



DIOCESE OF SALT LAKE CITY  
of the Roman Catholic Church

# Cathedral to host Catholic High School Choral Festival featuring Vivaldi's 'Gloria'

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by Linda Petersen, *Intermountain Catholic*

SALT LAKE CITY – More than 120 young voices will fill the Cathedral of the Madeleine on Jan. 30 during the Catholic High School Choral Festival. The event, which organizers hope will grow from a local family concert series into a national destination for Catholic youth choirs, will culminate in a performance of Antonio Vivaldi's masterwork "Gloria."



Several years ago, the festival, through Melanie Malinka, The Madeleine Choir School's director of music, established a partnership with the American Federation Pueri Cantores, the official student choral organization of the Catholic Church, to sponsor this event.

"The Cathedral of the Madeleine is both a magnificent sacred space and the Catholic mother church of Utah, making it a meaningful setting for a Pueri Cantores festival," said Kathleen Prina, American Federation Pueri Cantores program director. "The cathedral's beauty, history and acoustics, together with its strong commitment to sacred music and its outstanding choir school, create an environment that elevates sacred music and invites young singers into a deeper experience of prayer and artistry. It was a natural fit to host the festival at the Cathedral of the Madeleine."

Having the festival associated with the cathedral "also reflects our desire to support and celebrate sacred choral music in regions where it can be both a witness and a source of unity," she said.

This collaboration is helping transform the Salt Lake City event into a premier opportunity for choirs across the Western United States to perform sacred music with a full orchestra, Malinka said.

"The festival grew out of the idea that we want to provide an opportunity for more advanced young singers to perform a larger sacred work that is with orchestra," she said. "Many programs who have a smaller choir wouldn't have the funds or the ability to put something like that together. This is an opportunity for them to perform in the cathedral through this festival."

This year's participating groups include the Cathedral Choral Scholars, a group of high school and college-age singers often comprised of Madeleine Choir School alumni, as well as choirs from Juan Diego Catholic High School and Chesterton Academy of Utah. They will be joined by Notre Dame Prep Saints Chorale from Scottsdale, Ariz. and singers from Chesterton Academy at Valley of the Sacred Heart, Dixon, Calif.

The festival begins on Jan. 29, when students will participate in intensive rehearsals of Vivaldi's "Gloria" with guest conductor Dr. Eric Schmidt, the interim choral director at the University of Utah and a former Madeleine Choir School faculty member.

"There's an educational element – to learn to work together as a choir with a conductor you've never worked with before," Malinka said. "It's a great feat of collaboration and learning what you can do as a group when you come together."

The instrumental support for the concert will come from a chamber orchestra of musicians from the Utah Youth Symphony.

Along with the musical opportunities, the festival aims to deepen the spiritual lives of the participants, Malinka said. "It's an opportunity to come to our beautiful cathedral and come together – either just for the music or to glorify God. To listen, and to come and pray, really."

The Friday evening concert is free and open to the public. In addition to the group performance of the "Gloria," each choir will perform two individual selections from their own repertoire.

"Especially for younger people, students in particular, because this concert is on the shorter side, I think it's a great opportunity to introduce young people to ... sacred classical music," Malinka said.