



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 27, 2010

Chorale, MacPhail partner to launch new chorus of local senior citizens

Minneapolis -The Minnesota Chorale and MacPhail Center for Music announce the formation of **Voices of Experience**, an artistically ambitious, 50-voice chorus of Twin Cities' seniors, ages 55 and older, with and without previous choral experience. A Chorale-MacPhail steering committee has chosen Dr. Mary Kay Geston, an associate professor of music at Northwestern College in St. Paul, as the ensemble's conductor.

Though often courted as consumers of and donors to the arts, seniors have been widely neglected as performers. Voices of Experience seeks to remedy this neglect, mobilizing and celebrating the musical gifts of its members and harnessing their community-building and life-enhancing capacity. Intended to be a durable musical institution, the chorus aims to be not just a recreation but a serious artistic endeavor—a focus of learning, creativity, pride, and self renewal in later life, serving both its members and the senior population as a whole.

Voices of Experience will make its formal debut at two concerts in November. On Nov. 19, at noon, the group will sing in MacPhail's Antonello Hall. On Nov. 21, at 3 p.m., at Westwood Lutheran Church, 9001 Cedar Lake Road, St. Louis Park, the ensemble will perform with the Minnesota Chorale and its Minneapolis Youth Chorus - four generations singing side-by-side, as the centerpiece of the Chorale's 2010 Bridges community-engagement project, *Sing On!*

Admission to the chorus is by auditions, which will be held at MacPhail, 501 South 2nd Street, Minneapolis, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Aug. 31, Sept. 2, and Sept. 7. To schedule an audition, please call 612-321-0100. Rehearsals, also at MacPhail, will be held on Tuesdays at 10 a.m., beginning Sept. 14. Tuition for the 10-week semester is \$150; scholarships are available.

Voices of Experience is made possible in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Quaker Hill Foundation. The Minnesota Chorale is a fiscal year 2010 recipient of an Arts Access grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is funded, in part, by the Minnesota arts and cultural heritage fund as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.

For further information, please telephone 612.321.0100 or visit macphail.org.

Mary Kay Geston is an associate professor of music at Northwestern College, St. Paul, has directed the Manitou Singers at St. Olaf College, and previously taught at universities in South Dakota and Colorado. She is a sought-after guest conductor of honor and festival choirs regionally and nationally. Choirs under her direction have performed at state and division conferences of the American Choral Directors Association and Minnesota Music Educators Association. Geston is president-elect of the North Central Division of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), serves on ACDA of Minnesota's F. Melius Christiansen Endowment Fund committee, and previously was president of ACDA of Minnesota. "I am delighted to be named conductor of this exciting new choir," Geston said. "The educational expertise of MacPhail combined with the superlative artistic reputation of the Minnesota Chorale make this a truly unique musical offering for older singers in the metro area."

Founded in 1972, the **Minnesota Chorale** is Principal Chorus of the Minnesota Orchestra and ranks among the foremost professional choruses in the United States. Led by Kathy Saltzman Romey since 1995, the Chorale is best known for its work with the Twin Cities' two major orchestras, but is equally dedicated to fostering and deepening community through its community-engagement initiatives, educational activities, and independent presentations of choral works. A seasoned artistic partner, the Chorale explores new artistic pathways and collaborative opportunities while earning the highest critical acclaim for its work on the concert stage.

MacPhail Center for Music is a non-profit organization committed to transforming lives and enriching the community through music education. Each year, MacPhail opens its doors to more than 8,200 students offering programming for all ages and abilities, at locations in Minneapolis, White Bear Lake, and Apple Valley, as well as numerous community partnerships across the Twin Cities metro area. MacPhail has a 102-year history of excellence, promoting life-long learning and building long-term relationships between students and teachers.