

An Invitation to Sing

Mostly Motets is a vocal ensemble of about 10 singers that sings sacred music from the Renaissance and earlier. We sing motets by the likes of Tallis, Victoria, Byrd, and Palestrina as well as works from earlier centuries (chant, Dufay, Desprez, Frye, etc.). Very nearly all of our music comes from those genres.

The group had its informal beginnings in 1998, but regularly scheduled rehearsals began in January of 2004. They are normally held year around on the second and fourth Sundays of every month, except for May, November, and December, when they are held on the first and third Sundays. Rehearsals are normally for 3 hours, in Santa Rosa, California, starting at 1:30 p.m.. We sing live performances and eventually will record a CD now and then.



We would like the group to consist of a very small number of singers who clearly understand, truly benefit from, and are deeply committed to what the group is about. If you have questions or are interested, I would be happy to chat with you by phone or over coffee. Singers with the following characteristics will probably be the best fit:

1. Enjoy Early Sacred Music. We really do sing nearly exclusively sacred music from the Renaissance and earlier. Most of it: is subdued, tranquil, and reverent in nature; is in Latin; and is sung without accompaniment. Singers who might sing with us would ideally be familiar enough with that type of music to know that they truly enjoy and are moved by it.

2. Show Up Reliably and Punctually. Since we are such a small group and sing with two or sometimes only one person on a part, it is critical that we all show up for rehearsals and that we all show up on time. The fact that there are almost always at least two weeks and sometimes three or four weeks between rehearsals facilitates scheduling travel, social events, and vacations between rehearsals. Meeting twice a month instead of weekly reduces the time commitment for rehearsals, but that limited schedule and the size of our group make it all the more imperative that we all be exceptionally committed to showing up reliably and on time.

3. Be Able to Sing Well. This includes having a voice that is pleasant, blends well, and is more or less free of vibrato. A simple, clean sound is desired, rather than the very big, highly resonant sound that many classical soloists seek to develop. It is also important to be able (with sufficient practice) to sing accurately and precisely: in pitch, rhythm, and enunciation. While these attributes are important, none of us has developed them to perfection. We are all still learning and working on improvement.

4. Learn Your Part. We do not emphasize learning a large quantity of music and members have access to performance and rehearsal recordings, MIDI files, and other learning aides via the group's web site. Members do not need to be highly advanced sight readers, but some are. Our goals are to minimize the time we spend learning notes and rhythms in rehearsals and to maximize the time we can enjoy singing a moderate quantity of music very well. That requires singers who will be personally responsible for spending however much or little time it takes them to learn their parts before each rehearsal and who are willing to spend a considerable amount of time refining each piece.

5. Be Reasonably Congenial. We're a small group and like to enjoy each other's company at coffee breaks. And while we all have the right to expect each other to learn our own parts, a certain amount of support and patience is called for—both for fellow singers and for our rather inexperienced director (me).

We heartily invite anyone who might be interested in singing with us to get in touch with me using the contact information in the box below. If you aren't able to sing with us, please pass the word on and check our web site occasionally for scheduled performances.

Steve Moore

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