

## FEATURED SOLOIST

### Kevin Vandal, piano



Kevin Vandal, from Perth, ND, is in his third year studying piano performance with Dr. Dianna Anderson at Minot State University. He has been actively involved in the local music scene since high school, participating regularly at the International Music Camp, Dakota Chamber Music, and the annual Music Teachers National Association state performance competitions. He appeared with the Minot Symphony Orchestra in 2021 (as their featured high school soloist) to play the first movement of Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No. 2 - he is especially excited to join the MSO again for their March 2024 concert! In his sophomore year at MSU he received the newly offered Virginia Geesaman Chamber Music Internship - a year-long intensive that included mentorship from Luminus (the faculty piano trio at MSU) and Beo (a professional string quartet from Pittsburg, PA). Since attending MSU, he has also studied and performed as an organist, appearing with the MSU Concert Choir and the Minot Symphony Orchestra. He currently serves as a collaborative pianist for the Western Plains Opera Company and as a freelance piano instructor. This April, he will take the stage with the Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra for a full performance of George Gershwin's Concerto in F.



Kevin Vandal's February 2021 performance of the first movement of Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Minot Symphony Orchestra.

## GUEST CONDUCTOR & COMPOSER



### Dr. Emerson Eads

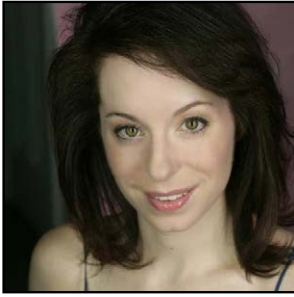
Dr. Emerson Eads currently serves as Director of Choral Activities at Minot State University. As a composer and conductor, Emerson has devoted himself to music of social concern. His Mass for the Oppressed, a setting of the Ordinary of the Mass featuring textual interpolations by his brother Evan Eads, and a Credo adapted from

the diary of Pope Francis before his ordination, holds particular poignancy for the social issues of our time. The Mass was written for the release of the Fairbanks Four (native Alaskan's from the composer's home town) who spent 18 years in prison wrongfully. His cantata "...from which your laughter rises." for mezzo-soprano, oboe, and orchestra, was written for the mothers of the Fairbanks Four, and was paired in a concert featuring Haydn's Stabat Mater, conducted to acclaim. His newest opera, The Princess Sophia, about the sinking of the SS Princess Sophia in October of 1918, was premiered in Juneau, Alaska on October 25th, 2018 to rave review in Opera Magazine. His most recent project, A Prairie Cantata with poetry by North Dakota poet, Huldah Lucile Winsted will be premiered in November with the Minot State University Choir.

Dr. Eads studied choral conducting with Carmen-Helena Tellez at the University of Notre Dame working with eminent choral conductors such as, Joseph Flummerfelt, Stephen Cleobury, Anne Howard Jones, and Peter Phillips among others. He studied composition with Alaskan composer, John Luther Adams.

*"Mass For The Oppressed was composed as a response to the release from prison of George Frese, Eugene Vent, Marvin Roberts, and Kevin Pease—Native Alaskans, collectively known as The Fairbanks Four, who were wrongfully convicted of murder, and spent eighteen years in prison. Growing up in Fairbanks, I was seventeen years old when the Fairbanks Four went into prison. Eighteen years later, I find myself a graduate student at the University of Notre Dame. Though not a Catholic myself, I have sung settings of the Mass all my life, and the text of the Mass presented a truly universal conduit through which to express the complex and varying emotions that rose within me. While the Fairbanks Four represent a local Alaskan issue, it speaks to a much wider and systematic problem in our nation's criminal justice system, where the poor and underprivileged are often victimized. This realization, along with the Jubilee Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis, spurred me to compose the Mass for the Oppressed." - Eads*

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### **Teresa Eickel, soprano**

In 2023 – 2024 season, Teresa will perform with the Minot Symphony Orchestra as the soprano soloist in Emerson Eads' Mass for the Oppressed, as well as present a full recital featuring the world premiere of an important new song cycle, Everywhere is Archipelago, composed by Emerson Eads with poetry by Pulitzer Prize-nominated poet,

Margaret Gibson. She will appear in a collaborative concert, Women Trailblazers, with Rhode Island College and the Rhode Island Symphony. She will also present her one-woman concert, A Brief History of Love, for the First Congregational Church of New Britain Summer Concert Series.

