

Wishart B. Bell, D.M.A.

906 East Fairview

South Bend, IN 46614

(574) 232-9404; cell (574) 229-2247

E-mail: wbell@wishartmusicservices.com

BIOGRAPHY

Wishart Bell serves as founding Artistic Director of Vesper Chorale Inc. of South Bend, IN, conducting Vesper Chorale, Vesper Chamber Orchestra, and the Children's Choir of Michiana. He is Director of Music at First United Methodist Church, and directs *Cantus Cathedralis*, a polyphonic choir based at St. Matthew Cathedral of South Bend. He additionally teaches voice at Bethel College. He is active as a choral clinician with adult and children's choirs and handbells, and as a coach/accompanist on the Vesper Chorale Recital Series.

He has developed Vesper Chorale Inc. into one of the premier performing arts companies in northern Indiana. Since its founding in 1993, Vesper Chorale has earned numerous awards for unique collaborative, educational and performance programming. Vesper Chamber Orchestra began in 1998 to join Vesper Chorale in the performance of masterworks for chamber chorus and orchestra. In these events, now known as the Basically Baroque Concert Series, choir and orchestra collaborate with college, university, high school, and church music departments to study and perform oratorio from the 17th and 20th Centuries. They have performed such works as Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation*, Mozart's *C Minor Mass*, and Fauré's *Requiem*. In 2004 they performed the regional premier of Robert Levin's completion of Mozart's *Requiem*.

Under the sponsorship of Vesper Chorale and First United Methodist Church, Bell formed The Children's Choir of Michiana, in 2004. Vesper Chorale and the Children's Choir of Michiana collaborated with the Dowagiac Union Schools to anchor their Choral Festival, in November of 2006. Under his leadership, the Children's Choir of Michiana launched its second and third choral ensembles this past season, and starts its first satellite choir this year. The choir hosted its first regional invitational choral festival in November 2008.

Orchestral players have joined the choir at First United Methodist Church on oratorio projects as well as the major literature for organ and orchestra – including the complete Mozart Church Sonatas and Poulenc's *Organ Concerto*. Oratorio performances have included works by Haydn, Mozart, Handel, Bach, Rutter, Thoms, and others.

In the fall of 2004 Dr. Bell formed *Cantus Cathedralis* (Cathedral Singers), a vocal ensemble that studies liturgical music ranging from medieval chant to the 20th Century, focusing on repertoire of the 15th, 16th, and 20th Centuries. In October of 2006 he traveled with the ensemble to Belmont Abbey College (North Carolina), where they presented a clinic and concert.

His credits as a voice teacher include placing students in such professional organizations as the Chicago Symphony Chorus, and the U. S. Navy Sea Chanters. Students have also been accepted into important graduate programs and placed well in regional and national competitions.

Dr. Bell published a set of program notes relating to Mozart's *Requiem* in the 2006 *Journal of the Conductor's Guild*. He has published additional articles in *Creator Magazine*, *The American*

Organist, and Worship Arts magazine, and regularly distributes notes and essays to his performers providing insight into history and performance practice of works under rehearsal. Further awards include the Cliff Dwellers Arts Foundation Award, the Leo Heim Memorial Award, and Elnora Stickley Foundation grants. His work has gained Vesper Chorale and the Children's choir of Michiana grants from the Indiana Arts Council, the Indiana Council for the Humanities, the St. Joseph County Community Foundation, and the Josephson Music Trust. He was appointed to a Senior Artist Residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts (Canada) in June of 2004. In 2008 he was awarded for Vesper Chorale a grant from the Kurt and Tessie Simon Fund for Holocaust Remembrance, for a performance of the *Holocaust Cantata* as part of commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of Kristallnacht (The night of broken glass).

The year 2008 provided addition teaching and performance opportunities. For the month of July, Dr. Bell joined the vocal faculty of the Governor's School for the Humanities, and Visual and Performing Arts at the University of Virginia, where he taught composition, conducting, and vocal/choral music. In November he launched with Vesper Chorale a new initiative, known as Diverse Journeys Concert Series, aspiring to partner with ethnic communities in celebrating the music and history of their respective cultures. His work became international in October, with a series of performances in Bucharest, Romania. He accompanied tenor Emanuel Caraman in an acclaimed recital at the National University of Music Bucharest (Universitatea Națională de Muzică București, UNMB) and other venues. These performances have garnered return invitations for each of the following three years.

Wishart Bell is a graduate of Trinity College and the American Conservatory of Music, with the advanced degrees Master of Music in piano, and Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting. With emphasis in both choral and orchestral conducting, he has studied with Charles Heffernun, Harold Decker, Tsung Yeh, and Harold Farberman, and has attended classes with Kenneth Kiesler, Helmuth Rilling and Robert Shaw. He has also taken advanced study in vocal pedagogy, with Richard Miller, at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.