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**Ars Musica Music Director Dusty Francis Named Artistic Director  
of New Youth Chorus Based in Ridgewood**

*New Jersey State Children's Chorus (NJSCC) is a secular youth chorus open to children in grades K-5;  
auditions are ongoing*

**Ridgewood, NJ - May 16, 2016** – Dusty Francis has enjoyed an active career as a choral music performer, conductor, and teacher in the New York metropolitan area and across the country. He has conducted a breadth of ensembles, including high school, church, community and university choirs, orchestras and opera choruses, and is currently thriving in his role as Music Director of the renowned Ars Musica Chorale, a 75-member adult chorus based in Ridgewood, NJ. In his continued pursuit of Ars Musica's mission of providing choral singers with instructive and rewarding opportunities to make music together, Francis discovered an opportunity to bring a new choral experience to Bergen County, one that would meet the needs of a different kind of singer.

This time, it would be all about the kids.

Led by Francis as Artistic Director, the New Jersey State Children's Chorus is Bergen County's only secular children's chorus and consists of two ensembles. The Apprentice Choir is open to boys and girls in grades Kindergarten through two and the Intermediate Choir is open to boys and girls in grades three through five. The chorus is conveniently located in Ridgewood, Bergen County, NJ.

When asked what will set NJSCC apart from other choruses, Francis answered, "Singers in NJSCC will learn valuable skills that can be transferred to their church and school music programs and to the rest of their lives." He continued, "There are some truly wonderful existing music programs in Bergen County, and NJSCC is committed to serving the community not as a competing choir but a complementary choir. There's no such thing as "too much music"."

Singers interested in auditioning for NJSCC's Inaugural Season can submit an audition request at [www.njstatechildrenschorus.org/auditions](http://www.njstatechildrenschorus.org/auditions). Auditions are scheduled for Tuesday, May 24th, Thursday, May 26th, Monday, June 6th and Wednesday, June 8th at First Presbyterian Church, 722 East Ridgewood Avenue, Ridgewood, NJ. While auditions for the chorus are required, any child with an interest in choral singing is welcome to participate in the audition process.

“Auditions for both the Apprentice and Intermediate Choirs are designed to put the child at ease to express himself or herself musically,” Francis explained. “Both parent and child will be given the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about NJSCC. Auditions will be brief, informal, and fun.”

As the NJSCC begins its inaugural season, what is Dusty Francis most looking forward to? “I’m so excited to meet our first class of singers and to help them discover just what they’re capable of. And, in turn, to show the community just what their children can do if given the opportunity, guidance, and encouragement.”

For more information about NJSCC, including rehearsal schedule, tuition and financial aid information, and audition details and reservations, visit [www.njstatechildrenschorus.org](http://www.njstatechildrenschorus.org).

### **About the New Jersey State Children’s Chorus**

The New Jersey State Children’s Chorus, an initiative of Ars Musica and based in Ridgewood, New Jersey, is Bergen County’s only community children’s chorus, fostering camaraderie and leadership through choral singing. Its mission is to achieve choral excellence through musicianship training, community building, and performance, empowering young people from every cultural and economic background to become leaders in their classrooms and their communities. The NJSCC consists of two ensembles. The Apprentice Choir is open to boys and girls in grades Kindergarten through two and the Intermediate Choir is open to boys and girls in grades three through five. The inaugural 10-month season of the NJSCC will kick off in September, 2016. Weekly rehearsals for both the Apprentice and Intermediate Choirs will be held in Ridgewood, NJ on Tuesday afternoons/evenings under the leadership of Artistic Director Dusty Francis. For more information about the New Jersey State Children’s Chorus, including rehearsal and performance schedules, audition details and/or to request an audition, visit [www.njstatechildrenschorus.org](http://www.njstatechildrenschorus.org).

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