

A Call for Support

From the concert programme of the Men & Boys Choir Tour of Nova Scotia presented by Musique Royale, June 2017

Dear Friends,

As Capella Regalis embarks on our fifth tour and our second recording project, my memory takes me back to all of our wonderful, previous tours, and to our first-ever recording project in 2014. We have toured Nova Scotia from tip to tip, Yarmouth to Glace Bay, over the course of four tours, and now we are headed to PEI in our first out-of-province excursion. When we recorded our debut CD only three years ago, three of our current basses were sopranos!

In my letter to the audience at our Christmas shows this past winter, I talked about the importance of learning to listen, as a life skill. I was thinking about this on the way home from a rehearsal back around Christmastime: Why do I believe so strongly that a men and boys choir offers something unique in the world of education? Why do I believe that in the hour and fifteen minutes we spend learning music twice each week, we learn so much more than notes? I think it has to do with acquiring listening skills.

In any given rehearsal, the boys are called upon to *listen* in a way that is unique to choral activity and rare in our present age. They have to listen to themselves to be sure they've got the notes and are making the most beautiful sound possible; they must listen to each other and the men behind them to sing in tune, with proper phrasing and diction and blend, and emulate what the more experienced singers are doing; and they have to listen to me to keep up with the flow of the rehearsal (as they are so often reminded, half of singing in a good choir is simply keeping the focus). This is heightened listening. The choristers are sharpening their listening skills over and over again, at every moment, lest they miss something of great import.

Touring is a superb exercise in cultivating this virtue of attentiveness. When we are on tour, we are called upon to be pleasant additions to our surroundings and in recent years something noticeable has happened: The choir is not just appreciated by concert audiences (whose warmth never fails to encourage) but by billet hosts, museum staff, innkeepers, you name it. People appreciate the men and boys, and are glad for their presence, *even when they have not heard them sing*. As a group, we are striving to be attentive, to listen, regardless of what we are doing, in consistent thankfulness for what we are receiving.

It perhaps goes without saying that recording projects are excellent for developing listening skills. At the end of this tour, our plan is to make our second Capella Regalis recording. It will be a LIVE recording, taken from our final concert in the Cathedral Church of All Saints on June 15th, with some 'studio' recording added two days later, to make for an exciting blend of repertoire.

All Capella Regalis programming, including our Summer Tour 2017 and our new recording project, is possible only with the support of individual donors. We can give our young choristers these experiences only if we have raised enough funding. I hope you will consider making a donation to Capella Regalis. Your encouragement does not fall on deaf ears and your generosity will have manifest benefits in the lives of our choristers and, we hope, our culture for years to come.

Yours, Nick