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(and a big Thank You! to Wanda Osborn!)

CHORALE NOTES

(& Photos!)

February, 2012

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Deb Thompson (left) and Maria ter Weele working on their breath control during warm-ups

Rehearsals!

Any group singer quickly learns that rehearsals are the heart and soul of a choral program. Though we (hopefully!) practice and study as we can during the week, and work with our Section Leaders to lock in that learning, it's the Monday night rehearsals which tune us up as a group, teach us better voice skills, make sure we're learning our parts and pull our Chorale together in planned and also spontaneous ways. Our average Chorale season has about 11-15 weeks in which to pull between twenty-five to forty singers together, get them up to speed, tie in instrumentals, refine, refine, refine and draw as many as a dozen choral pieces into a unified and entertaining program. And then (gulp!) we perform. A network of volunteer workers do a whole lot of work behind the scenes, and our Directors' and Accompanists' efforts, guidance and skills are clearly key, but the "meat and potatoes" of chorale is getting to, and getting value from, those weekly rehearsals.

So, why do we do this? We're not paid to sing. We have busy lives, families and jobs to juggle. Many or most of us don't even have remarkable singing voices. What draws us to take the time each and every Monday night to leave our homes, drive sometimes as much as 30 or 40 miles each way, spend 2 hours working hard with the Chorale and then drive home again? What motivates us, during the week, to grab a bit of time when we can to study our music? Why, when we sing in the car or the shower, isn't it familiar and fun or beautiful songs we all love to hear, but instead is our section part of a sometimes fragmented sounding and complicated song; a melody which makes no sense out of context? Why, why, why (and how?) do we overcome our natural reticence and anxieties and sing in front of other people?



Tim Carlson takes a break.

There are a few reasons. One is that we've learned or are learning that our not necessarily perfect voices, when blended with those of others, can add up to something beautiful, moving and complete. It's sort of miraculous. Another is the warm fellowship which grows in a group of people singing together. It's also a way to keep growing and learning, a sustenance our minds, bodies and spirits need. And then, a successful chorale is a gift of music to our community and an invitation to other music lovers to take part in the joy music brings. And it all starts each Monday evening when a diverse group of folks of different ages, talents, skills and interests get together and rehearse.

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Chorale Spring 2012 Concert Schedule

Culpeper Remembrance Days Sing – 7 pm The Depot	Saturday, April 14 th
Special Concert - 7pm Dogwood Village, Orange	Monday, April 23 rd
Multi-Media Concert - 7:00 pm - Daniel Tech Cntr	Friday, April 27 th
Concert - 4:00 pm – St. Luke's Lutheran	Sunday, April 29 th

The Director's Corner

- Carole Tomhave



Hello!
It is with much pleasure and anticipation that I step onto the podium of the Blue Ridge Chorale. I feel very honored to be leading an ensemble with such a long history of music-making and community involvement

in Central Virginia. The members of the choir are so friendly and hard-working that every rehearsal is a joy, and the Board is energized and creative. I know that together we are going to make many wonderful musical moments!

Our first such moment will be this year's spring concerts, to be held the last week of April. Our theme is "Out of the Stars", a title taken from a poem by Robert Weston. An excerpt from this poem does more than any words of mine to illustrate the intention behind our performances:

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.

This is the wonder of time;
This is the marvel of space;
Out of the stars swung the earth;
Life upon earth rose to love.

Please plan to attend one of our concerts and complete the musical circle by being the ears that receive what our throats and hearts have to offer. We promise a multisensory feast, as we will be projecting images of earth, the stars and planets, galaxies and more as we sing. I look forward to seeing you there!

Carole Tomhave

What It Takes

What Keeps Our Chorale Growing?

Fun! We learn and work hard, but we have a lot of fun in our rehearsals and our concerts.



Rehearsal break time

This is good for us as, and it's good for our music. Keep smiling, singers!

Friends! We rely on volunteers

inside the Chorale, friends, and family to help with concert logistics, to provide support to the singers, to encourage new members, and to let the community know of our music. They keep us singing!

Funds! It takes funds to run the Chorale, train and support our singers and bring quality concerts to our community. We rely on business and personal donors, fundraising, ticket sales and member dues. Though fund raising is a serious business, it's lightened by the grace and warmth our donors extend to us. Thank you all for your support!

Fans! Audiences make concerts work. Please plan to attend and enjoy our concerts, tell your friends, and be good fans of the arts in your community! And, consider joining the Chorale yourself... you'll like it!

The Flowers That Bloom in the Spring, Tra La!
The Chorale is raising some of those much-needed funds by taking orders for spring flowers. The white Easter lilies, brightly colored tulips or fragrant hyacinths, blooming in 6" pots, are grown locally at Battlefield Farms of Rapidan. Orders are due by March 12th, and delivery will be early in the week of March 26th. The cost is \$8 per pot, and if you buy 7, you will get one additional pot for free! Blooming plants make wonderful decorations for home and business and also gracious springtime gifts. And, the tulips and hyacinths can be planted outdoors to bloom for many more years!

Call 540-222-5565 or 540-948-4573 to order flowers.

