



Choirs  
Ontario

# DYNAMIC

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# DYNAMIC

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Check out our Choirs Ontario Events Calendar

# HERE



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# *Dear friends of Choirs Ontario,*

Wherever you are in Ontario, we hope that you are staying safe during this winter season. We are finally getting more sunlight, spring is just around the corner, and Choirs Ontario is budding with some exciting ideas!

First off, thanks to the unwavering dedication of our board member Gary Leung and CO managing director Elena Koneva, we will be launching Choirs Ontario's very first Preferred Partner Program (PPP) this spring as a new benefit to our members. Stay tuned and stay connected via our monthly e-news, website, Facebook and Instagram pages for more information!

We also have a "Save the Date" for all of you! Our Annual General Meeting will be on June 9th, 2019, featuring a workshop and performances by Mino Ode Kwewak N'Gamowak (Good Hearted Women Singers) from Waterloo. Led by Kelly Laurila, Theresa McGregor, and Hope Engel, the group will share their experiences and insights of singing with Settler choirs, express their thoughts

regarding song and cultural appropriation and how Settler choirs can engage in meaningful and respectful singing exchanges with Indigenous peoples.

The workshop, Marketing for Choirs with Anne Longmore, will be held in Windsor on April 13 and will be transmitted via Facebook live. This presentation will take participants through key marketing concepts for choirs and provide them with best practices along with practical tools and resources to help build an effective marketing program with limited time and budget.

Last but not the least, another friendly reminder! The Ontario Youth Choir application deadline is quickly approaching: March 22, 2019! We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Vicki St. Pierre as the 2019 OYC conductor.

***2019 is off to an exciting start!  
Best of luck to all of you in this new year!***

Sincerely,  
Elaine Choi

*Hello, colleagues,*

It seems like the winter months will never end this year, but before you know it, we will be celebrating spring concerts and those winter jackets and boots will be packed away for another year. Hang in there!

After working my way through the materials in this issue of *Dynamic*, I continue to be struck by the amount of dedication and hard work we all commit to our craft. We may be separated geographically across our large province, but the passion and commitment to choral music is abundant no matter where we call home.

Melissa Lalonde and Rosanne Simunovic bring us to Timmins in the first feature article of this issue, sharing experiences of collaboration and camaraderie. Hats off to Laurie Evan Fraser and the Upper Canada Choristers who celebrate 25 years of music-making together in their article "How Can I Keep From Singing?" Joanne Culley reminds us all that music-making and skill



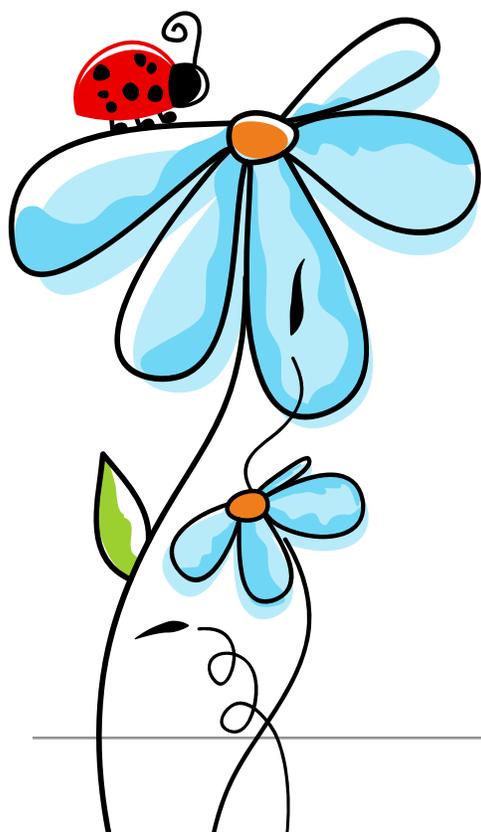
## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

building doesn't just happen from September to June, and opportunities such as Lake Field Music camp keep us going through the summer months.

Other updates include programming suggestions from dedicated volunteers Eileen Baldwin, Linda Beaupré, and Karen Freedman, exciting collaborations from Chorus Niagara Children's Choir, a story of the power of community from Canadian Orpheus Male Choir, a tale of success from the Arnprior Community Choir, and much, much more!

Thank you for your continued support of *Dynamic* and all the best for the concerts ahead!

Cheers,  
Mark Ramsay



# COL

*Choirs Ontario Library*

## NEWS AND UPDATES



*Linda Beaupré and Eileen Baldwin*

Eileen Baldwin, Linda Beaupré, and Karen Freedman have been busy at the library adding new donations to the online catalogue. There are too many new entries to list below, but here are a few titles that you might like to consider to fill in gaps in your spring programming...or to programme ahead for the fall season! Canadian composers are marked with an asterisk, and all pieces are with piano unless otherwise marked. Current quantities are given after each title, but recommendations of other sources where you can borrow more are available for many titles. Please forgive the mixed-up headings...our favourites seemed to fall into these various categories!

### UNISON AND TWO-PART FOR TREBLES AND WOMEN'S CHOIRS:

A Spoonful of Sugar (from Mary Poppins; arr. By Cristi Cary Miller), SA. 44 cc.

I Think I See the Animals (Dadee Reilly), unison (Christmas, a charming song for young children). 24 cc.

Island Santa (\*Connie Kaldor, arr. \*Zwozdesky), SA (This is SO much fun! Calypso, seasonal). 37 cc.

Long, Long Ago (\*Mark Sirett), unison. (Christmas...a very gentle, sweet song for young children or massed children of all ages). 61 cc.

Seven Feet of Snow, (S. Albrecht). 2-part. (A novelty song for winter with suggested movement). 26 cc.

The Birds (B. Britten) Unison. (A classic... on a poem by Hilaire Belloc). 45 cc.

The Robin (\*Ruth Watson Henderson), unison with flute (or oboe, or clarinet)

and cello....no piano. (A beautiful, evocative Christmas piece for advanced trebles or women's choir.)

When Santa Claus Gets Your Letter (Johnny Marks, arr. C.C. Miller), SA. (Very easy 2-part....and a sure winner!) 62 cc.

### SSA AND SSAA FOR TREBLES AND WOMEN'S CHOIRS:

A Girl's Garden (from Frostiana, by Randall Thompson). SAA (but mostly in unison). 52 cc.

Ave Verum Corpus (\*Eleanor Daley), SSAA a cap. 44 cc.

Carols of French Canada (arr. \*Louis Applebaum), SSAA. (Christmas; this is a great piece for an advanced treble choir or women's choir; all carols are in French) 21 cc.

Garden Song. (Dave Mallett, arr. Mac Huff) SSA (You will likely recognize this charming song... "Inch by inch, row by row....". The setting is delightful.) 53 cc.

Brightest and Best (arr. Malcolm Archer) SSA (If you do not already know Malcolm Archer's songs and arrangements, you want to...!) 19 cc.

Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep (Laura Farnell) SSA with piano and optional violin (a beautiful new setting for women or advanced trebles; listen to St. Cecilia Singers in The Big Sing on Youtube) 22 cc.

Le Train d'hiver (\*Marie-Claire Saindon) SSA a cap (Challenging and rewarding... and such a terrific piece!) 35 cc.

Hanukkah Dedication (Eddleman), SSA (also not hard...two good melodies that act as partners, plus a third easy harmony part....a lot of fun!) . 27 cc.

I Sing of a Maiden (\*Eleanor Daley), SSAA a cap. 14 cc.

Ma Navu (Spivak, arr. B. Wolfman), SSAA. (A beautiful setting in Hebrew of the text, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of peace...") 21 cc.

Psalm 100 (René Clausen), SSA (This is a terrific, very energetic piece of mixed



## MIXED VOICES: VINTAGE DOO-WOP, BROADWAY AND POPULAR MUSIC

Wake Up Little Susie (arr. Don Besig), SAB. Released in 1957 by the Everly Brothers. 24 cc.

Happy Together (arr. Lojeski), SATB. Released in 1967 by The Turtles. 12 cc.

Summertime, Summertime (arr. Althouse), SAB. Released in 1958 by The Jammies. 21 cc.

Trickle, Trickle, (arr. Steve Zegree), SATB. Released in 1979 by Manhattan Transfer. 21 cc.

Operator (arr. Kirby Shaw), SATB. Released in 1975 by Manhattan Transfer. 30 cc.

Nice Work if You Can Get It (Gershwin, arr. Gilpin), SATB. First recorded by Tommy Dorsey in 1937. 36 cc.

Don't Get Around Much Anymore (Duke Ellington, arr. Althouse). SATB. A jazz standard, words added 1942. 30 cc.

Nella Fantasia (Ennio Morricone). SATB. (Called "classical crossover" on Wikipedia; released by Sarah Brightman in 1998.) 60 cc.

It's a Grand Night for Singing (Rodgers & Hammerstein), SATB, (From the 1945 movie musical, "State Fair.") 71 cc.

## MIXED VOICES CHRISTMAS AND SEASONAL:

Christmas Lullaby, \*Graeme Wearmouth. SATB (This is a very simple, beautiful melody for soloist and SATB choir. It will work well with a soprano or alto soloist, or a group of children on the melody.) 61 cc.

Christmas Song of the 14th Century (arr. \*Willan), SATB organ (but it works beautifully a cappella also), 23 cc.

Festival Deck the Hall (arr. Althouse), SATB a cap. (Medium challenge, jazzy and fun) 40 cc.

Golden Vase Carol (Vedro, with English text by \*Jon Washburn), SATB a cap (a charming, light English carol; not difficult. Listen to Sursum Corda on Youtube.)

Winter Dreams (Carl Strommen), SAB (a gentle, melodic song expressing a wish to come home for Christmas). 14 cc.

*And finally.....looking for a water or sea theme? Here are some ideas in various voicings:*

In Time of Silver Rain (Audrey Snyder), SSA. (A beautiful, sensitive song by this fine writer, expressing the theme of renewal. Listen on YouTube to Conroe High School treble choir.) 31 cc.

Sick of the Songs of the Sea (C.A. Bennett). TTBB. (Yes, that really is the title! Your men can finish off a set of sea songs with this!) 21 cc.

The Drunken Sailor (arr. Emily Crocker). SA. (Very easy, fun arrangement....good for any age.) 21 cc.

The Gospel Ship (Kirby Shaw, using an original melody and "Michael row the boat ashore"). 2-part. 75 cc.

Waters Ripple and Flow, Czech folk, arr. Cristi Cary Miller, SA (Themes of homeland, freedom; wonderful for a small group or massed group). 115 cc.

When the Tide Goes Out (\*Brian Robertson, arr. \*Loomer), SA. (So much fun for all ages and voices....calypso style. Do you know any steel pan players? Bring them in!). 46 cc.

Wood River (\*Connie Kaldor, arr. \*Zwozdesky), SATB. 50 cc.

Wood River (\*Connie Kaldor, arr. \*Zwozdesky), SSA. 17 cc.

metres for two pianos or piano duo with instrumental ensemble of mixed woodwinds and percussion). 78 cc.

Round and Round the Dreydl Spins (Edelman), SSAA (canonic....not hard...with a great build to the end). 25 cc.

Where Have All the Flowers Gone (Seeger, arr. \*Sirett), SSA. 26 cc.

## MIXED VOICE CHOIRS (SAB & SATB) GENERAL & SACRED:

Tambur (Paix, arr. Bardos), SATB a cap (a rousing challenge piece, fun to sing and fun for the audience). 30 cc.

Stay With Us (Egil Hovland), SATB. (Sacred, beautiful, warm piece. Listen to a recording of the St. Olaf Choir on Youtube.)

Bright Morning Star (Kentucky Appalachian folksong, arr. Fred Squatrito) SATB a cap. (Sacred) 39 cc.

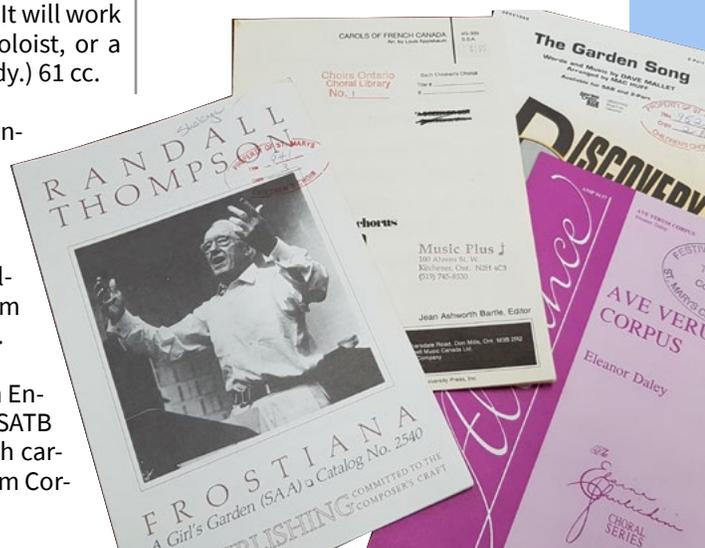
If Music Be the Food of Love (Dickau), SATB. (Lush, wonderful piece.) 36 cc.

Hold On! (Spiritual, arr. Jester Hairston). SATB a cap. 30 cc.

Williams Lake Stampede (\*Alan Moberg, arr. \*Larry Nickel). SATB. (This is 'way too much fun! It is fantastic with a small or a massed choir.) 35 cc.

The Auctioneer (Van Dyke and Black), SATB. (Having a fundraiser with an auction? You need this song! Your singers will sound like auctioneers—really!) 30 cc.

