



Dr. David R. Thye

Artistic Director & Principal Conductor
Arizona Cantilena Chorale

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY
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David R. Thye is a passionate conductor, educator, and clinician. While inspiring excellence through artistic mastery, discipline, and musical integrity, Dr. Thye consistently delivers cutting-edge “live” performances with great enthusiasm.

As a conductor, Dr. Thye’s compelling desire to unify artists in performance creates inspirational concert experiences for the listener. He thoroughly enjoys working with and motivating both the consummate professional and the average musician alike to pursue the highest standards of musical excellence and the most exquisite outcomes in choral performance. Thye seeks out the finest choral repertoire that powerfully and intimately communicates to the mind and soul utilizing Biblical passages, creative and artistic poetry, and inspiring texts that are thought-provoking and impactful. Ultimately, Dr. Thye is passionate about God, people, and music!

In addition to his work as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Arizona Cantilena Chorale in Phoenix, Dr. Thye is active as a Guest Conductor of choral music festivals across the U.S. and abroad. For the past 15 years, Thye has been a featured conductor in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and other premier concert halls and venues across the U.S. and around the world.

Now as an Artistic Director featured by Music Celebrations International, Dr. Thye seeks to rally Christian musicians across America to glorify the Lord in song and join him in a Holy Land Tour to Israel! The tour will feature Dr. Thye conducting *The Voices of Faith Chorus* in multiple venues in Israel where Jesus lived and ministered.

As a professor, Dr. Thye was the Robert L. Burton chair of graduate conducting in the School of Music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth where he was the music director and conductor of the Master Chorale (the principal chorus of the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra). For ten years, Thye’s concert series with the Master Chorale included multiple annual concerts with members of the FWSO. In prior posts, he was the director of choral activities at Arizona Christian University in Phoenix, the University of Montana in Missoula, and the University of Sioux Falls.

Having received his B.A. degree in music education and voice from the University of Sioux Falls, Thye began his teaching career as a public school choral director. He earned both M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in conducting from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music. He has studied with such noted teachers as Eph Ehly, Weston Noble, Margaret Hillis, Robert Shaw, Paul Salamunovich, and many others. In recognition of his outstanding success, the University of Sioux Falls presented him with its Alumni Pacesetter Award.

With over four decades of leadership experience in music, Thye has conducted and managed numerous music organizations, from elementary-age to professional-based ensembles—encompassing such varied genres as jazz, choral and symphonic works, musical theatre, opera, oratorio, and sacred music for the church. At ease with conducting orchestras or choirs, he thrives at combining musical forces in performance and has conducted most of the major choral works in the repertoire.

Finally, as an advocate for outstanding worship and arts, Dr. Thye has been a significant force for musical and artistic excellence in the church. He has been director of music and worship in several churches with weekly attendance ranging up to 10,000 people. As a Christian musician who is ecumenical in his ministry, Dr. Thye has continuously served over the past 43 years in a full- or part-time position in over 10 different evangelical Christian churches nationwide.

Critics acclaim his “virtuosity as a conductor.” The Fort Worth *Star-Telegram* hailed one of his performances stating, “Handel’s *Messiah* as performed by the Southwestern Master Chorale and Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra... was masterful on all fronts. But, while most performances of this oratorio are judged by the amount of thunder they bring..., the quality of this rendition was... revealed by how conductor David R. Thye handled quiet passages. Because, in addition to the heavens-rattling tonsil-wagging... that makes the work so compelling, there is also pause. There were several moments when Thye and the huge sound of his 130 singers... were cut off so cleanly that it felt like a vacuum had been created in the hall. Thye cherished silence for seconds that seemed like days before bringing the voices back with a joyful blast. The breath-taking precision of these moments spoke to how well the chorus and orchestra were prepared and to Thye’s control over the work. And Thye’s interpretation was so carefully structured and spacious that it allowed the audience to enjoy details such as the typically overlooked contributions of the ensemble’s double basses... and the inspiring trumpets... in particular. It was a... *Messiah* that offered the flash of virtuosity!” (Bass Performance Hall, Fort Worth, Texas)