About the Composer: Enya

A favorite selection in our Spring concert is “May It Be,” written by singer, instrumentalist and songwriter Enya (Eithne Ní Bhraonáin), of County Donegal, Ireland. Enya comes from a large, Irish-speaking, musical family, which also includes members of the internationally acclaimed band, Clannad.

Enya works closely with producer and manager Ricky Ryan and lyricist Roma Ryan. She’s known for her distinctive sound, characterised by voice-layering, folk melodies, synthesized backdrops and ethereal reverberations. Named the world's best-selling female artist of 2001, Enya has sold more than 75 million albums world-wide; over 26 million in the US. She has earned four Grammy awards and an Academy Award nomination (Best Original Song for “May it Be”). Enya writes and also performs the percussion, instruments, and vocals in most of her recordings.



An asteroid discovered on 18 November 1978 by A. Mrkos at Klet Observatory, is named “6433 Enya” (1978 WC), after the singer. 6433 Enya is in a 3.69 year orbit around the sun and lies between 279.7 million km, and 434.8 million km from the sun.

“May It Be”

Director Peter Jackson commissioned Enya to write a song for the *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy, and after viewing the preliminary film edits, she, Nicky Ryan, her producer, and Roma Ryan, her lyricist created the song “May it Be.” They recorded the song through her contract with Warner Music in the Ryans' Dublin studio, Aigle Studio, and it was published in 2001.

The lyrics of this theme song include English words, and words in J. R. R. Tolkien’s fictional Elvish language, *Quenya*. While Enya wrote the music, Roma Ryan studied *Quenya* and wrote the lyrics, in English and *Quenya*.

J.R.R. Tolkien created the *Quenya* language for his classic novel trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien said of *Quenya* that it was composed on a Latin basis “with two other ingredients that happen to give me 'phonaesthetic' pleasure: Finnish and Greek.... This language is High-Elven or, in its own terms, *Quenya*.” Tolkien's son Christopher said that for his father, *Quenya* was “language as he wanted it, the language of his heart.”

Two lines in “May It Be” contain phrases in *Quenya*. The first, “Mornië utúlië,” translates to “Darkness has come,” and “Mornië alantië” means “Darkness has fallen.”

Enya also performed the song “Aníron” for *The Lord of the Rings*, in Tolkien's Elvish language, *Sindarin*.



Derived and compiled from Wikipedia articles: “Enya,” “May it Be,” “Leo’s Tavern,” “6433 Enya,” and “Quenya.”
Celtic knot star is from aon-celtic.com

About the Composer: Daniel E. Gawthrop

The evocative “Sing Me to Heaven,” a feature of our Spring program, is the work of composer, broadcaster, teacher and organist **Daniel E. Gawthrop**. Lauded for his choral and organ compositions, Gawthrop developed much of his career during his life in Northern Virginia, while he was Composer-in-Residence to the Fairfax Symphony and music critic for *The Washington Post*.

Gawthrop’s works have premiered at the prestigious Kennedy Center Concert Hall and the National Cathedral in Washington DC, as well the Salt Lake City Mormon Tabernacle. His works have been performed and recorded by such noteworthy performers as The United States Air Force Singing Sergeants, the Turtle Creek Chorale, the Paul Hill Chorale, the American Boychoir, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the Cathedral Choral Society of the National Cathedral.

Gawthrop has been commissioned by dozens of institutions including the American Choral Directors Association through their prestigious Raymond Brock Memorial series, and he currently serves on the Board of Advisors of the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University.



“Sing Me to Heaven” - A Powerful Message

Daniel Gawthrop’s music is primarily published through Dunstan House. On the Dunstan House website, there are a series of moving testimonials to the personal power of his “Sing Me to Heaven.” This is one is from Gawthrop himself.

We thought it only fair to start with our own SMTH story. Some years ago, Paul Gulsvig brought his Onalaska High School Choir to

Washington DC. We had spoken to him on several occasions, and he had mentioned that they had a student in the choir who had been diagnosed with a fatal illness, and that SMTH had become especially meaningful to the choir during the year. When he knew he would be bringing the choir close to where we were living, he extended the choir’s invitation to come hear them sing. While schedules did not permit our hearing a concert, they very much wanted to have us hear them sing this piece. As it turned out, the only time we could arrange it was right before lunch in the middle of a day that was as busy for them as for us.

We arrived at their big, downtown hotel a little later than we wanted to (Washington DC traffic!) and rushed into the lobby to find all the students in the lobby, along with the usual noisy, bustling crowd that inhabits a large hotel lobby. After hurried greetings and introductions we were told by Paul that what we were about to experience happened every day in their choir rehearsal. Escorted by a beautiful, delicate young woman we were put into the center of a circle of students who quietly, without a director, began to sing “In my heart’s sequestered chambers lie truths stripped of poets gloss”...

The hotel lobby went silent as people stopped to listen. The young lady with us in the circle was dying – she knew it and the students knew it. Unable to cure her, they had come up with this daily ritual as the only healing they could offer. It was heartbreakingly beautiful, and profoundly moving.

