



August 2023

Dear Colleagues,

We are excited to invite your students to participate in the inaugural **Morningside University Vocal Arts Festival** on **Sunday, February 18**, and **Monday, February 19, 2024**. The purpose of this **FREE** musical experience is *different* from most festivals as it focuses equally on **solo vocal technique, choral performance, and collaboration with a prominent composer**. Your students will be challenged by preparing and performing excellent choral literature, offering optional solo voice instruction from our esteemed voice faculty, and presenting special masterclasses on various vocal production topics. Please click here to view a [tentative festival schedule](#).

This year, we are pleased to welcome **Shawn Kirchner** as our festival **composer-in-residence**. As you are likely aware, he has achieved national and international recognition and is a native of Cedar Falls, Iowa. We look forward to collaborating with him in rehearsals and masterclasses, while preparing and performing a program of his music. This special project has been underwritten by Kate Saulsbury, a longtime Morningside voice faculty member and current voice instructor at the University of Northern Iowa, whose late mother, Joan Smalley, served as Kirchner's early piano teacher in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

The Festival Choir will perform four choral selections with the composer at the piano. As part of the final concert, The Morningside Choir will also present a **world premiere performance** of movements from Shawn's new summer solstice oratorio entitled *Peace*

*and Plenty*. We will be joined by one invited high school choir, which will open the performance with a guest performance, and three high school vocal soloists will also be selected to perform.

In order to make this a valuable musical experience, directors may nominate **up to two (2) SATB quartets per school in grades 10-12**: 2 sopranos, 2 altos, 2 tenors, and 2 basses. For ensemble balance, it is suggested, but not required, that each school nominates full quartets. Instead, nominating your finest and *most qualified* students should be of the highest priority. Students will be selected based on the director's recommendation and prior musical experience/excellence, and will be notified of their acceptance in early-November. **All interested voice lesson students must prepare a working or prepared solo to workshop with a voice faculty member.**

We anticipate that this exciting event will fill up very quickly and student preference will be given on a first come, first served basis. Please visit our webpage to **nominate your students by Tuesday, October 24**. The event registration fee will be **FREE** and includes two on-campus meals, however, payment should not be made until notification of acceptance has been received in November. Those spending Sunday night in Sioux City may organize hotel housing at their own expense.

On behalf of Shawn Kirchner and the entire Morningside campus community, we look forward to hosting your students this winter!

Sincerely,

Dr. Ryan Person  
Director of Choral Activities

Shannon Salyards Burton  
Director of Voice Studies

