



Elevating the human experience through choral excellence

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media contact: kantorei@kantorei.org

Kantorei (Denver, CO USA) is pleased to announce that it has entered into a three-year relationship with multi-talented composer/arranger, pianist, organist, singer & conductor, M. Roger Holland, II to serve as the choir's Artist-in-Residence beginning with the 2021-22 season.

Roger is a Teaching Assistant Professor in Music and Religion and Director of The Spirituals Project at the Lamont School of Music, University of Denver. He previously served as Artist-in-Residence and director of the Union Gospel Choir for over 13 years and toured nationally and internationally with The Boys Choir of Harlem, working with them as a conductor, pianist, instructor and arranger for several of their recordings. He has played for the Broadway productions of Oprah Winfrey's *The Color Purple* and the Tony award winning show, *Memphis*.

"Denver is so very fortunate to have someone of Roger's talent, experience and expertise living in its backyard," said Joel Rinsema, Kantorei's Managing Artistic Director. *"Roger and I have been talking for quite a while about developing a relationship, and inviting him to serve as multi-year Artist-in-Residence for Kantorei seemed like the perfect marriage."*

Holland will be involved with one concert series per season beginning with the 2021-22 season. He and Rinsema will collaborate on programming, with Roger conducting, accompanying, and performing as soloist on each of the season's series. Roger will participate in pre-concert chats and other educational activities for Kantorei singers, staff, audience members, and the surrounding community. Kantorei will also commission and premiere new works from Roger as part of his residency.

Roger states, *"Kantorei is a premier choir, and Joel Rinsema is a consummate musician."* He continues, *"To have the opportunity to collaborate with these artists is both a privilege and an honor. The thought of it makes me feel like a kid getting to play in a toy store. I'm excited to have the opportunity to share my gifts and experiences with this talented ensemble."*

A graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York City where he received the Master of Divinity degree, Holland also received a Master's Degree in Piano Performance from the Manhattan School of Music in New York, and completed his undergraduate work at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey where he majored in Music Education with a concentration in piano and voice. In 2015 Union Theological Seminary awarded Roger the Trailblazers Distinguished Alumni Award, the first given to a graduate whose ministry is music, for his contributions to the legacy of African American music.

Original music collections published by GIA Publications include *"Building Up the Kingdom,"* featuring the single *"Worthy God,"* and his recent collection, *"Honey from the Rock, Vol. 1 – 4."*



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Roger toured nationally and internationally with The Boys Choir of Harlem, working with them as a conductor, pianist, instructor and arranger for several of their recordings. Roger served as Minister of Music for Our Lady of Charity Roman Catholic Church in Brooklyn, NY for 12 years and is Liturgical Music Consultant for the New York Archdiocese Office of Black Ministry, acting as Music Director for their special Masses at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

In addition to his Broadway credits which include playing for the Broadway production of Oprah Winfrey's *The Color Purple*, Roger is also a respected clinician, presenting workshops for McDonald's Gospelfest, the Clarence Rivers Music Institute, Archbishop Lyke Liturgical Conference, the Roderick Bell Institute, Unity Explosion-Region X, and the Hampton University Ministers' Conference. His commissioned works include "The Dream and The Dreamer," "Down By The River," commissioned by The Negro Spiritual Scholarship Foundation, and "The Tribulation Suite," a 4-movement work based on Negro Spirituals. In 2016, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York presented Roger with the Pierre Toussaint Medallion for Service.

Degree(s)

M.Div., Theology, Union Theological Seminary, 2012
MM, Piano Performance, Manhattan School of Music, 1991
BM, Music Education, Westminster Choir College, 1988

Professional Affiliations

American Choral Directors Association
National Association of Pastoral Musicians
Gospel Music Workshop of America

<https://mrogerholland.com/>

<https://liberalarts.du.edu/about/people/roger-holland>

<https://www.giamusic.com/store/artists/m-roger-holland>



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Kantorei is a Denver-based, choral ensemble comprised of volunteer singers under the direction of Artistic Director Joel M. Rinsema.

