



Choral Arts Ensemble and Honors Choirs of Southeastern Minnesota Announce New Artistic Director

March 28, 2024

Rochester, MN—Choral Arts Ensemble (CAE) and Honors Choirs of SE MN (HCSM) are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Ryan Deignan as the new Artistic Director. With experience teaching and conducting high school, college, and community choirs, Dr. Deignan brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to both organizations.

Rick Kvam, who will retire as Artistic Director for both organizations in May, says, "Ryan Deignan is an absolutely terrific choral conductor, an energetic and award-winning educator, a stellar solo singer, and a friendly, charismatic personality. Jan and I, blessed by countless experiences of great music and warm friendships during our years with Choral Arts Ensemble and Honors Choirs, are so happy to know that the choirs will be in such talented hands."

Dr. Deignan joins the choirs from the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), where he served as Assistant Professor and Interim Director of Choral Activities. At UMD, Dr. Deignan led the flagship University Singers and the award-winning vocal jazz ensemble *Lake Effect*. In addition to his UMD duties, Deignan served as the Artistic and Executive Director of the *Twin Ports Choral Project*, an adult community choir. Deignan holds a BA in Vocal Performance from Luther College, an MA in Music Education from the University of Iowa, and a DMA in Choral Studies with a cognate field in Vocal Pedagogy from the University of North Texas.

When accepting the position, Dr. Deignan said, "I am honored to accept the position of Artistic Director of Choral Arts Ensemble and Honors Choirs of SE Minnesota. These two organizations are pillars of the arts community in Rochester, providing inspiring singing experiences and choral music performances for more than 30 years. I am thrilled to be leading CAE, an ensemble with an outstanding reputation for artistic quality throughout the region and such a wonderful history of conductors in Rick Kvam and Michael Culloton."

Deignan continued, "I have spent the majority of my career in music education and very much look forward to supporting the future of choral singing by working with the high school singers of the Honors Concert Choir. I am eager to collaborate with both the CAE and Honors staffs to grow both organizations and continue the rich tradition of inspiring, high-quality choral music they have maintained for so many years."

Karen Sessler, Executive Director of Choral Arts Ensemble, said, "We look forward to welcoming Ryan and his family to Rochester this summer. I'm excited to work with him to build the choir and repertoire for Choral Arts Ensemble's 40th Season."



Choral Arts Ensemble (CAE) is a premier choir of 60 singers that performs in Rochester and Southeast Minnesota from October to May. Members are required to audition each year. The mission of the CAE is *to inspire, educate, and enrich the community at large through outstanding choral performance.*

Jayne Rothschild, Executive Director of Honors Choirs of SE MN, said, "Ryan brings an outstanding skill set as a conductor, educator, administrator, and professional musician, and he will be an excellent artistic leader for Honors Choirs. We cannot wait to welcome the Deignan family to Rochester."

Honors Choirs of SE MN was founded as a non-profit organization in 1992, and today is the largest youth choral organization in the area, serving 250-325 young singers in five choirs from Rochester and surrounding communities. The mission of Honors Choirs of Southeast Minnesota is *to promote the highest standard of excellence in the preparation and performance of choral music, seeking to provide artistic challenge and growth opportunities for youth throughout the region and enjoyment for the community at large.*

For more information, please get in touch with –

Karen Sessler at ksessler@choralartsensemble.org or Jayne Rothschild at jayne@honorschoirs.org

####