



DYNAMIC

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2013 Ontario Youth Choir
with conductor, Elroy Friesen

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 2017–18 season was a remarkable year for our organization with a number of exciting initiatives. Here are a few highlights:

- Rebranding – An initiative that will be completed with the launch of a newly re-designed website in mid-June. Stay tuned!
- Strategic Planning – Partnering with Endeavour Volunteer Consulting for Non-Profits, this yearlong initiative offers useful tools in evaluating our organizational progress, providing a sense of direction.
- Community Outreach – We aimed to target underserved areas this year, with a special focus on choral communities in Northern Ontario. This was made possible by the Professional Development Grant, sponsored by Ontario Arts Council. We are also happy to welcome two Northern representatives to our board, Theresa Thibert (Thunder Bay) and Melissa Lalonde (Timmins).

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding work of Choirs Ontario's Managing Director, Elena Koneva. She has demonstrated un-

paralleled commitment to our choral community by sharing her skills, expertise, and passion. Thanks to Elena's diligence, she continues to strengthen membership, communications, and office efficiency. These are immensely helpful to the success of our organization.

Choirs Ontario is also very fortunate to have a dedicated, "hands-on" board. Each board member contributes to the organization by utilizing her/his own individual skill set and interests. I am thankful for the board's patience and support in this first year of my term as president, and I look forward to continue learning from each of them.

Last but not least, I would like to thank our members and patrons for their continuous support for Choirs Ontario! Wishing you all the best during the summer months and I hope to see you at some of the Ontario Youth Choir concerts, happening between Aug 15-19!

Stay connected via social media, our website, and e-newsletters for more exciting news!

*Chorally yours,
Elaine Choi*

EDITOR'S MESSAGE



Hello,
colleagues,

As we slide into the summer months it is important to look back and celebrate all of accomplishments of the year: successful concerts and tours, new initiatives and partnerships, and hopefully a few new bonds formed while making music with friends new and old.

The Toronto Chamber Choir is looking back on 50 years of music-making and you can read all

about the history of the group in an article by David Barber. Henry Abraham takes us on a humorous journey in “Confessions of ‘Bad’ Baritone” as he recounts his experience joining an opera chorus for the first time. Elena Koneva shares some of her research and findings into how we can all continue to make our choirs inclusive and diverse. Finally, we deepen our understanding of Choral Evensong thanks to an article by Robert Busiakiewicz of St. James Cathedral in downtown Toronto. Don’t forget to check out the Choir News section to see what our colleagues from across the province are celebrating as well.

The summer months mark a busy and exciting time for Choirs Ontario with the launch of the 2018 Ontario Youth Choir (OYC) under the direction of Jon Washburn. Returning chorister Nathan Gritter shares his excitement for the upcoming program and OYC alumnus Megan Cooper takes us on a trip back to OYC in 1976, also under the leadership of Jon Washburn. As a former OYC apprentice conductor myself, I too am excited to hear the group this summer and have already marked the concert date on my calendar. Hope to see you there!

Thank you for your continued support of Dynamic and all the best for a restful and refreshing summer!

*Cheers,
Mark Ramsay*

CHOIRS ONTARIO HOLDS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

by Elena Koneva

The Annual General Meeting of Choirs Ontario was held on Saturday, June 9 at the Innis-Town Hall in Toronto. It was an opportunity for members to review the organization's progress during the 2017-18 season. Following the review of some of our recent activities, financial statements, and plans for the coming year, attendees enjoyed the Canadian premiere of the award-winning documentary *Robert Shaw - Man of Many Voices*. The film was introduced by Dr. Hilary Apfelstadt, who for several years was a member of the Robert Shaw Festival Singers and recorded two Grammy award-winning albums with the group in France. The feature-length documentary takes an in-depth look at Shaw as of one the world's most beloved classical music icons, from his serendipitous introduction into the world of music, through the many challenges and remarkable successes in his 60-year career.

Reactions from members in attendance:



Elena Koneva (right), Choirs Ontario Managing Director, thanking outgoing volunteer librarian, Eileen Baldwin.

“ *The film is a ‘must see’ for every choral conductor. It is powerful. In addition to all of the ‘no-holes barred’ lengthy in-depth life-story of Mr. Shaw, the actual making of the film is miraculous. I was speechless and in tears at the end.* ”

Jean Ashworth Bartle C.M., O. Ont.



Elaine Choi, Choirs Ontario President, thanking outgoing board member, Robert Filion.

“ *The film Robert Shaw - Man of Many Voices offered a fascinating outlook into the life and career of an American choral legend. It was wonderful to have the documentary introduced by Dr. Hilary Apfelstadt, who has had the privilege of singing for Robert Shaw. She explained the immense impact Robert Shaw had on her, and judging from what I saw in the film, it looks like anyone who has worked with him feels the same way.* ”

Nila Rajagopal

During the reception, members mingled with old and new friends, and learned more information about current and future issues within the choral community.

Choirs Ontario would like to thank board members Laurel Forshaw and Robert Filion whose terms end this year. Continuing to serve on the 2018–19 board are Elaine Choi, Mark Vuorinen, Matthew Otto, Ophelia Chang, Melanie Tellez, Carole Anderson, Jackie Hawley, Bruce Kotowich, Theresa Thibert, Hussein Janmohamed, and Mark Ramsay. The organization also welcomes Melissa Lalonde who is joining the board as the North East Regional Chair.

2018 ONTARIO YOUTH CHOIR *Announced*

by Nathan Gritter



Jon Washburn, conductor

The 2018 Ontario Youth Choir (OYC) program is running from August 10–19 at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. OYC is excited to have conductor Jon Washburn of the Vancouver Chamber Choir return for his third season, the first since 1991. He brings an abundance of musical knowledge to pass on to the young choristers.

OYC welcomes the return of Kathryn Tremills as collaborative pianist for 2018. Her artistry was loved by the audience as well as the choristers in 2017, and OYC is very happy to have her back this season. In addition, bass-baritone Giles Tomkins and U of T faculty member Elizabeth McDonald will act as vocal coaches for the duration of the summer program.

OYC is excited to include two apprentice conductors this season. Elise Naccarato is an OYC alumnus and currently works as an apprentice conductor with the Orpheus Choir of Toronto and Chorus Niagara. Victor Cheng is also a former OYC chorister turned conductor. This year he was the James T. Chestnutt Choral Scholar with the Elmer Iseler Singers.

This year's camp includes over 50 hours of rehearsal time, two masterclasses with our masterful vocal coaches, a tour through the Royal Ontario Museum, and many more great activities. The 2018 OYC concert tour will include performances in Hamilton, Orillia, and Toronto this year. It will be fantastic to connect with the local choral communities of Orillia and Hamilton this year and the choristers always enjoy meeting the audience members at every city they visit.



Jon Washburn
in rehearsal during one of his
previous visits as OYC conductor

The title of this year's concert is "The Spirit of Singing", and includes an eclectic range of repertoire. From musical giants such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms, to young Canadian composers, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Mr. Washburn has included repertoire from his experiences in British Columbia, and has included repertoire from local young composers who have worked with the Vancouver Chamber Choir.

