April 21, 2022

Dear Students, Parents, Alumni, and Friends,

As I write this letter, my heart is filled with gratitude for the privilege of serving as Artistic Director of The St. Louis Children's Choirs. The Children's Choirs has truly become a second family, and my life has been immeasurably blessed by the love and friendship of so many students, families, board members, alumni, and supporters over the past 26 years. From performances here in St. Louis to Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the White House, and Choir tours across the United States and around the world, the opportunity to teach and perform with our young artists, and to watch them grow, has been the highlight of my career.

Next year will be my 25th anniversary as Artistic Director, and now feels like the right time to plan for the transition so that I may "pass the baton" to a new Artistic Director in the summer of 2023. Mr. Berner and I will always treasure the mission of the Children's Choirs and will continue supporting this organization we love so much, as well as having more time to visit our son, daughter, granddaughter, and their families in Seattle and Germany.

The Children's Choirs began in 1978, with the vision of music teacher Diane Finley and twenty-nine students who loved to sing. In 1982 Ethelyn Sparfield became the Artistic Director and the Choirs attracted more singers and began to tour nationally and internationally. Today the Choirs include over 330 students and have toured to fourteen countries. As the official children's choir of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, students perform at Powell Hall, and collaborations with arts organizations have enabled young singers to share their music with more diverse audiences than ever before.

I am thankful for our outstanding administrative and artistic team who make this work possible. Over the years, it has been a great honor to work with exceptionally talented staff members and colleagues, awesome board members, devoted donors, and a world-wide family of remarkable alumni who continue to support the mission of musical excellence and character development.

Under the guidance and care of our dedicated Board of Directors, and with the incredible commitment of our staff, parents, donors, and alumni, the Children’s Choirs will continue to flourish and grow.

As the Choirs move forward in the selection and welcoming of a new Artistic Director, I am happy to be already partnering with our Board to consult on transition planning. The core values and mission of character development will remain unchanged in this exciting new chapter for The St. Louis Children’s Choirs. I feel confident the Choirs will continue to thrive and bless the community by shaping young lives through musical excellence!

Gratefully,

Barbara Berner
Artistic Director

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