



# The Voice of Orpheus

The Newsletter of Sons of Orpheus – the Male Choir of Tucson

Grayson Hirst, Founder/Artistic Director

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 2 - SPRING 2014

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## Spring 2014 Concert Notes

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### Sure on This Shining Night, Morten Lauridsen

James Agee, 1909–55, was a novelist, journalist, screenwriter (*The African Queen*, *The Night of the Hunter*), film critic, and poet. His autobiographical novel, *A Death in the Family*, was published posthumously in 1957 and won a Pulitzer Prize in 1958. His lone book of poetry, *Permit Me Voyage*, 1934, is the source of an untitled lyric that became the text for Morten Lauridsen's *Sure on This Shining Night*.

Sure on this shining night  
Of star made shadows round,  
Kindness must watch for me  
This side the ground.  
The late year lies down the north.  
All is healed, all is health.  
High summer holds the earth.  
Hearts all whole.  
Sure on this shining night  
I weep for wonder wand'ring far alone  
Of shadows on the stars.

Morten Lauridsen, 1943–, was the National Medal of Arts recipient in 2007. From 1994 to 2001 he was

composer in residence of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and he has been professor of composition at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music since 1972. He has received five Grammy Award nominations. *Sure on This Shining Night* is the third Lauridsen composition our choir has sung.

A delightful way to get to know Lauridsen is to find the DVD of Michael Stillwater's 2012 prize-winning documentary film *Shining Night: A Portrait of Composer Morten Lauridsen*. It portrays the composer at his Waldron Island retreat in Washington state's San Juan Islands and in rehearsals in California and Scotland.

James Agee, left, caricature by David Levine  
Morten Lauridsen, right, courtesy of Sinfini Music.



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## Sons of Orpheus 23rd Annual Spring Concert Schedule

**Sunday, April 6, 3:00 P.M.** Casas Adobes Congregational Church, 6801 North Oracle Road, Tucson AZ Admission prices: \$17 at the door. \$15 will-call via our web site (sonsoforpheus.org) or from a choir or board member. \$12 for students.

**Sunday, April 13, 3:00 P.M.** The Lodge at Del Webb, Rancho del Lago, 10264 South Blendu Way, Vail AZ. Ticket prices as above.

**Saturday, April 26, 2:00 P.M.** Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2331 Adams Street, Tucson AZ. A benefit for the Arizona Council for the Blind with special guests the *Arizona Daily Star's* David Fitzsimmons and soprano Lindsey McHugh. Ticket prices as above.



## Spring 2014 Program Notes (continued)

### A German Requiem, Johannes Brahms, fifth movement: *(Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit)*



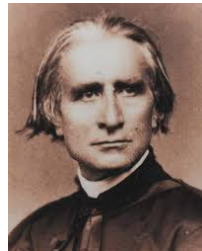
The Brahms requiem is strikingly different from those in the Roman Catholic tradition.

It begins not with a prayer for the dead but with solace for the living: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." It is in German rather than Latin. Brahms himself selected the passages from the Lutheran Bible for a libretto that would be sacred but not liturgical, humanistic rather than dogmatic. (Carl Martin Reinthaler, director of Music at the Bremen Cathedral expressed his concern to Brahms that the redeeming death of Jesus was not part of the text. When the piece was performed in Bremen, Reinthaler took it upon himself to insert the aria "I know that my Redeemer liveth" from Handel's *Messiah* to satisfy the clergy.)

Consolation is the theme of the fifth movement. It was composed almost as an afterthought a month following the original premier of the work and slipped in after the fourth of what had been six movements. The final version was presented in Zurich on September 12, 1868, a turning point in Brahms's career. Brahms composed his requiem for a large orchestra, but we're happy to sing accompanied by a piano four-hand

arrangement written by Brahms himself. Brent Burmeister and Chen-I Yang will provide the hands. Soprano Lindsey McHugh will provide the solo voice.