Nathan Gritter is a music student at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music and is currently working as a Student Administrator with Choirs Ontario.

I am writing as Choirs Ontario's summer student, alumnus of the 2017 Ontario Youth Choir, and a 2018 Ontario Youth Choir chorister. I have had the pleasure of assisting

with the choir's organizational activities this year and I couldn't be more excited for this year's OYC. In 2017, the choir was the highlight of my year. I learned so much and I established many amazing new friendships. I am really looking forward to experiencing OYC at my own school, U of T. I am excited to work with Elizabeth McDonald and Giles Tomkins, who are both amazing Toronto musicians. I want to challenge myself in new ways this year, by taking part in the masterclasses, and taking leadership roles. The pieces I am most looking forward to rehearsing and performing are the movements from Requiems. I gained a big appreciation for Requiems and Masses from my recent performances at U of T, and I'm excited to learn these excerpts that I have only listened to in the past. August is only two months away! *I can't wait!*

OYC Concert Information:

- Hamilton:** August 17, 7:30pm at Melrose United Church
- Orillia:** August 18, 7:30pm at St. James Anglican Church
- Toronto:** August 19, 3:00pm at Grace Church on-the-hill

You can purchase tickets and find out more information about the Ontario Youth Choir HERE: www.choirsonario.org/ontarioyouthchoir.html

DOWN MEMORY LANE:

1976 Ontario Youth Choir

by Megan Cooper (nee Brown)

*O*ntario Youth Choir 1976, under the direction of conductor Jon Washburn and assistant conductor Robert Cooper, holds only wonderful memories for me. The fact that the choir toured Northern Ontario was a huge bonus, as I hailed from Sudbury and it was a wonderful opportunity to share my pride in 'the North' with my OYC family.

That year's nine-day tour took us through Timmins, Dryden, Brandon, Thunder Bay, and Sudbury, and one leg actually involved a short-haul flight on a small plane. The highlight of that flight was when Rick Dowden

1976 Ontario Youth Choir
performing in Sudbury,
Jon Washburn conductor



“Fortunately for us all, we loved Jon almost immediately! He was fun, talented, musical, and expected nothing but the best from all of us, including himself. One thing I will always remember from Jon is the “transfer of learning” concept, that what you learn from one piece, you must apply to the next piece in which it occurs. In other words, each chorister should take responsibility for learning and growing and applying all that we learn.”

Beverley Killen (nee Anderson), 1976 OYC chorister

and Brian McIntosh somehow gained control of the cabin PA system, and took over as flight attendants, delivering their own version of what to do in case of emergency! Pity the other passengers on that plane as we laughed and sang our way south!

A few days later, as we approached Sudbury from Timmins on our big Greyhound tour bus, organizers realized that we were a little ahead of schedule, and since we had to drive literally past my street, I suggested that we stop at my house for a break. Well before the dawn of cell phones, this was, to say the least, an unexpected surprise for my mom! She was in fact thrilled, (and went on to be a camp ‘Mom’ herself) but my poor sister, who had worked the night shift and was dead asleep upstairs, had no idea what to make of 48 choristers who filled the living room and had an impromptu rehearsal right under her bedroom!



1976 Ontario Youth Choir on tour

My connection with the OYC began in the mid-1970s, and I clearly remember how bereft I felt following each year’s tour experience, as it seemed impossible to share with my non-musical friends the life-changing experience I had just undergone. Over time, I came to realize that this was exactly what the OYC experience was all about – as tough as it was to walk away each time, I took with me a huge piece of what we had accomplished as a collective, and was able to pass it on. My own singing and sight-reading skills improved each year with a new conductor and group of singers, and I was able to transfer those skills into new choral situations with renewed vigor and generosity of spirit. Singing in a choir (high-school, university, or community), became less about individual skill levels, and more about what the group could achieve as a whole. I appreciate having learned this lesson early through the OYC experience, and now rehearse and perform regularly with adults and young singers

with varying skillsets. I benefit from their generosity and expertise, and hope they somehow gain from mine.

An acronym we coined in Jon Washburn's 1976 OYC was "TOL" – he often talked about "transfer of learning" and stressed the fact that if we could do what he insisted upon in one piece, it was equally important that we used our brains and applied the skill or technique in other pieces as well. He often just stopped us midstream, threw up his arms and said, "TOL – think! What have you learned that you can apply here?" What great advice this has proven to be both in singing and in life! Thanks Jon!

I can't wait to hear this year's OYC under Jon Washburn's direction and am confident the singers will bond easily with the collective goal of making not just music, but magic, together. They will most certainly make wonderful friendships and memories to last a lifetime!

"Both of us were strongly influenced by Jon's musicality and personality. He encouraged us to always perform and behave in a professional manner. Even when we were on the plane travelling I remember him telling us that we should be going over our music."

Roger Brown and Patricia Brown (nee Russell), 1976 OYC choristers

**CHECK OUT OUR
CHOIRS ONTARIO CALENDAR
OF FESTIVALS AND EVENTS
HERE**





CHOIRS ONTARIO MUSIC LIBRARY MOVES TO TORONTO

*The Choirs Ontario Music Library
will be relocated to Toronto this summer and will
become accessible to the public by appointment
and in-person checkouts. Both our office and the
music library will be located at
Timothy Eaton Memorial Church,
230 St. Clair Avenue West*

STARTING JULY 2018.

Early Music:

NEW LIGHT -

50 years OF THE TORONTO CHAMBER CHOIR

by David Barber



A leading force in the Toronto early music scene is set to mark its golden anniversary as the Toronto Chamber Choir (TCC) prepares to kick off its 50th season, built on the overall theme Music & Friendship.

Led by Artistic Director Lucas Harris since 2014, the choir focuses on Renaissance and Baroque music, although it makes occasional for-

ays back to even earlier times and includes modern music when an artistic connection can be made. The choir has about 40 singers of mixed SATB voices. Most are unpaid but it includes a consort of paid section leads who also serve as soloists when required.

Over those 50 years, many now-established singers have sung with

the choir as soloists and/or section leads, gaining a boost to their early careers. They include sopranos Meredith Hall, Michele DeBoer, Amy Dodington, and Elisabeth Hetherington; mezzo Catherine Robbin; alto Laura Pudwell; tenors Albert Greer and Paul Jenkins; and basses John Dodington, Gary Relyea, John Pepper, and Paul Oros. You'll recognize these names for

their association with other early music ensembles including the Toronto Consort and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir. The TCC has long been a training ground for top choral talent. For nearly two decades, the choir has also expanded that tradition through a mentorship program offered to high school students at Rosedale Heights School of the Arts. This initiative provides an opportunity for select students to sing with the choir, and some have joined as members even after their graduation.

