

Midwest Young Artists Students Join United Nations Ambassadors to Sing for Peace

“Make music, not war” could be the slogan for a remarkable new recording poised for release this week featuring ambassadors to the United Nations and vocalists from Midwest Young Artists (MYA), a preeminent Chicago-area music conservatory. Members of the Voices Rising children’s choir along with the high school students of MYA’s select VX ensemble constitute the background choir accompanying the diplomats, who step out of their usual roles to sing on *Ambassadors Sing for Peace*.

An initiative of the United Nations led by Ambassador Simona Miculescu (Romania), the recording seeks to display the extraordinary power of the arts to bring people together. The ambassadors on the recording, who spend most days confronting thorny issues at the UN, are also vocalists in their own right. They selected peace themed songs for the album, which is produced by the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation. MYA’s longtime choral director Gary Fry called upon his renowned arranging and music direction skills for the project, so it was a natural to involve the talented youth of Midwest Young Artists.

“I think it makes a terrific statement to have young people singing with these world leaders,” said Fry. “The ambassadors agreed that today’s children are our best hope for a more peaceful world in the future.” Ambassador Miculescu adds, “This album is a dream come true for me, because, since my arrival in New York, I’ve been planning to gather a few ambassadors to convey the message of peace in a different way than on the UN rostrum. Diplomacy and music create perfect synergies in spreading the spirit of peace!”

The students sang backup on several tracks of the twelve-song album, including Michael Jackson’s “Heal the World” and Fry’s own composition “Rhythms of One World.” The ambassadors, representing the countries of Canada, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Nauru, and Romania, sang in four different languages and recorded their lead vocals at a studio in New York City, while MYA’s pupils added their melodies at a studio here on the North Shore.

Sally Alvarado, a senior at Niles North High School, is a member of the MYA VX vocal ensemble and weighed in on her experience performing on the project. “I think it is a shame that humans so often turn to war in times of crisis. I don’t believe that killing will bring peace to the nations of the world. If what we want is peace, then I believe that music is a universal and beautiful way to bring together people of all races, ethnicities, and languages.” When asked about her feelings on being able to take part in this UN initiative she added: “I love to perform in situations like these. It is wonderful knowing that I made an everlasting impression on a person through song-- and the impression that music leaves on me is truly remarkable.”

Proceeds from the record sales of *Ambassadors Sing for Peace*, which will be sold as a CD at the UN gift shop in New York as well as available digitally on iTunes and other digital music sites, will benefit United Nations youth programs worldwide. The voices of the youngsters in MYA's choral programs will in this way have a truly global reach with musical messages of international friendship and peace. To learn more about the UN, visit: www.UN.org. For information on the Midwest Young Artists music school, visit: www.MYA.org.