### A Faust Symphony, Franz Liszt *Schlusschor*



As it happens, we'll sing another piece that was an add-on. Three years after Franz Liszt thought

he had finished *A Faust Symphony*, he added a *Schlusschor* (concluding chorus) for a performance at the dedication of a monument to Goethe and Schiller in the city of Weimar in 1857. The *Schlusschor* is just eight lines taken by Liszt from Goethe's *Faust*:

*Alles Vergängliche  
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;  
Das Unzulängliche,  
Hier wird's Ereignis;  
Das Unbeschreibliche,  
Hier wird es getan;  
Das Ewig-Weibliche  
Zieht uns hinan.*

Everything transitory  
Is only an allegory.  
The insufficient  
Is here completed;  
The indescribable,  
Is here explained;  
The Eternal Feminine  
Draws us aloft.

Because a male choir is made up of beings who stereotypically have trouble understanding even mortal women, one wonders how we are to sing about the Eternal Feminine. We will do our best. And soloist Brandon Dale will too.

### Wildcat Kelly's Lament

No doubt the Brahms and Liszt texts are poetic, but how much more poetic can you get than Bob Fletcher's *Don't Fence Me In*? In 1934 Fletcher, a Montana highway engineer, sold Cole Porter the rights to this clever ditty for \$250. The rest is history as sung by such historians as Roy Rogers, Bing Crosby, Gene Autrey, Ella Fitzgerald, Willie Nelson, and Mickey and Minnie Mouse.

The song is a cowboy's lament, the lamenter being one Wildcat Kelly who's about to be dragged off to the hoosegow:

Oh give me land, lots of land  
Under starry skies above,  
Don't fence me in.

Let me ride through the wide open  
Country that I love,  
Don't fence me in.

Let me be by myself in the evening  
breeze,  
Listen to the murmur of the  
cottonwood trees,  
Send me off forever but I ask you  
please,  
Don't fence me in.

Just turn me loose let me straddle  
my old saddle  
Underneath the western skies.  
On my cayuse let me wander over  
yonder  
Till I see the mountains rise.

I want to ride to the ridge where  
the west commences,  
Gaze at the moon till I lose my  
senses,

Can't look at hobbles and I  
can't stand fences,  
Don't fence me in.

Baritone soloist David Harrington will milk this number for everything it's got to give.

## THE CHOIR

**Accompanist**  
Brent Burmeister

**First Tenors:**  
Brandon Dale  
Eugene Friesen  
John Kamper  
Tom McGorray  
Bruce Mortensen  
James Naughton  
Bryce Rodriguez  
Jim Tomlinson  
Jerry Villano  
Dick Wroldsen

**Second Tenors:**  
Darrell Bishop  
Dave Burns  
Darwin Hall  
Jim Hogan  
Bob Kurtz  
Richard Miller  
Mike Negrete  
James Owens  
Ken Rosenblatt  
Larry Ross  
Larry Sayre

**Baritones:**  
Mike Bradley  
Chuck Dickson  
John Evans  
Jim Filipek  
Cameron Fordyce  
Michael Fraser  
Frank Hartline  
Jim Kitchak  
Ned Mackey  
Walter Thomas  
Jerome Wozniak

**Basses:**  
Jeffrey Handt  
Tom Kane  
George Ledbetter  
Rick Sack  
Gary Smyth  
Eugene Stevick  
Thomas Wentzel  
Woon-Yin Wong

## Repertoire for the Spring Concerts

### Arias\* and Choruses

from:

Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*

Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*

Liszt's *Schlusschor, aus Faust Symphonie*

Brahms's *Ein Deutes Requiem*, movement V

### Art Songs

*The Seal Lullabye*, Whitacre

*Sure on this Shining Night*, Lauridsen

*Amor de Mi Alma*, Stroope

### Intermission

### WWI English Dance Hall Songs

*Policeman's Holiday, Jalousie, Gigolette*

### Cowboy Songs

*Arizona, Arizona; Mexicali Rose, Don't Fence Me In, Rawhide*

### Sea Chanteys

*Lowlands, Shenandoah, Swansea Town*

### \*Soloists

Lindsey McHugh,

Erica Burkhart,

Brandon Dale,

Carlos Zapien

### The Holiday Concerts

We started our Christmas season almost as early as Safeway or Walgreen's started theirs. Our first venue was the Westin La Paloma on November 30th, On December 4th we sang our annual Food Bank concert at the Berger Performing Arts Center, then the Newman Center on the 8th, followed by six concerts on three nights at Mission San Xavier. (Make that seven concerts if you count the full rehearsal before a packed house on the day prior to the San Xavier evening concerts.) Then we went on the road: Coolidge on the 15th and Green Valley on the 19th.

