

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 20, 2009

WHAT: Fine Arts Center Presents Cantus
Thursday, March 12 at 7:30 PM

WHERE: Bowker Auditorium
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets or
go online to www.fineartscenter.com/tickets

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(CANTUS BRINGS ITS CHARM AND HARMONIOUS SOUND TO UMASS BOWKER)

Cantus, a Minneapolis-St. Paul ensemble has made a nice career for itself since its founding in 1995 at Minnesota's St. Olaf College. The reasons are ample including impeccable singing, an engaging stage personality, heartfelt interpretations and a sense of boundless joy in music making. From art songs to folk songs, from Smokey Robinson to Richard Strauss, Cantus' brilliant sound has garnered the highest praise from critics and audiences alike. The Washington Post exclaims "Cantus' sonic blend was so beaming and elastic that it seemed to originate as a single, gorgeous variegated voice," said *The Washington Post*. They bring their vocal gusto to the UMass Bowker Auditorium on Thursday, March 12 at 7:30PM. Cantus includes baritones Dashon Burton and Adam Reinwald; tenors Eric Hopkins, Aaron Humble, Paul Rudoj, Gary Ruschman, and Shahzore Shah; and bass vocalists Chris Foss and Tim Takach.

As one of the few full-time vocal ensembles in the world, the ensemble enjoys a vigorous schedule of national tours, subscription concerts in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, several innovative residencies, collaborations, educational programs, and recording. Rehearsing and performing without a conductor, Cantus has been praised by critics and the public alike for its broad repertoire, bold ensemble singing and engaging stage presentation. Cantus' repertoire spans all periods and genres, including contemporary works, art songs, early

music, world music, and pop. The ensemble regularly commissions new works. Cantus' "Music for Men's Voices" choral series is published by the Neil A. Kjos Music Company and features works written for and by the members of Cantus.

Cantus' coast-to-coast tours have included performances throughout the United States, appearing on major concert stages from New York to San Francisco. In the summer of 2003 the ensemble made its European debut at France's Polyfolia Festival. The ensemble has performed at the American Choral Directors' Association's national and regional conventions and numerous choral festivals. Last season, Cantus toured across the eastern United States with the Boston Pops, traveled to Cameroon, Africa for a 13-day engagement, and performed in Washington, DC at the Kennedy Center.

Cantus also has a rich history of collaborations with other arts organizations, including Trio Mediaeval, the Minnesota Orchestra under the direction of Doc Severinsen, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. In 2007, Cantus collaborated with Theater Latté Da in the commissioning of a new work entitled *All Is Calm: the Christmas Truce of 1914*. Cantus fulfills its mission of commissioning new music both individually and through the Male Choral Commissioning Consortium, which it directs. Cantus has recorded nine CDs on its own label, Cantus Recordings. Cantus' recent self-titled CD "Cantus" was named one of the top 10 CD's of 2007 by National Public Radio. Cantus fulfills its commitment to music education by encouraging people of all ages – especially men – to sing. Its members are frequent clinicians at festivals, schools and universities throughout the country.

Tickets for Cantus are \$30 and \$15. Youth 17 and under and Five College/GCC students are \$15. Tickets are available from the Fine Arts Center Box Office at 545-2511, 800-999-UMAS, or online at www.fineartscenter.com. This performance is funded by a grant from the Vidda Foundation. The University of Massachusetts Amherst Fine Arts Center is also a 2008-09 recipient of a CMA Residency Partnership Program Grant. Funding has been provided by the Chamber Music America Residency Endowment Fund.

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