



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Bob Peskin, 612.455.2298

bob@mnchorale.org

CHORALE PARTNERS WITH COURAGE CENTER FOR 2011 *BRIDGES* PROGRAM, *JOIN THE DANCE!*

**Nationally-acclaimed Dance Exchange creating
choreographed works**

MINNEAPOLIS, October 11, 2011. The Minnesota Chorale announces details of its 17th annual *Bridges* community engagement program. *Join the Dance!* is a partnership between the Chorale, Courage Center, the Dance Exchange, and VSA Minnesota.

Join the Dance! focuses on Minnesotans with physical disabilities. Clients of Courage Center—a Minnesota-based nonprofit rehabilitation and resource center for people with disabilities—will be paired with Chorale singers in the creation and performance of choreographed works, set to music sung by the Chorale. Under the direction of Chorale artistic director Kathy Saltzman Romey, the performances will feature the premiere of a new work by composer Mary Ellen Childs, commissioned for this program. Dancers from the Dance Exchange of Takoma Park, Md., will lead singers and dancers in the creation of these works, using the Dance Exchange's nationally acclaimed methods for developing community-based art.

Following a private performance at Courage Center Golden Valley on Friday evening, Nov. 18, two public performances are scheduled:

- Saturday, Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m. at the Music Room of the SPCO Center, Hamm Building, 408 St. Peter Street, St. Paul, Minn.
- Sunday, Nov. 20, 4:00 p.m. at St. Richard's Catholic Church, 7540 Penn Ave. S., Richfield, Minn.

All performance spaces are fully accessible. General admission tickets for the public performances are \$20 (\$15 for seniors, students and VSA Minnesota) and may be purchased online at www.mnchorale.org/dance or by phone at 612.455.2100.

Funding for *Join the Dance!* is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and VSA Minnesota.

– MORE –

About *Bridges*

The *Bridges* program, established by the Minnesota Chorale in 1994 to build musical and social bridges to diverse populations, has been acclaimed as a national model for choral outreach programs. *Bridges* is a series of musical initiatives that harness the richness and diversity of the global choral repertoire to engage communities and raise awareness of pressing social needs. Each year, the Chorale identifies key program collaborators, whether a community, an organization, an artist, or some combination of these. It then identifies appropriate occasions and venues, locates or commissions suitable repertoire, and tailors a range of outreach, education, and performance activities to accomplish the goals of the program. The cumulative results of nearly two decades of *Bridges* programs include a widening of the audience for choral music in the Twin Cities and a web of organizational and individual connections centered on music but reaching far beyond it. For more information, visit www.mnchorale.org/dance

About Courage Center

Courage Center is a nonprofit rehabilitation and resource center that advances the lives of children and adults experiencing barriers to health and independence. At Courage Center, we specialize in treating brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke, chronic pain, autism, and disabilities experienced since birth. Founded in 1928, Minneapolis-based Courage Center offers advanced technologies and innovation provided in part through the efforts of thousands of volunteers and donors. For more information, visit www.CourageCenter.org

About Dance Exchange

Dance Exchange breaks boundaries between stage and audience, theater and community, movement and language, tradition and the unexplored. Founded in 1976 by Liz Lerman and now under the artistic direction of Cassie Meador, Dance Exchange stretches the range of contemporary dance through explosive dancing, personal stories, humor, and a company of performers whose ages span six decades. The work consists of concerts, interactive performances, community residencies, and professional training in community-based dance. For more information, visit www.danceexchange.org

About VSA Minnesota

VSA Minnesota is a non-profit agency that provides programs and services that make the arts available and accessible to Minnesota people with disabilities. VSA Minnesota is dedicated to ensuring that music, theater, dance, creative writing, and visual and media arts play a part in the lives of all people. In addition, VSA Minnesota believes that experiences in the arts enhance personal growth, increase educational achievement and enable career success. Participation in the arts promotes acceptance and inclusion in all aspects of life. Founded in 1986, VSA Minnesota is an affiliate of VSA in Washington D.C. For more information, visit www.vsamn.org