King's Singers, The 25th Anniversary Jubilee Collection. SATB. (This book of King's Singers arrangements is a classic collection of 12 a cappella arrangements. Look up the list online at kingsingers.com.) 36 cc.



**THE** Ontario Arts Council (OAC) announced Charlene Pauls as the recipient of the 2018 Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting. Charlene is the associate artistic director of the Oakville Choir for Children and Youth (OCCY) and conducts its Raise Her Voice chamber choir, which promotes empowerment for young female leaders. Charlene is an advocate for choral music as an agent of social change. In addition to her work with Raise Her Voice, she leads the Mosaic Music Collective – an intergenerational, multicultural community choir that aims to break down barriers through global music.

Along with these roles, Charlene is also the music director at Oakville's Anglican Church of the Incar-

nation. Later this season, she will be appearing as a guest conductor with London's Chor Amica and the Guelph Chamber Choir.

Charlene's skills as a choral conductor have been recognized at the World Choir Games and at Podium, Canada's national choral festival. She is often called on for her expertise as a choral clinician with groups across Canada. A champion of new Canadian music, Charlene is actively involved in developing, commissioning, and promoting works by emerging and established Canadian composers. Charlene holds a doctorate in vocal performance from the University of Toronto, with a focus on vocal pedagogy. She also has degrees in piano, voice, and religious studies from McGill University, the University of Manitoba, and the Canadian Mennonite University.



OAKVILLE'S  
**CHARLENE  
PAULS**  
AWARDED  
**THE 2018  
LESLIE BELL  
PRIZE**  
FOR CHORAL  
CONDUCTING

*This article is reprinted with permission from The Ontario Arts Council.*

The jury was unanimous in its decision, stating:  
*“We are very impressed by Charlene, a conductor who leads her choirs to a very high level of achievement. She is a vibrant and effective community builder, as well as an excellent musician and choral educator. We also applaud her strong commitment to Canadian music and the way she weaves social consciousness into her work.”*

The \$10,000 Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting is awarded every two years to an emerging professional conductor who is a resident of Ontario and works with a professional, semi-professional or community choir. The prize is made possible by a financial contribution from the Leslie Bell Scholarship Fund and the OAC. The scholarship fund, administered by OAC, was established in 1973 by the Leslie Bell Singers and friends of the late Dr. Leslie Bell. The winner was chosen through a nominating and adjudication process managed by the OAC. The jury comprised Teri Dunn (Toronto), Robert Fillion (Ottawa) and Dean Jobin-Bevans (Orillia). Previous winners include Mark Vuorinen (2016), Rachel Rensink-Hoff (2014) and Jamie Hillman (2012).



“If you’re going to take on something like this, I don’t care if it’s Timmins, it’s got to be good,” said Rosanne (Giallornardo) Simunovic as we sat, in true northern style, in Tim Horton’s avoiding the bone chilling minus 40 degrees outside. Rosanne shared with me her vision and experience of choral music as tailored to Northern Ontario. (She also told of how she convinced original Canadian cast members of Andrew Lloyd Weber’s *Cats* to come to perform in Timmins year after year, but we’ll come back to that.)

Rosanne has long contributed to the development of the arts in Timmins, Ontario through initiatives like the Timmins Symphony Orchestra, the Timmins Arts Council, and her own private teaching studio. She is noted for her work as artistic director of the Timmins Youth Singers (TYS), the TYS Alumnus Choir, and the Timmins Concert Singers (TCS). Originally conceived so that youth would have somewhere to further develop their voices and musicianship, the Timmins Youth Singers consisted of individuals (SATB) aged roughly 13 through 20 and enjoyed a solid 24 years of music making.

In a North that is often more than just geographically isolated from the South, Rosanne’s ability to bring the musical world to Timmins as well as to bring Timmins artists out into the world by means of choral work was remarkable. Many TYS and TCS choristers were selected to participate in the Canadian premiere of Andrew Lloyd Weber’s *Requiem*, in the International Choral Festival in Toronto, with the Scarborough Philharmonic, and to



# “I DON’T CARE IF IT’S TIMMINS. IT’S GOT TO BE GOOD!”:

IN CONVERSATION WITH  
**ROSANNE SIMUNOVIC**

by Melissa Lalonde

sing the national anthem at the Toronto SkyDome (Rogers Centre) for a Jays game. Rosanne credits her choristers: “The talent was breathtaking. All the students studied both piano and voice and focused solely on piano, voice, and choir.”

Regardless of their activity, the local artistic climate could at times be quite challenging for these choirs: “In Timmins Ontario, audiences won’t always come out to hear only classical music, but programmed with other genres, they may come to appreciate some of the classical pieces. I always sort of visualized more than just a choir standing on the stage, but then I wanted the choir to be excellent as well and diverse in its genres. Choirs can be very genre specific and I think it’s because sometimes

tists who never had the chance to perform the songs they loved on their own were very grateful.”

Rosanne’s love for theatre music shows in her approach to choral art: “I would bring all of these ideas home and think ‘Ok, what can I do in Timmins?’ I was a creative child. I would always picture things in lights and stories. My father ran Henry’s Pharmacy. His artform was window displays. I think that’s where I first learned how to display things on stage, helping him. Everyone helps when you come from a good family and a good circle of friends.”

Speaking of support systems, when asked if she ever felt professionally isolated while working in the North Rosanne shares: “It

here. They were wonderful and refused to let me quit in challenging times. My students were reinforced as well when they heard from the professionals at Ontario Youth Choir (OYC) that they were part of a good choir, the TYS. They could come home afterwards and be proud. Many would make friends during OYC and we would bring them up and fill in the gaps for concerts. Some would return to Timmins every year.”

If there is anything I take away from my conversation with Rosanne, it is the possibility and essentiality of growing and valuing meaningful artistic connections, within the Northern regions of the province as well as outside of them: “Time marches on and you start to lose these precious people who are part of your career. They touch your soul. They were supportive. That was a big thing. They didn’t come up, leave and never reach out again. They kept in touch. You can’t forget people like that. They were very meaningful. As successful as they were, they were very giving and humble. That, I’ll never forget as long as I live.” And how important to recognize, to not forget those who have paved the way for future artistic life in this land of frost-bitten Tim Horton’s coffee shops!

## «I WOULD BRING ALL OF THESE IDEAS HOME AND THINK ‘OK, WHAT CAN I DO IN TIMMINS?»

the conducting repertoire is so rigid in what it calls serious music.”