In the 2021-2022 season, Teresa performed with Boheme Opera in November 2021 and April 2022 as part of their concert series. In recent seasons, Teresa performed her important collaborative concert, Love Sings a New Day, with bass-baritone Kenneth Overton and soprano Mia Douglas at the Asylum Hill Congregational Church Concert Series in Hartford. Teresa appeared in the Celebrity Vocal Recital at Vann Vocal Institute, organized by Metropolitan tenor David Cangelosi and as a guest soloist with the West Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Teresa also debuted her one-woman show, A Brief History of Love, which is an irreverent look at love and relationships through the lens of beloved hits from opera and Broadway.

In 2016, Teresa made her debut in the title role of Turandot with the Fairbank Symphony Orchestra. She also appeared with the Fairbanks Symphony Orchestra in their opening Gala Concert in 2015, as well as a series of chamber performances and a solo art song recital accompanied Maestro Eduard Zilberkant.

In recent seasons, Teresa made her debut in the role of Violetta in La traviata with the Lowveld Chamber Music Association. This was followed by a debut with Boston Midsummer Opera as Ludmilla in The Bartered Bride and as a guest soloist with the Missouri Symphony Orchestra's gala concert, It's a Grand Night For Singing. Teresa was seen as the soprano soloist in the concert series, Around the World in 80 Minutes, in Boca Raton, FL with internationally acclaimed violinist, Yi-Jia Susanne Hou. She also appeared as the soprano soloist in the concert series, All the Good Stuff in North Carolina, West Virginia, and Connecticut.

*Continued...*

# FEATURED SOLOIST

*Teresa Eickel cont.*

A champion of new music, Teresa performs an original programmatic recital program, *Bury My Heart*, with actor Ryan Stadler and pianist Saffron Chung. In addition created the role of Vera Goodman in the world premiere of *Slaying the Dragon* by Michael Ching with Center City Opera in Philadelphia.

Teresa Eickel made her debut as a solo recitalist at the Ravinia Festival's Rising Star Festival. She appeared as the soprano soloist in Mahler's 2nd Symphony, *Resurrection*, with the New Haven Symphony and the role of Cio-Cio-San in *Madama Butterfly* with Festival Opera Walnut Creek,, a role she has performed to great critical and audience acclaim with Mobile Opera, Ashlawn Opera Festival, Opera Fairbanks, San Francisco Lyric Opera, Boheme Opera, and the Bear Valley Music Festival.



## **Minot Chamber Chorale**

The Minot Chamber Chorale is a 40+ piece, mixed chorus that performs four concerts per year around the Minot area. Each concert has a different theme and concerts are performed in different venues around the city. Usually the concerts are in October, early December, mid-February, and late April. After more than forty-five years, the Minot Chamber Chorale is dedicated bringing quality choral music to the Minot area, and is still the only volunteer, community mixed chorus in Minot.

The Minot Chamber Chorale was founded in 1972 to fill an unmet need in the community — a mixed chorus to present quality choral literature. The singers make a commitment to perform in every concert during each season because they have a deep love for chorale music and know that with choral music, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The only paid artists are the accompanist and the director. The spirit of volunteerism has kept the Chorale going and their cooperation fosters a spirit of goodwill and camaraderie. The Minot Chamber Chorale is supported in part by the ND Council on the Arts. And is a proud member of the Minot Are Council of the Arts.

