



CHORALE NOTES (& Photos!)

December , 2011

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Here we are singing at Dogwood Village. What a wonderful audience!

Our very active Fall/Winter Concert Season ended at St. Luke's Lutheran Church on Sunday, December 11th with our final concert of the year. Now there's time to sit back a bit, and reflect. What a great concert season this has been! Knowing this would be her final season with us, Virginia Erwin chose dynamic and moving music and we had a great time with it.

This season, as well as singing at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, we performed at two new venues: Dogwood Village in Orange and Prince Michel Winery in Leon. Both were distinguished not just by being beautiful locations, but by their very friendly, supportive

and helpful staff. Thank you so much, to our hospitable concert hosts and our terrific audiences!

And thank you to our own heroes: all 39 of our wonderful singers, both adult and child; our gifted soloists, **Cathy ter Weele** and **Melissa Janes**; our talented singer/instrumentalists, **Kathy and Scott Tester**; our wonderful Directors, **Virginia Erwin**, **Cathy ter Weele** and **Carole Tomhave**; our hard-working, patient and talented accompanists, **Brittany Bache** and **Caleb Ballew**; our guest instrumentalists, **Joe Whitesides** and **Patrick Neidich**; and the very hard-working team of chorale volunteers who planned and worked and strove mightily to make the concerts happen. **Kathy Tester**, as Concert Master, worked with the venues and with the instrumentalists, and mapped out and oversaw the



Our Youth Chorale sang so beautifully! - Photos: Dogwood Village

logistics of each concert, and arranged the Girl Scout volunteers for the St Luke's concert. **Wanda Osborn** handled the moving and set-up of

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Join Us! Chorale Spring 2012 Season Begins Soon!

Adult Rehearsals Begin – 6:30 pm - St. Luke's Monday, January 9th
Youth Rehearsals Begin – 5:45 - St. Luke's Monday, January 16th

Holiday Concerts, cont'd

risers, stands, lights, amps, speakers and keyboard -a huge task!- with the assistance, in particular, of **Charlie Pringle** and **Alex ter Weele**. **Jack Garber** designed, created and oversaw the printing of the programs, tickets, posters and hand-outs.

Dorothy Wright organized, wrote and sent out concert publicity and news articles. **Margie Blankenship** saw to the comfort of the singers and arranged for the excellent volunteers from the Community Services Board who were ushers and ticket-takers at the Prince Michel's Winery concert. **Diana Cmeyla**, **Nellie Santinga**, **Joyce Calhoun** and **Johncie Carlson** handled the recovery, sorting and return to storage of the precious music scores. **Tim Carlson** handled the accounting and banking of ticket receipts and



At a Board meeting, (from left front to left rear) Jack Garber, Bonnie LaRocque, Virginia Erwin, Kathy Tester and Diana Cmeyla discuss pros and cons of scheduling an extra rehearsal.

donations. Thanks also to our contributors of donations and of time and resources, and to our (fortunately!) understanding and supportive families!

And special thanks to the Chorale Board, which works so hard all year to bring keep the Chorale running smoothly and make the Concerts happen and happen well: **Carolyn Osborne** (President), **Tim Carlson** (Treasurer), **Wanda Osborn** (Corresponding Secretary), **Bonnie LaRocque** (Recording Secretary), **Donna Pringle** (Fund Raising), **Diana Cmeyla** (Librarian), **Jack Garber** (Programs), **Dorothy Wright** (Publicity), **Margie Blankenship** (Social), **Rose Howard** (Chorale Manager), **Kathy Tester** (Concert Master/Production), as well as Directors **Virginia Erwin** and **Cathy ter Weele**.

Pulling together, we do beautiful things!

A Brief History of the BRC Music Library (and its care and storage)

By **Diana Cmeyla**, Chorale Librarian

Back in 1991, when I joined the Culpeper Piedmont Choral Society, as the Blue Ridge Chorale was then called, **Lois Shanks** was the Director. Lois lived in Warrenton and kept all the music stored in her basement. When I volunteered to help **Clareece Eaton** (yes, that's **Joe Eaton**'s mother!) with the music, all we had to do was number, stamp, sort and dispense it to the members, then retrieve it return it to Lois at the end of each concert. Very simple!

At the time when Lois left and **Art Palmer** became the Director, we were based at Precious Blood Catholic Church. They kindly let us store our music in a downstairs closet. As Precious Blood's school grew, though, they needed more space, so we moved the



The new system for storing the Chorale's music library. (Photo shamelessly recycled from the October issue.)

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History of the Library, cont'd

music to a closet in the rectory's garage, but this didn't work very well, as we could only access the music when the church office was open, it was a very tight fit, and it required constantly lifting and moving heavy boxes full of music to get at their contents. **Judy Gore** helped me handle these tasks. When we moved our rehearsal space from Precious Blood due to *their* need for more space, we found ourselves moving the music to a commercial storage unit. Still, Judy and I were lifting and moving around the heavy boxes to gain access to the music. And contending with heat and cold, we tried when we could to work when the weather was amenable.

When Judy left the BRC, I was on my own handling the music, and that job snowed me under. Help was on its way, though. **Wayne Payne**

designed and built tiers of shelves to fit the storage unit, and **Nellie Santinga** found and purchased boxes which perfectly hold each set of music individually on the shelves. Also we ordered computer software to store all the information, which Nellie, **Joyce Calhoun** and **Johncie Carlson** are completing. What an improvement! No more lifting and moving around of large, heavy boxes holding many sets of music at a time. All is alphabetized and easily found. No more lost pieces just thrown in boxes in a hurry, and then needing to be painstakingly sorted and put away "later on." And, every Blue Ridge Chorale singer helps by putting their music in the appropriate box after the concert!

