. Taylor is grateful for the opportunity to sing with Southern Oregon Repertory Singers.



Sponsored by:
Phyllis Reynolds

ALTOS

Section Sponsored by Julia Sommer

Luna Bitzer can't imagine life without music. From early studies on piano and flute on three continents, to later lessons in voice; from rock bands to symphonic bands, chamber music to symphonic chorales, music has always figured prominently in her life. Yet for 28 years, Repertory Singers has given her the greatest joy of all. When Luna is not making music, she can be found happily digging in her garden.



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Gary & Coralie
Farnham

Laurie Anne Hunter is very happy to have found her true home in the Rogue Valley after an extensive career in New York, playing and conducting at the New York City Opera and on Broadway. Former Artistic Director of the Rogue Valley Chorale, she taught music at SOU for over 20 years and has led productions for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Oregon Cabaret Theater, SOU Theater Arts, Rogue Opera, Brava! Opera and Medford's Collaborative Theater Project. She also spent many years playing therapeutic harp music for Providence hospice and is currently Music Director at the First Presbyterian Church of Ashland.



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CORE SINGERS (CONTINUED)

Tamara Marston (Music Director) — In addition to being a member of Southern Oregon Repertory Singers for a very (very) long time, Tami has been an actor, singer and director in the Rogue Valley for over 30 years, having served as Music Director for Ashland High School productions of *The Boyfriend*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *The Addams Family*; for several Teen Music Theater Oregon shows including *Tarzan*, *Music Man*, *Annie*, and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; and for *Mary Poppins* at the Crater Performing Arts Center. As an actor, she's appeared in over 15 productions at the Oregon Cabaret Theater and worked at many other theaters on the west coast. Music and theater have provided a career, a throughline, and a primary source of joy her entire life, and working with teens as a way to Pass It On is the very best icing on the cake.



Sponsored by:
Pat & Lou Franks

Shelly Cox-Thornhill, born and raised in the Rogue Valley, has studied voice for more than 25 years. She is a frequent soloist and chorus member with many ensembles in the region including Jefferson Baroque Orchestra, Siskiyou Singers, Rogue Valley Chorale, Trinity Episcopal Church and Ashland First Presbyterian Church. She is a core singer with the Southern Oregon Repertory Singers. Shelly works on the Administrative Team for Jackson County Mental Health and currently resides in Medford with her family.



Sponsored by:
Cindy Barnard

TENORS

Section Sponsored by Betty & Dieter Heycke

Aaron Dady has been singing for as long as he can remember and began performing on stage at his church before the age of five. Raised in the Rogue Valley, he developed an early appreciation for choral music while attending performances by the Southern Oregon Repertory Singers, which fueled his desire to one day join their ranks. He has appeared with several ensembles, including the Rogue Valley Chorale, RCC Choir, and the Oregon Bach Festival's Youth Choral Academy under the direction of Dr. Anton Armstrong and the late Maestro Helmuth Rilling, and has performed at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts in Eugene. In addition to his choral work, Aaron has performed leading stage roles including



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CORE SINGERS (CONTINUED)

Tony in *West Side Story* and Ralph Rackstraw in Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*. He is honored to perform alongside such distinguished musicians and is especially drawn to the beauty and complexity of choral music, as well as the collaboration required to create a unified and expressive sound. Aaron resides in Central Point with his wife and their two energetic boys.

Andrew Davis was born and raised in Medford, Oregon. They have studied voice with Lynn Sjolund, Michael Morris, Dr. Jerron Jorgensen, and Dr. Christi McLain. Andrew has performed as both a chorister and soloist with the Rogue Valley Chorale, Southern Oregon Repertory Singers, and the choirs of Southern Oregon University. Their operatic work includes lead roles as F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Ghosts of Gatsby* and William Royle in *Staggerwing*, and most recently as the Current Narrator in *The Raven* by Jesse Preis. In 2025, Andrew was one of four finalists for the Partnership for the Performing Arts Scholarship.



Sponsored by:
Nick & Barbara
Tennant

Zachery Marshall has been a musician since a young age, and now sings with Southern Oregon Repertory Singers and SOU Chamber Choir. To him, music communicates, pushes boundaries, and is a window into the mind and heart. In 2017 he graduated with his Bachelor of Arts in Music and Media, and is now putting it to use in making the community thrive with music.



Sponsored by:
Marilyn Anderson &
William Tout

Brandt Nakamura's life and work are deeply rooted in performance. Since obtaining his B.A. in Music from Southern Oregon University in 2010 under the tutelage of Dr. Paul French, he has performed extensively with multiple musical groups and theatres in the Rogue Valley. Repertory Singers remains a constant source of musical inspiration to Brandt, and he is honored to continue his work with the talent and grace of both Dr. Paul and Jodi French.



