



Concerts Are Coming Up!

... Meet *Gloria*!

Our concert this Fall/Winter season is, quite rightly, named *Gloria*. Many of the wide variety of carols and anthems we'll perform are gloria-rich songs of praise and of Christmas celebration. Other songs celebrate the everyday glories of Winter: the singular beauty and fun of snow, the great joys of family gatherings and of a cozy home in a wintry setting. With more than 15 selections ranging in style from deeply traditional through popular to jazz rhythms, with melodies from Mozart through Mel Tormé, *Gloria* is a lively, exciting concert. It's fun and challenging to learn, fast moving and, well, glorious to sing and to hear. We hope you'll come and share the fun with us!

Gloria is directed by our Music Director, Bob Burnett, with Cathy ter Weele, our Youth Director. We will be accompanied by Jesse Ratcliffe on piano and organ, with guest accompanists: Tyler Johnson who played for us last Spring, on bass; Jeff Wolf, who performed with us in the New York State of Mind Concert in 2013, percussion. We will also have a brass quartet: Rick Grimley, Patrick Neidich, Kevin Twenty, and Joe Michaels. These performers live in the Warrenton area, play music for St. James Episcopal, and in several local wind bands, and some of them also have individually performed with the Chorale before.

Be sure you don't miss *Gloria*: she's a beauty!



This season, our concerts will be held in two exciting and historic locations: at the beautifully renovated State Theatre in Culpeper, and at Reynold's Memorial Baptist Church in Sperryville.

CHORALE NOTES October, 2014



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BRC's 2014 Holiday Performances and Events

- Sat. Nov 15th** caroling, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm, Country Shoppes, Rt. 29 in Culpeper
- Thurs. Nov 20th** 7 PM, Community Thanksgiving, Culpeper Baptist Church.
- Sun. Nov 23rd** 5:00 PM, Community Tree Lighting at the Depot, Downtown Culpeper.
- Fri. Dec 5th** *Gloria*, 7:00 PM, Reynold's Memorial Baptist Church in Sperryville.
- Sun. Dec 7th**, *Gloria*, 3:00 PM, State Theatre in Culpeper.

Have a safe and happy Halloween!



All This and Shopping, Too!

Sunday, Nov 23rd will be a terrific day to spend in Downtown Culpeper. It's the day of the Downtown Open House, the Community Tree Lighting and the 4th Annual Blue Ridge Chorale Holiday Market. Come to the State Theatre at 11 to get in on the early shopping, then check out the downtown stores. We'll be open & selling from 11 until 4. Our Marketplace will feature around 20 vendors whose offerings include locally produced foods, services and items. It's a great opportunity for gift, decorative and holiday shopping which directly benefits your community. At 5 pm, join us at the Depot for the Culpeper Community Tree Lighting, where the Chorale will be singing carols for you to enjoy, and to join in! What a great start to the Holiday Season!





Directors Corner

– Bob Burnett

What a continuing joy to be part of the Blue Ridge Chorale!

Recently, I was struck by the similarities in the description of a fine wine and the BRC... full-bodied yet mellow... with individual flavors which blend into a composite greater than the sum of its parts. Just as aerating awakens the flavors in a fine wine, so must we push ourselves to keep adding the qualities of excitement and vibrancy - to awaken and enhance the music.

In my last notes, I spoke about the undetermined “sound” to be produced by the Chorale, and my anticipation of hearing it. Oftentimes, anticipation can be greater than fulfillment, but not in this case. Building on the incredible sound created by the Chorale’s previous Directors, today our sound has not only been *defined*, but is well on its way to becoming *refined*. The BRC can produce a sound from the soul: a sound created by people who don’t just WANT to sing; they NEED to sing!

For our December concerts we are exploring a striking variety of tonalities and rhythms... not always with initial staggering success, but always with a purpose and a clear end in view: we are neither waiting for our ship to come in at the airport, nor is the light at the end of the tunnel that of an oncoming train! Success in this

challenging program takes a balance of hard work and great enthusiasm, and these elements are starting to come together beautifully.