Daniel E. Gawthrop & Jane Griner Mar 7, 2006

Text from www.dunstanhouse.com, Hubble Deep Space Image from Google Images

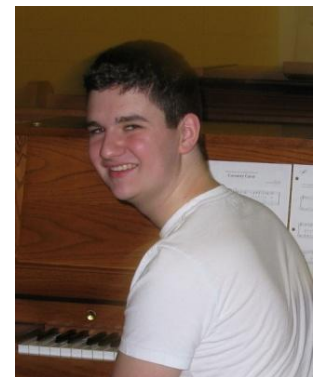
Behind the Scenes: Our Accompanists

Our accompanists are sort of the unsung (sorry about that!) heroes of our Chorale. While audiences only see them in concerts, their participation throughout the season is critical, and their skill, talent and flexibility are very important to the Chorale's success.



Brittany Bache, our Chorale Accompanist, has only been with us since Spring of 2011, but became a true Chorale member right away. She supports our weekly rehearsals, and prior to the start of each season not only learns the accompaniment to 9-12 pieces as well their individual parts, but also starts the development of the Chorale's home study aids. Brittany takes all this in stride with charm, poise and a good sense of humor. We are so glad she's part of our Chorale.

Caleb Ballew, our Youth Accompanist, has a similar role for our Youth Chorale, working along with our Youth Director, Cathy ter Weele. Caleb also accompanies Chorale special concerts at the July 4th Reading of the Declaration and also at the Tree Lighting at the Culpeper Depot. Caleb is himself still a high school student but his playing is skillful and professional, and so is his approach to his role.



We also are fortunate to be able to enhance our concerts with performances of skilled instrumentalists. Two of these, **Kathy Tester** and **Scott Tester**, are Chorale members who move smoothly between singing and playing during our concerts. Kathy, a stalwart in our Soprano section, is also our Concert Master, is on the Chorale Board, and plays the flute as well as singing in our concerts. Scott, himself a music teacher, sings Baritone and Tenor parts and plays violin, and when needed has filled in to conduct warm-ups. Kathy and Scott are vital and valuable members of our Chorale family.

Also accompanying our concerts are other local music professionals who join us for a few weeks right around concert time. **Joe Whitesides** has accompanied several of our concerts as a percussionist, and **Patrick Neidich** played trumpet for our December concert and will join us again this April. We are always interested in knowing about musicians in the area who might be interested in playing at our concerts, so if you are, or know of, one let us know!

Choral music is a multi-layered, complex art form. It takes a lot of practice to achieve, requires great support to develop and at the concerts, musical underpinnings really help bring it to life. We are so fortunate to have this wonderful behind the scenes and concert support!

OK, we're past Valentine's Day but the message still applies.....
If music be the food of love, play on. [William Shakespeare](#)

What's This About "Keats' Eremite?"

A puzzling reference in one of this season's songs awakened memories of long-ago English Lit classes, and led to some "Googling" and reading. Composer Randall Thompson's beautiful "Choose Something Like a Star," from his choral interpretations of Robert Frost's poetry, contains these lines:

"And steadfast as Keats' Eremite,
Not even stooping from its sphere,
It asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,"

These lines, written by Robert Frost, are a reference to the writings of an earlier poet, John Keats (1795 – 1821), one of the best-known of



Portrait of John Keats by William Hilton. National Portrait Gallery, London

the English romantic poets. Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to a Nightingale" are classic grist for the mill of high school English classes, and his poems are loved for their combination of rich imagery and personal depth. One of the recurring themes in his poetry is the longing for

stability in the face of inevitable change. This is a very understandable focus, as Keats' own battle with tuberculosis dominated his life and resulted in his death at age 26. For Keats, a patient, devoted, undistracted Eremite, symbolized pure focus and perseverance.

John Keats makes reference to an Eremite in more than one of his poems. In "The Eve of St Agnes," he wrote:

"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:"

In "The Eve of St Agnes," Keats' sharply contrasts the mobility and brightness of young love and passion with older folks' fears of mortality and, at the far extreme, the patient vigils and care kept by two very old household retainers, themselves on the edge of death.

The other, and more direct, reference is in Keats' poem, "Bright Star," which he wrote for Fanny Brawne, who was the love of his short but intense life.

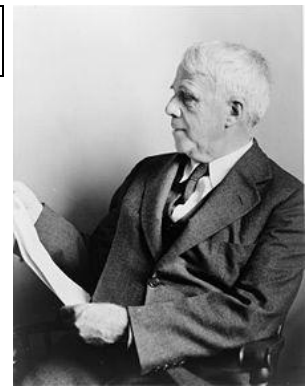
Bright Star

"Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art--
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,"

Photo of Robert Frost,
1941

In writing the poem "Choose Something Like a Star," American poet Robert Frost (1874-1963), dwelt as Keats did, on the perseverance and stability of a star. He concluded his poem with:

"So when at time the mob is swayed
To carry praises or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid."



Hermit, or eremite: An individual who shuns society to live in solitude, often for religious reasons. The first Christian hermits appeared in Egypt in the 3rd century AD, escaping persecution by withdrawing to the desert and leading a life of prayer and penance.
- The Free Dictionary