The choir began in 1968 when the worldwide early music revival was still in its early stages, especially in Toronto. (Tafelmusik was founded more than a decade later, in 1979; Toronto Consort launched its first season in 1972; and Opera Atelier began in 1983.) The choir's founder was Annegret Wright, who named the group the Toronto Chamber Society. She envisioned a German model – a tripartite organization with a consort of choristers, solo singers, and instrumentalists. Her goal was to promote early music by giving authentic performances of Renaissance and Baroque repertoire – still rare in Toronto at that time. Two members who sang from its earliest days are still singing with the choir – a testament to its appeal and longevity.

Wright taught the choir to love J.S. Bach, of course, but also her favourite lesser-known composers such as Schütz, Scheidt, and Schein. She led the group for ten years before passing the job to John Barron, its conductor for the next three years. Wright continued her support behind the scenes un-



til her death from cancer not long before the choir's 20th anniversary concert, which she was to have conducted.

Lorna Lutz Heyge led the choir for the next three years. Looking for an inexpensive way to expand the season to four concerts from two, she created the tradition of the choir's "Kaffeemusik" events, afternoon lecture/concerts followed by coffee and treats baked by the singers. The choir still programs this popular educational format twice a year.

In 1985 the group chose as its director an enthusiastic young man still in his 20s named David Fallis, who would continue as music director for nearly 25 years. For its 1998/99 season the group changed its name to the Toronto Chamber Choir, as it remains today. Fallis refined the "authentic" part of the TCC mission by regularly lowering standard performance pitch to Baroque pitch at A=415 Hz from A440

and providing even more opportunities through his connections to both Tafelmusik and Toronto Consort, such as Christmas concerts for which TCC has joined Tafelmusik for a performance of the Praetorius Vespers. He taught the singers how to pronounce Latin with German, Italian, and French accents, and expanded the repertoire to include works by Praetorius, Monteverdi, Handel, Purcell, and Vivaldi, among many other composers. Several of the soloists he hired are members today of the Toronto Consort or Tafelmusik. Fallis' informed, artistic direction – leading Toronto Consort and Opera Atelier, for example – is now recognized far beyond Toronto.

David Fallis' successor was Mark Vuorinen, a specialist in the music of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, who led the choir for five years and introduced Canadian premieres of works by many contemporary composers while forging a thematic or musical link back to the



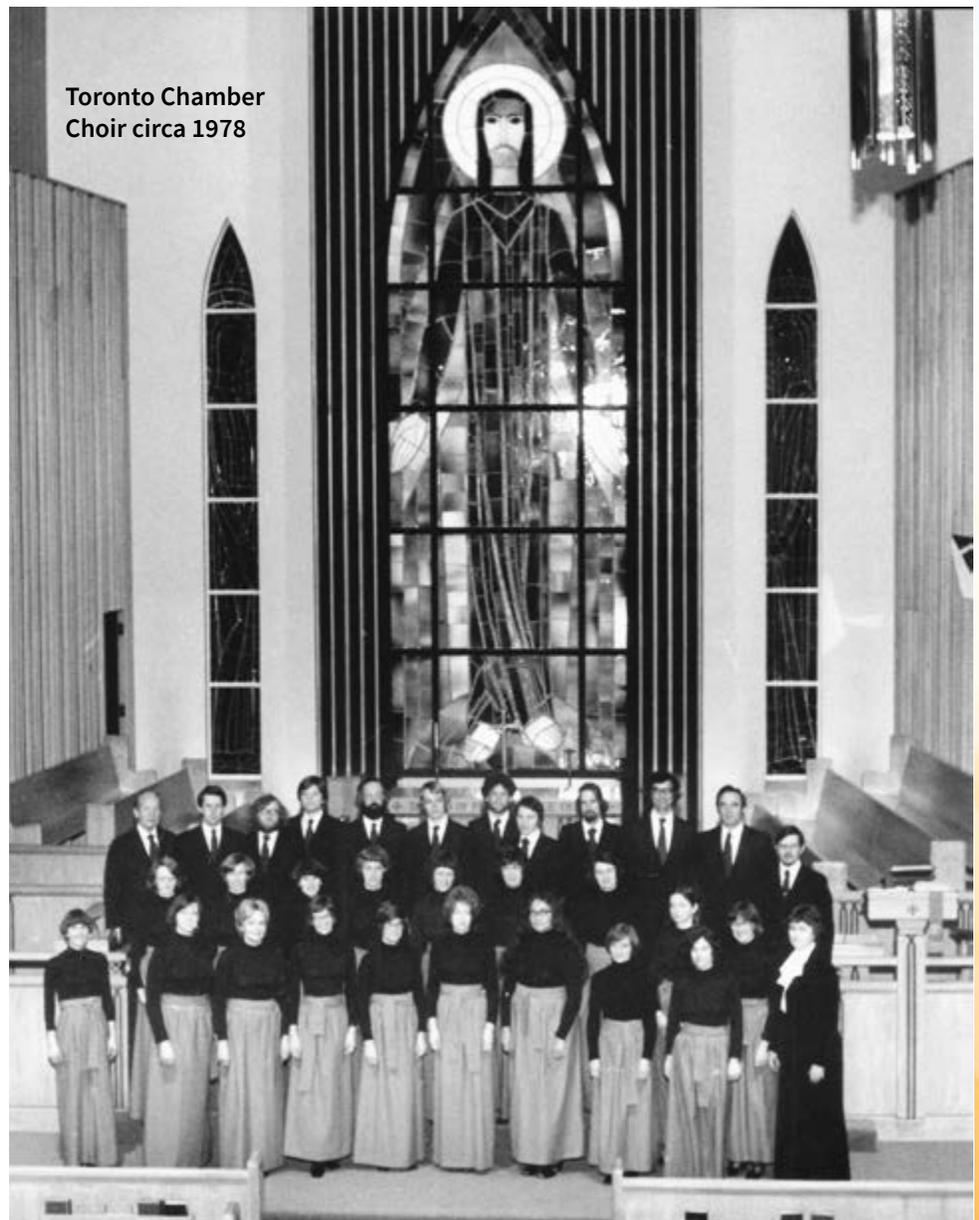
Toronto Chamber Choir
circa 1972

ern Europe – old and new – by such lesser-known composers as Mielczewski, Dyketsky, and Sviridov and such more familiar names as Biber, Martinu, and Pärt. Harris has also expanded the Kaffeemusik format to include expert guest lecturers and enhanced visual presentations. Harris also enhanced the choir’s section-lead program, called the Toronto Chamber Consort, which offers solo opportunities to young singers with a special interest in early music.

choir’s founding mandate of early music. Vuorinen has gone on to become a music professor at the University of Waterloo and conductor of the Kitchener-Waterloo Grand Philharmonic Choir.

Now looking forward to his fifth season, Artistic Director Lucas Harris is well known to audiences in Toronto and around the world as a player of the lute and its larger cousin, the theorbo. Harris is the first instrumentalist to lead the Toronto Chamber Choir and TCC is the first choir he’s directed. Not surprisingly, Harris has introduced new perspectives to the choir’s programs with his twin passions for research into the past and for new ways of presenting old music.

