



# DeKalb Choral Guild

*Harmonia et Concordia*

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## **DEKALB CHORAL GUILD ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL 2009 GEORGIA YOUNG COMPOSERS FESTIVAL**

### **GUILD TO PREMIERE WORKS BY COLLEGIATE AND HIGH SCHOOL COMPOSERS AND AWARD SCHOLARSHIPS TO WINNERS**

ATLANTA, May 4, 2009 – The DeKalb Choral Guild announces the inaugural edition of a new student-oriented composition contest for choral works, the 2009 Georgia Young Composers Festival. The Guild has selected five outstanding collegiate and high school composers from schools across the state. The Guild will present the composers' works in concert in front of a panel of judges who will select a collegiate and high school winner who will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship. The festival concert will take place Saturday, May 16, 8:00 PM, at the Florence Kopleff Recital Hall on the campus of Georgia State University.

“The idea of the Georgia Young Composers Festival,” said festival director Cliff Norris, “is to promote the work of talented composition students right here in the state of Georgia.” The festival activities started in the Fall of 2008 with a call for entries to all public and private universities, colleges and high schools across the state. In March, a selection committee of professional choral musicians narrowed the field down to the five finalists. Mr. Norris commented, “the chorus is amazed by the diversity in styles and subjects used by the students in their works. The singers have really enjoyed getting to know these talented students.”

The finalists for the 2009 Georgia Young Composers Festival are:

- Justin Johns, a junior at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia, majoring in Music Theory and Composition. Justin's work “Requiem” intersperses the Latin text from opening movement of a traditional requiem mass with the words of Robert Louis Stevenson's poem “Requiem” sung by a baritone solo. The music is set in an evocative modern style with piano accompaniment that enriches the emotional texture.
- Chris Owenby, pursuing a Master's in Music degree at Georgia State University in Atlanta. Chris's work “O Magnum Mysterium” sets the ancient Latin text that marvels on the “great mystery” of the animals surrounding the manger being the first to see the baby Jesus. The lush, divisi choral writing is underscored with a piano part that enhances the sense of mystery evoked by his setting of the text.

- Daniel Elder, a junior at the University of Georgia, majoring in Music Composition. Daniel chooses as his subject Edgar Allan Poe's "A Dream Within a Dream," which laments the transitory nature of life. Daniel's work for a capella chorus uses a variety of compositional techniques and beautiful part-writing to express the poet's emotions.
- Evelyn Petcher, a junior at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain. Her work, "Jesu Dulcis Memoria" is a setting of an ancient Latin hymn of the same name. Befitting the text, she uses stylistic techniques showing a progression from plainchant through the Baroque era, adding polyphonic elements with each verse.
- Thomas Morris, a junior at the Paideia School in Atlanta and the sole high school division finalist. Thomas also chose Poe's "A Dream Within a Dream" as the text for his work, set for a capella chorus and soprano solo. The piece has extended use of divisi parts to enhance the harmonic textures and lay bare the poem's deep emotional content.

AT&T of Georgia is sponsoring the collegiate division scholarship award, while the Guild is sponsoring the high school division award. Both scholarships are for \$1,000 and will be presented to the winner as determined by the judges at the festival concert. The Guild has received additional funding for the concert through a generous donation from Mr. & Mrs. Roger and Vivian Hill and a grant from the Georgia Council for the Arts. The Guild also received substantial donations of in-kind services from the Andersen Law Firm and Star-Tech.com.

Tickets for the festival concert are \$15 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors. Please contact the DeKalb Choral Guild at 678-318-1362, [info@dekalbchoralguild.org](mailto:info@dekalbchoralguild.org) or visit the Guild's website at [www.dekalbchoralguild.org](http://www.dekalbchoralguild.org) for tickets, directions to the concert and more information about our student finalists. The Guild will also present Leonard Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms."

The DeKalb Choral Guild is an auditioned community chorus with professional direction based in DeKalb County that attracts singers and audiences from across the metropolitan Atlanta area. The Guild has presented 31 seasons of choral music, spanning a diverse range of repertoire including many modern works by living composers. The Guild has appeared as featured performers on stages throughout the Atlanta area, the Southeast and Europe, including the Georgia Chapter of the American Choral Director's Association Convention, the Piccolo Spoleto Festival, and tours of Germany, the Czech Republic and Italy. The Guild is an active commissioner of new works. The Guild released a CD recording in 2008 entitled "If Music Be the Food of Love" with works celebrating the many facets and meanings of love.

The Georgia Young Composers Festival (GYCF) is a composition contest that will bring together high school and collegiate music composition students from the state of Georgia, introducing them and their works to today's audiences. Sponsored by the DeKalb Choral Guild, the GYCF will give these young people at the beginning of their careers a chance to work with an accomplished community chorus, give the music community an introduction to its newest faces, and give the public a chance to hear the latest music being produced in Georgia schools and colleges. Through this event, the DeKalb Choral Guild hopes to recognize the great talent present in our state's students, and thereby encourage the continuation of the choral arts.

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