



'S Wonderful!



Great American Song Selections

from

Cole Porter and George & Ira Gershwin

This is going to be one terrific concert!

At 3:00 on Sunday, May 3rd at the State Theatre in Culpeper, the Blue Ridge Chorale is presenting a concert right out of the Great American Songbook: filled with George & Ira Gershwin's wonderful, lively songs loaded with rhythms and harmonies, and Cole Porter's amazing sound and catchy lyrics.

We're singing such terrific music this season that rehearsals are just flying by! **'S Wonderful**, indeed!

CHORALE NOTES

Spring, 2015

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Our Spring Concert Schedule:

On Monday, April 27th – The Chorale will give a complimentary performance of our concert exclusively for the staff, residents and guests of the Culpeper Baptist Community.

On Friday, May 1st – The Chorale will give a complimentary performance of our concert exclusively for the staff, residents and guests of Dogwood Village of Orange.

On Sunday, May 3rd – The Chorale will offer its public performance of *'S Wonderful!* at the State Theatre at 305 South Main Street in Culpeper. Admission at the door, or tickets can be purchased in advance through the State Theatre website: www.culpepertheatre.org

This season we have 55 singers preparing for the concert: 36 adults and 19 youth! Our concert will be directed by Music Director Bob Burnett and Youth Director, Cathy ter Weele, with Brittany Bache accompanying, and with guest musicians.

'Art is the proper task of life.'

— Friedrich Nietzsche



Director's Corner – Bob Burnett



So... March came in like a lion. But it finally looks as if the lamb waiting in the wings has moved on stage. And the Blue Ridge Chorale will soon move on stage to present its Spring concert; *'S Wonderful!* – featuring songs by George and Ira Gershwin and Cole Porter.

The Gershwin brothers and Porter could hardly have come from more dissimilar backgrounds: the former from a working class neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, and the latter from an affluent family in Indiana; George Gershwin leaving school at age 15 and Cole Porter graduating from Yale as well as from Harvard's business and music schools.

Gershwin spent the early years of his career promoting his songs in New York City and also worked as a rehearsal accompanist and Vaudeville pianist – a far cry from Porter's intensive education in France.

And yet, both composers celebrate Life and Love through their musical genius: Gershwin's to "reflect the thought and aspiration of the people and the time. My people are American; my time is today", and Porter's compositions reflecting his expatriate, often satirical perceptions of America – but always with Love. And both served to help soften the effects of the Great Depression through their distinct lyrical and musical offerings.

And the Chorale's passions are reflected in "Another Op'nin, Another Show" and "Just One of Those Things". Nothing would be possible without the talent and unbridled enthusiasm of accompanist Brittany Bache. She will be joined by Bassist Tyler Johnson (also an excellent banjo player – wait for it, wait for it) and percussionist Jeff Wolf of Stillwater Studios in Marshall Virginia.

Ponderings from the President

– Jodi Stone



Spring is in the air, trees are getting ready to blossom and the birds are all a twitter! This is my favorite season. Everything begins again fresh and new. This is also true of the chorale. We are busy getting ready for our spring performances. We have fresh new faces and wonderful familiar faces all working

together to make some "S'Wonderful" and "Delovely" sounds for our audiences. I am thankful for Bob's artistic vision and his dedication to helping us achieve the delightful sounds that we will be making in a few short weeks. I am also thankful for all our dedicated members. We look forward to sharing this season with all of you.

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

Jodi

"Art washes away from the soul the dirt of everyday life." — Pablo Picasso

Editor's Note: Arts in the Community

In the busy-ness, excitement and anxiety of getting ready for our concerts, it's nice to step back for a few minutes and consider that the Chorale - each and every singer, staff member and volunteer, is part of the much larger activity which is art. Whether we're struggling to achieve just the right blend of notes and tone in one of Cole Porter's complex and challenging chords or striving to work out a pattern which will fit all our singers onto a stage, or, later, are experiencing the glow of bringing favorite and familiar tunes to shut-ins, we are taking part in an ancient, grand and glorious process, art, which expands our lives and touches those around us.