An example is a recent concert called *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, which explored a connection between European and Chinese music (accompanied by Chinese instruments) composed during the lifetime of a 17th-century Jesuit missionary who had travelled to China. Another of his concerts featured music of East-



Toronto Chamber
Choir circa 1978

Highlights of the coming 50th-anniversary season include the initial Music & Friendship concert on Sept. 29 at Trinity St. Paul's Centre, a "greatest hits" look back for which former members and conductors have been invited to return and perform. A humorous Kaffeemusik on Nov. 25 at Church of the Redeemer combines madrigals with fairy tales about musicians. The first concert of 2019 on March 2 at Grace Church on-the-Hill will focus on the Convivencia period in Medieval and Renaissance Spain, a time of artistic growth when Jews, Muslims, and

Christians co-existed in relative peace. In a spring fundraising event on April 24 at Heliconian Hall, the choir's consort of section leads will sing cantatas by the Italian singer and composer Barbara Strozzi, who celebrates her 400th birthday in 2019. This ties in nicely with the final concert of the season, A Voice of Her Own, on May 26 at Church of the Redeemer which explores the choral music and biographies of nine extraordinary women from Hildegard to Clara Schumann. The choir is also planning a recording project based on this program.

The long and successful history of the Toronto Chamber Choir reflects the interests of the early music revival since the mid 20th century. Now with his active imagination, Lucas Harris presents choral concerts that continue to attract audiences with esoteric ancient music that he brings to new life with excitement and energy.

For more information on the TCC, please visit <https://torontochamberchoir.ca/>



David Barber is a journalist, author of music books, and composer who has sung with the Toronto Chamber Choir for nearly 20 years. The TCC 50th-anniversary concert in September will include the world premiere of Gaudeamus, a commissioned work he has composed for the occasion. This article includes material written by Christine McClymont, who has sung with the choir since its founding in 1968.



RECRUITING SINGERS TO **TRULY REFLECT** YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

by Elena Koneva

This article is based in part on materials published by Chris Rowbury on www.chrisrowbury.com and a workshop on community engagement presented by Jane Marsland in Toronto.

How do you recruit a truly representative set of people from my local community: in age, gender, race, culture, background, education, disability, etc? In short, a real *community* choir.

The current reality is that most choirs do not reflect a true cross section of society. The majority often do not represent the racial, cultural, or gender mix of the community they are based in. While inclusive representation is an important component of a strong organization, there is no easy answer to recruiting a representative set of people from your local community. Here are tactics you can try. Big change starts with small steps.

DEFINING WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY CHOIR IS ABOUT

Be clear what it means for your group to be inclusive and representative and on what your aims are. Find the right words to clearly explain that message to prospective choir members. It may be that you have to use different language for the different groups that you are trying to attract. Each group will use different language and have different shared points of reference.

GETTING THE WORD OUT TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Get this information in front of the relevant group using relevant promotional tactics. Map your potential engagement tactics and communication strategies (from informing to communicating to engaging) and increase your communication efforts to that population segment. You will need to take the word to the people you want to attract. That may mean identifying places where groups gather.

GETTING OUT OF THE “BUILDING” AND INTO THE COMMUNITY

Go out to the people you want to attract rather than expecting them to come to you. Consider singing outside of your typical rehearsal and/or performance venue as those might feel intimidating to some of the groups you are trying to reach. Partnering with a community-based organization that has established relationships with those you are looking to reach might be a great first step in promoting the choir.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER?

It may not be possible to start from scratch with a truly representative group of singers. It may be that your description, publicity sources, venue, etc. may have to be tailored for each particular group. You can then combine them at a later stage. For instance, you could start a men's choir, a mixed-voice choir at the local cultural centre, and a youth choir. Once these are up and running, you could have a joint concert (involving a couple of joint songs where everyone needs to rehearse together), then gradually amalgamate all the different groups into one choir.

CONSIDER YOUR PROGRAMMING CHOICES

Just like your audience, your choir membership is very likely to be a reflection of what is on stage. In curating programs, artistic directors are not just selecting repertoire but also curating their chorus's constituency.

And if your specific tactic is not working, it does not mean change is not important. This is hard work but will pay off in expanding your organization's network, for singers and audience members.



Toronto City
Opera production

CONFESSIONS OF A *Bad*, BARITONE

by Henry Abraham

As an ex-Pat American amateur violinist seeking a break from Trumplandia, I came to Toronto. What better mix of diversity and musical culture than in this wonderful city? I am a middling fiddler, and I hoped to find a community of similar folks, perhaps a community orchestra, to play with. But at first pass I had no luck. Then a catalog appeared one day in my mailbox from the Toronto District School Board announcing courses in adult education. Nothing for string players, but something just as interesting – music courses that promised great music, good teaching, and community all at once. I pored through the offerings and I felt like Goldilocks choosing between bowls of porridge. One course sounded too cold (“Music Theory”), one was too hot (“Advanced Piano”), but one sounded just right: a beginners’ course in opera chorus.

Were my eyes deceiving me? That one sounded too good to be true. I had often dreamed of singing in the chorus of the great operas. I’d join the throngs of singing prisoners, slaves, and soldiers belting out the great choruses of Mozart, Verdi, and Puccini. Sign me up! But there was one issue. If the truth were known, I couldn’t sing, at least not very well. In my defense let it be said that I could carry a tune, but only if someone else carried the heavy end. If they were doing *Madame Butterfly*, I could probably get through the Humming Chorus, but I might want to hum the rest of the opera, too, since my Italian was not Pavarotti grade.

Neither was my German, French, or Russian. Also tricky was that the course was recruiting for the chorus of the Toronto City Opera, the venerable semi-professional troupe that has performed classics for over fifty years. With a vague sense that I might not actually know what I was getting into, I bit the bullet, and when they asked for singers in this year's productions of *Fidelio* and *The Magic Flute*, I raised my hand.

It may have been the best decision I made for myself in years, though probably not as much for the Toronto City Opera. A good singer can cover two or even three octaves. It turned out I could cover one. Below that octave I croaked. Above it I squeaked. A charitable person might say I was a baritone of limited range. A harsher judge would say I was an operatic charity case. There are four choral parts in both *Fidelio* and *The Magic Flute*, and baritones have nothing to do with them. That meant that for two thirds of each opera I croaked or squeaked. On the brighter side, for one third I was perfect! Well, not exactly perfect.



There was another problem that emerged. A good singer can sing on key. I, on the other hand, would wander around the dark forest of tonality and pick a tree that only approximated what the composer intended. How had I managed to properly tune a violin all these years? With an electronic tuner, was the answer! But at home when I tried to sing into my tuner, the needle went crazy. My vocal cords would not stay steady enough to give me recognizable note. How did all those opera guys do it? Making things even harder was that Beethoven and Mo-

zart like to have five soloists and four voices in the chorus singing different notes at the same time. My fellow traveler in the bass clef, dragged me through our rehearsals. The artistic staff were unflaggingly kind.