Shifts in community interests also acted as obstacles to chorister recruitment and audience attendance. This is where *Cats* comes in. “We were having an anniversary concert coming up, and I wondered if I could snag a couple of cast members from *Cats* to come up since it was so huge in Canada at the time – and I did. Rum Tum Tugger (Greg Bond) and Skimbleshanks the Railway Cat (Larry Herbert). Together they were dynamite and we did excerpts from *Grease*, *Cats*, *Godspell*, *A Chorus Line* ... that was a turning point and I started bringing in more performers from Stratford, from *Phantom*. It brought the crowds and these ar-

often felt really lonely. Thank God for my husband and my daughters who were amazing! I remember going through a bit of a down time with the choir once and receiving a phone call from a colleague in Southern Ontario. He said: ‘We’re having a choral conference and I need you down here.’ His phone call and that conference were jump starts for me.”

A past Ontario Choral Federation (now Choirs Ontario) board member, conductor of provincial junior and teen choir camps, and Chair of the Festivals Committee, Rosanne credits her colleagues in Southern Ontario as being powerful lifelines: “The support from those conductors was amazing and almost more than I received



Melissa Lalonde is a music educator and choral conductor based in Timmins Ontario. She is adjunct in student affairs at the Université de Hearst, Timmins campus. She

holds a B.Mus.Ed. and B.Ed. from Western University and a M.Mus. Performance in choral conducting from the University of Toronto.



**BRAVING A DARK,** snowy evening in January 1994 – Toronto’s coldest month on record – two women met in donated space at Upper Canada College to share a vision for a community choir. This choir would bring the excitement of choral music to everyone, including those unable to attend or afford a live performance, while at the same time holding aloft the goal of musical excellence.

The Upper Canada Choristers (UCC) gave their first community concert later that year in the George Hees Lobby of Toronto’s Sunnybrook Hospital. Now the Choristers share their varied repertoire in the community by singing at 15–20 events annually.

On this the 25th anniversary under the leadership of these two founders -- Artistic Director and Conductor Laurie Evan Fraser and President Jacqui Atkin – the Upper Canada Choristers have been faithful to that initial vision of community service and musical mentoring to enthusiastic people of all musical skills, abilities and backgrounds, instilling a life-long love of music.

# HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING?:

*The Upper Canada  
Choristers celebrate  
25 years*

by Laurie Evan Fraser

Today, the Upper Canada Choristers is a thriving mixed-voice community choir with a long history of collaboration with international choirs and local children’s choirs. Performing with a wide variety of guest artists, the choir has built a diverse repertoire and continues its commitment to musical excellence. Cante-mos, formed in 2009 with a nucleus of singers from Venezuela and Colombia, is the

auditioned Latin American chamber ensemble of the Choristers.

The Upper Canada Choristers prepare three full programs annually.

The winter concert in December typically features seasonal music and a carol sing-along. The choir often sings larger works such as Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, Charpentier’s *Messe de Minuit pour Noël*, Britten’s *Ceremony of Carols*, *Navidad Nuestra* by Ariel Ramirez, and Jenkin’s *Stella Natalis*.

Spring program themes vary greatly: from *Noye’s Fludde* by Benjamin Britten (complete with children playing recorders and costumed as birds); *The Armed Man* by Karl Jenkins accompanied by the BBC film

footage; Our Home and Native Lands, a multi-cultural mosaic of music from the cultures represented within the choir; to Turn the World Around – Songs of Hope and Rebellion.

Each choral year ends in June with a cabaret-style strawberry social. The Choristers sing show tunes, and stage solo and small ensemble performances that have featured music by Gershwin, Gilbert and Sullivan, Cole Porter, and Richard Rogers. Cante-mos typically sings pieces from Latin American folkloric repertoire.

Spring hats, costumes, finger foods, a wide range of beverages and, of course, strawberry shortcake contribute to the informal and festive atmosphere, which also serves as the choir members' wrap party until the following September.

Looking back over the span of three decades, UCC has expanded its musical range through collaborations with choirs presenting diverse repertoire from a wide variety of cultures.

The Choristers have sung as part of The Big Sing at Roy Thomson Hall, at Koerner Hall with the Hong Kong Children's Symphony Orchestra, at a memorial service for the President of McMaster University, and at Nuit Blanche. They have also performed in collaborations with choirs from Japan (Seiyukai) the United States (University of West Virginia Concert Choir) and Italy (Coro Anthem).

As part of Holocaust Education Week, the Choristers collaborated with the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir and Temple Sinai Ensemble Choir to give two performances of a concert, Voices of the Whirlwind, a song cycle based on lyrics written by children from the Warsaw Ghetto.

In 2004, the Choristers had the privilege of working with the composer Stephen Chatman for the world premiere of his composition "Voices of Earth" with poetry by poet of Confederation, Archibald Lampman. The choir has also commissioned new works by Mark Sirett, David Thomlinson, Stephen Hatfield, and César Alejandro Carrillo.

Community service has always been a cornerstone of the choir's mandate, and audiences include

children with serious illnesses, early Alzheimer residents in special facilities, and seniors in long-term care residences.

"Every community concert brings a little surprise. It is always a privilege to listen to the reminiscences of veterans; or witness spontaneous dancing and shouts of joy, or sometimes just quiet tears." – UCC alto

Christmas concerts are the most popular. Armed with percussion instruments and carol song books, the Choristers have yet to be stumped by any request!

One Christmas Day, a small group of Choristers visited a dementia ward in the Toronto area. Accompanied by residence staff, the Choristers went from room to room singing carols for and with the residents. One gentleman in particular stood out as he sang along with great clarity and authority. Thinking he was a staff member, the Choristers were surprised to see him led back to his room in the lockdown ward. Prior to him stepping forward to sing along, the staff had considered him non-verbal.

There is a common misconception that senior audiences only enjoy a narrow range of repertoire; UCC's experience proves that older audiences are far more savvy and enjoy a wide-range of musical styles from many cultures. In recognition of this, the Choristers are preparing a community concert year-round Song Book, which will include a wide range of music in the public domain: including standards, spirituals, opera, world music, and folk songs.

The Choristers also recognize the importance of young voices having the opportunity to sing in a proper performance hall, with passionate amateur and professional singers and instrumentalists. This is particularly true for young boys who rarely have first-hand encouragement of male role models in choral music. UCC upholds an ongoing commitment to mentor young singers, in part by regularly inviting a children's choir to perform.

This has led to joint projects with numerous school choirs including the Institute for Child Study, Davisville Public School, Montrose Public

School, Swansea Public School, Maurice Cody Public School, Allenby Public School, and École secondaire catholique Saint-Frère-André.

“It’s a real pleasure for me to sing with my daughter and her choir. And it is a remarkable thing – here we are, 100 people ranging in age from 9 to 69 years, standing together, using our voices and our hearts and our minds to make a wonderful sound!” – UCC soprano

The clear, high voices of children blending together with the deep mature voices of the adults create a richly-textured and particularly evocative sound. The adults learn as much as the children. Singing with children is a visceral reminder that singing is something to be enjoyed from public school through retirement.