The Blue Ridge Chorale is a community resource, both as a means of bringing song and music education into the community, and a base for folks who want to participate in the exciting art of making music. In this year's issues, *Chorale Notes* will take a look at some of the other organizations, large and small, in our five-county area, which promote, nourish and deliver art. In this issue, we will start with two influential arts organizations in Culpeper: the State Theatre and Windmore Foundation for the Arts, but that's just the beginning.

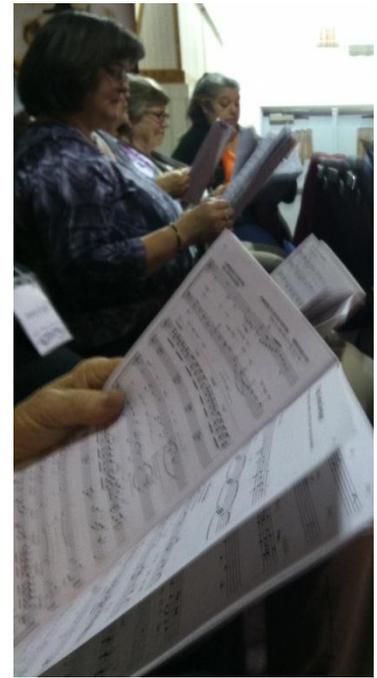
Ready to sing? Chin up, smile and love what you're singing.

Let art happen!



**Four
Weeks?!?**

***More
Like
Fifteen
Weeks!***



“Four weeks, you rehearse and rehearse. Three weeks and it couldn’t get worse. One week, will it ever be right? Then out of the hat, it’s that big first night!” from “Another Op’nin, Another Show” by Cole Porter
Community choral programs require a long rehearsal span, since most meet weekly to rehearse. Professional troupes, on the other hand, rehearse much more frequently and can often put a show together in one intense month. Either way, it’s hard work for all, but it sure is fun!

Youth Programs News

We are so proud that Cathy ter Weele and a host of Chorale volunteers have grown The Blue Ridge Chorale’s Summer Music Workshop into a Parks and Recreation program! Here’s the P&R posting:

SING, DANCE, PLAY!

Ages 7-14, 2weeks

Come and enjoy singing games, folk songs, English country dancing, and learn to play the soprano recorder in this fun summer Music workshop, led by Cathy ter Weele, music teacher at Emerald Hill Elementary. Children will take home a book of folk songs and a soprano recorder and method book. The workshop will conclude with a small performance for friends and family at Lenn Park on July 3 at 7:00pm. Siblings get a \$20 discount.
Instructor: Cathy terWeele / Blue Ridge Chorale
 Lenn Park Pavilion, 18063 Stevensburg Rd
 M-F 6/22-7/3 10:00am - 12:00pm \$80.00

See www.CulpeperRecreation.com to learn more



Cathy (left) with last year’s Youth chorus, preparing for the concert.

Cathy ter Weele, a key Chorale singer and volunteer, is also our Youth Director. Cathy has a wonderful background in music and education. Kodaly certified, Cathy is great at bringing children together to learn to sing, dance and play in organized groups. Our Youth Chorus performances are always a high point of our concerts, and our young singers are having fun and learning music, cooperation and poise in the process. The Summer Music Workshop has always been both fun and education and is a great summer outdoor activity. Kudos to Cathy!

Arts and the Community

The State Theatre



December 1, 2013 – the Chorale's first full concert at the State Theatre.

The State Theatre in Culpeper is near and dear to the Chorale. The Theatre has been the site of four Blue Ridge Chorale performances so far, taking us from the Theatre's Opening Gala in May, 2013, through three concerts since: *The Gifts of Christmas*, *Music from the Movies*, and *Gloria!*. And, we have '*Wonderful!*' coming up on May 3rd. You can learn a bit more about the interesting history and history and wonderful renovation of the Theatre in the June, 2013 newsletter (it's on our website) as well as on the Theatre's site: www.culpepertheatre.org.

Theatre Manager Jodi Stone shared some of her thoughts with us about the Theatre's role in the arts and the community.

Q: What is the mission of the Theatre in the arts community?

Jodi: It's summed up in the acronym **STATE** – Showcasing the Arts to Everyone. This has been the purpose of the Theatre since it re-opened two years ago, and we keep growing toward that goal.

Q: How is the Theatre impacting the community?