Learning to prepare two operas for production in a handful of months would have been completely terrifying were it not for the breathtaking beauty of the music. Every rehearsal moved us closer to where we needed to be. The sopranos of the chorus are powerhouses, at times so strong that I felt that the basses were only their accompaniment. But the stars of the shows are clearly the young professional soloists who carry the heavy end of the music. When we rehearsed with them for the first time, all of our hard work made sense. Now we were hearing the music as it was written. *Fidelio's* finale is a dizzying explosion of nine musical lines going at the same time, often in different directions. We didn't need a conductor. We needed an air traffic controller, so when we rehearsed with our soloists for the first time, our hearts were in our mouths. Our worries of midair musical collisions were needless. The spirits of the chorus soared as the voices of our soloists all but lifted off the roof of the auditorium. The voices of the chorus rocked. We clapped at the end as much in excitement as in relief.

Off to the costume lady we floated. She gave me a tricorne hat as part of my 18th century look. I looked great in it, like an oarsman in Washington Crossing the Delaware, minus the oar, the boat, and the Delaware. And as much as I would have been honored to row Wash-

ington across the Delaware, singing in an opera in Toronto was turning out to be much better.

Did I mention the dress rehearsals? That's where I learned of the mysteries of makeup. Growing up in the macho world of Philadelphia streets, I knew nothing about the stuff before this opera gig, but after multiple misadventures applying "base," "tone," and "liner," afterwards when I'd walk by the make-up counter at drug stores I found myself slowing down and saying, "Heyyyyyy..."

The lights were too bright on production nights to see the audience, and so it was hard to feel nervous. To paraphrase Noel Coward, we just tried to sing and not bump into the furniture. And sing we did! By closing night of *The Magic Flute* we had an overflow audience, and a collective rush in our cast I haven't experienced in years. On the subway ride home I may have left the top of the program sticking out of my pocket, and maybe there was a daub of make-up visible on my cheek. But Canadians are famously polite. If they noticed, they didn't say.

TORONTO CITY OPERA,
in its 52nd season, will be
performing at Al Green The-
atre, Miles Nadal Jewish
Community Centre for its
2018–2019 productions.
Opera lovers can visit their
website at
www.torontocityopera.com
for performance information.

Dr. Henry Abraham is an American psychiatrist living in Toronto. He is a co-founder of two medical organizations which were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985.

LIGHTEN OUR DARKNESS

- in Praise of Choral Evensong

by Robert Busiakiewicz

*This article first appeared
as a blog post on March
14, 2018 on the St. James
Cathedral website
www.stjamescathedral.ca*

It is referred to by Chaucer, Milton, and Shakespeare; it is mentioned in Louis Stevenson, Dickens, and Trollope; it is present in Plath, Wilde and Auden, yet one is invariably met with looks of bewilderment and flabbergast when declining a friend's invitation with the words, "I'm sorry I can't make it - I'll be attending Choral Evensong." The dialogue proceeds in this guise: "Well, what kind of song is Evensong anyway? I didn't realise you were (awkward pause) religious." Before being able to muster a conflated response integrating the nuances of 17th century politics, compositional techniques, architecture and poetry, the assumption is made, the stereotype is formed, "It's just church, I suppose."

In reality, Evensong is something of an eccentric dark horse, the joker in the pack, when it comes to preconceived notions about "just church." For starters, unlike the sacramental liturgies of Eucharist, or Baptism, it doesn't require any clergy for it to take place. It is an example of 'Divine Office' (an oxymoron, surely?) which has been passed down through the centuries from the Apostles, and daily Jewish prayers before them. These prayers were adopted and adapted by monastic institutions and reached

something resembling their current format just under half a millennium ago following a domestic dispute involving an Englishman, a Roman, and a Spaniard.

The choral rendering of Anglican Evening Prayer is also peculiar in that it has, amongst Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and even hardened atheists, a burgeoning popularity. Richard Dawkins has been quoted as saying, "I have a certain love of Evensong."¹ The Guardian reports a 35% increase in attendance for the service since 2000², all of this taking place within a church that its own primate once declared as "one generation away from extinction."³ With my own eyes I have seen people camp out in tents to participate in the service, people have queued in the freezing rain waiting for a seat, I have even seen a fully regaled, robed and professional choir sing Evensong to a congregation of zero. How can this be explained?

Evensong's zealous appeal grows from a curious combination of ingredients. The order in which they are presented is crucial. You enter St. James Cathedral to the sound of music. It takes a moment to recognise that the organ is located all around the building, creating a 'surround-sound' effect that is practically

unique in Toronto. The organist is playing on not four, but five different keyboards, one of which is being played with their feet. As the bells toll to signal a service is about to begin, the music gradually quiets and we hear the immortal sound of the human voice. The choir, not yet visible, sings a short prayer, or introit, to focus the mind away from the frenzy of King Street. As the procession enters the space, it's hard not to notice the dazzling white surplices, the elaborate copes, the academic hoods as the slowly gliding company of women and men make their way up to the ornately neo-gothic high altar. The service begins, as it has on this very patch of earth for over two hundred years, with the chanted words: "O Lord, open thou our lips."⁴ We begin from a position of penitence, of weakness, of ignorance. We plead, "make haste to help us, make speed to save us."⁵

The choir, singing on our behalf, begins chanting a Psalm appointed for the day. Did they really say, "I am become like a pelican in the wilderness"?⁶ Who is Og the King of Basan, and why does he have fat bulls? Was throwing a shoe at Edom a common thing to do, or to describe Moab as a washpot? What of earthquakes, pescacide, unicorns, lions, delightful legs, leery drunks, olfactory malfunction, culinary adventures, gnashing teeth, and herb for the use of men? Did the lyrics to Queen's Another One Bites the Dust really come from Psalm 72?

The Old Testament reading begins, and it's far from soporific. In the course of a month one can guarantee an airing of tales that deal with jealousy, betrayal, murder, family feud, sea monsters, erotica, the list goes on: eat your heart out Game of Thrones. Jesus Christ 'meek and mild' doesn't enter the picture until the Magnificat, or Song of Mary, is sung. Even then he has not yet been born. This great declaration of the Incarnation, God stooping so low, launches us perfectly into the Second Lesson which fixes our minds on the ground-breaking acts of Christ and the Apostles before we join the aged Simeon in his hymn of praise: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."⁷ We now pause and see how far we've come. We stand and say the Creed together. This is the Church's summary of the truths we have been learning about. Another, more substantial, piece of music is offered as a meditation, followed by prayers reflecting on the day, as the shadows lengthen, the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over.

