

DR. JOSEPH PAUL DEASE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Dr. Joseph Paul Dease is a native of Dothan, Alabama. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Choral/Vocal Music from the University of Montevallo, a Master of Music in Choral Conducting with advanced studies in Vocal Pedagogy from East Carolina University, and a Ph.D. in Choral Conducting/Choral Music Education from the Florida State University College of Music. Currently, he is the Founding Artistic Director and Conductor of the Magic City Choral Society and serves as Director of Arts and Music at Southside Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.



Dr. Dease has a wealth of conducting experience ranging from secondary school, church, community, college, and opera choruses. That experience also includes frequent adjudicating and guest conducting in North Carolina, Florida, Alabama, and New Mexico. Students and colleagues have described his style as passionate, enthusiastic, engaging, endearing, but above all, positive. Dr. Dease's mentors include: Clifford K. Madsen, André Thomas, Kevin Fenton, Kimberly Van Weelden, Judy Bowers, Ronda Fleming, Brad Logan, Kathryn Foster, and Gilda Willkerson.

DONNA BLETHEN, NBCT
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC EDUCATION

Ms. Blethen received her B.S. and M.S. degrees in Instrumental Music Education from The University of Alabama and is a student in Walden University's Educational Doctorate program in Teacher Leadership. She received National Board Certification in Early/Middle Childhood Music/Band in 2005 from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. She has taught band in elementary, middle and high schools and is currently teaching 4th through 8th grade band in the Birmingham City Schools.



A native of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Ms. Blethen has performed in numerous musical ensembles throughout the state, including the Tuscaloosa Symphony and the Birmingham Heritage Jazz Band. She currently performs with the Celebration Winds Community Concert Band, the Birmingham Community Concert Band, and the UAB Community Wind Symphony.

Ms. Blethen conducts music fundamental classes throughout the year for members of the Magic City Choral Society. She believes that if you are truly passionate about music, you are never too old nor is it ever too late to learn to read music.

TY ROBERT THORNTON
PRINCIPAL ACCOMPANIST

Ty Robert Thornton began his piano studies at the age of 6. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Piano Pedagogy in 1978 and a Master of Arts degree in Piano Performance in 1980, both from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, where he studied with Mr. Warren Mack. Mr. Thornton holds a Master of Music in musicology from Florida State University (1988), where he also completed the Certificate in Early Music and pursued doctoral studies in musicology. His post-graduate piano teachers include Julia Benfer, Dr. John Salmon, and Robert Sherwood. He studied piano and harpsichord with Dr. Karyl Louwenaar, and organ with Dr. Ronald Sider. He taught on the music faculties of Pensacola Christian College, the University of Alabama, and the Conservatory of Fine and Performing Arts at Birmingham-Southern College. He also worked as musical director with Terrific New Theatre, Birmingham Festival Theatre, the Drama department of Canterbury United Methodist Church, and Dane Peterson's Theater, and served as accompanist for the Opera and Musical Theatre Departments of Birmingham-Southern College, the Pensacola Opera, the Pensacola Choral Society, the music department of the University of West Florida, the Music and Drama Departments of Pensacola Junior College, the Alabama Ballet, and Opera Birmingham.



ROB BRADLEY
ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR

Rob Bradley received a B.S. degree in Choral Music Education from the University of Alabama with piano as his principal instrument. As a teacher and accompanist, Mr. Bradley has been involved in choral and instrumental music programs throughout the state for more than twenty years.

"I heard the MCCA choirs for the first time at the 2009 MCCA Spring Concert and knew that I wanted to be involved. I appreciate Paul and the choir's willingness to let me serve in a helping capacity."