Jodi: The Theatre can address a lot of community needs. For instance, education: we work with the schools to bring the students more theater education, including theatre which helps students achieve their Standards of Learning requirements through programs such as "The Tailor of Gloucester" and "Apollo to the Moon." This (past)

weekend, hosted the Annual CCPS Youth Art Show in our lobby. We have monthly film showings for students whose special needs make attending movies under normal circumstances difficult. For some students, this is a unique opportunity. For other student groups, it's behavioral reinforcement. This program keeps growing!

Q: How do you see Culpeper changing?

Jodi: We're seeing Main and Davis Street Down Town style widening in the town; in restaurants, hotels, even apartments and activities, such as theatre.

Q: What new plans of the Theatre's are you especially excited about?

Jodi: We are excited to be working more closely with the Windmore Foundation. This has been a long-term goal of the Theatre: to grow as a resource, becoming a center for community arts.

We're also working on bringing more live performances to the Theatre: drama, symphonies, and ballet, and making our Lobby and Galleria areas into an art gallery, exhibiting art all the time.

Q: Challenges?

Jodi: A challenge for us is making more contact with members of our community who have other cultures and speak other languages.

We also want to reach out more into the surrounding counties, as well as the Culpeper community. The Theatre has a lot to offer, and can be an outstanding resource.

Arts and the Community

Windmore Foundation for the Arts

Based in Culpeper, Virginia, Windmore Foundation for the Arts, Inc. was founded in 1987. Windmore promotes the visual, literary, and performing arts through awareness, education, and participation. Windmore's goals in the Northern Piedmont area are: to promote



the multiple disciplines of the arts, be a resource for arts education, and to increase the participation in the arts by people from all backgrounds. Windmore is a patron of theater, dance, literature, music, visual arts and arts education. Windmore offers college scholarships in the Arts. Currently eleven devoted board members work together with new Executive Director Debra Smyers, all emphasizing the importance of arts education for all ages as an ongoing focus of Windmore. "Something new this year will be Windmore's *Signature Series* with professional guest artists who will also provide arts education to our community and engage directly with audiences" Debra remarked. Most events, exhibits, and classes will take place at the State Theatre. Windmore's website and Facebook page are great sources of information for Windmore's upcoming events and schedule. Debra encourages communications, wanting to hear from the community, and may be directly reached at exec@windmorefoundation.org or 800-754-4507.



The Artists of Windmore exhibit at the Dorothy Skelton Event at the State Theatre on January 23rd.

Artists of Windmore

Artists of Windmore was founded in January of 1995. The artists are a diverse group producing works of art in a variety of media, including oils, acrylics, watercolors, pastels, photography, pottery, fiber arts, collage, papier maché, etc. The artists meet weekly to create and to participate in various activities, such as artist workshops, plein air outings, field trips to museums, lectures, and critiques. Participating members exhibit their work. Email Windmore for more information or to join the Artists of Windmore: artists@windmorefoundation.org

Crossroads Youth Orchestra

Crossroads Youth Orchestra is made up of over 35 students in grades 6 to 12. Music Director **Scott Tester** has over 36 years of experience in the public schools and leads Crossroads Youth Orchestra with excellent classical music programs and music education. Managing Director Carla Jewell and her husband John Jewell founded Windmore's Crossroads Youth Orchestra program in the fall of 2012. Crossroads provides students the opportunity of working with an experienced music director and performing works in a full symphony orchestra setting. Crossroad's next concert is on May 14, 2015 at the State Theatre in Culpeper at 7 pm. Auditions for Crossroads Youth Orchestra are conducted on a rolling basis. Email cyo@windmorefoundation.org for more information.



Out of Time Teachers at Burgandine House

Out of Time Teachers

"We're living history" says Susan Williams of Out of Time Teachers. Representatives of this Culpeper based group can usually be found at Burgandine House, or in the schools, bringing our rich regional history to life through dress, narrative and activities. Their presentations are hands-on: the students and visitors are invited to participate in the activities of the period being taught. Out of Time teachers imparts the culture of Elizabethan, Jamestown Colonial, Revolutionary and Civil War times. Ongoing living history tours are conducted by local historians Susan Williams and David Reaves of the Out of Time Teachers. For more information: please call 540-829-1099 or email: info@windmorefoundation.org.