Sponsored by:
Jerry Kenefick

CORE SINGERS (CONTINUED)

Eric Sohnrey delights in sharing the joy of music alongside his fellow performers. A native of Oregon City, Eric earned his BA in Vocal Performance in 2023 from Southern Oregon University, where he studied with Paul French and Jerron Jorgensen and was awarded the Art and Thea Mills Choral Music Scholarship. Currently, Eric is Director of Voice and a piano instructor at Rogue Music Academy, where he nurtures a love of singing in students of all ages. An active performer in the Rogue Valley, he has appeared in productions with Camelot Theatre, and sings with multiple choirs. Eric plans to continue performing with Rep Singers until he moves on to pursue his Master's Degree in Vocal Pedagogy.



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BASSES

Section Sponsored by Dr. Virginia L. Whitener

Dale Engle has performed as a soloist and chorister in several Bay Area groups, including the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, San Francisco Chamber Singers (now Volti), Festival Opera and Pacific Edge Voices, in genres ranging from classical to a cappella jazz and pop. He is delighted to have found a new home in the Rogue Valley and the Repertory Singers.



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Robert Kohrs

Shayne Flock grew up in the Rogue Valley, surrounded by music. Coming from a family of musicians, he was introduced to choral singing at a very young age. Shayne began his lifelong passion for choral music in the third grade. After earning a music degree from Oregon State University (OSU) and teaching music for a few years in Central Oregon, Shayne and his wife returned to the Rogue Valley to raise their family. With over 15 years of experience in music education, Shayne is currently the choir director at North Medford High School. As a singer, he has had the honor of performing with numerous choral groups in the valley, including the Rogue Youth Choruses, where he was a charter member of the Youth Ensemble, the Rogue Valley Chorale, and the Siskiyou Singers, among others. Shayne began his journey as a professional choir director during

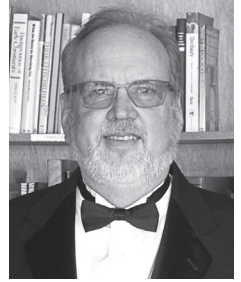


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CORE SINGERS (CONTINUED)

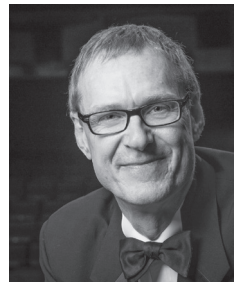
his time at OSU and has actively sought directing opportunities wherever he has lived. His local directing experience includes leading Cantare (part of the Rogue Valley Youth Choruses) and the Voices of the Applegate. In his free time, Shayne enjoys fishing in his drift boat and camping with his wife and children: Vanessa, AnnaLynn, and Keneniah.

Dan Fowler is pastor at the 1st Presbyterian Church of Ashland. Dan was a music major (vocal performance emphasis) at San Francisco State University and has sung bass/baritone solos for many choral works and performed in several operas and musicals throughout Northern California and Southern Oregon. He has also served as a choral conductor with several choirs. In addition to singing, Dan also plays piano and guitar.



Sponsored by:
Phyllis Fernlund

Don Matthews has a Bachelor of Music degree from Eastern Michigan University, a Master's in Vocal Performance from USC, and was a member of the San Francisco Opera chorus. In 1998, he became the morning classical music host at Jefferson Public Radio until he retired in 2024. Don was a voice teacher at SOU from 2002 to 2021 and has appeared in numerous productions with the Camelot Theatre, Rogue Music Theatre among others. He has also appeared as a soloist with Rogue Valley Chorale, Siskiyou Singers, and Rogue Opera.



Sponsored by:
Ellen and Julian
Hamer

Michael Morris, baritone, spent nearly 50 years teaching voice, conducting, and performing, having sung leading roles in some 70 operas, operettas, and musicals, in addition to performing as a baritone soloist in dozens of concert works and oratorios; he continues to be an active soloist. Michael earned his BM from San Francisco State University and his MM from College of Notre Dame in Belmont, California. He is the former Artistic Director for the Rogue Valley Chorale.



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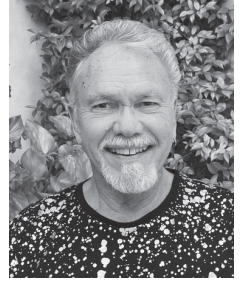
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CORE SINGERS (CONTINUED)

Nick Tennant has been singing in public for a long time. He has performed in concert under the direction of Igor Stravinsky, Josef Kripps, and Darius Milhaud; and with Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the San Francisco Symphony, Berkeley Consortium Antiquum, Rogue Opera, Rogue Valley Symphony, Britt Festival, Actors Workshop, and French and Irish national radio.



Sponsored by:
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YOUNG ARTISTS

Young Singers Sponsor: Judith Clinton,
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Alexandra Carwithen discovered her desire to teach music at the age of seven and began formal vocal training at age 12. She enjoys performing in productions all around the valley and has recently been seen as Miss Honey in Camelot Theatre's *Matilda*, and *Zelda 1924* in SOU Lyric Theatre's *The Ghosts of Gatsby*. Alexandra graduated from Southern Oregon University in June of 2024 with a Bachelor's in Music Education and a certificate in Vocal Performance. She recently had the honor of studying opera in Austria at the Austrian–American Mozart Academy, and performed the role of Zweite Dame in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. Alexandra most recently taught voice, piano, and flute to students of all ages at Rogue Music Academy in Medford and currently teaches band at Joseph Lane Middle School in Roseburg.