*“As my child wisely pointed out to me, singing is fun! The joy of singing is what brings the adults of the Upper Canada Choristers together. Life is complicated, and singing gives us ease from our worries, lifts our spirits and provides us a unique way of celebrating together.”* – UCC bass

On May 10, 2019, the Upper Canada Choristers will celebrate 25 continuous years of joyous singing in a concert, *How Can I Keep from Singing?* at Toronto’s Metropolitan United Church. They will premiere a new work commissioned to celebrate this milestone, *Teasdale Love Songs*, a set of six songs by Canadian composer Stephen Chatman, setting the love poems of Sara Teasdale. Other concert repertoire will include, *Five Hebrew Love Songs* by Eric Whitacre and a cappella arrangements of songs by Lennon and McCartney. Children from the Maurice Cody Junior Public School will perform solo selections as well as singing together with the Choristers.

Cantemos will perform love songs from Argentina and Uruguay and a song commissioned especially for the ensemble composed by Venezuelan composer,

César Alejandro Carrillo, setting the poetry of Cantemos tenor, Jacinto Salcedo.

Capping off this quarter century of song, UCC then travels to Japan to share our model of community service with Japanese choirs in concerts at seniors’ residences and activity centres. The choir will perform at a music festival and re-establish contact with Seiyukai (our guests in Toronto in 2008) in a joint concert in Ageo City in the outskirts of Tokyo. As an added bonus, Choristers will have the chance to reconnect with alumni now living in Japan.

Looking forward, the future is rich with possibilities. The Choristers continue to enlarge the scope of their community work, sharing their music with more and more diverse audiences. They pursue the mastery of a wide variety of repertoire in many languages, honouring the rich cultural mosaic represented in both the choir membership and in the broader community.

As Arthur O’Shaughnessy said so aptly, “We are the music makers and the dreamers of dreams... we, with our dreaming and singing, ceaseless and sorrowless we!”

For more information on the Upper Canada Choristers, please visit

[www.uppercanadachoristers.org](http://www.uppercanadachoristers.org)



Laurie Evan Fraser is the Founding Artistic Director and Conductor of the Upper Canada Choristers and Cantemos. She is a composer, adjudicator, singer, and collaborative pianist.

# BOOST

## *Your Vocal Skills*



by Joanne Culley

## AT LAKE FIELD MUSIC CAMP

Lead and Backup Singing  
coached by Gillian Stecyk.  
Photo credit: Andrew Wolf

Friends Vivian Hu and Lori Hazelwood sing in a community choir during the year and have attended Lake Field Music camp twice to improve their singing, try different musical genres and have some fun, like learning new dance moves in the Lead and Backup Singing class.

Hu says, “I also took Choir for All, Vocal Technique, and Jazz Choir. I especially like the show tunes we sing. Next year I want to try the Spirituals Choir. I’ve made so many new friends.”

Hazelwood says, “With two young kids at home, that week is a break for me to focus on music. Last year in addition to Vocal Technique, I also took Drum Kit, Beginner Gui-

tar, and African Drumming. Learning about rhythms and reading music have really helped me with my singing.”

Both say that not only do they learn from the excellent instructors, but also from their fellow students, whom they find to be encouraging and non-judgemental.

Dale Hensley sings in an auditioned choir and has been attending the camp for seven years. She usually focuses on masterclasses and ensembles such as the Chamber Choir and the A Cappella group, but also took Ear Training and Sight-Singing classes last year. “My goals are to overcome stage fright so that I can sing solos, and

to be accomplished enough to sing without accompaniment,” says Hensley. “The camp has such a fabulous faculty who are incredibly talented, yet humble. They’ve helped me to realize that singing is complicated, that there are many things to keep in mind all at the same time: the lyrics, the notes, the harmonies, the tonalities, the voice.”

At home, Mikki Mendelsohn is in four classical choirs, including a World Fest choir that sang with Luciano Pavarotti. After attending the past three years, she has great praise for the camp. “I’ve had many voice teachers over the years, and the teachers at LFM camp are the best,” she says. “I stretch my-



Musical Theatre directed by Ellen Vesterdal performed a shortened version of *Brigadoon*. Photo credit: Andrew Wolf

self there by singing in different rhythms and styles, in classes such as Swing Sisters, Jazz Choir, and Musical Theatre, where I played the character Fiona in *Brigadoon*. The instructors are encouraging and supportive and they help you get out of your skin to conquer your nervousness. Gillian Stecyk, who teaches Vocal Technique, listens to each singer and gives pointers on how to improve, and our voices are better because of it.”

Doug Loweth, a baritone, has been coming to the camp for five years. During the year he’s in a church choir, as well as singing art songs and opera. “Sharing music with other people is a wonderful experience,” he says. “Camp provides an opportunity for me to expand my repertoire and try different genres of music from different eras, such as Musical Theatre and Jazz Choir. It’s a friendly place and once a performance is done it’s done, there’s no judgement about it.”

Andrew Wolf, LFM President, says, “The diversity of musical opportunities allows participants to create a personalized program with vo-

cal and/or instrumental classes. Everyone can share a common musical experience each morning with the Choir for All under the direction of Barry Peters, who has been teaching at the camp for over 25 years. The collegial atmosphere extends to the evening concerts where participants bring music to perform with others early in the week and the coached groups perform in concerts at the end of the week.”

The camp’s instrumental program includes a variety of workshops and ensembles ranging from chamber groups and jazz combos to wind and string ensembles and orchestra. Singers and instrumentalists can collaborate in Pop, Blues and New Orleans bands. Other classes allow participants to rest their primary interest and develop their listening or rhythm skills, or try a new instrument, such as ukulele, drums or handbells.

The faculty are all professionals, working as conductors, soloists, teachers, studio musicians, and as members of bands and choirs, most returning year after year because of the intensity of the experience.

Kristina Nøjd, a pianist and teacher, first attended LFM camp as a youth participant with her mother. She went on to study classical piano then jazz vocals and has now returned to accompany several ensembles including the World Music Choir and the Chamber Choir. “I was excited to return to camp as part of the faculty. There is more responsibility, but it has always been such an accepting and encouraging place,” she says.

Fern Lindzon, a pianist, singer, composer/arranger and teacher, conducted the Swing Sisters Choir

“When people get over their fear, it’s like bringing a key and unlocking their voices”

and taught Jazz Improvisation in her first time at LFM camp. She noticed that fear is often the primary challenge many people face when singing. “When people get over their fear, it’s like bringing a key and unlocking their voices,” says Lindzon. “To help overcome fear, I tell singers to get off the page, to memorize the music, and write out the lyrics to just glance at them now and then. The more famil-

iar you are with the material, the more comfortable you feel.” “I was blown away by the development and devotion of the students in my class, it’s so gratifying to teach them,” says Lindzon. “They help each other in class by singing back at each other. There is such a positive vibe.”