As though we had not quite sung our fill, at the Gemütlichkeit at Jim and Lorna Kithcak's house after the Green Valley concert we sang a rousing "Happy Birthday" to Brent Burmeister and Grayson Hirst and then carols while Lindsey McHugh led us at

the piano. ("Gemütlichkeit" is a festivity in the form of a mixture of music, food, and drink. It's a word that we learned from German men's choirs during our concert tour through Germany, Austria, and Hungary in 2000. We have assiduously maintained the Gemütlichkeit as part of the culture of the Sons of Orpheus ever since.)

Our Christmas season not only started early, it lasted well after the driest Christmas tree in town went off to the chipper. On January 18th we recorded several songs that are new to our repertoire (adjacent article). The session included selections in which soprano Lindsey McHugh and tenor Brandon Dale had solos. Lindsey is a sophomore in the U of A school of music. We hope to have her around for a couple of years at least. Brandon will graduate this coming December and will be going off to seek his fortune on the world's stages.

### Recording Session Notes

At two o'clock Saturday afternoon, January 18, we crammed ourselves onto our risers at the Jim Brady Recording Studio and began the sweaty, nerve-wracking, foot-numbing, back-breaking business of laying down tracks for two CDs. Three hours later we had six holiday tunes and six patriotic tunes "in the can." We'll get the rest next year.

We had covered our music in plastic protectors to muffle the sound of page turning, but we had hardly begun when the engineer stopped us to say it would be quieter if we could sing the music from memory.

After the laughter died down, we devised stealth modes: Don't turn a page during a rest. Lift the pages gently over the rings rather than pull them across. No chameleon or sloth

ever moved more slowly, more deliberately than the way we turned pages for the rest of the afternoon.

Did we say sweaty? Clothes started coming off after the first 15 minutes. After a half hour, we thought about going the full monte and picking out the 12 least repulsive guys for a calendar.

We'll be prepared when we gather to finish the CDs next year. Speedos!



Vaquero Wrangler  
(more on page 5)

Photo by Walt Thomas



## *Donations Received*

### **Sons of Orpheus – the Male Choir of Tucson**

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations received during 2013.

#### **Benefactors (\$1,000 - \$2,499)**

Anonymous

Society of Former Agents of the FBI  
(to honor Tom McGorray)

BWS Architects Inc.  
(to honor Dave Burns)

#### **Sponsors (\$250 - \$999)**

Anonymous

Barbara Katz

Cameron and Jackie Fordyce

#### **Partners (\$100 - \$249)**

Edward and Joanne Anderson

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Jim and Lorna Kitchak

Eugene Beavers

Norma Davenport

Barbara Lamb

Jackie D. Bell

Dr. Norman Don

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Warren and Ellen Bodow

Michael and Eleanor Fraser

James and Lesa Naughton

Harold and Jill Wieck

#### **Friends (\$25 - \$99)**

Vernon and Mona Baker

Linda Griffin

Norraine McMillan

Ronald and Linda Bechky

John and Janet Haas

Karl and Joann Metzger

Dave Burns

Sharon Landeen

Richard and Linda Miller

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Leon Lederman

Joan A. Morris

Blaine Ford

Ned and Pat Mackey

Louise Netherton

Ellen Frazer

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Marner

Carol Stookey

Ron and Carolyn Gooley

W.L. May

Joan T. Suess

## *Hogan's Dare*

In the six years that Jim Hogan has been pushing the choir with a beer-and-pizza bet that he can raise more money by himself than the rest of us can raise together, Orpheus has collected over \$60,000 for the Community Food Bank in Tucson. The 2013 effort, ours and Jim's, has raised \$11,290. Jim lost the bet, but he'll be happy to eat and drink with people who will be shaking his hand and thanking him for his motivation. Everybody wins!

Jim is not alone among the people we need to thank for our prize. The Berger Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of the Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind is the focal point of our Food Bank Christmas concert and our campaign. The students and teachers at ASDB put on a great show, the kind of performance that keeps the audiences filling the hall every year. And El Mariachi Tapatio, led by Alberto Rangel, Jr., gives the evening a special flavor, topped off by Alberto's Spanglish version of "The Night Before Christmas."

