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## **THE ROSE ENSEMBLE WINS INTERNATIONAL CHORAL COMPETITION IN TOLOSA, SPAIN**

St. Paul, Minn.—As the exclusive representative of the United States, The Rose Ensemble took first prize for sacred music in the 39<sup>th</sup> Tolosa International Choral Competition, a major choral festival held last week in Spain.

“I am immensely proud of this incredible achievement,” said Rose Ensemble Founder & Artistic Director Jordan Sramek. “Walking down the aisle of the church as they announced our name, the audience cheered. We just couldn’t believe how warm everyone was to us.”

The Rose Ensemble won first place in the sacred music category for professional choirs. The group also took second place in the secular music category for professional choirs (trailing the winners by only one point out of 400).

The Rose Ensemble performed in Tolosa as part of a Spanish tour encompassing six performances over the last two weeks, including music festivals in Pamplona and Burgos. Most notably, The Rose Ensemble took part in the *XXVII Jornadas Internacionales Aragonesas de Canto Coral* festival in Borja, Spain—the first North American choir invited to participate in this festival in over a decade.

On the heels of these achievements, the group has already received invitations to perform in France, Germany and Brazil. “After we left the arena, the entire city was alive with the afterglow of this choral festival, and everywhere we went people stopped to congratulate us,” said Sramek from Spain on Sunday.

### **THE TOLOSA INTERNATIONAL CHORAL COMPETITION**

The Tolosa International Choral Competition has been held in every year since 1969 and attracts thousands of choral music fans from around the world. Its aim is to bring together the best choirs in the world to enable an exchange of styles, interpretation, choral literature, vocal education and customs of each country, as well as to raise awareness of the musical and cultural tradition of the Basque Country. Over the decades, the competition has become one of the most important choral events in the world, with almost a thousand choirs from all over the world competing in Tolosa to date. The festival is also part of what is known as the European Grand Prix, a collection of six choral competitions throughout Europe.

### **ABOUT THE ROSE ENSEMBLE**

Based in St. Paul, Minn., The Rose Ensemble reawakens the ancient through imaginative performances of vocal music, connecting each individual to past worlds with stories of spirituality and humanity. The group tours both nationally and internationally with concerts, master classes and interactive workshops for school-age students.

Now in its twelfth season, The Rose Ensemble has produced seven full-length recordings and is the recipient of the 2005 Chorus America Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence.

***“POSTCARDS FROM SPAIN”: THE ROSE ENSEMBLE’S TOUR BLOG***

Director Jordan Sramek’s travel blog chronicles this Minnesota choir’s experiences on tour in Europe (with the occasional post from The Rose Ensemble’s other singers.) The blog is available on the group’s MySpace page ([www.myspace.com/theroseensemble](http://www.myspace.com/theroseensemble)); all entries are also archived on The Rose Ensemble’s Web site ([www.RoseEnsemble.org](http://www.RoseEnsemble.org)).

**PHOTOS:**

High-resolution photos available for download at <http://www.roseensemble.org/news/pressroom.html>



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