Sponsored by:
Ellen & Julian Hamer

Holden Cook graduated from SOU in 2025 with a BS in Music and certificates in Vocal Performance and Music Theory and History. This is his fourth season with the Rep Singers, and he is so thrilled to be back following graduation! In addition to his four years of Southern Oregon Repertory Singers and SOU choir, Holden has worked as a rehearsal assistant for the Ashland First United Methodist Church choir and Rogue Valley Chorale's Youth Ensemble, and has been a featured soloist and chorus member with the Jefferson Baroque Orchestra.



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Nick & Barbara
Tennant

YOUNG SINGERS (CONTINUED)

Henrik Hunt earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education with a Certificate in Vocal Performance from Southern Oregon University in 2024. While at SOU, he was awarded the Chamber Music Concerts Scholarship and studied voice with Paul French. Henrik now teaches elementary music at Mills and Pelican Elementary Schools in Klamath Falls while pursuing his Master of Arts in Teaching at George Fox University. He has sung in choirs for most of his life and has been a member of the Southern Oregon Repertory Singers since 2023. For Henrik, music is a profound means of expressing emotions that words alone cannot fully capture.



Sponsored by:
Marilyn Anderson &
Bill Tout

Bre Molina is a California native who moved to the Rogue Valley in 2015 and graduated from Southern Oregon University in the spring of 2023 with a Bachelor's Degree in Music. They have a long history with choral performance, participating in the California All State, Regional, and County Honor Choirs during their time at Del Norte High School. They have worked closely with Paul French for several years as part of SOU's Chamber Choir Ensemble, have spent time as the music director for SOU's A Capella group Dulcet, and have also performed in multiple masterclasses hosted by SOU as part of their degree. They have a strong love for the arts, and write poetry that has been featured in collaborative choral works written by Jodi French. When Bre is not singing and making art, they can be found working as a dental assistant, playing video games, and spending time with their two precious cats.



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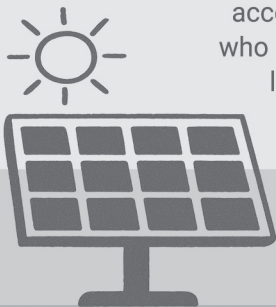
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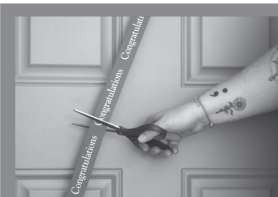
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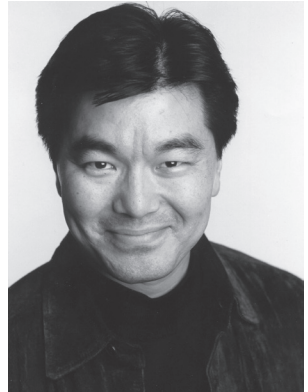
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Christòpheren Nomura

Christòpheren Nomura stands at the forefront of his generation of singers. Since making his New York City debut, he has performed throughout the world, hailed as one of classical music’s “rising stars” by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Mr. Nomura has earned a prominent place on the opera, musical theatre, concert and recital stages, appearing with many of the leading North American orchestras, in wide-ranging repertoire under internationally renowned conductors such as Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, James Conlon, Sergiu Comissiona, Christof Perick, Roger Norrington, Christopher Hogwood, Ton Koopman, Bruno Weil, Paul Goodman, Jane Glover, Andrew Parrott, and Nicholas McGegan. 2015-16 brought his first Musical Theater performances in the role of Tatsuo Kimura in *Allegiance*, which ran on Broadway with George Takei, Lea Salonga and Telly Leung. A noted Bach and early music specialist, Mr. Nomura has been a frequent performer with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Oregon Bach Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, Music of the Baroque, Baldwin-Wallace Bach Festival, Handel & Haydn Society, Boston Early Music Festival, Boston Baroque and the Berkshire Choral Festival.



He has performed with Apollo’s Fire, Tafelmusik and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. His collaborations with such ensembles as the S’Kampa, Boromeo, Brentano and St. Lawrence String Quartets and pianists Martin Katz, Dalton Baldwin, Charles Wadsworth, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and William Bolcom have brought him to the leading American Chamber Music Festivals across the United States. In the realm of opera, Mr. Nomura is a noted Mozartean, known for his portrayals of Don Giovanni, Count Almaviva and Guglielmo. He has likewise had a strong association with Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*. He was Prince Yamadori in the SONY film codirected by Martin Scorsese and Frédéric Mitterand, conducted by James Conlon and appeared in *Butterfly* for his debuts with the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa, Dallas Opera and Cincinnati Opera.

