

# CALVIN INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

*for the study and renewal of worship*

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## The Joy of Music in Community: Reflections on Gloriae Dei Cantores

*Reflections by Greg Scheer on today's presentation by Gloriae Dei Cantores at the January Series:*

Today's concert by Gloriae Dei Cantores was, as expected, superb. The choir's tone was vibrant. Director Elizabeth Patterson's conducting was rock solid, if somewhat understated. The program was a tour de force of sacred choral music from the whole world and the whole Church's history.



What was more impressive than all this, though, was the palpable joy that permeated the performance. The singers' smiles were not put on as a performance demeanor. Instead, their faces seemed to communicate that they could think of nothing better than to be singing together. As an audience, we were drawn into their joy, and experienced something much deeper than a performance.

It's no surprise that there was something different about Gloriae Dei Cantores. The choir comes from the Community of Jesus in Orleans, MA ([www.communityofjesus.org](http://www.communityofjesus.org)) where 350 people of all ages and denominational backgrounds commit to sharing life through daily prayer, weekly worship and a number of arts ministries. I would guess that the choir's unique musical cohesion and obvious joy of singing together grow from the life they share as brothers and sisters in Christ.

There's a lesson to be learned here: those of us who lead musicians in churches may find that our church's music grows into something more than just music if it grows *out of* something more than just music. That is, if we were to spend more time building community among our musicians, praying for one another and worshiping together (and not just practicing), we might find a contagious sense of joy permeating our own music making.