Evensong grapples with so many dramatic, and yet universal themes that it is no wonder that those who encounter it, experience it on such a viscerally stimulating level. It has at its core the fundamental tribulations of the human condition, which, in combination with Thomas Cranmer's gorgeous command of language, has an enduring charm and resonance. This is all to say nothing of the staggeringly high quality, and constant variety of music written for it. Even composers who were avowed atheists such as Vaughan Williams, Tippett, Maxwell Davies, Rorem, and Britten, composed some of our most treasured church music for the service because of its fertile landscape for creativity and inspiration. It is not for me to comment on the quality of the music on offer at St. James, but I think that everyone has something to glean from this crowning jewel within our rich tapestry of a tradition. Should you know someone to come away from the plush musical banquet of Evensong (every Sunday at 4.30pm, entirely free) not feeling uplifted or spiritually nourished then you might consider the advice of Lorenzo in The Merchant of Venice:

*"The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted."*⁸

Endnotes:

¹ Douglas Murray, www.spectator.co.uk/2013/09/interview-richard-dawkins-on-what-hed-miss-if-christianity-vanished/ ~ interview by Douglas Murray

² Stephen Pritchard, Apr 8th, 2018 www.theguardian.com/music/2018/apr/08/home-listening-choral-evensong-gesualdo-six-york-minster-radio-3

³ Trevor Grundy, Religion News Service 11-19-2013

⁴ Psalm 51, v. 15

⁵ Opening versicles and responses of Evening Prayer in The Book of Common Prayer, Canada, 1962.

⁶ Psalm 102, v. 6

⁷ Luke 2, v. 29

⁸ Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, V i



In 2014 Robert Busiakiewicz founded the professional vocal ensemble Opus 8 (www.opus8choir.com) and became the Director of Music at St. James Cathedral, Toronto.



Conductors from left to right: Ezra Burke, Marg Stubington, Lydia Adams, Mary Bella, Valeska Cabrera, Shirley Madden, Thomas Burton. Photo credit: Laura Adlers

THE AMADEUS CHORAL CONDUCTING WORKSHOP:

LEARNING & LEVITY IN EQUAL MEASURE

by Julie Winn

For the devoted chorister, what could be more fun than three days chock-full of rehearsal time? This was exactly the plan for the Amadeus Choir’s inaugural Choral Conducting Workshop held March 23–25. Starting Friday and culminating in a glorious concert Sunday, the choir, along with choristers from the Eglinton St. George’s United Church choir, sang, ate, learned, and bonded with each other—and with its workshop conductors.

Conductor and artistic director Lydia Adams and guest clinicians Linda Beaupré, Shawn Grenke, and Joan Andrews, ran a brilliantly designed schedule of rehearsals and in camera sessions with the six conductors. Each participant brought extensive conducting experience with ensembles including children’s, church, university, and community choirs. Four are currently working towards graduate degrees in choral conducting.

For Adams, this event was an idea she’d hoped to bring to fruition for a long time. With the guiding hand of experienced arts manager and producer Laura Adlers, Lydia and her clinicians ran an intensive program of masterclasses and roundtable discussions, using video recordings of each conductor’s rehearsal time for study purposes.

“For a lot of community conductors,” Adams says, “it’s tough to

find places to work in front of a choir and get that real experience. It was our goal to assist these people in every way we could, to allow them to gain the proficiency and know-how they will be able to use going forward.”

From the choristers’ perspective, the experience was tremendous. Amadeus singers are no neophytes when it comes to approaching unfamiliar music. They were given a brief run-through of the music in advance, just to learn

notes, but they were given no direction for interpretation. The idea was to provide each workshop conductor with something of a blank slate – to allow each to bring their own ideas to the music at hand. The choir was instructed to follow directions diligently, leaving behind the instinct and experience they might normally employ. This kind of objective response provided conductors with immediate feedback as to their success in communicating with the choir.

Moments of levity, epiphany, and tremendous beauty were shared in equal measure throughout the weekend, and the culminating concert was a delight to all present. An enthusiastic audience conveyed its praise and encouragement of each conductor on the day, and will no doubt keep an eye out for the next iteration of this wonderful Amadeus Choir event, slated for the spring of 2019.



Julie Winn is a music teacher, freelance writer, and longstanding member of the Amadeus Choir. To see more of Julie’s work, go to wantedcs.com/juliewinn



Chorus York *A rising star* in Richmond Hill

by Mary-Lou Montgrain

Chorus York, Richmond Hill's newest community choir, is now completing its second successful season under the guidance of artistic director, Stéphane Potvin. Established in February 2016, by a small group of enthusiastic singers, Chorus York touches on many musical genres and is already in demand for fundraisers, symphony concerts, and other public and private events.

This season the choir presented a concert featuring Broadway musicals in November, a concert of love songs in February in honour of Valentine's Day at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, some rock & pop in March, and jazz and spirituals in May. To conclude the season, Chorus York is appearing as guest performers with the Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra for their annual Last Night at the Proms at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. In addition to the traditional Proms repertoire, the choir will

perform selected movements from Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Mozart's *Requiem*.

The choir attributes much of its success to the expert guidance of its director, Stéphane Potvin, who came to them highly recommended by singers who had sung under his leadership in the Boris Brott Summer Festivals in Hamilton. From the beginning, Stéphane has served as a business advisor and mentor for the choir, guiding them through the process of becoming a not-for-profit registered charity and assisting them with strategic planning.

Chorus York continues its pursuit of excellence in the performance of an eclectic selection of high quality repertoire, ranging from classical to popular, always aiming for an enriching learning environment for its singers and audience members. Anyone interested in participating in this rewarding experience is invited to contact Chorus York through their website www.chorusyork.ca



Robert Phillips (Music Director), Dianne Phillips (chorister), Henry Remiz (accompanist), Kate Remiz (chorister), Joanne Crookshank (librarian and chorister), and John Crookshank (President)

25th Anniversary OF THE DURHAM PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

by Robert Phillips

The Durham Philharmonic Choir (DPC) recently held its 25th Anniversary Gala and Fundraiser at Royal Ashburn Golf and Country Club in Ashburn. Over 80 guests attended with representatives from various arts councils and special guests from the choir's original membership of choristers and volunteers. Also in attendance were many loyal patrons.

Speakers included host/emcee and Past President Susan Reed, President John Crookshank, Pine Ridge Arts Council Past President and former DPC chorister Cathy Schnippering, and Founding and current Music Director Robert Phillips.

The evening included live performances by several musical entertainers as well as a highly successful silent auction featuring pieces by local artists. It was a tremendous evening of fun, great food, dancing, friendship, and re-connecting for many of the guests.

Robert Phillips (B.Mus. Mt. Allison 1982; M.Mus. University of Toronto 1987) has been the director of Durham Philharmonic Choir since its inception in 1993.



Espresso Singers 10th Anniversary Concert (2018)

Here's to Song:
 CELEBRATING *10 years* OF
Espresso
 S I N G E R S

by Valerie McIntyre

Espresso Singers (ES) is a chorus of female singers that loves music as much as we love each other: we are tight-knit but quick to welcome new singers into our creative, friendly, and sometimes rambunctious nest. Thank goodness for our conductor, John-Charles (J.-C.) Coolen, who not only provides strong musical leadership but a healthy balance as the only male in the rehearsal room at Durham College in Oshawa on Friday nights.