## FEATURED SOLOIST



### Toby Newman, mezzo-soprano

Described by the New York Times as “fresh-voiced and sympathetic,” Toby Newman most recently appeared as Emilia in LoftOpera’s critically acclaimed production of Rossini’s *Otello*. Her repertoire includes Sesto in *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (Opera Roanoke), Dinah in *Trouble in Tahiti* (Anchorage Opera), Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (Phoenicia International Festival of the Voice), Bianca in *The Rape of Lucretia* (LoftOpera), and the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (The Bushnell Center for Performing Arts, Hartford, CT). Of her Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with St. Petersburg Opera the Tampa Bay Examiner said ““Ms. Newman had the entire audience laughing continuously from falling up the stairs to hang onto her departing love’s leg to learning coquetry from Ms. Seipel. She has such a clear voice and amazing range that it gave listeners delightful shivers.”

Ms. Newman is also an accomplished oratorio singer, with recent credits including the alto solos in Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Handel’s *Messiah*, Judas Maccabaeus, and Dettigen *Te Deum*, Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* and *Cantata 80*, Brahms’ *Liebeslieder Walzer*, and one of the two “divas” in the New Haven Symphony Orchestra’s *Dueling Divas* concert. Ms. Newman’s discography includes the alto solos on the newly released recording of Emerson Eads’ *Mass for the Oppressed*.

In addition to her work in traditional opera and oratorio, Ms. Newman works extensively in the realm of new music and contemporary opera. Her longtime association with Meredith Monk has included multiple recordings and concerts at Carnegie Hall and other renowned venues. Additional new music highlights include the lead female role in Robert Eén’s opera *The Escape Artist* at Disney Hall in Los Angeles and repeat performances in Maharashtra, India, and world and American premieres by composers such as Thomas Pasatieri, Huang Ruo, and Gerald Cohen, among many others.

Eads’ premiere concert was recorded live by GRAMMY-winning Five/Four Productions, and proceeds from the recording will help fund The Alaska Innocence Project ([www.alaskainnocence.org](http://www.alaskainnocence.org)), a non-profit organization whose mission is to identify and exonerate wrongfully convicted Alaskans as the last hope for those innocent individuals who have exhausted their appeals and yet remain convicted. By giving voice to those who have been silenced, Eads’ hope is to create a musical and emotional space where those voices can fully resonate until “Justice rolls down,” not just for some, but for all.

## FEATURED SOLOIST



### Barry Banks, tenor

In a prestigious career built on impeccable technique and innate musicality, Grammy-nominated tenor Barry Banks' early career in a core repertoire of bel canto and classical roles took him to the major stages of the world including appearances as Don Narciso (*Il turco in Italia*) and the title role in *Mitridate, re di Ponto* at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Ernesto (*Don Pasquale*) at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Count Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) at Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Idreno (*Semiramide*) at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples, Arnold (*Guillaume Tell*) at Welsh National Opera, Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*) at the Salzburg Festival, and the title role of *Candide* in his US stage debut at Chicago Lyric Opera.

In a relationship with Metropolitan Opera spanning more than 25 years, key roles have included Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*), Ramiro (*La Cenerentola*), Tonio (*La fille du régiment*), Elvino (*La Sonnambula*), Lindoro (*L'italiana in Algeri*), and Italian Tenor (*Der Rosenkavalier*). Banks' triumphant return to Metropolitan Opera in the 2021/22 season as Hades in Matt Aucoin's acclaimed new opera *Eurydice*, earned him the highest of praise from audiences and critics alike, the *Washington Post* writing, "his tenor is white-hot, piercing through the orchestra, threatening to burst into flames as Hades." Further pathing the way into a new territory of repertoire, other recent appearances include a return to Los Angeles Opera in Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abel's new opera *Omar* conducted by Kazem Abdullah, and his role debut as Mime in *Das Rheingold* for Dallas Opera under the baton of Emmanuelle Villaume.

Other notable opera roles include Iago in Rossini's *Otello* at both Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Salzburg Festival; the role of Don Ramiro (*La cenerentola*) saw his debut at the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Oreste (*Ermione*) marked his debut at the Santa Fe Festival, and he made house debuts at Opéra de Monte-Carlo and Wiener Staatsoper as Narciso in performances of *Il turco in Italia* opposite Cecilia Bartoli. During a long association with English National Opera, Banks has appeared in a string of new productions including Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Hoffmann (*The Tales of Hoffmann*) and the Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*).