Ellen Vesterdal, a singer, choir director and teacher, taught Vocal Duets and conducted the Spirituals Choir last year at camp. “There is such a collegial atmosphere, with so much support among both the staff and students. A week is enough time to settle into a groove and try different approaches,” she says. “The students are keen and willing to leave their adult inhibitions at the door by doing wacky things to free their voices. I try to help them be more connected to their bodies, to improve their body awareness, by not singing from the throat up, but with the strong support of their abdominal muscles. They come with goals and are open to trying new things. It’s good to be shaken up, to get out of our little habits that sometimes get in the way when we sing.”

Vesterdal says that sometimes older learners have too high expectations for themselves. She recommends being kind to yourself as a beginner, as kind to yourself as you are to others.

Andrew Wolf says, “The shared experience of music camp has fostered many friendships and musical collaborations amongst the participants and the faculty. Participants have found new teachers, choirs and bands, and some small ensembles have continued to meet



*Swing Sisters choir conducted by Fern Lindzon. Photo credit: Andrew Wolf*

after camp. A group of singers from the 2017 camp were inspired to form the ‘Jazz Project,’ under the direction of Gillian Stecyk, to continue singing their favourite songs and even collaborated with an instrumental group to present a successful concert.”

Dale Hensley’s advice for those considering LFM camp is: “Try everything, don’t hold back, move outside your niche, and scare yourself.”

Established in 1977, Lake Field Music camp is a non-profit organization offering a full accommodation

retreat for adult amateur musicians from across Canada and beyond. The program for singers and instrumentalists consists of more than 50 ensembles and workshops in a variety of genres including classical, jazz, pop and world music.

The next camp will be August 11–18, 2019 at Lakefield College School, about 150 km northeast of Toronto. For

more information, please visit [www.lakefieldmusic.ca](http://www.lakefieldmusic.ca), email [info@lakefieldmusic.ca](mailto:info@lakefieldmusic.ca) or call 647-692-3463.



*Joanne Culley has enjoyed singing in many choirs and plays in the Friends in Music band. Her book, Love in the Air: Second World War Letters is available at [www.friesenpress.com](http://www.friesenpress.com).*

# Les concours de chorales... Qu'ose ça donner ?

par Le Collège des chefs de l'Alliance des Chorales du Québec

Que ce soit dans les sports, dans les arts, au travail et même entre ami, il semble que tout est compétitif. C'est même devenu un trait de personnalité. Êtes-vous compétitif ou non? Votre chorale devrait-elle participer à des concours? De toute façon : les concours... qu'ose ça donner ?

Il y a plusieurs bienfaits à la compétition pour votre chorale, pour le chef et pour les choristes. Que vous soyez « compétitif » ou pas... prenez la bonne décision, une décision qui pourrait changer l'expérience artistique de tous.

Les chorales de tous genres peuvent trouver un concours à leur image. Que ce soit au festivals de musique de votre communauté jusqu'aux grandes compétitions internationales, le choix est grand et chaque concours a ses bienfaits. Les chœurs qui participent à des concours devraient le faire pour de bonnes raisons. Donnez un nouveau souffle à votre chœur. Des objectifs en répétitions, de la découverte de nouveau répertoire, de la préparation pour un auditoire qui peut apprécier encore plus tous vos efforts, vous permettrez à votre chorale se dépasser. Peu importe le résultat en compétition, votre chorale aura une nouvelle corde à son arc, un sentiment de dépassement.

En tant que chef de chœur, il nous faut nous aussi se dépasser. On cherche de nouveaux ateliers, des rencontres, des cours pour avancer dans notre art. Les concours peuvent aussi servir à nous ressourcer

Whether in sport, in the arts, at work and even with friends, it seems that everything is competitive. It has even become a personality trait. Are you competitive or not? Should your choir participate in competitions? Nonetheless: choral competitions ... and what do they provide?

There are many benefits to competition for your choir, for the conductor, and for the singers. Whether you are «competitive» or not ... make the right decision, a decision that could change everyone's artistic experience. There is an abundance of choral festivals, and choirs of all kinds can find a contest that fits them. From

## Choral competitions... What is it ?

by Le Collège des chefs de l'Alliance des Chorales du Québec

music festivals in your community to major international competitions, the choice is great and each competition has its benefits. Choirs participating in competitions should do so for a good reason. Give a new breath to your choir; offer a new purpose for rehearsals; discover of new repertoire; prepare for an audience that will appreciate your efforts even more; let your choir surpass itself. No matter the result in competition, your choir will have a new string to its bow, a feeling of accomplishment.

As choir leaders, we also need to surpass ourselves. We are looking for new workshops, meetings, and courses to advance in our art. Competitions can also be used to rejuvenate ourselves. They push us towards the unknown, out of our comfort zone. The competitions can serve us as much in professional development as reassurance. On rehearsal nights, what better than to tell our choristers that there will be people who know and appreciate all the details of our work? It's time to work on the

er. Ils nous poussent vers l'inconnu, hors de notre zone de confort. Les concours peuvent nous servir autant pour nous développer que pour nous rassurer. Les soirs de répétitions, quoi de mieux que de pouvoir dire à nos choristes qu'il y aura des gens qui s'y connaissent et qui apprécieront tous les détails de notre travail. C'est le temps de travailler la sonorité, la justesse, la diction et la musicalité. Les commentaires reçus lors d'un concours sont inégalables. Ils pourraient vous permettre d'infirmer vos choix artistiques, de les justifier auprès des choristes et même à vous faire penser plus loin.

Vos choristes, les compétitifs tout comme les non-compétitifs, développeront de nouvelles habiletés individuelles et de groupes. Chacun reconnaîtra l'importance qu'il/elle apporte à l'ensemble lors de la préparation pour un concours. Durant la compétition les chanteurs ont la chance d'interpréter pour un auditoire non-conquis : des gens qui les apprécieront pour la qualité de leurs interprétations, pour ce qu'ils ont à donner. C'est tout autre chose pour le/la choriste que de se préparer et de chanter pour quelqu'un d'autre que sa famille et ses amis. Le nouveau « feedback » reçu en concours est souvent perçu comme étant plus crédible, plus important. De plus, les commentaires répètent souvent ce qu'ils ont déjà entendu du chef en répétition. Et tout à coup....ça fait dé clic! Après une prestation en concours, les choristes ont des sentiments de fierté et d'accomplissement. Ils ont vécu une expérience différente, enrichissante et valorisante.

Les concours ne sont plus ce qu'ils étaient. Les plus grands changements des dernières années ont été fait par rapport au jury. Fini les jurys qui abaissent et qui découragent. Aujourd'hui, les commentaires sont constructifs. On suggère des améliorations, on reconnaît les qualités des interprétations et on encourage les chœurs à continuer. Plusieurs concours offrent même la possibilité de rencontrer et même de travailler avec un membre du jury.

Allez-y ! Dépassez-vous, poussez-vous plus loin, donnez-vous la chance, à votre chef, à votre chœur et à

sound, the accuracy, the diction, and the musicality. The comments received during a competition are second to none. They could allow you to refute your artistic choices, to justify them to the singers, and even make you think further.