Like a family tree, our choir branched out from the Durham Community Choir (DCC), our sister choir, where many of our members began singing together under Coolen's leadership and continue to do so today. The idea of a separate auditioned women's chorus began in 2008 as a way to perform Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* in celebration of Coolen's tenth year conducting DCC. The group was presented as the Britten Chorus in a joint concert with DCC but decided to keep singing together so, Espresso Singers was born!



Over the last ten years we have covered a variety of music including choral classics and modern arrangements as well as world music and jazz. Coolen's vision of the choir as both a colourful musical pursuit and a community, sharing joy and – at times – sadness, has come to pass. As soprano Elena Makagonova puts it, "I've been a member of Espressivo Singers since 2011 and I really enjoy every season! This is a group of talented and enthusiastic women who call each other 'sisters.'"

Espressivo Singers
performing with
classical guitarist,
Liona Boyd
(Christmas 2017)

Our May 5 spring anniversary concert, "Where There is Love: Celebrating 10 Years of Espressivo Singers," included choristers' favourites from the decade. Many pieces were introduced by choristers themselves, sharing personal connections such as this one by soprano Megan Stralak, who introduced "Nuit d'Étoiles" by Claude Debussy, "One of my best memories is of one of our members, Linda, who sadly passed away. She loved the piece and I always think of her when we sing it."



The concert concluded with the fitting, "Here's to Song" by Allister MacGillivray (arr. Lydia Adams), an emotional moment for all of us as

the lyrics expressed our feelings about this special choir:

*Here's to song, here's to time;
Here's to both with friends of mine...
We have friends and song no wealth can buy.*

For more information, visit www.EspressivoSingers.ca



Valerie McIntyre is a second soprano and the Public Relations Coordinator with Espressivo Singers, an all-female auditioned choir directed by John-Charles Coolen and based in Oshawa.



Milton Choristers, photo credit: Suresh Padia

MILTON CHORISTERS CELEBRATES *50th Anniversary*

by Helen Dietz

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Milton Choristers. In December 1968 Judy Hunter, an accomplished musician and member of the University Women's Group of Milton and area, founded a women's choir called The Chansonettes, and began performing concerts in the community. By September 1979 the singing group evolved into the Milton Choristers, a 4-part SATB community choir that continues to entertain audiences in the Halton Region.

Various directors and accompanists have brought to the choir their leadership and brilliant skills of musical development. This year, artistic direction is provided by the talented Rachel Cleland, featuring collaborative pianist Susan Edmonds.

The choir currently has 55 members and performs a vast repertoire of classical, contemporary, sacred, and secular arrangements. Over the years we have had over 480 members and we have sung over 870

pieces of music, with *Messiah* being the most favourite. Our library contains over 500 pieces of music. We have three vinyl recordings from the early years and CDs for every concert thereafter. Our archives are a treasure trove of photo albums, scrapbooks, and concert programmes for every performance.

The key to the success of the choir is maintaining a quality standard of singing as well as a strong sense of camaraderie. We provide an inspiring, pleasurable, and memorable choral entertainment experience for the public and for our members. The choir offers an opportunity for its members to expand their musical skills, make new friends, and give back to the community.

The Milton Choristers are committed to enhancing the knowledge and appreciation of choral music in its members and in the Milton community. It offers a musical scholarship for youth and an annual musical workshop open to the community. We perform two concerts annually, often featuring guest soloists and



Helen Dietz is the President of the Board of the Milton Choristers. As the choir librarian, she enjoys networking with other choirs throughout Ontario.

musicians, and also perform at numerous events, especially during the holidays at the Milton District Hospital and senior's residences and nursing homes. The public can also see the choir carolling at Troy's Toy Drive and at the Winter Street Festival.

The group is administered by a volunteer executive board which is elected annually and the choir benefits from the expertise and talents of our entire membership to make each season successful. If you live in the Halton region and like to sing, the Milton Choristers are always accepting new members.

*For more information,
please visit
www.miltonchoristers.com*



PASSING THE BATON: AN EXCITING TRANSITION SEASON FOR GUELPH CHAMBER CHOIR

by Brenda Lewis

As Gerald Neufeld, founding conductor of the 38-year-old Guelph Chamber Choir (GCC) phases out his role, the choir's search for a new conductor, a carefully-planned process by the choir's Board of Directors over the past two years, has culminated in the selection of two very fine guest conductors from 27 applicants for the position of Artistic Director: Patrick Murray and Charlene Pauls.

Patrick Murray will begin the 2018–2019 concert series on November 3, 2018 with a program featuring Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostris* for two violins, continuo, soloists and choir. In combining this work with music by young composers such as Matthew Emery and one of his own compositions, Patrick shows his skill with conducting both early music and contemporary music.

Patrick is completing his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting at University of Illinois having achieved a Master of Music in choral conducting at Yale where he was assistant conductor of the Yale Camerata. He is the conductor of the University Chorus at University of Illinois and has had conducting internships with the Toronto Children's Chorus, the Grand Philharmonic (Kitchener-Waterloo), and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Patrick is also a composer with numerous choral and chamber music premieres to his credit. Learn more about Patrick at: www.patrickmurraymusic.net



Charlene Pauls will conduct a concert on February 16, 2019 which features Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. Charlene, who has performed with the GCC on two occasions as a soprano soloist, brings her expertise and experience to the group as a gifted soprano with many years of experience conducting community choirs and youth choirs.

She is the Artistic Director of London Pro Musica Choir, a long-standing and very active community chorus of fifty voices. As well, Charlene is Associate Artistic Director of the Oakville Choir for Children and Youth where she directs Raise Her Voice Chamber, an ambassadorial ensemble selected from within the organization's senior singers. She has led this group in award-winning performances at various national and international competitions. Learn more about Charlene at: www.charlenepails.com



Gerald Neufeld, outgoing Artistic Director

With input from choir members, the search committee will recommend one of these two candidates to the Board of Directors to begin planning for the 2019–2020 concert series as the Artistic Director of this choir, which has earned a national and international reputation for excellence.

Retiring Artistic Director Gerald Neufeld states: “As the outgoing Artistic Director, I am delighted by the thorough process by which a future conductor is being chosen. The choir closes this year in a very healthy financial position. It is the careful management of past and present administrators, together with the Board of Directors, that will enable the choir to flourish under a new Artistic Director.”

Visit the Guelph Chamber Choir website at www.guelph-chamberchoir.ca for complete concert season details and updated information as this intriguing new season unfolds!



Brenda Lewis is in her ninth season as Guelph Chamber Choir's Concert Promotion Coordinator. She is also a publicist for international touring artists and community organizations, and is an acclaimed jazz vocalist.