It was a great pleasure to sing for the Dogwood Retirement Community in Orange, and to feel the audience’s wholehearted response. Our singing of the National Anthem at the Culpeper Air Fest, with its spontaneous harmonies, not only energized the crowd, but resulted in a standing invitation from The Flying Circus in Bealeton to perform at their shows in 2015.

In addition to community performances, the Chorale will be leading the musical part of the Culpeper Community Thanksgiving service on November 20th at the Culpeper Baptist Church. We eagerly anticipate sharing the joys of the Holiday season through music.

The strength of any organization, like that of a high rise building, derives from a deep and strong foundation. Our singers’ weekly preparation, faithful attendance, love of music and hard work at rehearsals are the certainly greatest part of that foundation, but the Chorale structure rests as well on the strength, patience, talent and generous efforts of Section Leader and Youth Director Cathy ter Weele, Concert Master Kathy Tester and Accompanist Jesse Ratcliffe, who work so hard and effectively defining, refining and shaping the sections’ voices, in addition to their other, critical, Chorale roles. I am truly grateful for everyone’s commitment and excitement, and look forward to a breathtakingly beautiful skyscraper of Holiday song!

Photos, of Bob and of Jodi (next page), are courtesy of Studio C Photography, Culpeper.



Gray, damp weather didn’t dampen the spirits of a good-sized turnout for the Air Fest on October 11th. Unlike the 2013 event, when it rained so heavily all day, this time planes were able to fly and people came to see them! The Air Fest is an annual event held in Brandy Station and draws good crowds who come for the day to see the planes on the ground and in the air.

And, the Blue Ridge Chorale was there... flipping burgers and selling sodas (and cocoa) and singing the Star Spangled Banner for the ceremonies!

Chorale’s Air Fest Fundraiser Success

For many years now, the Chorale has sold refreshments at the Air Fest. This concession is completely run by Chorale volunteers, some so well experienced that they are professionals in all but salary! This is a key annual fund raiser for the Chorale, and even with much less than perfect weather meaning a smaller turn-out, the Chorale raised \$1,275.

Many thanks to the volunteers and generous donors who helped make this event a success. Special thanks to Joyce Calhoun, our Fund Raising Chair, for pulling this together and being there every step of the way; to Wanda Osborn and her terrific family who worked tirelessly; to Wayne Payne, whose generosity is the project’s backbone; to Donna and Charlie Pringle, who did so very much; to Joe Eaton, who manned the grill all day, to Diana Cmeyla who was there nearly all day, to the dozen or so other Chorale members who helped out, and to those who donated cash and/or items to defray costs to the Chorale. It worked!



PONDERINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT – Jodi Stone

Fall is my favorite season! I love the crisp in the air and the beauty of the changing leaves. The smell of cinnamon and other spices give me a warm, happy feeling inside.

I hope that you can enjoy this fall season as much as I do. Fall also brings with it some of the best times to practice our “serve”. I have found that when I am serving others I am my most content with myself. Opportunities to serve are all around us we just have to keep our eyes open for them. Sometimes they may seem like very small things and sometimes they are very time consuming and tiring big things. Either way, helping others and volunteering our time are both very worthwhile things to do.

As we sing our way into the holiday season I hope that each of us is able to take the time to serve when we can, and reap the benefits from doing so.

Keep a song in your heart and smile on your face.

Jodi 😊

YOUTH CHORALE NEWS

This season the Youth Chorale has 15 singers! That’s terrific! The Blue Ridge Chorale Youth Chorale started eight years ago, and over time has had varying levels of participation. We’ve seen some wonderful growth in recent years.

They will have a major role in this season’s concerts, on their own and in combination with the Chorale. We’re all so proud of this group of young singers... kudos to Youth Director Cathy ter Weele and her group!



Cathy ter Weele rehearsing the Youth Chorale for last Spring’s concert: “Music of the Movies”. They were terrific! We’re looking forward to another great concert with our hard- working young singers.