We also want to credit our families, friends, neighbors, and the readers of this newsletter for responding so generously to our solicitations.

## Spring, an Appealing Season

Sons of Orpheus is an amateur choir that supports itself with \$120 per-man annual dues and by the sale of concert tickets, CDs, ads in our spring concert program booklet, grants from various agencies, gifts from our newsletter readers, and several organizations who pay us for our services. We also perform without charge for such organizations the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System, Tucson Homicide Survivors, TMC Hospice, Tucson Community Food Bank, and La Fiesta de los Vaqueros. Please think of the remittance envelope you find herein as an artery that pumps lifeblood into our organization from the heart of the community. Your donations go into the kitty to pay our director, our accompanists, our sheet music and printing bills, insurance costs, and charges for rehearsal and performance space. We provide a stipend for our student singers and we pay our instrumentalists as well as our soprano soloists.

You can use the envelope to [1] make a donation to our general fund, [2] purchase CDs (Please see our CD lineup on page 6. The cost is \$10 for one CD and \$5 per each thereafter. Include \$4 for shipping. A CD mailer can hold two CDs), and [3] buy chances for a \$100 gift certificate from Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar, a consistent and generous contributor to the Orpheus cause. A \$10 contribution will get your name on a ticket. \$20 will get you two tickets, etc. The drawing for the Fleming's gift certificate will take place at the end of the spring concert season. The winner will be notified by phone or by mail. Other restaurants have given us gift certificates as well. Raffle tickets for them will be sold only at each of the three spring concert venues, one ticket for \$5, three for \$10. Winners will be notified by phone or by mail.

Sons of Orpheus is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. Donors to our general fund receive a formal acknowledgment for their records. That, and our heartfelt thanks.

### Los Vaqueros de Orpheus

Thursday morning, February 20th, marked the 89th Annual Tucson Rodeo Parade, a highlight of Tucson's annual Fiesta de los Vaqueros. The largest non-motorized parade in the country, the parade comes close in size to a slightly longer one in Sri Lanka, with elephants. Ours is easier to clean up after.

Cowboyed-up in our string ties, leather vests, and black Western hats, we sang the loudest and peppiest cowboy numbers in our repertoire. We then led the audience in the National Anthem, signaling the beginning of the parade.

In order to get there and park before the major roads were closed, we had to show up before 7 A.M. We were invited to warm up our bodies and our voices in the museum on the rodeo grounds, so we vocalized amid a great collection of

antique saddles and horse-drawn equipment, the perfect setting to get that cowboy feeling.

We have been singing cowboy classics for many years, but this was our first participation in this storied celebration. We had a great time, and we hope that our performance is just the first of many more to come.

—Charles Dickson



Photo by Walt Thomas

### Erratum

Our winter newsletter included a profile of first tenor, Jim Naughton. We wrote that Jim had been a seminary student at Our Lady Queen of Angles in Los Angeles. We correct ourselves to say that Jim, although he knows an angle when he sees one, attended Our Lady Queen of Angels. We apologize to Jim for whatever grief our error may have caused.

The editor wears, tattooed on a withered right biceps, an aphorism by the famed Scottish architect, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, (1868-1928):

“There is hope in honest error, none in the icy perfection of the mere stylist.”

We think Mackintosh used “stylist” to mean one who slavishly follows the latest fad, as in “That dude is stylin’.”

Can you tell which two of the hombres on the left are stylin’ and which one is the real deal?

#### Tres Vaqueros

From Left, Marshall Stewart, volunteer coordinator; Richard Miller, Orpheus Executive Committee Chairman; Grayson Hirst, founder/director of Sons of Orpheus

## Profiling Mike Negrete



**Mike Negrete**

Photo by Walt Thomas

On his way into a concert at the Arizona School of Music twenty-four years ago, Mike spotted a poster announcing Grayson Hirst’s initial plea for singers to form a men’s choir. He bit, becoming a founding member of the Sons of Orpheus. Mike left the

choir for about a decade starting in the mid-nineties, but rejoined after he read in our newsletter that we were planning a “Following the Footsteps of Bach” tour in the summer of 2008. Mike was hooked again. He has been a mainstay in the Orpheus second tenor section since then. Mike is one of those people who travel many paths in life. His journey began in Ashland, Ohio. After high school, at the urging of his mother he headed down the road to St. Louis University to major in pre-med, but he found out that his mother’s dream for him was like a lot of mothers’ dreams. Time for a new direction!