TORONTO CHILDREN'S CHORUS CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY



by Carol Stairs

The Toronto Children's Chorus Training Choirs and Main Choir perform "Wairua Tapu Tau Mai Ra", a New Zealand Maori blessing composed by Bub Wehi. (Toronto Centre for the Arts, May 5, 2018.) Photo credit: Bonnie O'Sullivan

In May 1978, music teacher Jean Ashworth Bartle gathered the 49 choristers from her Howard Public School and Kingsway-Lambton United Church choirs to begin rehearsing the "Waltz of the Snowflakes" from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. Andrew Davis had invited her to form a children's choir to perform and record the work with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in October 1978, and also to sing Orff's *Carmina Burana* the following February. After these thrilling experiences, the choristers continued to sing together, and the Toronto Children's Chorus (TCC) was born! (Since 1978, the TCC has performed with the TSO on 45 occasions.)

On May 5, 2018 over 300 choristers aged 5 to 17 filled the Toronto Centre for the Arts with song to celebrate the choir's 40th anniversary. Guests included the

TCC's Distinguished Honorary Patron Elizabeth Dowdswell, O.C., O.Ont., Lieutenant Governor of Ontario;



Artistic Director Elise Bradley (L) and Founder/Conductor Laureate Jean Ashworth Bartle at the 40th Anniversary concert reception, May 5, 2018. Photo credit: Bonnie O'Sullivan



Founding members of the Toronto Children's Chorus, from Howard Public School and Kingsway-Lambton United Church choirs; conductor Jean Ashworth Bartle (R). 1978.

TCC Founder and Conductor Laureate Jean Ashworth Bartle, C.M., O.Ont., and her accompanist of 29 years, Ruth Watson Henderson; Inuit singer/songwriter and recording artist Susan Aglukark, O.C.; original chorister Martha Spears; and several founding families.

This season marks Elise Bradley's 11th year as artistic director of the Toronto Children's Chorus. A passionate musician and educator, award-winning conductor, and internationally respected adjudicator and clinician,

Ms. Bradley was recently honoured to be named a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for her services to music in her homeland and in Canada. Her dynamic artistic staff includes Assistant Artistic Director Matthew Otto; Associate Conductors Carole Anderson, Judith Bean, Louise Lui and Linda Song; KinderNotes Director Kim Kendrick; Vocal Consultant Dr. Darryl Edwards; Choreographer Jennifer Swan; and accompanists Helen Becqué, Geoffrey Conquer, Lara Dodds-Eden, Joy Lee, Marjorie Wiens, Heather Williams, and Jai Eun Yoo.

Though unable to attend the 40th anniversary concert, TCC Honorary Patron Sir Andrew Davis sent this congratulatory message: "Little did I imagine, when I asked Jean Ashworth Bartle to provide a children's chorus for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra recording of the complete Nutcracker ballet, that this group would expand into the extraordinarily wide-ranging ensemble that is the Toronto Children's Chorus of today. It has been an enormous pleasure for me to witness this growth and, not only to work with them on many occasions but indeed, to compose two works for them. I send my heartfelt congratulations, supremely confident that the future of the TCC under the inspired leadership of Elise Bradley will only go on to greater heights. Here's to the next 40 years!"



Carol Stairs, Manager, Artistic Administration, has been a TCC staff member for 24 years, working since 1994 with Founder Jean Ashworth Bartle and, since 2007, with Artistic Director Elise Bradley.

VILLAGE VOICES

CELEBRATES

30 Years

AS MARKHAM'S COMMUNITY CHOIR

by Donna Shen, Brigitte Sopher, and Deborah Young

In September, Village Voices will begin its 30th anniversary season! Village Voices community choir was formed in 1989 by friends who loved to sing. In fact, we have one member who has been with us for the entire 30 years...Karen Ryan! Our celebration of this milestone will be spectacular and will be including past alumni to join us in song.

A non-auditioned, not-for-profit, SATB community choir, Village Voices' 50+ members love to sing and perform a wide range of music genres. Our major concerts are held at Christmas and in May. As part of our outreach program, we share our music with senior residences in our community. Following the performance, we have an old fashioned sing-along. Our members enjoy these as much as our audience does!

Village Voices is directed by our exceptional choral conductor and most talented pianist, Oksana Vignan. Her extensive education and varied experience has allowed Village Voices to expand our repertoire and musical abilities. Oksana also serves as Music Director for Men of Note and Christ Church Anglican Stouffville music ministry. In addition, Oksana is a music teacher for the Toronto District School Board.

Our choir is also fortunate to have as an accompanist the accomplished pianist, Robert Graham, a Toronto-based Canadian-Australian pianist, conductor of Resa's Pieces choir, vocal coach, singer with The Fairest and Best, and award-winning songwriter. The list goes on for both of them! They are quite a pair, whether performing amazing piano duets or providing memorable moments of levity with their humorous banter.

When funds are available, other vocal professionals are invited to work with the choir to sharpen our members' choral skills. We are very grateful to Choirs Ontario for assisting with funding these events.

Come join Village Voices for our special 30th season! We learn, we sing, we laugh, we socialize during a cheerful break/snack time, and then we learn and sing and laugh again! We're looking for more voices in all sections but men's voices are especially welcome. We are always looking for men! We rehearse on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 – 10:00 p.m. at Unionville Presbyterian Church (600 Village Parkway North, Unionville). Our season extends from September to June.

More information is available by emailing info@villagevoiceschoir.ca



Brigitte Sopher is a retired French Immersion teacher and school principal, who enjoys nature and the arts. Her passions are painting and singing.

Donna Shen is a retired music teacher and was a concert flautist. Donna has both sung and served in several executive positions with Village Voices.



An enthusiastic first soprano, Deborah Young is a retired special education teacher. She sits on the Village Voices board and provides choir rehearsal tracks.

INTRODUCING:

Women of Song

by Kathy Salata

The Duet Club of Hamilton's 2017–2018 concert series featured its newly renamed 30–voice chorus, Women of Song. The new chorus name was the result of a vote that was held at the Club's Annual General Meeting in May 2017. Women of Song is directed by Stéphane Potvin and accompanied by Dr. Erika Reiman.

This busy choir has just completed a year of successful choral performances throughout Hamilton, including an entertaining and inspiring annual choral concert with guest choirs Sir William Osler Elementary School Glee Club as well as Komenci and Esplori from the Hamilton Children's Choir. Janice Young, president of the Duet Club, presented the Sir William Osler Elementary School Glee Club with the Rhena McIlroy Scholarship for choral excellence. The Sir William Osler Elementary School Glee Club also won the Junior Vocal category in the CBC Music Class Challenge 2017.

The Duet Club was founded in 1889, making it the longest-standing women's musical club in Canada. Voice, piano, instrumental, and choral scholarships are presented annually to talented young musicians and the chorus provides women an opportunity to sing in an organized group. The Duet Club Women's Chorus originally formed about 100 years ago. After many years it was disbanded but was re-established in 1967 to celebrate Canada's Centennial.

The next concert season brings more excitement for Women of Song as they celebrate The Duet Club of Hamilton's 130th year with wonderful music and special events. You can find more information about the group by visiting www.duetclub.ca