Arts and the Community - Windmore Foundation for the Arts (continued)

Pen-to-Paper

This group's bond is the enjoyment of writing. Pen-to-Paper is a group of published authors, new writers, and aspiring writers in this area. The group meets monthly to discuss many aspects of writing, including: publishing, genres, performing 'readings', encouraging children to write, techniques to stimulate creativity, writing exercises, critiquing, and much more. Pen-to-Paper meets the first Tuesday of every month. There is a morning meeting from 10 am until noon and an evening meeting from 5 pm to 7 pm. Both meetings are held in a conference room in the Culpeper County Library.

Pen-to-Paper's published anthologies include:

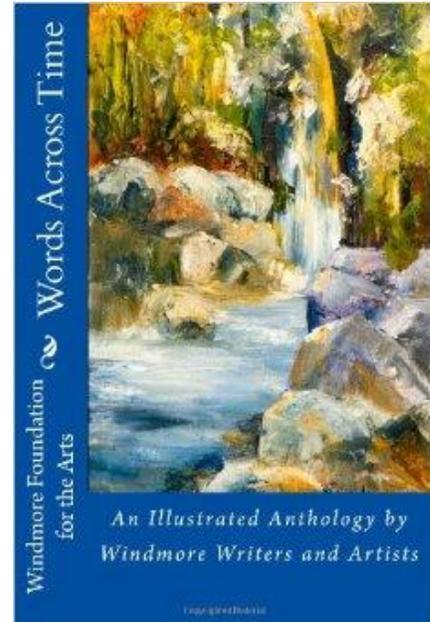
The Windmore Writers' Anthology, 1992.

Touching the Heart, 1996.

Images in Ink, 2010).

Words Across Time, 2012(includes artwork from Artists of Windmore.

Windmore will present "Developing Structure and Plot" on Tuesday April 14, 2015 from 9:30 am to 3 pm at St. Stephens Church Parish Hall located at 115 N East St, Culpeper, Virginia. Attendees must pre-register by April 7, 2015. Lunch will be provided. Any dietary restrictions should be noted with registration. Email Fran at info@windmorefoundation.org or call 540-825-2890 to register. Cost is included with a Windmore membership or \$20 for non-members.



StageWorks



StageWorks is Windmore's community theater group. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in the Parish Hall of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church located at 115 N East Street, Culpeper, Virginia. In May, StageWorks is presenting *Kingdom*, an interactive children's show, by playwright Pam Steadman. What happens when a dragon loses its fire while sleeping with its mouth open during a torrential rainstorm? Come find out where the dragon's exciting quest leads! Performances on May 29 at 7 pm; Saturday May 30 at 3 pm; and Sunday May 31 at 3 pm at Heritage Hall in Brandy Station. More information is on Windmore's website: www.windmorefoundation.org.

StageWorks Culpeper provides opportunities for those interested in performing in plays and musicals, working backstage, designing and constructing sets, costume design, stage make-up, and working lights and sound equipment. Are you interested in community theater? Email stageworks@windmorefoundation.org for more information. StageWorks participants are all ages and for some, it is their first experience in theater and they are thriving with this opportunity.

"I long ago came to the conclusion that even if I could put down accurately the thing I saw and enjoyed, it would not give the observer the kind of feeling it gave me. I had to create an equivalent for what I felt about what I was looking at—not copy it."

"I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way - things I had no words for." — Georgia O'Keeffe

The Gershwins – George and Ira



If you ask anyone to list the top American composers of the 20th Century, **George Gershwin** (1898 – 1938) will come up early in the conversation. As a composer of Tin Pan Alley pop music, then shows and movies, compositions such as “Rhapsody In Blue” and “An American in Paris” and the enduring and greatly loved opera *Porgy and Bess*, Gershwin had a huge impact on American music and gave us songs we love to sing, to dance to and to hear.

