

## **Axtell Area Oratorio Society 50th Anniversary Concert Airs on NET Radio Easter Sunday**

LINCOLN, Neb. (March 7, 2008) -- A special 50th anniversary performance of Handel's "Messiah" by Nebraska's Axtell Area Oratorio Society airs on NET Radio's "Nebraska Concerts" series on Easter Sunday, March 23, at 2 p.m. CT. "Nebraska Concerts" provides NET Radio listeners with programs of fine music performed and recorded on Nebraska's stages.

The group's golden gala concert was held last year at the Merryman Performing Arts Center in Kearney to commemorate 50 years of presenting Handel's great work. The first performance of "Messiah" by the Axtell Area Oratorio Society was in 1958 at the Axtell Public School Auditorium. The 1958 choir was comprised of 40 members from Axtell, Holdrege, Minden, Wilcox, Hildreth, Funk and Loomis.

J. Rodney Wendell directed the first performance and has directed all the concerts since, including this anniversary presentation. Some of the original society members perform in the 50th concert, as well as their children and grandchildren.

The anniversary concert features an 80-voice chorus and a 20-piece chamber orchestra with organ. Professional soloists featured are soprano Jana Holzmeier, mezzo-soprano Senja Stephens, tenor Paul Smith and bass Charles Smith. The "Nebraska Concerts" recording on Easter Sunday will feature Parts II and III of "Messiah."

"Nebraska Concerts" is broadcast each Sunday at 2 p.m. CT on NET Radio, a service of NET. Dave Hughes is producer and Genevieve Randall is scriptwriter and host. For more information about NET Radio or to listen to NET Radio programs webcast live, visit [www.netNebraska.org](http://www.netNebraska.org) and click on Radio. All that is needed is access to the Internet and a free Windows Media Player program. Webcasting of NET Radio is a free service provided by NET.

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