



CAPELLA REGALIS MEN AND BOYS CHOIR

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www.capellaregalis.com

Dear Friend,

May 17, 2022

Thirteen years ago, I started Capella Regalis: a choir for men and boys in the European liturgical tradition. This was not because I preferred the sound of boys' voices (I grew up in a mixed choir), or because I was particularly attracted to a certain repertoire, still less to some archaic traditional ideal. Nothing of the sort. It was simply because I felt that boys (and therefore men) in our neck of the woods were not being given the training necessary to the task of reading music while making a beautiful vocal sound in various languages and styles, in order that they might *perform* (loosely translated as "make manifest") the finest music of any age. And experience had already taught me that at this point in time, in this part of the world, if you start a mixed choir, the boys either don't show up from the get-go, or are the first to lose heart and drop out.

In recent years, most cathedral choirs in England, and many collegiate chapel choirs whose membership includes children, have started their own choirs for girls, thank goodness. In response to queries as to why, at St Paul's Cathedral, they will keep the two groups separate, Director of Music Andrew Carwood said something that prompted some thoughts from my father Paul. Because I think it is pertinent - and strangely encouraging - I want to share with you the entirety of his email next day to me and Vanessa:

I thought that quote from Andrew Carwood - "I accept the idea of a boys' choir as culturally iconic" - was rather telling. This may be the case in certain quarters in England, but here in North America today, I'd say the idea of a boys' choir is culturally embarrassing, if not entirely invisible. Consequently, you two have had to think through the real issue, which is not the need to preserve a cultural icon, but to rediscover the potential for training in the great music of the Church as a vehicle to bring life to countless boys and young men, who otherwise might drown in a sea of overwhelming mediocrity.

I know the use of the term "Dark Ages" to characterize the Late Antiquity/Early Medieval period in Western European history has, with good reason, fallen out of favour. However, I'm sure there have been times, and there will continue to be times, when alert people feel they are living in a society that is experiencing a particularly dark age. Certainly many Ukrainians must be feeling something along these lines at the moment. And closer to home, I suspect small numbers of thoughtful people are wondering about the cultural icons and idols that dominate our society.

The wonderful fact that over the last twenty-five years, more than one billion people have lifted themselves out of extreme poverty does not preclude the possibility that during the same period countless young hearts and minds have been wasted through neglect and cowardice.

Enough - back to the "Dark Ages":

*"In the generation of Boethius and Cassiodorus the challenge was no longer how to transform what had been received; it was rather to preserve and transmit what was forgotten." (Robert Louis Wilken in *The First Thousand Years*)*

With Capella Regalis I do not feel that educating kids of a particular gender is our task. Our task is simply to educate as best we can, with the gifts of music that we've been given, to foster both the critical thinking and the courage that great music demands of us, in all sorts of young minds. We are finally starting a Girls Choir. I am so looking forward to seeing this group take shape, to hear them, and to have us all singing together on some grand Feast Day next year. We have also this year started our Endowment Fund, a testament to our commitment to a future in which boys and girls will have access to a program that has already shown itself to be transforming and inspiring.

The great jazz bassist and composer Charles Mingus once said, "Let my children have music! Let them hear live music. Not noise. My children! You do what you want with your own!". In supporting Capella Regalis, you are letting all sorts of children, not just your own, have music.

It is thanks to many of you that Capella Regalis has survived and in fact, grown through this pandemic. We have the largest group of probationers in our history, and the young men who are now altos, tenors and basses are swelling our ranks, providing the best kind of mentorship to the young ones. Please give as generously as you can to ensure the continued development and vitality of this educational program.

Thank you,



Nick Halley, *Founder & Artistic Director*

Donations received in response to this appeal will support our Men & Boys Choir programming, and 20% of each donation will go into our Endowment Start-up Fund. If, in addition, you would like to donate to our Girls Choir Start-Up, please stay tuned for the crowdfunding campaign launch on Indiegogo and on our website in early June.

There are many ways to donate to Capella Regalis and receive a tax receipt. *We are an educational outreach program of Musique Royale, a music presenting charity.*

1. Mail a cheque. **Cheques should be made payable to Musique Royale**, with 'Capella Regalis' in the memo line. Please note our **new mailing address**:
Capella Regalis
6036 Coburg Road
Halifax, NS B3H 1Y9
2. Visit the 'Contribute' page on our website (capellaregalis.com/contribute) and follow the links to make an online payment by e-transfer or credit card. Both options will lead you to Musique Royale, so **please be sure to include a note that your donation is for Capella Regalis.**