



FDCS CHORAL SOCIETY

Bringing Choral Masterworks to Life Since 1968

Choral Passages Vol. 35, No. 5, April 2025



FROM THE PODIUM

Greta Nelson, Artistic Director

When I think of spring in Iowa, the first thing that comes to mind is wind, rain, and even snow. Once we make it through the early parts of spring, however, the outdoors start to become more green and alive. One morning, very soon, we'll wake up, look outside, and it will feel as if this change happened overnight! Spring often is described as a time of transformation, and this is a strong theme embedded in our upcoming performance.

We will sing pieces that emphasize the beauty of life, but also its challenges. Dan Forrest's "The Music of Living" expresses a desire to embrace the full spectrum of human emotions, including laughter and tears. The text of "Earth Song" by Frank Ticheli speaks of environmental and climate justice, and emphasizes the power of music as a comforting force and a refuge.

At the heart of this program is *The Sunrise Mass*, by Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo. This four-movement work takes us on a journey from heaven gradually down to earth. Commonly, a traditional requiem is the opposite, ending in

heaven. Gjeilo wanted this piece to become more human, solid and grounded, as it progresses. What I love about this piece is it is engaging for any and all listeners. Whether you attend choral masterwork concerts frequently, or if you consider yourself a less-musical person, I truly believe you will enjoy this work. There is a cinematic style within it, and Gjeilo states that the Mass was partly inspired by Howard Shore's film score for *Lord of the Rings*. With titles like "The Sunrise" and "The City" for movements 2 and 3, you will likely hear the moment the sun appears over the horizon, and you may recognize the hustle and bustle of a city at the start and throughout movement 3. The musical imagery within this piece is genius and captivating. The final movement is titled "Identity." Here, we have found the mature sense of self, and our journey nears its conclusion through a beautiful chorale section, informally titled "The Ground".

On a personal note, I am in the process of my own transformation, as I pursue a new career opportunity over in Waverly, IA, as its next high school choir director. This will be my last concert at the podium for Fort Dodge Choral Society. I could not have imagined a more beautiful, transcending set of music to present to you all. It resonates with my heart deeply. This is a special group of humans that emphasize community, collaboration, and excellent music making. Please consider joining us for this final concert of the year.



2024 – 2025 Concert Season Finale

The Beauty of the Earth

featuring Ola Gjeilo's *Sunrise Mass*
with Chamber String Ensemble

Sunday, May 4, 2025, 4 pm

(Note: special beginning time)

Grace Lutheran Church
211 S 9th St, FD

Fun FDCS Fact

Over the 2024-25 season, we have had singers from eight cities and towns in our area: Clarion, Fort Dodge, Gowrie, Humboldt, Ogden, Pocahontas, Storm Lake, and Webster City — an embarrassment of riches.



If you enjoy singing excellent choral works of all types, please consider joining us for our next season.

First rehearsal will probably be:

Monday, August 18, 2025, 7-9 pm,
Grace Lutheran Church FD
(Check our website for up-to-date information.)

Thank you for your support this year!

We are so very grateful to each of you who purchased a membership this year. Membership revenue accounts for more than half of our budget. It assures us from the beginning of the season that we can be certain that we have the funds needed for each concert. Thank you again!

Community Masterwork Festival

The Community Masterwork Festival has been offered for three years by the Waldorf University Music department. The Festival is designed to offer a unique, high-quality experience for high school students, but this year FD Choral Society was invited to participate also. The choral masterwork selected this year was *Te Deum, op. 103* by Anton Dvorak.

It was fun for the small group from Choral Society to rehearse the piece with Greta Nelson, our Artistic Director. Then all groups registered for the Festival were to come to Waldorf, to participate in rehearsals during the day, and in the whole-group performance in the evening. Unfortunately, due to dangerous winter weather on the scheduled date, the Festival had to be re-scheduled, and the new date didn't work for our group. But a group of Webster City high school students were able to attend and really enjoyed it. We're really hoping to be able to participate in the future.

FDCS ANNUAL MEETING

All are invited!

Monday, May 19, 2025, at 7:00 pm
Grace Lutheran Church, 211 S 9th Street, Fort Dodge

We review the last year briefly, consider planning for the 2025-26 season, and address any issues and ideas that have come up. We hope you can join us!

2024-2025 FDCS Board

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\$12 at the door. Students free.

Choral Passages

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Choral Passages is the official newsletter of Fort Dodge Choral Society, published 5 times per year to inform members of the activities and concerns of the Society. Subscriptions are free by sending your name, address and phone number to:

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