Known for his deep commitment to the art of the recital, he has given more than 250 recitals throughout North America, Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. He has appeared at Lincoln Center, the “Making Music” series at Carnegie Hall, the Celebrity Series in Boston, Ravinia, the John F. Kennedy Center and the Vancouver Recital Society. He was Artist-In-Residence with San Francisco Performances for four seasons. Mr. Nomura was invited to sing Bernstein’s Mass at the Vatican for

the “Jubilee Year,” in 2000 performing before an audience of 15,000 in the Salla Nervi, simulcast to some 200,000 people in Vatican Square.

His discography includes recordings on the Sony, Dorian, Teldec, London, Denon, TDK and L’oiseau Lyre labels. His recording of the Monteverdi Vespers of 1610 on Telarc was nominated for a Grammy (Best Classical Ensemble Recording). Mr. Nomura has been the recipient of numerous awards and distinctions including a four-year Fulbright Grant to study with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Hermann Prey and Gérard Souzay. He was winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions as well as the Naumburg, United States Information Agency Music Ambassadors and the Marilyn Horne Foundation competitions.

Besides his private studio for vocal instruction, Mr. Nomura has been on faculties at Boston University and Stony Brook University and currently teaches at Seton Hall University. With his recent experiences on Broadway, he now works extensively with students in non-Classical genres including musical theatre, jazz, gospel and pop as well.

Peter Relph

Peter Relph is a contemporary English composer from Cumbria, whose music is shaped by the landscapes of the Lake District, medieval chant, and regional folk traditions. Known for his expressive and finely crafted choral writing, his work often explores themes of memory, loss, and reflection, blending lyrical vocal lines with a sensitive use of texture and silence. While rooted in the sacred tradition, his music speaks in a distinctly modern voice, engaging both professional and academic ensembles.

Relph’s compositions have been performed across Europe and North America by ensembles including the Westminster Williamson Voices, The Same Stream Choir, and Magdalene College Chapel Choir. He is the founder and musical director of the vocal group Anchorae.

Among his notable works is a *Requiem* (2018) for double choir, soloists, and percussion, recognized for its meditative structure and emotional depth. His music is published and recorded by GIA Publications (Chicago).



A Note on the Composition

In late 2023 I was delighted to be invited to write a substantial work for the Southern Oregon Repertory Singers by their Director, Dr Paul French. *To the end, in songs.* can be considered a companion piece of sorts to *Requiem* which the choir had performed earlier in 2023, building on some of the structural ideas which I introduced in that piece.

I was immediately drawn to the text of Psalm 4: the text, moving from a state of searching restlessness towards a state of peace, feels deeply resonant both in daily life and the world at large. The text itself contains two clear breaks, marked in latin as: [diapsalma]. These pauses have been used in the music to create a single work of three movements, a triptych of interconnected text and music.

The text of ‘*To the end, in songs.*’, from Psalm IV.

Plainchant and folk music from my home by the Lake District have characterised this work deeply, much as they have throughout my compositional life. The music seems also to have been influenced by the landscape of the Peak District, where I was living for a short while (and where I wrote most of this piece).

My first encounter with the text of Psalm 4 was through the service of compline, a service sung almost entirely in plainsong. The plainsong melody for Psalm IV from this service has been used as the source of many of the melodies and harmonies present in ‘*To the end, in songs.*’. I have included the full psalm as an option to perform before the composition itself.

Plainsong melody for Psalm IV.

Each movement of the work contains three key similar structural elements, a short choral ‘intonation’, the main body of the movement (the ‘verse’), and ending in a choral ‘song’. Beginning dramatically, each movement becomes progressively calmer than the last, eventually fading to peace and rest.

—Peter Relph, 2025

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SOPRANO

Lindsay Kuzmitz ^{2,4}
Gayle Bate
Katie Boehnlein ¹
Alexandra Carwithen ³
Gabi Gauthier
Muriel Garcia-Hart ²

Amanda Gerig ¹
Kelly Jean Hammond
Allie Beth Hymas
Emily Jeffs
Ruby Johnson
Jennifer Matsuura ²

Bre Molina ³
Mikaeli Nootenboom ²
Taylor Pulsipher ²
Katie Schwarz
Elizabeth Soper
Leanne Strom

ALTO

Laurie Anne Hunter ^{2,4}
Marie Barlow
Luna Bitzer ¹
Kyla Casazza
Anita Caster
Shelly Cox-Thornhill ²

Sharon Dady
Erin DeCarlow
Paula Fowler
Susan Franks
Livia Genise
Caitlyn Gillespie

Lorin Groshong
Susan Hocevar
Tami Marston ¹
Linda Morris
Ellie Murray
Julia Sommer

TENOR

Brandt Nakamura ^{2,4}
Nicholas Bate
Aaron Dady ¹
Ralph Dady
Andrew Davis ¹
Tom Hearon

Henrik Hunt ³
Nic Kinzie
Josh Lounsbury
Zachery Marshall ¹
Ken McPherson
Daniel Munoz

Jonathan Nash
Ethan Plankenhorn
Brian Richards
Barry Russell
Eric Sohnrey ¹
Hal Wing