Thank you, each and every person who has helped with this project over the years.

Director's Corner



(Editor's note: Virginia will retire as Director of the Chorale effective the end of this month, so this is her last Director's Corner entry. In our next issue, in February, we'll be hearing from our new Director, Carole Tomhave! Virginia, thank you for eight years of leadership, inspiration and the challenges of raising the Chorale's goals and performance! We wish you a joyous retirement!)

by Virginia Erwin

I have so many memories! The year was 1971. Newly married to a returning Vietnam soldier, I began teaching second grade in Capitol Heights, Maryland, where we had chosen to begin our new life. Now, December of 2011, it occurs to me that I've been teaching for 40 years! 40 years? Where has the time gone?

As the decades have passed, I have developed a deep sense of being part of a long line of music makers. From the Ancient peoples to future generations, I feel a personal connection to those who came before and to those who will come after. In that spirit, I will always have a place in my heart for my favorite choir - the men and women of the Blue Ridge Chorale.

We have certainly traveled far together! From the first moment of my arrival in Culpeper, we've worked hard to make ourselves into the best choir that we could be. I am astounded when I think of how far we have come, how much we - the Board and the singers - have accomplished. Our path wasn't always clear, and it was by turns interesting, hard work, and fun. No matter the conditions, we kept traveling. What we knew then, and what we know now, is that choral music - our individual songs - have broken down walls, touched us deeply, and enabled us as a group to move forward to a place where grace resides.

I will miss you: To my intrepid sopranos: there is nothing you cannot do. You are lovely. To my stalwart altos: you are disciplined and absolutely wonderful. To my tenor males: You are rare and valuable. To my tenor women: Thank goodness for you, plucky lades! And finally to my basses: With your resonant voices, you hold down the fort and you make me laugh besides. In short, what would I have done without the lot of you???

In the years to come, I will think of you often. I'm very sorry to leave, but I know The Blue Ridge Chorale will continue its tradition of excellent programs. Under the able direction of Carole Tomhave, you will continue to thrive and grow. Understand that you as choral singers are also part of a continuing line of music makers. Music makes the world a better place. By your example, the torch will thrive now, and then be passed to a new generation.

God bless you all. Virginia

Who's John Rutter?

The Chorale has performed quite a few compositions by John Rutter, especially at Christmas time, and he's consistently one of our favorite composers. Last December, our concerts showcased his complex and beautiful *Magnificat*, and this season's concerts included his "Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind," and "I Wish You Christmas." Rutter is a British composer, conductor, editor, arranger and record producer, mainly of choral music. NBC's Today Show has referred to him as "the world's greatest living composer and conductor of choral music."

"For the infectiousness of his melodic invention and consummate craftsmanship, Rutter has few peers."
London Evening Standard 09/25/2005

Rutter's compositions include Christmas carols, anthems and extended works such as his *Gloria*, *Magnificat*, and *Requiem* (1985). The world premiere of Rutter's *Requiem*, and also of his authoritative edition of Faure's

Requiem, took place in 1985 with the Fox Valley Festival Chorus, in Illinois. In 2002, his setting of Psalm 150, commissioned for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, was performed at St Paul's Cathedral, London. He was commissioned to write a new anthem, "This is the Day which the Lord Hath Made" which was performed at the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton in 2011 at Westminster Abbey. He also composed an opera, *Bang!* for the Trinity Boys Choir, which premiered

Join us in an adventure!

"Out of the stars in their flight, out of the dust of eternity, here have we come, stardust and sunlight, mingling through time and through space." – Robert T. Weston

The Blue Ridge Chorale of Culpeper's Spring Concert, "*Out of the Stars*," will celebrate the vast and varied wonders of our universe and the sources of light which allow for life to exist on Planet Earth. Marrying voices raised in song and multi-media visual images, we will explore the beauty of creation and humankind's relationship to the manifest world. Our program will include "**Choose Something Like a Star**" from Frostiana by **Randall Thompson**; "**Sing Me to Heaven**" by **Daniel Gawthrop**; **The Heavens are Telling**" from **Franz Haydn's The Creation**; "**True Light**" by **Keith Hampton** And much more!

Rehearsals will begin on Monday, Jan. 9, 2012. We would love to have you join us! We are a non-affiliated community chorale serving Culpeper and surrounding areas. For more information, contact Carolyn Osborne at 540-948-4573, or visit our website at www.brcsings.com



1975. The story is based on The Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

In 1981 Rutter founded his own choir, the Cambridge Singers, whom he conducts and records with,

especially under his own label, *Collegium Records*.

An interesting man, Rutter has an eclectic style of music which reflects French and English choral traditions of the early 20th century as well as of light music and American classic songwriting. Although he primarily composes and conducts religious music, Rutter told the US television program *60 Minutes* in 2003 that he is not himself a religious man: he is, though, deeply spiritual and is inspired by the spirituality of sacred verses, rituals and prayers. In a 2009 interview Rutter discussed his understanding of "genius" and its unique ability to transform lives, whether communicated through music or other media. He likened the purity of music to that of mathematics, referring to the discoveries of the early Greeks that frequencies of harmonic pitches are related by whole-number ratios.

Rutter's work is published principally by Oxford University Press in England and by Hinshaw Music in the US. He has been recorded by many choirs, but publishes his own recordings principally on his Collegium label.

Excerpted from a Wikipedia article