

THE BATON IS PASSED



Hal Wright

The arts have always played a special part in the culture of our community. Canton and Akron both have wonderful symphony orchestras. Musical artists such as Macy Gray, Joe Vitale, and the O'Jays have their roots in the area. Talented musicians can be found around town in restaurants, coffee shops, and houses of worship. It is possible, however, that you are unaware of one of the best-kept musical secrets of our community – our very own **MajesticVoice Chorus**.

The **MajesticVoice Chorus** was born out of the former *Spectacular Music Productions (SMP)*, an organization that presented large choral and orchestra performances periodically in the early 2000s. When *SMP* folded in 2009, a core group of singers decided that there was still music left to be sung in this area! Those motivated few founded *MajesticVoice* with the goal of providing music as a service to the community, not only through major concerts but also through smaller “outreach programs” that provide music for those who may not be able to come out to a large event.

In keeping with that goal, the **Chorus** has provided yearly Christmas and Patriotic concerts, as well as over 200 outreach programs in venues such as nursing homes, assisted and independent living communities, and even hospitals, thus allowing many area

residents who may not physically be able to attend a major concert to still be part of the song!

Since the group was set up as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, the **Chorus** does not charge a specific fee for outreach programs, but donations are accepted. Major concerts are ticketed events but are reasonably priced. Some of the proceeds have been used to provide scholarships for college-bound high school students who plan on majoring in music.

As a community chorus, **MajesticVoice** is not associated with a specific church, although many of our members sing in their church choirs. For this reason, the chorus does not perform on Sunday mornings, reserving that time for families who wish to attend church.

At its peak, the **Chorus** averaged as many as 45 singers from our community for major concerts. As we know, the pandemic in our country has taken its toll on many organizations. **MajesticChorus** was forced to discontinue major concerts for two years, and outreach programs at nursing homes and care facilities were suspended.

In addition, during the difficult years of the pandemic, the **Chorus** suffered another challenge. Their long-time director, Kathleen Bell, who was so instrumental in laying the foundation not only for musical excellence but

“**Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.**”

– Berthod Auerbach



also for community service, sadly passed away near the end of 2021. She will be sorely missed.

The **Chorus** of community voices wishes to announce that **MajesticVoice Chorus** is in *rebuilding mode* and looking to the future with optimism and excitement. In Kathleen’s absence, the Director’s baton for the 2022 fall concert season has been passed to life-long Stark County resident **Hal Wright**. A highly qualified, professional musician for four decades, Wright has directed large choirs and orchestras and professionally produced eight gold records and one platinum record. All told, Hal has produced over 300 albums, including three for **MajesticVoice Chorus**. His musical accolades include 200 choral arrangements in print, and he has produced worship projects internationally in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, China, India, Africa, and Mongolia.

Upon officially accepting the position on July 1st, Wright commented, “This is a fun, energetic group of folks who love to sing and perform! When the offer to become the director was extended, it was an easy decision for me! The **Chorus** has so much potential for serving the Canton community with

music.” Wright extends an invitation to those in the community who enjoy singing with others and hearing the rich harmonies of choral music, saying, “The **Chorus** is not affiliated with a specific church, but since so many churches are now abandoning their choirs, **MajesticVoice** is a wonderful alternative for those who enjoy singing and serving!” Going forward, Wright will team with **Chorus** member David Zavasky, who has been named Assistant Music Director. Zavasky will direct many of the outreach programs throughout the year.

If you have the desire to sing and serve our community, **MajesticVoice** extends an invitation to you to become a part of this great organization. Singers need not be professional vocalists but should be able to carry a tune and be willing to learn. Weekly rehearsals are held on Monday evenings beginning in September. A performance date for this year’s Christmas concert is set for Dec. 3rd at the historic Lions Lincoln Theater in Massillon. Come join this exciting group of singers and serve your community with music! For more information, please contact Hal Wright at halwrightmusic@gmail.com.