BASS

Don Matthews ^{2,4}
Holden Cook ³
Ken Depp
Dale Engle ¹
Shayne Flock ¹

Dan Fowler ¹
Dave Hilton
Brian Kerns
Michael Morris ²
Andrew Nordquist
Bill Powell

Robin Stevens
Ron Strom
Nick Tennant ²
Brian Tingle
Craig Williams

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Violins

Abigail Wilensky,
concertmaster

Juliet Long

Melissa Orr

Esther Platt

Steve Scharf

Nancie Linn Shaw

Kendalia Spencer

Arlene Tayloe

Maddy Vanderwall

Violas

Vicki Gunn

Dwayne Johnson

Michael Sorensen

Cellos

Michal Palzewicz

Lisa Truelove

Bass

David Miller

Flute

Jodi French

Sherril Wood

Horn

Jenifer Carstensen

Trumpets

Steve Kessler

Tom Dambly

Trombone

Mark Jacobs

Percussion

Theresa McCoy

Piano

Jodi French

Harp

Laurie-Anne Hunter



To the end, in songs

*To the end, in songs**

Peter Relph (b. 1992)
text: Psalm IV

- I i. Intonation
ii. Verse
iii. Song
- II i. Intonation
ii. Verse
iii. Song
- III i. Intonation
ii. Verse
iii. Song

Christòpheren Nomura, baritone

— INTERMISSION —

*The Stranger Among You:
Songs of Exile and Home**

Jodi French (b. 1967)
text: Langston Hughes

1. *I've Known Rivers*

2. *The Road to Drumleman*
Shelly Cox-Thornhill, mezzo-soprano

text: Willie Mitchell

3. *Dark Waters* (instrumental)

4. *Mother of Exiles*
Jennifer Matsuura, soprano
Christòpheren Nomura, baritone

text: Emma Lazarus

5. *Legend of Leaving*
Christòpheren Nomura, baritone

text: Lawson Inada
Retired Emperor Sutoku
(r. 1124-1141)

6. *The Stranger Among You*

texts: trad. Scottish blessing
Old Testament

7. *The Same Stream of Life*

text: Rabindranath Tagore

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Program Notes

BY ED WIGHT

PETER RELPH

To the end, in songs (2024)

British composer Peter Relph is a rising international star in choral music.

Born in Cumbria in 1992, he's written chamber works, solo works for organ (his instrument) and also piano, as well as songs. But thus far in his career, he favors choral composition—and usually *a cappella*. He says that his music is strongly influenced, in part, by medieval chant—and if anything that is an understatement! Sacred titles appear in his instrumental works and songs, and thoroughly dominate his choral pieces. *To the end, in songs* provides an extended setting of the 4th Psalm. The medieval chant for that psalm opens each of the three movements. Based on his website, this piece also appears to be his first choral work with orchestral accompaniment. The Southern Oregon Repertory Singers commissioned this piece, and we are proud to present the world premier this weekend.

Psalm 4 is “The Psalm of David.” As the text progresses, David comes ultimately to trust God. Initially distressed by the blasphemy and accusations of others, David eventually finds joy and peace in God’s word. Peter Relph depicts this journey, the text of Psalm 4, in three movements—each with a similar structure. Every movement opens with a brief *Intonation*, followed by a *Verse*

(the main body of the movement), and closes with a choral *Song*. These choral ‘Songs’ display one of Relph’s particular strengths, as he sets the first two *a cappella*. And he only allows some restrained accompaniment for the third song, for a choral part here that never rises above *mezzo forte*. As David journeys towards peace, Relph says that “each movement becomes progressively calmer than the last.”

You can witness that larger calming structure with just the opening intonation passage in each movement. In medieval chant, the intonation is the first music phrase sung by the priest, before the entrance of the other voices. In similar fashion, Relph has the choir begin each movement with a fragment of the musical psalm—each lasting just six bars. In succession, the three movements offer, respectively, the final three musical phrases of the chant. The first 6-bar intonation opens *mezzo forte* and crescendos to *fortissimo*—but then each successive one grows softer; the second intonation goes from *piano* to *mezzo forte* followed by a softening; and the final one stays at *pianissimo* before it too softens.

The same holds true for the baritone solo part. His first entrance (with his two pitches in the opening bar the same as the intonation) is the most elaborate of the piece. And he sings the title of this work, *To the end, in*

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songs. *A Psalm of David*. Relph sets the second movement solo in much slower note values (quarter notes and 8th notes) instead of the 16ths, and 32nd-notes of the first movement. And when that first solo music returns in the 3rd movement, Relph presents a less elaborate version of his melody. At times the sopranos will also sing the soloist's themes.

The harmony throughout this work is nothing short of striking. As Paul French says "color is everywhere." As soon as the soloist sings his first phrase, the sopranos begin an extended pedal on A (six bars of triplets on the same pitch) while the harmony changes constantly around them.

The choral entrance in the 2nd movement verse opens *pianissimo*, but only eight bars later they've reached *forte*. Then Relph creates another soprano pedal for both two-bar settings of the word *mirificavit* ("to wonder"). Against a constant F in the 1st soprano, the second sopranos offer E natural and D natural in the first two bars; E flat and D flat in the last two. Constant harmonic color.