Singing at Dogwood Village



On September 12th, representatives of the Chorale performed at Dogwood Village in Orange. The program of twelve songs, all old favorites, included “Danny Boy,” “God of Our Fathers,” and “As Time Goes By,” as well as patriotic favorites including “You’re a Grand Old Flag,” “Yankee Doodle Dandy,” “God Bless America,” and our favorite arrangement of “America the Beautiful.” Kathy Tester, Geniene Zinn and Scott Tester performed a beautiful version of “Whispering Hope.” As they always are, the staff and residents of Dogwood Village were gracious hosts and the audience was appreciative and enthusiastic, singing right along with us. It was a fun event for singers and audience alike!

Annual Poinsettia Sale

Again this year, we’ll have beautiful poinsettias for sale in a range of sizes. They make lovely gifts and decoration.

Call 540-222-9099, or speak with a Chorale member about how to order. Proceeds from this project help keep the Chorale singing!



Looking for a Back Issue of *Chorale Notes*?

This is our 20th edition of *Chorale Notes*. The newsletter has covered Chorale activity, with lots of photos, since Summer, 2011, when we performed at the Shenandoah Park Anniversary, and on to today.

If you want to look something up, or just wander through past issues, go to our Website, www.brcsings.com and you’ll find them in the Information Updates tab.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS - The Story Goes On



Introduction of Carols into Church Services

As we learned last year, Christmas carols originated pretty independently of church influence until the 1200s, when St. Francis of Assisi fostered the practice of community pageants. Even for centuries after that, the singing of carols in the churches was not a popular practice. This started to change in 1880 when Edward White Benson - then the Bishop of Truro, Cornwall - later to become Archbishop of Canterbury, developed and held the first Nine Lessons and Carols service on Christmas Eve. The Festival of **Nine Lessons and Carols**, a service traditionally followed at Christmas, tells the story of the fall of man, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus in nine short Bible interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns and choir music.

The format was based on an Order drawn up by Edward Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury but at that time Bishop of Truro, in Cornwall, for use on Christmas Eve (24 December) 1880. Tradition says that he organized a 10:00 p.m. service on Christmas Eve in a temporary wooden structure serving as his cathedral and that the purpose of the service was to keep men out of the pubs.



Huffington “Top 15 Carols”

The Huffington Post – Religion - rates these as the top fifteen carols in popularity (12/23/2011):

- Away in a Manger** (Unknown, 1885)
- The Holly and the Ivy** (Unknown, 1710)
- Ding Dong, Merrily on High** (Johan Tabourot, 1589)
- Hark! The Herald Angels Sing** (Charles Wesley, 1739)
- It Came Upon a Midnight Clear** (Edmund Sears, 1849)
- Silent Night** (Joseph Mohr, 1816)
- The Twelve Days of Christmas** (James L. Halliwell, 1842)
- O Holy Night** (Placide Cappeau, 1847)
- Good King Wenceslas** (John Mason Neal, 1843)
- Once in Royal David’s City** (Cecil Alexander, 1848)
- The First Noel** (Unknown, 1800)
- O Come, All Ye Faithful!** (John Francis Wade, 1751)
- I Saw Three Ships** (Unknown, 1700)
- We Wish You a Merry Christmas** (Unknown, 1640)
- Joy to the World** (Isaac Watts, 1719)



Chorale Christmas Music Survey

In our August issue, readers were asked to send in their top 5 or so Christmas songs – sacred or secular. This was not a popular request, which I didn’t understand until I tried making my own list: it’s really hard! With some arm twisting, we received responses from 23 different Chorale members, who listed from 1 to 8 songs, resulting in about 70 “votes.” There was a surprising variety of favorites: 43 different songs of which only 17 received more than one vote. Many folks said it was very hard to narrow down the songs they love to a few. That makes sense and it’s what I found, too. Here’s how this came out:

Given 4 of 70 votes

O Holy Night; It Came Upon a Midnight Clear;
Silent Night

Given 3 of 70 votes

Angels We Have Heard on High; I’ll Be Home for
Christmas; O Little Town of Bethlehem
The Christmas Song (“Chestnuts Roasting...”)