Ira Gershwin (1896 – 1983) was lyricist who collaborated with his younger brother, composer George Gershwin, to create some of the most memorable songs of the 20th century. With George he wrote more than a dozen Broadway shows, featuring songs such as “I Got Rhythm”, “Embraceable You”, “The Man I Love” and “Someone to Watch Over Me”. He was also responsible, along with DuBose Heyward, for the libretto to George's opera *Porgy and Bess*. The success the brothers had with their collaborative works has often overshadowed the creative role that Ira played



George Gershwin spent 4 years in Paris during the 1920's, where he applied to study under the direction of composers Maurice Ravel. Ravel feared that classical emphasis would ruin Gershwin's capabilities as a jazz writer. Turning down his request, Ravel wrote to him: "Why become a second-rate Ravel when you're already a first-rate Gershwin?" During that time, Gershwin composed his noteworthy “An American in Paris.”

Ira and George Gershwin were both born in New York, the sons of Jewish Lithuanian immigrants. The boys grew up in Brooklyn and Manhattan, mostly in the Yiddish Theatre district, and spent a lot of time at the theaters. George made pocket money working for the Yiddish theaters and performers: running errands and sometimes on stage as an extra. George became interested in piano when he was 10, to Ira's great relief (the piano had been bought for him but he didn't like to play). George's interest in music grew with him, and at age 15 he left school and went to work on Tin Pan Alley as a “Song Plugger,” playing and singing songs to customers to sell the sheet music. He published his first song at age 17, and received \$.50 for it. At age 20, he wrote “Swanee” and his career started to take wings. Gershwin wrote

prolifically for the next 19 years, often with Ira writing the lyrics.

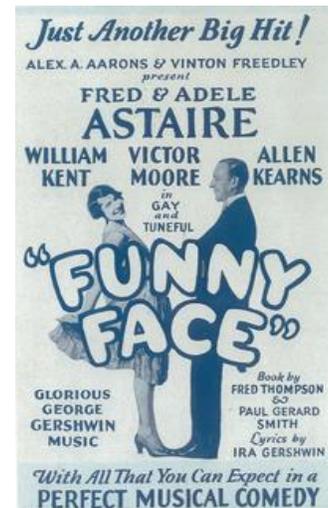
Early in 1937, George began to complain of blinding headaches and a recurring impression that he smelled burning rubber. His attempts to perform on the piano started to fail, and he died in 1938 of a brain tumor. He was 39 years old.

Ira stopped writing lyrics for 3 years after his brother's death, but then his mastery of songwriting continued, and he wrote hit songs with composers Jerome Kern, Kurt Weill and Harold Arlen.

“Swanee” was written in 1919 by George Gershwin, with lyrics by Irving Caesar. It was Gershwin's first big hit and was his highest-selling composition. The song is most often associated with singer Al Jolson. Its success gave Gershwin the chance to stop writing pop hits and concentrate on writing for movies and theatre. Caesar and Gershwin, who was 20, claimed to have written the song in about ten minutes while riding on a bus in Manhattan. They wrote it partly as a parody of Stephen Foster's “Old Folks at Home”.

Not long afterwards Gershwin played “Swanee” at a party where Al Jolson heard it. Jolson then put it into his show *Sinbad*, already a success at the Winter Garden Theatre, and recorded it for Columbia Records in January 1920. “After that”, said Gershwin, “Swanee penetrated the four corners of the earth.”

Arthur Schwartz said: “It's ironic that (Gershwin) never again wrote a number equaling the sales of “Swanee”, which for all its infectiousness, doesn't match the individuality and subtlety of his later works.”



“S Wonderful” was written by George and Ira Gershwin for the 1927 Broadway musical *Funny Face* (1927). It was in this show that Fred Astaire first performed in evening clothes and a top hat.

George Gershwin's most ambitious composition was *Porgy and Bess*. Gershwin's “folk opera” is now widely regarded as one of the most important American operas of the twentieth century.



Cole Porter

Cole Porter was born in Indiana in 1891, into a wealthy family. He was named for his grandfather, James Omar Cole, "the richest man in Indiana", a coal and timber speculator who dominated the family, Porter grew up in a world of comfort, indulgence and culture, but also strict expectations. He began learning music at an early age: starting the violin at 6 and writing (with Mother's help) an operetta at age 8. Porter's mother falsified his recorded birth year as 1893, to make him seem even more precocious.

His grandfather wanted Cole to be a lawyer and sent him to New England schools: Worcester Academy and Yale. Cole Porter was a successful student, but also wrote 300 songs during his college years. He learned how to party, too, with his classmates, taking a train into New York City for dinner, theater and a night on the town. When he graduated from Yale in 1913, Cole went to Harvard Law, but transferred to the Music department, where he grew and refined his skills. His first song performed on Broadway, "Esmeralda," came out in 1915.