Amidst such sophisticated harmony throughout, remarkably extended and striking lushness, perhaps the most glorious effect appears in the third movement verse. For the important text "et sperate in Domino" (and hope in the Lord), Relph offers *four consecutive bars* of a rich chord on the first part of the bar and its 'resolution' on the final beat. The quick succession

is striking. And when that passage returns 30 bars later with different text, of course Relph varies it. Such remarkable and unending harmonic beauty rarely provides a stable footing. Just delicious effects in service of a text that gradually resolves into peace.

The final choral song, concluding the work and David's journey: "Now I lay me down in peace...for it is thou, Lord, that makest me dwell in safety" rarely rises above *piano* and *pianissimo*. The final ten bars re-state the title, and offer one final example. Relph's works are known for his harmonic complexity, and he certainly doesn't disappoint here. The key signature suggests either G Major or E Minor, but the lower orchestral parts keep implying C Major—while the choir and high instruments provide such color pitches as B, D, and A. It suggests a wonderful ambiguity while ending with a double *pianissimo*. A demanding and wonderful work, in the service of a profound text and a great journey.

JODI FRENCH
*The Stranger
Among You* (2026)

The Stranger Among You honors the common bonds that unite us all and argues for compassion, empathy and love for all humankind.

I've Known Rivers

For the *I've Known Rivers* text, wonderfully set by Jodi French (our Composer-in-Residence), Langston Hughes mentions rivers of great

historical importance. The Euphrates River provided one of the borders of the Fertile Crescent in the Middle East—the birthplace of Civilization, agriculture, writing and urbanization. French suggests our ancient common heritage with one of the oldest musical modes, writing the opening passage for flutes in a bright Lydian mode. Hughes also draws upon his African-American heritage by referencing the Nile and Congo Rivers (the two longest rivers in Africa), as well as Abraham Lincoln's journeys down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. Like these ancient rivers, he celebrates a racial heritage that has depth, power and resilience: "My soul has grown deep like the rivers."

Hughes became one of the foremost poets of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 30s, "a movement of outstanding literary vigor...with a sophisticated exploration of black lives and culture" (Merriam Webster Literary Encyclopedia). This movement also celebrated a rich, early jazz inheritance, with the prominent participation of such great artists as Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Bessie Smith (the first major African-American superstar, a pioneer of blues performance)—and the historically seminal band of Duke Ellington, blending both jazz and blues. French captures this, delightfully shifting to a swing style in the middle of the piece, honoring this heritage.

Road to Drumleman

A common bond across all cultures is the love of one's home country.

The Road to Drumleman, by Scottish poet and songwriter Willie Mitchell, celebrates this: a love of home and local community life. But he also touches on the importance of travel and movement: Comes the Spring "I'll take to the road that is dearest to me, the Road to Drumleman that winds to the sea." French's setting reflects this particularly rustic, folk-like poetry, with a light, homophonic texture featuring just the men, backing Shelly Cox-Thornhill's wonderful solo.

Mother of Exiles

The Colossus of Rhodes was one of the 'Seven Wonders of the [Ancient] World.' The proud citizens of Rhodes erected this statue, towering over 100 feet high, to celebrate victory in a year-long war—finally driving the invaders away. Emma Lazarus wrote the sonnet *The New Colossus* in 1883 as a fundraiser for the Statue of Liberty. Unlike the earlier Colossus, this giant statue *welcomes* immigrants. Its famous line "with huddled masses yearning to breathe free" was even inscribed on its pedestal.

This monument in the harbor of New York is truly the *Mother of Exiles*.

French's setting dramatically opens with the choir almost shouting "Not!" with accents. The new colossus is not like the old Greek statue, which celebrated driving people away. If one feels compelled to leave the home country, the Statue of Liberty becomes the first sign of welcome on the way to registering at such eastern coast

historic facilities as Ellis Island (1892-1954) and other border institutions. “Here at our sea-washed, sun-set gates, shall stand a mighty woman with a torch...”

French emphasizes the main focus of the Lazarus text with the first soft dynamics of the piece, for the women’s voices: “and her name is *Mother of Exiles*.”

The Stranger Among You

Jodi French draws on several text sources for *The Stranger Among You*, including the traditional Scottish blessing, “The Rune of Hospitality”. The overall message of the text is to treat others the way you would wish to be treated. Variants of what we in the west call “the golden rule” appear in many cultures across the world including Confucianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and more. The Golden Rule is more than moral advice—it is a bridge, offering a common ethical language that people of all backgrounds can embrace. It inspires movements for social justice, underpins international human rights frameworks, and motivates individual acts of kindness.

Flowing directly out of *Mother of Exiles*, French incorporates a prominent characteristic of Scotland’s music—the ‘Scotch snap’ of a 16th note followed by dotted 8th—into both instrumental and choral melodies. Also, such Scottish dialogue as “A stranger yest-reen”—meaning a stranger seen just

last evening. For them, “I put food in the eating place, drink in the drinking place, and music in the listening place.” Music, like food and drink, meets a fundamental human need. Every culture teaches hospitality in its own way, but the Scottish tradition is renowned, a sacred calling to welcome each person as our most honored guest, regardless of appearance, or status.”

