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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Nov. 12, 2004

**Contact:** Nancy Cooper, adjunct assistant professor, Department of Music, 243-2080.

### **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY'S 'MESSIAH' CONCERT SHARES HOLIDAY SPIRIT**

#### **MISSOULA –**

Community members and University of Montana students are invited to sing at the Habitat for Humanity "Messiah" concert at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 28, in the University Theatre.

The concert merges professional soloists, a 30-piece orchestra and a community choir.

There is no charge for the concert, but a free-will donation will be accepted at the door. It aids Habitat for Humanity in plans to provide housing for eligible low-income families.

Professional musicians volunteer, and the community choir collects pledges to participate in the event. A minimum pledge of \$50 for adults and \$35 for students is needed to perform in the concert. Those with the highest pledge totals receive prizes donated by local businesses. The concert averages \$10,000 in donated funds each year. This year, organizers hope to surpass that amount, said Nancy Cooper, Department of Music adjunct assistant professor.

"The 'Messiah' is one of the greatest works of all choral literature," Cooper said. "It's very, very fun to sing and to sing with an orchestra."

In its ninth year, the concert features soprano soloist Anne Basinski, alto Karen Callan, tenor David Cody and baritone Stephen Kalm. Thomas Cook will conduct. The orchestra includes members of the UM Symphony, Missoula Symphony Orchestra, String Orchestra of the Rockies and local high school orchestras.

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Two voluntary rehearsals will be held from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 14, and Sunday, Nov. 21, at Holy Spirit Episcopal Church on 130 S. Sixth Street E. From 1:30-3:30 p.m. A full rehearsal will be held from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 28, at the University Center.

“We encourage people to attend because not only is it the perfect beginning to the Christmas season, but you’ll be supporting a tremendously worthy cause,” Cooper said.

Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit organization focused on decreasing homelessness around the world. Houses for low-income families are built by diverse groups of people working together through donations to Habitat. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat has built more than 150,000 houses around the world. In Missoula, since its start-up in the community in 1991, Habitat has built 25 homes and is nearly finished with its 26th.

For those wishing to participate in the concert, pledge sheets can be found online at [www.habitatmsla.org](http://www.habitatmsla.org). For more information, call Cooper at 243-2080.

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