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Nov. 9, 1999  
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## NEWS RELEASE

### 'SCHOLA CANTORUM DAYTONIENSIS' BRINGS CHANT TO MODERN WORSHIP

DAYTON, Ohio — It's simply a blend of 10 or 12 voices, but the resulting music can call to mind the majesty and glory of service to God and the powerful peace of prayer.

Chant, whether in the Gregorian tradition, the Ambrosian rite or the Byzantine style, is the music of choice for the University of Dayton's *Schola Cantorum Daytoniensis* or, translated from Latin, "a group of singers from Dayton," says Brother Todd Ridder, S.M., a lecturer in the music department and co-founder of the group.

The singers celebrate four or five liturgies each year, including Masses and vespers, and also perform concerts and medieval liturgical dramas. A Mass to honor the Feast of St. Andrew will be celebrated by *Schola Cantorum Daytoniensis* at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 30, in the Immaculate Conception Chapel on campus.

"St. Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, so the instrumental music will have a little bit of a Scots flavor," Ridder says.

The Kyrie they'll sing is by the Renaissance composer Guillaume Dufay, and it will be sung in alternating chant and polyphony (harmony). The Kyrie will be accompanied by two viols, played by Ridder and Charles Larkowski, associate professor of music history at Wright State University and co-founder of the *schola*. The alleluia will be sung in an ancient form of polyphony known as organum.

The popularity of chant can be traced to its roots, Ridder says. "It's appealing. It's designed to be music for meditation and prayer. There's an ethereal or floating quality that's

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different from today's music, which has more of a driving force to it whether it's rock or jazz or classical music."

Chant is arranged to suit the speech rhythms of Latin, and "it doesn't fit into the standard major-minor categories that have been around since the 1700s," Ridder says. "It's a different sound because of the choice and arrangement of notes."

The group generally sings psalms in English but uses Latin for many of its pieces. When they sing at a liturgy, "all of a sudden a number of people may remember their Latin from grade school or somewhere and they'll sing along with us," Ridder says.

The *schola* was formed in 1994 because of a request from UD's philosophy department for music to complement its colloquium on St. Augustine, a fourth-century philosopher. "Well, there was no written music from that time, so we went to the tradition of the church in Milan, where Augustine was baptized," Ridder recalls. He turned to Larkowski to help with the chants he found doing the research and to recruit singers.

"After the event, we realized we wanted to keep on singing, and the group was formed," Ridder says. Current members are drawn from UD and WSU faculty as well as the community.

Following the explosive popularity of a chant CD released about five years ago by the Benedictine monks of Santo Domingo de Silos, the centuries-old musical form is finding new acceptance in Catholic worship, Ridder says.

"It's a nourishing activity, spiritually," he says. "We all enjoy the singing, but it also hits a different part of the psyche. It deepens the opportunity for prayer, both for the singers and for those who attend the services."

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For media interviews, contact **Brother Todd Ridder** at (937) 229-3985 or via e-mail at [ridder@yar.udayton.edu](mailto:ridder@yar.udayton.edu). Additional information is available at [www.udayton.edu/~music/faculty/ridder/scd.html](http://www.udayton.edu/~music/faculty/ridder/scd.html).