



# Nebraska Choral Arts Society

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Children's choir has "Bon Voyage" sendoff before touring Mexico

**For Immediate Release**

**June 2, 2008**

**WHAT:** "Bon Voyage" sendoff concert before a tour of Mexico

**WHO:** Bel Canto, a Nebraska Children's Chorus choir of the Nebraska Choral Arts Society

**WHEN:** Sunday, June 8 at 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** University of Nebraska at Omaha's Strauss Performing Arts Center  
63<sup>rd</sup> and Dodge Streets

**TICKETS:** Admission is free. A freewill offering will be collected.

**MEDIA RSVP:** Please contact Marjorie Maas at 402.991.1560 to confirm interest. If interested in speaking with Bel Canto Conductor Sean Burton, choir members or families, please arrive by 2:30 p.m., or stay until the conclusion of the concert.

*Omaha, Neb.* – Bel Canto, one of the six children's choirs of the Nebraska Choral Arts Society, embarks on a 10-day tour of Mexico on June 9. NCAS will host a "Bon Voyage" concert on Sunday, June 8 at 3 p.m. in the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Strauss Performing Arts Center for the community and their families and friends to wish them well and celebrate this achievement. Concert repertoire will be a sampling of all the pieces they will perform on tour including multicultural sacred, folk, multicultural and contemporary works. Admission is free; a freewill donation will be collected.

Comprised of approximately 30 students in fifth through twelfth grades, Bel Canto (Italian for "beautiful singing") is the most celebrated and widely-toured ensemble of the eight choirs composing the Nebraska Choral Arts Society. They have performed with the symphony orchestras of Lincoln, Omaha and Sioux City, been featured at state, regional, national and international conferences of various learned societies, and toured throughout North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. The ensemble's annual repertoire includes approximately thirty-five memorized pieces in as many as eight languages. Bel Canto's performances are regarded for their unique sonority, meticulous tuning and commitment to the composer's intent.

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Bel Canto has recorded five compact discs, the most recent titled "Reflections." Additionally, they were a featured choir in the Field Studies International Festival at Lincoln Center in New York in 2003. In June 2002 the choir placing second in the world renowned Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.

Bel Canto Conductor Dr. Sean Burton comments, “One emphasis of our tour is to share Bel Canto’s enthusiastic esprit de corps and joy of singing. Our members, through the memorable international performances and travel, will also learn the innumerable benefits of cultural exchange.”

He continues, “We’re pursuing integration with the Mexico’s cultural offerings. This tour is truly going throughout the country, not just to tourist locales.”

On the Mexican tour, Bel Canto will perform eight concerts in the country’s most noteworthy cathedrals and cultural and academic institutions. Performance venues include the Metropolitan Cathedral, the Basilica of Guadalupe, the National Conservatory of Music and the University of the Americas. They begin in Mexico City, travel to Xalapa (one of Omaha’s sister cities), perform in Puebla and Taxco and end the tour in Acapulco.

“Choral music, perhaps even more so than the verbal exchange, has the ability to span cultures and transcend barriers,” explained Burton regarding the variety of languages and musical styles planned for the tour’s program.

The NCAS concert season runs September through May with choirs touring through late spring and into June. Touring is fundamental to the organization; other choirs have or will tour North Carolina, Kansas City, Colorado Springs, central Iowa and Chicago this season. New member auditions for the adult and children’s choirs of NCAS are held in August, January and May.

As far as an outlook to next season, Burton shares, “We’re a better choir every year, and there will be several exciting projects in the coming season to help further recognize Bel Canto on a national level.”

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The Nebraska Choral Arts Society, a non-profit organization founded in 1978, is the umbrella of the Masterworks Chorus, CAST (Choral Arts Society Teens) and the Nebraska Children’s Chorus. Its mission is to share the gift of great choral music, to inspire new generations with the love of singing and broaden its reach to all ages and cultures. Eight choirs make up the Nebraska Choral Arts Society, performing throughout the year in various venues in Omaha and across the country. The most advanced choirs of NCAS have performed internationally in choral music festivals and concerts in Europe, Asia and Africa. For more information, visit [www.choirmusic.org](http://www.choirmusic.org).