



Matthew Larkin
Music Director

OTTAWA CHORAL SOCIETY HEADS TO ITALY ON MAY 22ND FOR ITS FIFTH INTERNATIONAL TOUR!



The **OTTAWA CHORAL SOCIETY**, and Music Director Matthew Larkin, will be embarking on the choir's fifth international tour, and its second visit to Italy, at the end of May, where it will perform in splendid Renaissance churches in three of Italy's most fabled cities.

The first stop on the choir's itinerary is **VENICE** where it will present a programme of beautiful *a cappella* music on Sunday, May 25th. The featured work will be the *Mass in G Minor* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, which the choir recently performed at its final concert of the 2007-08 season in April. Completing the programme will be a triptych of lovely *Ave Maria's* by Robert Parsons, Anton Bruckner and Matthew Larkin, and Samuel Barber's *Agnus Dei*, the composer's own sublime choral arrangement of his *Adagio for Strings*.

The concert takes place in the magnificent **Basilica San Giovanni e Paolo**, one of the largest churches of Venice. This impressive basilica dates from 1246 when Doge Jacobo Tiepolo donated a tract of swampland to the Dominicans after dreaming of a flock of white doves flying over it. The church is splendidly decorated with the masterpieces of a host of celebrated artists, among them Bellini, Bartolomeo, Cima, the Lamberti's and Veronese. Since the 15th century, the funeral services of all of Venice's doges have been held in this historic testament to the glory of the Renaissance.

The choir continues on for three glorious days in FLORENCE, the city considered to be the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance, where it will offer a reprise of the *a cappella* programme on Wednesday, May 28th in the Romanesque church of Chiesa **di Santo Stefano al Ponte Vecchio**. The church, dating back to 1116, is now deconsecrated and serves as the home of the Regional Orchestra of Tuscany and host to several important music festivals. Located near the famous Ponte Vecchio and the Uffizi, the church was completely rebuilt after the extensive damage it suffered during WW II and was restored again by the Florentines following the devastating flooding of the city in 1966.

The tour concludes in the cradle of the ancient Roman Empire with a concert in Rome's magnificent **Chiesa San Marcello** on Friday, May 30th. Accompanied by Orchestra Nova Amadeus, the concert is devoted entirely to works by Mozart and will feature his exuberant



Regina Coeli, the lovely *Sancta Maria, mater Dei*, the sublime motet *Ave Verum Corpus* and the Master's glorious *Coronation Mass*.

The Chiesa San Marcello is the most ancient church in Rome's busy Via del Corso. Originally founded in the fourth Century, it contains the relics of Pope Marcellus. The church was rebuilt in 1519 after a fire destroyed the previous structure. The facade, a masterpiece of Carlo Fontana (1682-86) is typically Baroque; the interior displays important paintings, as well as relics of several ecclesiastical potentates from the 16th and 17th centuries, many resting in intricately carved sarcophagi.

The choir made its first visit to Italy in 1982 to the walled city of L'Aquila, in the Apennine Mountains of the Abruzzo, during the First International Festival of Music and Architecture. The choir received thrilling ovations following its memorable performances of Handel's *Messiah* with Canada's Orchestra London in the beautiful Romanesque church of Santa Maria di Collemaggio.

Chiesa San Marcello al Corso, Rome