Mike turned west and enrolled at the University of Wyoming in the pharmacy school, graduating from there in 1976. After working as a licensed pharmacist in Casper, Wyoming for a year, he decided that pharmacy was just a side trip. He went to work as a

“jug head” seismology tech with Western Geophysical and spent half a year thumping the ground and reading the resulting echoes for signs of what lay beneath. But it’s cold in Wyoming!

Attracted to Tucson by our weather and some friends, Mike turned south and in 1979 started his own business out of a panel truck: Mike’s Juice Bar. He set up under a mesquite tree at the corner of Council and Court where he served bagels and freshly squeezed juices to the downtown crowd. It was a good business and it enabled him to buy a house which he renovated to create an apartment space for some extra income. He still lives in that house and is now tearing it up to turn it back into a single residence.

After 14 years in the juice business, Mike’s trail swerved again. He took classes to become a medical technician and worked at Lab Corps and

TMC where he engaged in a task much like what he had done as a seismology tech—trying to figure out what’s going on beneath the surface.

In 2001 the next (and current) phase of Mike’s life began when he went to work for the U. S. Postal Service. He delivers mail on a rural route in the Continental Ranch area northwest of Tucson.

The musical aspect of Mike’s life has seen changes too. His first fave was Elvis, then the Beatles, then a pretty severe turn when he discovered Leroy Anderson. From there it was a short trip to symphonic music. Mike and Carolyn Gordon, the love of his life, are season ticket holders at the Tucson Symphony.

Another of Mike’s musical interests is the five-string banjo. He and some friends formed a bluegrass band and played in local bars. In 1978 they won first place for amateurs at the Telluride Bluegrass Festival.

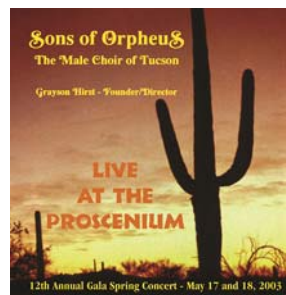
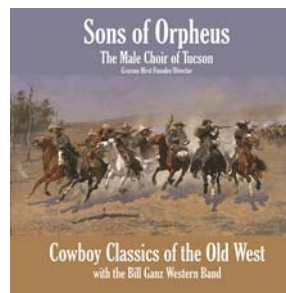
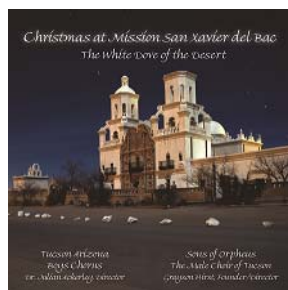
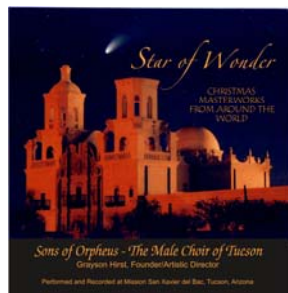
Mike tells the story about the night Emmylou Harris was in town and dropped in for a listen. When Mike spotted her, he decided to sing one of her songs—“Roses in the Snow.” A little flustered, Mike forgot the words to the second verse. After the band vamped for a while, Mike sang the first verse over again. A man who knows the compass can always figure a way out of a jam.

Mike has a fine voice. He has done solo and ensemble singing with Orpheus over the years. He’s a good guy and a good hand on the riser crew. Orpheus is thankful that Mike Negrete is going our way.

## Sons of Orpheus CDs For Sale

We proudly present our most current line-up of CDs, which features our newest album, *Star of Wonder*, Christmas Masterpieces from *Around the World*, performed and recorded live at Mission San Xavier del Bac, as guests of the Tohono O’odham Nation.

