

WELCOME FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

From the concert programme of To Bethlehem With Kings Christmas concert series, December 2012

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday, the King's Chapel Choir wrapped up its fifth annual series of *A King's Christmas*, and here we are now with *Capella Regalis* in its third season (with three performances) of *To Bethlehem with Kings*. My father, Paul Halley, and I were asked in a recent CBC interview to discuss the trials and tribulations of life as choral directors during the period leading up to Christmas, the hectic schedule of rehearsals and performances, the frantic publicizing, organizing, and behind-the-scenes chaos of pulling this off. However, neither Paul nor I could describe this time of glorious music-making as anything other than sheer pleasure – as anything other than a gift.

The boys of *Capella Regalis* kicked off the academic year with their first Choir Camp, a week of rehearsing, sporting, and the general merriment of rustic camp life among friends. This fall, the choir performed for the Lieutenant Governor and a full house at St John's Lunenburg in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee, as well as with the Kings Chorus under the baton of Dinuk Wijeratne in the Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra's performance of *Carmina Burana*. At the heart of our programme are the weekly Evensongs in the Chapel of the University of King's College, and with a tour in May, it seems we're not far from my dream of Choir School life.

I'm often asked what a boy learns in *Capella Regalis*. The boys learn their music with me and the other men in the choir, with Paul Halley and Nick Veltmeyer (Organ Scholar at King's) accompanying. Nick (familarly "Nico") also runs what is quickly developing into our Junior Choir, where new boys catch up on the skills that give the full-fledged chorister his edge. In addition to learning bits of Latin, French, and German, and what Alexander MacLeod in his reading from *A King's Christmas* called "the dots and lines of music's great code", the boys become increasingly skilled at the subtleties of phrasing and vocal production. But I think there is something more: together we are learning teamwork and the commitment, compassion, even devotion, that ultimately produces real leadership and fulfillment – the kind of fulfillment that can direct us out of our darkness, toward the Light.

And what do I learn in *Capella Regalis*? Is the continual effort required to pull off another Evensong, another concert, to get everyone home safely, to keep our youthful choristers engaged, a burden of countless cares and concerns? Or, is it an arena of grace where we see these young people plunge into the rich and vast depths of transformative music? Truthfully, it is a bit of both; it is real. Yet, with this able administration, this superb board, and an increasingly devoted cast of parents and volunteers, my role in this group has become a great pleasure and a great musical reward.

Capella Regalis is daily fulfilling its mission and that is exciting. We are still at the beginning of our path, but we are making great strides, and I ask for your continued support in whatever form you are able to give it. The boys and men, the parents and volunteers, and especially you, our wonderful audience, are enough to fill even the most frantic, chaotic, Advent-laden choral director with gratitude.

Thank you for joining us this evening,

Nick