Your singers, both competitive and non-competitive, will develop new individual and group skills. Everyone will recognize the importance he/she brings to the whole while preparing for a competition. During the competition, singers have a chance to perform for a new audience: people who will appreciate them for the quality of their performances, for what they have to give. It is completely different for the choir member to prepare and sing for someone other than family and friends. The new «feedback» received in competitions is often perceived as being more credible, more important. In addition, comments often repeat what they have heard from the leader in rehearsal. And suddenly...it clicks! After performance in competition, singers have feelings of pride and accomplishment. They had a different and rewarding experience.

The contests are not what they used to be in the past. Over the last few years big changes have been made to the jury process and feedback. No more juries that lower and discourage. Today, the comments are constructive. Improvements are suggested, qualities of interpretation are recognized, and choirs are encouraged to continue. Many competitions even offer the opportunity to meet and work further with a member of the jury.

Go for it! Push yourself further, give your leader, your choir and your singers the chance to «Always go further, always go further: this is life». From Philippe Duquette's *Tirée de Chanter* (SA or SATB version and piano)

*The College of Chiefs of the Alliance is a group of choral conductors whose choral practice covers the different sectors of choral singing in Quebec (popular, show, classical) and the various clienteles (children, teens, adults, and*

vos choristes, de « Toujours aller plus, toujours aller plus loin : c'est la vie. » Tirée de Chanter de Philippe Duquette (version SA ou SATB et piano)

*Le Collège de chefs de l'Alliance est un regroupement de plusieurs chefs de chœur dont la pratique chorale couvre les différents secteurs du chant choral au Québec (populaire, spectacle, classique) et les différentes clientèles (enfants, ados, adultes et aînés, etc.). Cela part du principe qu'un chef de chœur doit parfaire sa formation, et ce, tout au long de sa carrière. La musique étant une matière vivante, elle évolue constamment et pour arriver à la maîtriser, nous devons, comme chef, continuer d'avancer nous aussi. Un tel comité existe dans plusieurs associations et sous différentes appellations à travers le monde, mais l'idée de l'appliquer à notre Alliance nous a été proposée par notre collègue Jean-Pierre Guindon.*

*seniors, etc.). This is based on the principle that a choral conductor must continue his/her training throughout his career. As music is a living material, it is constantly evolving and, in order to master it, we must, as leaders, continue to move forward as well. Such committees exist in several associations and under different names around the world, but the idea of applying it to our Alliance has been proposed to us by our colleague Jean-Pierre Guindon.*



**David Bowser**  
Artistic Director

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# THE LITTLE CHOIR THAT GREW: *the story of the Arnprior Community Choir*

by Marilyn Campbell

It's a warm, early September evening, and you're strolling past the Legion Hall on Daniel Street in Arnprior. As you walk past the hall, you could swear that you can hear Christmas music being sung. But in September?

Yes – in September. What you were hearing was the Arnprior Community Choir (ACC) beginning its 28th year of rehearsals for its December Christmas concert Sing Noel.

Everyone will agree that Arnprior is a real hockey and sports town. But many are unaware that the town has also had a very active and beloved community choir for 27 years. Members come from 11 different towns and hamlets, including as far away as Ottawa and Eganville. Over time, the choir has grown to 85 men and women members, with ages ranging from the 30s up to the 80s. And with the increase in the number of men, the choir can now sing SATB songs, resulting in rich and beautiful harmony.



The Arnprior Community Choir rehearses, October 2017. Photo collage by Pat Newton

This home-grown choir has evolved from a Continuing Education night course at the Arnprior District High School in the fall of 1991. The “choir” class was among such courses as bridge, watercolours, and sewing. Its first-year enrolment was small: only 15 people.

Lisa Webber had been approached to teach this course by individuals who wanted to set up a community choir. And she had all the prerequisites: a Bachelor of Music/Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Lethbridge, specializing in elementary, intermediate, and senior choral music; and a Mas-

ter of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Ottawa.

Before long, the word reached choral singers in Arnprior and the Ottawa Valley that there was now an “official” community choir. The number of registrants doubled to 30 the following January (1992), requiring a move to another school for rehearsals, and to 40 the next September. Within a year, the choir was firmly established.

In its first year, the choir performed throughout the community, at nursing homes and for Remembrance Day ceremonies. Well-attended (and eventually sold-out) ticketed concerts began in 1992, with two held each year, one for Christmas and one the following spring, the spring concert alternating between classical and pop music. In 2016, the ACC add-



Lisa Webber directs the Arnprior Community Choir in rehearsal, October 2017. Photo by Marilyn Campbell

ed another concert held in March each year. This concert is a freewill donation concert with the Valley Concert Band to raise funds for both the ACC and the band.

ACC has always given back to the community, through fund-raising concerts and singalongs at nu-

merous organizations and seniors’ homes. Lisa’s philosophy is: “... someone calls or asks, and we’ll sing!” The choir has sung in Arnprior and in outlying areas such as Almonte, White Lake, Pakenham, Kanata, Nepean, and Renfrew. The choir has also participated in and supported the Renfrew Music Festival and the Ottawa Valley Music Festival. In addition, the choir gives a substantial scholarship each year to a graduating student at Arnprior District High School who has been involved in vocal music at the high school level and is going on to university studies.

Considering the latest statistics that show that more people in Canada sing in a choir than play hockey (shocking!), the ACC can easily expect to continue to grow and to provide beautiful choral music for years to come.

Visit [www.arnpriorcommunitychoir.com](http://www.arnpriorcommunitychoir.com) for details on the choir’s upcoming concerts.

*With thanks to Lisa Webber for her input and memories.*



The hall is almost filled at a rehearsal of the Arnprior Community Choir, October 2017. Photo by Marilyn Campbell

Marilyn Campbell, ACC manager and member for five years, is also a member of the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra Opera Amore choir and an avid musical student.



# CHORUS YORK



by Mary-Lou Montgrain

*Chorus York*, Richmond Hill's community choir, although still in the early stages of development, is continuing to be in demand to perform at local events, both public and private. Audience members consistently praise the choir for its growth in choral sound and artistic presentation.

Established in February, 2016 by a small group of enthusiastic singers, Chorus York touches on many musical genres. This season began in November with two concerts featuring music from Broadway musicals. The program included some well-known titles:

Oklahoma, Phantom of the Opera, My Fair Lady – and some that were less well-known: Brigadoon, “Why Do I Love You?” (from Showboat), and “June is Bustin’ Out All Over” (from Carousel).