Barry Banks' distinguished concert career has included Berlioz's *Grande Messe des Morts* under Sir Colin Davis with London Symphony Orchestra

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*Barry Banks cont.*

and released to considerable acclaim on LSO Live, Britten's War Requiem at the Teatro alla Scala under Xian Zhang to mark the 10th Anniversary of 9/11, The Dream of Gerontius with Münchner Philharmoniker under Sir Andrew Davis, Rossini's Petite messe solennelle with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Daniele Gatti, Das Lied von der Erde with players from Utah Symphony Orchestra under Thierry Fischer, and Gurrelieder with Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España under the baton of David Afkham. Most recently he has performed Mahler's Symphony No.8 in the closing concert of the Cincinnati Mayfest under Juanjo Mena, and Verdi's Messa da Requiem at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus with Athens State Orchestra.

An impressive discography includes three recordings of Mahler's Symphony No.8 - with Utah Symphony Orchestra (Fischer), London Philharmonic Orchestra (Jurowski), and, soon to be released, Minnesota Orchestra (Vänskä). He has recorded variously with Sony, EMI, Phillips, Telarc, Teldec, Harmonia Mundi, Opera Rara, Erato and Classical Opera and has had a long and fruitful association with the Chandos label with a number of releases on the Opera in English series and a featured solo album of bel canto arias.

Highlights of Barry Banks' 2023/24 season include a return to San Francisco Opera for performances of Omar conducted by John Kennedy and Das Rheingold in staged performances with Los Angeles Philharmonic under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel.

Barry Banks joins the Peabody Conservatory as adjunct professor of vocal studies for the 2023/24 academic year.

# A CRY FOR FREEDOM



**Saturday, Mar. 16, 2024**

**6pm Musicology - 7pm Concert**

Gershwin: Concerto in F  
Kevin Vandal, piano

Emerson Eads: *Mass for the Oppressed*

Guest Conductor Dr. Emerson Eads

Minot Chamber Chorale

Teresa Eickel, soprano

Toby Newman, alto

Barry Banks, tenor

Dr. Jason Thoms, bass

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9

Sibelius: *Finlandia*

Minot Chamber Chorale

## FEATURED SOLOIST



### **Dr. Jason Thoms, baritone**

Dr. Jason Thoms is a 5th generation professional musician. He is a graduate of St. Olaf College and Michigan State University and holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting, and additional education in Voice and Opera from University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Dr. Thoms has been a professional conductor for over 25 years, and has worked for large churches as full-time Director of Music, and has served as a Director of Choral Activities at Mississippi University for Women, Concordia College-New York, and currently Bismarck State College. In June 2017, he made his Carnegie Hall main stage debut when he served as Artistic Director and Festival Conductor for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation Hymn Festival. He has conducted ensembles in 49 US states, Canada, Germany, and Italy.

He has been a professional singer for over 20 years singing with some of the top professional choral ensembles in the US including the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, South Dakota Chorale, Clarion Ensemble, Collegiate Chorale, Kinnara, Spire Ensemble, and the St. Tikhon's Choir. He has also performed as a professional soloist on four occasions at Carnegie Hall in NYC.

Dr. Thoms is a published composer with GIA Music (and soon with Paraclete Press). He has written many choral and choral/orchestral compositions for a variety of ensembles. In the past year, his compositions have been strongly influenced by chant and Christian Orthodox music. He is also frequently hired to transcribe and orchestrate music for conductors and composers.

During the spring 2020, Dr. Thoms began producing virtual choirs for a variety of ensembles across the country, and also created a number of one-man virtual performances. Currently, he is developing and creating a 3-month experience for the Danbury Concert Chorus to produce a virtual performance of the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah with professional soloists, and virtual choir choral movements.

Dr. Thoms teaches voice lessons, conducting lessons, choral workshops on rehearsal and choral methods, and has frequently served as an adjudicator and guest conductor.