Legend of Leaving

In this hopeful, 7-movement work—*The Stranger Among You*—Jodi French focuses on our common humanity and the welcoming of the stranger. Tragically, America felt it necessary to radically depart from this spirit during World War II. Government and military officials felt the Japanese populations of Hawaii and the West Coast were honeycombed with spies and informants, especially after Pearl Harbor, and a feared invasion of the mainland in 1942. So, 120,000 American citizens of Japanese descent, primarily in the coastal states, were rounded up and put in internment camps for the duration of the war—as were 15,000 Germans and Italians. History has shown this to be a horrific and tragic mistake.

Lawson Fusao Inada taught literature and writing at Southern Oregon University from 1966 until his retirement in 2002. He also served as the 5th Poet Laureate for the State of Oregon from 2006-10, and is the recipient of numerous awards as well as a

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Guggenheim Fellowship in 2004. As a child he spent years in the internment camps, and in 1992 he published a collection of poetry entitled *Legends of Camp*, writing about those experiences. He included the text of this movement—*Legend of Leaving*—in that collection.

Baritone soloist Christopheren Nomura, of Japanese heritage, is a prominent international singer. He continues to perform hundreds of concerts and recitals with many of the world's great orchestras and artists. Remarkably, his father was in one of the same internment camps as Lawson Inada. In addition to that extraordinary connection, Christopheren is also thrilled by this piece, because—surprisingly—it is one of the first times

he has ever sung Japanese in a concert. The Japanese tanka (a poetic form like haiku, but slightly longer) which begins this movement was written by The Retired Emperor Sutoku, (r. 1124-1141) and speaks of a stream divided by a boulder, at last reuniting

The Same Stream of Life

The text for this final movement includes several sources. It opens again with Langston Hughes's river imagery and music from the first movement, including his line "My soul has grown deep like the rivers." French shifts to the broad spirituality of Calcutta-born Indian poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). "That river's stream is



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the same that runs through my veins night and day—the stream of life worldwide.” French also includes the sentiment of an ancient song (c. 1400 B.C.E.) dedicated to the sacred waters of the goddess Nikkal. It is found in the Hurrian Hymns, from ancient Syria (Ugarit) and contains what is currently thought to be the earliest written musical notation. To suggest this remarkable source from antiquity, French employs a variant of the richest and most exotic of the ancient modes—Phrygian—with its unique flatted second scale degree (along with more common flatted sixths and sevenths). She sets a positive, hopeful ending celebrating the stream of life in a warm A Major: “the same life that shoots with joy...through numberless blades of grass...tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers...And my joy is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.” And be ready for that emphatic final cadence, enlivened at the last second by a colorful 9th in the sopranos!

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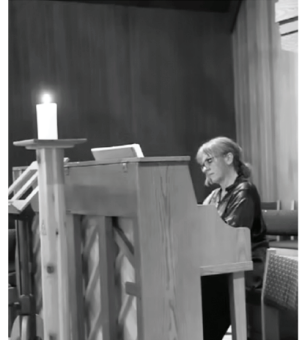
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Musical Echoes of the Holiday Season

December 2026

12 SATURDAY
7:30PM

13 SUNDAY
3:00PM

Chapter Four: A Legacy in Motion

As the Southern Oregon Repertory Singers mark four decades of music-making, Chapter Four of our story reflects a period of bold artistry, resilience, and renewed vision.

Following the triumph of our 25th anniversary performance of *Mass in B minor* in 2011—presented with period instruments and distinguished national soloists—we continued our exploration of masterworks with Johann Sebastian Bach’s profound *St. Matthew Passion* in 2014. This deeply moving performance featured an exceptional cast, including Christopher Cock as the Evangelist and Christòpheren Nomura in the role of Jesus.

In 2017, we launched a defining new tradition: the James M. Collier New Works Festival. Made possible through an extraordinary endowment gift from Jim Collier, the festival embodies his vision of fostering new choral music and ensuring its place in our future. His generosity continues to resonate through every new work we bring to life.

Then came 2020—a year that reshaped the world. After our final performances on February 29 and March 1, the onset of COVID-19 brought our voices to an unprecedented pause. For 21 months, our ensemble fell silent, as singers everywhere grappled with the sobering realities of aerosol transmission and the unique risks of choral singing.

When we reunited in December 2021, it was with both joy and adaptation. Masked in specially designed singer’s masks, we returned to the stage—our sound intact, though the experience felt, as many described it, “like singing in a sock.” Even so, the spirit of music endured.

In February 2022, the outbreak of war in Ukraine stirred the global artistic community. Renowned composer John Rutter responded with *A Prayer for Ukraine*, generously offered to choirs worldwide. That March, Rep Singers



By Brian Tingle,
Co-Founder
Southern Oregon
Repertory Singers

presented the Oregon premiere at a fundraiser supporting Ashland's sister city, Sviatohirsk—a deeply moving and meaningful performance.