Given 2 of 70 votes

The Carol of the Bells; God Ye Rest Merry, Gentlemen;
In the Bleak Mid-Winter; Lullay, Lullay, Thou Tiny Child;
Still, Still, Still; We Wish You a Merry Christmas (Rutter)
White Christmas; The Little Drummer Boy
Born Is He, the Child Divine;
Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella
Do You Hear What I Hear?

Given 1 of 70 votes

Believe; Breath of Heaven; Candlelight Carol;
Gloria (Vivaldi); Grown Up Christmas List;
Saw Three Ships; I Wonder as I Wander;
Infant Holy, Infant Lowly; It’s a Marshmallow World;
Jingle Bells; Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming;
Mary, Did You Know?; Masters in This Hall;
Myn Lyking (R.R. Terry, with 15th Century words);
Nativity Carol (Rutter); Now the Green Blade Riseth;
Once in Royal David’s City; Rudolph;
Santa Claus Is Coming to Town; Sleigh Ride;
The First Noel; The Messiah; The Wexford Carol;
Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day;
Twelve Days of Christmas; Walking in a Winter
Wonderland; When Blossoms Bloomed Amid the Snow.
**The 43rd listing, which I suspect could be the choice of
all of us, was: “Anything I can sing along with!”**



What is not a pudding, as we know it, and usually doesn't contain figs?

Figgy Pudding!

At our holiday concerts, we often carol "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," which includes the definite command "Now, bring us a figgy pudding... We won't go until we get some, so bring it right here!" Most of us are aware that this figgy pudding is also called a plum pudding or Christmas pudding and isn't pudding at all as Americans know it. Here's a bit about the exotic, elusive, very English non-fig non-pudding known as figgy pudding.

"Pudding" is a commonly used English name for any dessert. Figgy, or plum pudding is a Christmas pudding, a steamed, cake-like dish made during the holidays. Usually, these puddings are made with dried fruit, and often without figs. British Christmas puddings date back to the 1400s, actually starting as a means of preserving meat, over the centuries becoming sweeter and less meaty. Like many other old practices, this pudding



regained popularity as a Christmas treat during Queen Victoria's reign.

Historically similar to mincemeat pies, figgy puddings are now made with a variety of dried and glace' fruits, citrus peel and nuts, bound together with eggs, breadcrumbs and ground suet. The mixture is pressed into a bowl,

covered with parchment, and steamed in a pot on the stove for many hours until it's cooked.

Like the American fruitcake, these puddings are made early, at least a month before Christmas, sometimes a full year before. The steamed pudding is then hung in a cloth and stored in a dry place until the holiday meal, when is steamed to heat it up and then usually served decorated with a sprig of holly and with brandy poured over it and lit. Hard sauce (that "Hard" is brandy, good people) is often served with the warm pudding. Delicious!

It's thought that stirring the Christmas pudding brings good luck, and many families share the task - a great way to get help stirring this rather heavy mixture! Some folks add a coin or little charm into the mix, to be found by a lucky person who will certainly have a prosperous new year.

We Hope You Have a Warm and Wonderful Thanksgiving!

Pudding References

(from Dickens, of course)

From Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, which set the trends for many Victorian Christmas old-customs-to-be, here is the miser Ebenezer Scrooge, chastising his nephew Fred, for wishing him a Merry Christmas (the illustration is by John Leech) :



What else can I be (editor's note - but "dismal") when I live in a world full of fools babbling "Merry Christmas" at one another? What's Christmas but a time for finding yourself a year older and not a day richer? There's nothing merry in that. If I could work my will, nephew, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

Figgy puddings are now usually made in molds of various shapes, a practice which started among the wealthier folk. In earlier times, or less privileged homes, the dough was tied in a cloth and steamed, forming a round pudding.



Feeling adventuresome? Try looking up - Marguerite Patten 10 Minute Christmas Pudding - , and you'll get a terrific recipe for a microwaved figgy pudding. I made it last year: it's very good and quite easy!

"Mrs Cratchit left the room alone -- too nervous to bear witnesses -- to take the pudding up and bring it in... Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper which smells like a washing-day. That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that. That was the pudding. In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered -- flushed, but smiling proudly -- with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quarter of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top." - also from *A Christmas Carol* - Charles Dickens