World War I brought Porter to Paris, where he is said to have joined the French Foreign Legion. It's said while in the field he "had a specially constructed portable piano made for him so that he could carry it on his back and would entertain the troops." In Paris, Porter entertained extravagantly, throwing parties scandalous even by Parisian standards. In 1919, he married Linda Lee Thomas, an American divorcee. She was beautiful, well-connected and supportive of Cole's lifestyle, as long as he remained somewhat discreet. They were close friends and confidants, and their marriage was advantageous to them both. They lived lavishly in the Paris house and rented palazzos in Venice as well, returning to live in the US in 1939, due to the unrest in Europe.

All through his time in Paris, Cole wrote song after song. His first big hit was "Old Fashioned Garden" in 1919, and in 1920, he had several songs in the musical *A Night Out*. With Linda's encouragement, he wrote prolifically and quite successfully. His career really took with Porter's 1928 musical, *Paris*, which included the song "Let's Do It". The show's great success led to a 1929 revue, *Wake Up and Dream*, for which Porter wrote the score, including "What is This Thing Called Love?". This was followed by *Fifty Million Frenchmen*, which featured 28 Cole Porter songs including "You Do Something to Me," and *The New Yorkers* (1930) which included "Love For Sale." In 1932, Fred Astaire's last stage show, *Gay Divorce*, featured "Night and Day", which became Porter's most popular song, and in 1934, the show *Anything Goes* was an immediate success. *Anything Goes* was the first show where Porter was so well known that could make a grand entrance at opening night, and he did. A critic commented, "Cole's opening-night behavior is as indecent as that of a bridegroom who has a good time at his own wedding."

Porter had great success writing for Hollywood as well as Broadway in the mid-1930's, to his wife's dismay. Linda felt the Hollywood celebrity lifestyle was flamboyant and indiscreet, and stayed in Paris during that time. They were reunited when Porter was severely injured in New York in a riding accident (1938) and Linda rushed to his side. Porter's right leg was so badly injured that amputation was recommended. Porter refused, and Linda supported his decision. While recuperating for 7 months, and after he was officially back at work, Porter wrote music to distract himself from the pain. This produced "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," "At Long Last Love", "From Now On", "Well, Did You Evah!", and "Every Time We Say Goodbye".

Porter cooperated in making the 1946 film *Night and Day*, a largely fictionalized telling of his own story. The movie was panned by critics, but was very popular, mostly due to its wealth of Porter songs. Porter went on to write hits for the highly successful shows (and later, movies) *Kiss Me, Kate*, *Can-Can*, and *Silk Stockings*. The film *High Society* (1956) included Porter's last major hit song, "True Love".

Porter's mother and his wife died in the early 1950's and Porter's health declined, due to the old injury in his leg. After 38 operations, he consented to having his leg amputated in 1958. He was much more comfortable, and in better health, but never wrote music after that. He died in 1964 at the age of 73.

Porter's many wonderful melodies and intricate rhymes made him a giant among American popular composers, and his songs are widely performed. In May 2007, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame was dedicated to him. In 2010, his portrait was added to the Hoosier Heritage Gallery in the office of the Governor of Indiana, but it was taken down in 2011, replaced by that of Richard Lieber, founder of Indiana's state park system. In 2014, Porter was honored with a plaque on the Legacy Walk in Chicago, which celebrates LGBT achievers.

The Last Page

Credits:

The Gershwins and Cole Porter

Information from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Information on the Cole Porter portrait being replaced from Indiana.gov news release Nov 7, 2011

Photos and graphics from Google Images.

Information on the State Theatre:

Jodi Stone, Theatre Manager and the State Theatre website.

Photo by Beth Burns.

Information on Windmore:

Debra Smeyers, Executive Director

Susan Williams, Out of Time Teachers

Windmore website.

Photos from the Windmore and Burgandine House websites.

Art quotes:

<http://creatingminds.org/quotes/art.htm>

Portraits of Bob Burnett and Jodi Stone are courtesy of Studio C Photography.



'Only through art can we emerge from ourselves and know what another person sees.' — Marcel Proust