Kantorei's choral artists have studied at schools with strong music programs across the United States such as Baylor University, Brigham Young University, Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, St. Olaf College, Wartburg College, and Westminster Choir College. Kantorei's singers reside throughout the greater Denver area. Some serve as choral music educators, church choir conductors, and vocal instructors. Others are doctors, social workers, optometrists, counselors, clinical psychologists, accountants, realtors –all brought together in weekly rehearsals for shared artistic excellence and community.

Kantorei frequently performs at major choral conventions across the U.S., has toured around the world, and works with composers and conductors of international renown. Kantorei has sung under the batons of René Clausen, Simon Carrington, Eric Whitacre, Karen Kennedy, and Anton Armstrong.

Kantorei has commissioned and premiered new choral works from renowned composers including Kim André Arnesen, Eric William Barnum, Abbie Betinis, René Clausen, Ola Gjeilo, Jake Runestad, Joshua Shank, and Eric Whitacre.

Kantorei has released two recordings on the Naxos label. "Sing, Wearing the Sky" (2020) choral music of Jake Runestad reached the #3 best-selling classical album on iTunes, #4 on the Traditional Classical Billboard Charts, and the top ten in both the best-selling classical album and new classical release categories on Amazon. "Infinity: Choral Works of Kim André Arnesen" (2018) climbed to the #2 best-selling classical album on iTunes, #6 on the Traditional Classical Billboard Charts, and #19 on the overall Classical Billboard charts. Santa Barbara Music Publishing Inc., publishes the Kantorei Choral series.

Formed in 1997 under the leadership of six friends and artistic director Richard Larson, Kantorei has established itself as one of the nation's premier choral ensembles and has performed for the American Choral Directors Association National Conferences in 2003, 2011, and 2019. Kantorei's mission is "to elevate the human experience through choral excellence."



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Managing Artistic Director, Joel M. Rinsema joined Kantorei in 2014, becoming the second conductor in its history. During his tenure, Kantorei has experienced tremendous growth of its audiences, nearly tripled its budget size, and launched an ambitious recording strategy. A frequent collaborator and champion of new works for chorus, Joel has commissioned and premiered work of many of today's leading composers including Kim André Arnesen, Mason Bates, René Clausen, Ola Gjeilo, Jocelyn Hagen, Mark Hayes, Cecilia McDowall, David Montoya, Sarah Quartel, Jake Runestad and Eric Whitacre. In the summer of 2018, Joel conducted the Central American premiere of Ola Gjeilo's "Dreamweaver" in Guatemala City and Antigua, Guatemala with Capella Cantorum de Guatemala.

Joel is a passionate advocate for the professional choral art form, and he frequently consults with other choral arts organizations around the country. Because of his leadership in his field, he received the Louis Botto Award for "Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal" from Chorus America, the industry's advocacy, research, and leadership development organization for choruses, choral leaders, and singers.

He is an accomplished conductor of major works for choir and orchestra and was one of eighteen conductors chosen nationally through audition to participate in master classes and workshops presented by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association and Chorus America. As a tenor soloist, Joel performed across the United States, in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic.

Joel is also the Director of Music and Technology in Worship at First Plymouth Congregational Church in Cherry Hills Village, Colorado and served for the last three and a half years as the North American Choral Promotion Manager for Oxford University Press based in Oxford, England. He holds music degrees from Arizona State and Whitworth Universities and is a member of the Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (Grammys), American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and Colorado Music Educators Association (CMEA).

Joel came to Kantorei from the Grammy Award-winning Phoenix Chorale. Throughout his 23-year tenure with the Phoenix Chorale, he served in nearly every capacity with the organization including the last 15 years as President & CEO and Assistant Conductor. He negotiated an ongoing recording contract with the prestigious U.K.-based Chandos Records, and Phoenix Chorale recordings earned a total of eight Grammy nominations and two Grammy wins during his tenure. Joel appears on all of the Phoenix Chorale recordings and was a soloist on the Grammy Award-winning "Spotless Rose: Hymn to the Virgin Mary."

In addition to his work with the Phoenix Chorale, Joel served as the Director of Music at Church of the Beatitudes United Church of Christ in Phoenix for 15 years, and was the founding chorus master of the Arizona Musicfest Chorus.