February 28, 2018

The Honorable Tina Smith

60 Plato Boulevard, Suite 220

Saint Paul, MN 55107

Dear Senator Smith,

I am writing to express my deepest thanks to you for your support of arts funding. The Rose Ensemble is fortunate this year to be the recipient of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in support of our program *Welcome the Stranger: The Promise of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica*.

Grounded in original research, this program explores the virtue of hospitality ~ “welcoming the stranger” ~ a central tenet in the Rule of St. Benedict that speaks to today. The concert is set in 1618 at a mythical gathering of Milanese Benedictines, where virtuosic compositions by local nuns are intermingled with medieval plainchant and Renaissance motets of the nearby Cassinese monks of Saint Simpliciano. In a nod to the present, we honor Women’s History Month with a new work commissioned from Minnesotan Abbie Betinis.

We are pleased to have available at each concert a visual display on St. Benedict and hospitality created in partnership with staff at the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library in Collegeville.

In late breaking news, we are especially excited to welcome to the Twin Cities from the University of Chicago Dr. Robert Kendrick, a noted specialist on this music. Dr. Kendrick will be joining me for the pre-concert talks. *He was so excited about the program, that he contacted me to volunteer his services!*

*Welcome the Stranger* will be performed on March 9 at Colonial Church (Edina), March 10 at the Church of the Holy Cross (Minneapolis), and March 11 at St. Paul Seminary (St. Paul). It would be our pleasure to *welcome you* to any of these concerts should you be available.

Sincerely,

Jordan Sramek

Founder/Artistic and Executive Director