Our CD repertoire includes sacred music from around the world (sung in English, Latin, Italian, French, Ladino, Church Slavonic and even Nigerian), classical choral favorites, popular passages from many operas, and of course the best cowboy songs from the Western music genre.



Altered States

Puberty is a scary phenomenon for Julian Ackerly, the director of the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus. He must awaken every morning wondering if any of his sopranos or altos succumbed to testosterone overnight.

For several years we had a man in our bass section who had been a soprano with the TABC. We always wondered how the transformation took place. Was it accomplished in stages? After years greeting his family at the breakfast table as a soprano, did he one day bid them good morning as an alto; a month or so later as a tenor; then a month after that as a baritone? And did the morning finally come when he emerged from his room as a bass with a heavy beard? On the other hand, perhaps on his twelfth birthday a sudden, disastrous crack from “Good” to “morning,” issued from his throat, and he knew he would never again sing with the birds.

Orphean Rick Sack has undergone a metamorphosis of his own. He was a baritone for his first 10 years with the choir, and he was a baritone when he appeared at this year’s first rehearsal. After a few weeks we noticed him gravitating toward the basses. It was gradual at first, but now he has moved into the section permanently. Rick is a bit past the age when the change could have been hormonal, so perhaps it was just allergies. The baritones miss him, and they are sorry to see that he has fallen so low.

Rick has for several years been in charge of the sale of advertising in our spring concert booklet. He has whipped us out into the streets to **sell, sell, sell!** His new, more masculine voice is a notch more effective. We thank him for his leadership and we encourage our audiences to support our advertisers.



Photo by Iván Berger

Rick Sack

Tough Guy

Dave Burns ruptured an Achilles tendon last summer in the middle of a trout stream, but that didn’t stop him from showing up at the first rehearsal in August. He one-footed it on a scooter for several weeks. His wife or tenor Jerry Villano got him to rehearsals. He sang the Christmas season in tuxedo pants slit up the side to accommodate his walking boot. He’s back on all twos now, working out to get ready for this summer’s back-country adventures.

Moon Cult

Last spring, at Le Buzz Caffe, I happened upon Guy Atchley’s striking photograph *Desert Promise*. It’s a shot of giant saguaros against a darkening sky and a rainbow. I wrote about it and asked Guy’s permission to use it on my website <artforpoetryssake.com>.

He sent me a digital image and included a photograph of a clutch of saguaros in the moonlight.

What a pleasant surprise! As it happened we had just started rehearsing Morten Lauridsen’s setting of the James Agee poem *Sure on this Shining Night* (see page 1).

Guy calls the bonus photograph *Moon Cult*, but it was surely made on a shining night.

You can see both the photos in color on the newsletter page of our website: <sonsoforpheus.org>.



*Desert Promise*



Photo by Guy Atchley

*Wet Season*

Yet again  
after rain  
these two,  
grizzled, wizened,  
stately stand.  
Lighted late,  
monsooned cool,  
one nudges  
other with  
armored arm.  
Such touch  
must assure:  
we endure.

—Ned Mackey



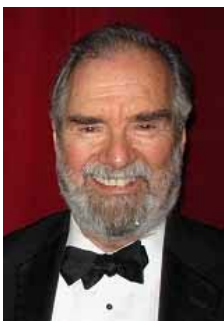
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**TUCSON'S AMBASSADORS OF SONG**



**GRAYSON HIRST,  
DIRECTOR**

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Tucson AZ 85751  
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**Our Sponsors**

Sons of Orpheus is supported in part by grants from the Tucson Pima Arts Council and the Arizona Commission on the Arts, with funding from the State of Arizona and the National Endowment for the Arts.



**We're on the web at  
[www.SonsOfOrpheus.org](http://www.SonsOfOrpheus.org)**

**Want More Information?**

We invite you to go to our web site and look through the repertoire Grayson Hirst has chosen for our first 23 years. While you're at it, please consider sending us your email address so we can add you to our electronic list. Please write us at:

[contact1@SonsOfOrpheus.org](mailto:contact1@SonsOfOrpheus.org)

We'll send you a heads-up whenever the newsletter or other information is online. You can see our newsletters in color and save us some postage for snail mail.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS, QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, ABOUT  
THE VOICE OF ORPHEUS. PLEASE EMAIL US.**