

Education

Cantus is in full swing with our High School Mentorship program partnership with the FAIR School for Arts in Downtown Minneapolis. We just completed five (5) classroom visits in three (3) months, working with choral director Tanner VanderKrabben (they/them) and their two choirs.

Tanner is a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota and did their student teaching with Laurie Meyers down at South High School. They are midway through their second year at FAIR, and we have been working together to showcase what we do as an ensemble (our artistic work, our collaborative process, etc.) and start to address Tanner's needs as a teacher building a choral program from the ground up.

On our last two visits, we were able to observe Tanner at work in the classroom, work directly with the students on the music they are learning, do sessions on vocal technique, and have some in-depth discussions with the students themselves on the subject of artistic philosophy—who they are as people, what their artistic influences are, and how they can combine those to be intentional about the art that they create as they grow and learn. I was also able to chat on the phone with Tanner to go over what the ensemble observed in their teaching, which Tanner said was very helpful.

In the spring, we will be partnering with the FAIR school choir on an as-yet-determined collaborative project in May around the theme of "Creation." We will work with the students and Tanner to identify areas of curiosity, which can include anything from what Cantus does of selecting a narrative-driven story to base a concert off of, writing their own songs, and more.

In other news, we are busy planning, with ACDA-MN, the Cantus Tenor Bass Festival! It is an all-are-welcome high school tenor bass festival hosted by and at St. Michael-Albertville High School. The festival will be an all-day affair on March 11, 2024, and will feature Cantus as both clinicians and performers, featuring three or four mass-choir songs conducted by members of the ensemble. Our goal is to have this day as a day of musical community-building for low-voice singers around the state.

Programming

Season 2023/24 [Current season]

The artists are in the process of finishing up a handful of things. We have finalized the setlist for our collaboration with the **Worthington Area Symphonic Orchestra (WASO)**. It will be a fun program of Cantus audience favorites, and the WASO/Cantus tutti numbers will be a lot of pop and Motown works - promising a fun evening for audience members. Later this month, we are finalizing our set lists for the collaboration with **Canadian Brass**. Also our spring show and album project, **Mountain Nights**, will be finalized soon. We're particularly excited about organizing the setlist into a cohesive album track order and brainstorming about how to best present the new performance concept to our audiences. The shows that remain incomplete (i.e. idol, covers, chamber) have deadlines in the new calendar year.

Season 2024/25

We have recently heard back from Sweet Honey in the Rock that they would be delighted to collaborate on a new work for our touring show, **Wanting Memories**. We don't yet have specifics on what that work will be, but the conversation continues. Later this month, the artists will discuss with whom we would like to perform **our collaborative show**. Recent collaborators have included Chanticleer, Cantus Norway, and Canadian Brass, and we're very excited about new prospects. No additional progress has been made on this season, but none is required at this time.

Season 2025/26

Our primary touring program focusing on the **semiquincentennial anniversary of the United States** continues to evolve and has moved away from the gargantuan task of wrapping 250 years-worth of content into one program and delves more specifically into the origins of our country's melting pot - immigration and cultural/national identity. With My Journey Yours as a starting framework, we hope to finalize this program by mid-December to present to MKI Artists. The artists are in conversation with MKI Artists regarding our secondary touring program; we're strongly considering **aligning album releases with touring shows**. More details as the conversation progresses.