Our commitment to new music continued in May 2023 with the premieres of two significant works: a vibrant cantata by Will Todd and a multi-movement composition by our Composer-in-Residence, Jodi French.

In March 2024, we honored the life and legacy of our founding Music Director, Ellison Glattly. His vision shaped this ensemble from its earliest days, and his continued presence in later years as a bass singer remains a cherished memory.

December 2025 marked another milestone: our first-ever holiday concert at the beautifully restored Holly Theatre, where we performed to a sold-out audience of 1,024 people. The excitement continues—we look forward to returning on December 18, 2026 for what promises to become a beloved annual tradition.

As we turn our gaze toward our 50th anniversary, we ask: what lies ahead? What musical treasures from centuries past to works yet unwritten will inspire us and the next generation under the direction of Paul French?

For this chorister, and to those who have journeyed with us, it has been nothing short of a magic carpet ride through decades filled with harmony, challenge, and joy. We invite you to continue this journey with us, to experience the beauty of choral music, and to share in the wonder that still lies ahead.

Cheers to the next chapter!

40 Years in Harmony

A Rep Singers Timeline

The story of the Southern Oregon Repertory Singers is one of artistic excellence, innovation, and enduring community connection. Here are defining moments from four decades of music-making:

1986 – Founded by Ellison Glattly and Brian Tingle at Southern Oregon State College.

- **April 1986** – First concert performance.

1989–1990 – Glattly departs to pursue a career in golf instruction. Following a national search, Paul French is appointed Music Director; he conducts his first concert in December 1990.

1994 & 2002 – Invited performances at the regional conference of the American Choral Directors Association in Tacoma, Washington.

1996 – A landmark year:

- Launch of the first *Mozart's Birthday Bash* with the Northwest Bach Ensemble, conducted by Philip Bayles and Paul French, featuring John Stadelman as Mozart.
- Glattly returns to Ashland and rejoins the ensemble as a bass singer.
- First theatrical collaboration with Rogue Music Theatre on *Sweeney Todd*.
- First commissioned premiere: a new choral work by Craig Kingsbury.
- Jodi French (then Jodi O'Connell) appears in her first performance with the ensemble.

1997 – Invited to perform at the North Western Division of American Guild of Organists Convention

2000 – Release of debut CD, *In Time of Softest Snow*.

2003 – National broadcast debut on National Public Radio's *West Coast Live*, featuring music by Todd Barton.

- Premiere of the first *Songs of Shakespeare* concert at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

2006 – West Coast premiere of Robert Levin's completion of Mozart's *Great Mass in C minor*.

-
- 2011** – 25th Anniversary Season: acclaimed performances of *Mass in B minor* by Johann Sebastian Bach with period instruments and internationally recognized soloists.
- 2014** – Presentation of Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* with period instruments and distinguished soloists.
- 2016** – Performances of *The Creation* by Joseph Haydn.
- Haydn with period instruments and Christopher Nomura, baritone soloist.
- 2017** – Launch of the James M. Collier New Works Festival, made possible by a transformative \$250,000 endowment gift.
- 2020** – Final performances before the global shutdown caused by COVID; the ensemble pauses for 21 months.
- 2021** – Return to the stage with premieres by Alvin Trotman (*Winter*) and Jodi French (*Auld Lang Syne*).
- 2022** – Oregon premiere of John Rutter’s *A Ukrainian Prayer*, supporting Ashland’s sister city in Ukraine.
- 2023** – World premieres of commissioned works by Will Todd (*m = pV*) and Jodi French (*The Kiss of Peace*).
- 2024** – Concert in memoriam honoring co-founder Ellison Glattly.
- 2025** – Featured performance of *Requiem* by Gabriel Fauré with soloist Dan Gibbs.
- World premiere of Jodi French’s *Cannons Into Bells*.
 - Holiday concert to a sold-out audience at the historic Holly Theatre.
- 2026** – World premiere of Jodi French’s *The Stranger Among You: Songs of Exile & Home*, and commissioned work *To the end, in songs* by British composer Peter Relph.
- Holiday concert planned for Holly Theater (December 2026)
- 2027** – **Commissioned works by British composer Lucy Walker and Jodi French for May 2027 premiere.**

Looking Ahead

With a rich legacy behind us and new music on the horizon, Rep Singers continues to inspire, innovate, and bring the power of choral music to our community—one unforgettable performance at a time.

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Winter Concert Series
Feb. 27-28 & Mar. 1, 2026

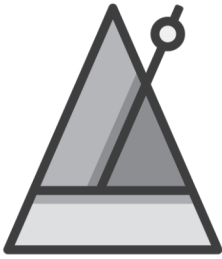
Spring Concert Series
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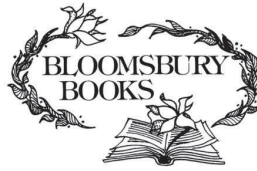
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