In February the choir presented its 2nd Annual Gala Fundraiser in celebration of Valentine’s Day at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. The audience was entertained with a choral selection of love songs, performances by classical duo Natalie Wong on violin and Drew Henderson on guitar, Stephen Cockle and Sue Kralik with vocal duets illustrating the lighter side of love, and love poems read by published poet, Laura Ewing. The evening also fea-

tured a selection of finger food, a cash bar, a silent auction and a rose for every lady, courtesy of choir member, June Graham. Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Chorus York's fearless leader, Stéphane Potvin, who entertained the audience with his witty sense of humour, even leading a live auction which gave the winning audience member an opportunity to conduct the choir after a brief tutorial. In all, it was an enjoyable and memorable evening.

Fans of Chorus York can look forward to Classics in the Spring on May 4th and 5th when the ensemble will delve into what many would call the essential body of classical repertoire. Accompanied by organist Richard Hansen, the choir will sing Vivaldi's Gloria, Boyce's Te Deum, Tallis' "If Ye Love Me", Byrd's "Ave Verum", and a further collection of great English music by Tye and Ferant.

In June, as in past years, Chorus York will once again perform with the Richmond Hill Philharmonic Orchestra for their final concert at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. This year's concert, True North Strong and Free, will feature music by Canadian composers both past and present.

Chorus York 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 and board development.

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 the choir website [www.chorusyork.ca](http://www.chorusyork.ca) or call 905-884-7922 for further information.***



# The Magic



Exultate Chamber Singers

## OF COMBINING ADULT AND CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

by Sadie Menicanin



For many of us who now sing in adult choirs in our free time, as well as those who make a living as choristers, it's safe to assume that our love of choral singing began in the humble and unique sphere of the children's choir. As we well know, children's choirs, while first and foremost settings for group singing, are also much more than that. Choir is a place to cultivate focus, trust and humility, develop mentorship and leadership skills in youth, and provide opportunities to explore our home province, our country, and even the world.

Though this may all be true, it was likely other small, extraordinary moments that sparked in us a lifelong desire to sing. Learning that special magic of singing in harmony, looking out from the front of a church for the first time at a vast open sanctuary (which seemed even bigger as a child), standing with your fellow choristers in a crisp uniform before a performance: these little moments set the choir experience apart from any solo instrumental training we may have also had as children.

Perhaps you can remember a time that you first heard an adult choir sing. Maybe you were struck by the sound of the low tenor and bass voices, the powerful dynamics, or the precision and unity that such a choir can display in performance. Hearing adult choirs sing lets children know what else is possible in choral music. This experience demonstrates to children that the choral experience can and does continue after "growing up."



Chorus Niagara Children's Choir



Singing with an adult choir as a child is even more formative in this regard. Bringing children alongside adults in a music-making experience — not just in performance but also in the rehearsal process — can establish a unique atmosphere of collaboration and mutual learning. While children might be inspired to sing their best in such collaborative settings, adult choristers might also benefit from restoring their childlike wonder for singing once again.

Exultate Chamber Singers is pleased to be joining forces with Chorus Niagara Children's Choir on Saturday March 30 at 4:00 p.m. in the hopes of cultivating such a spirit of collaboration and inspiration. Presenting works that speak to childhood moments in beautiful, humble poetry, this concert should prove to be a memorable experience for both adult and child choristers, as well as the audience. For more information, visit: [www.exultate.net](http://www.exultate.net)

*A member of Exultate Chamber Singers since moving to Toronto in 2015, Sadie Menicanin is currently pursuing her doctorate in historical musicology at the University of Toronto.*



# SUSAN KORSTANJE

*Celebrates 25 Years*

## WITH LAKEHEAD CHORAL GROUP

by Wendy Galbraith O'Connor



Susan Korstanje, conductor

Choral groups sing for pleasure and also for challenge. No matter what a chorister's musical background or level of expertise, the love of music and the pleasure of learning new pieces go hand-in-hand for a rich musical experience. Add to this the challenge and excitement of staging public performances, and you have a dynamic blend that also engages the community.

It can be a struggle for a local choir to find a qualified musical leader, let alone long-term leadership. However, Lakehead Choral Group (LCG) has been very fortunate to

enjoy such musical direction since 1994. Susan Korstanje began with LCG as a co-conductor, and became the choir's sole conductor and Music Director in 1997. 2019 marks Susan's 25th season with LCG.

Susan came to the choir with an impressive range of experience and very apparent love of music! She attests to a rich musical childhood and youth, both at home and at school. Susan holds a BA with Honors in Music and Secondary Education (concentration in choral conducting) from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and

an MA in Musicology from University of Toronto. In her years before coming to Thunder Bay, she embarked on two European tours with orchestras and choir, participated in a wide range of musical theatre, and directed various school, church, and camp choirs in the US and Southern Ontario.

In the meantime, Lakehead Choral Group had itself emerged as an active local musical group. LCG was founded in 1956, before Thunder Bay was even Thunder Bay! The two cities that were to form Thunder Bay in 1971, Fort William and



2017 LCG Concert: Canada's Story

Port Arthur, were known collectively as the Lakehead – thus the group's name. In the early years, LCG performed not only concerts, but musicals in full costume as well. As the many seasons passed, the group came to concentrate on purely choral performances.

Since coming to Thunder Bay in 1992, Susan has participated in a wide variety of musical experiences and productions. She has attended the local Rene Clausen Choral School in Minnesota, composed music for the Cambrian Players' production of *The Tempest*, and directed two student musicals while teaching at Thunder Bay Christian School. She has performed many times with Consortium Aurora Borealis – as instrumentalist, soprano soloist, ensemble singer, and director of LCG in one combined concert. She was a founding member of the To-ne quartet, and has been a frequent soloist with Oras Chamber Choir. Susan is currently the director of the Lakehead University Vocal Ensemble. And to top it off, she is also a violinist and member of the Women in Black trio.

Susan's first time conducting an LCG performance, "The Century in

Song" in 1995, was memorable not only for its theme, but in its potential for disaster. "Just before the audience arrived, the power went out in the hall, and as we sang the first half, a rock band continued playing loudly on the level below – but we persevered!" Several noteworthy programs she has conducted since then included the group's 40th, 50th, and 60th anniversary concerts, as well as occasions on which LCG collaborated with other Thunder Bay music groups such as Consortium Aurora Borealis, Sweet Adelines, and the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra. "My favourite LCG concert," recalls Susan, "was 'Land of Our Dreams: The Immigrant Experience,' which we performed in Spring 2015. It was a stirring program interweaving songs with readings of actual immigrant accounts."

In a moving tribute, LCG sang at Susan's Canadian citizenship ceremony in 2004!

Bass singer Bob Grieve, who has sung with LCG for over 50 years, has enjoyed his time under Susan's musical direction. "When Susan took over as our Music Director, it soon became evident that she was an accomplished conductor and

musician. In the 25 years that she has led us, she has introduced us to increasingly difficult repertoire and has challenged our musicality. The resulting product has drawn rave reviews from our audiences and has made Lakehead Choral Group one of the leading mixed-voice choirs in the city. It has been an enjoyable experience to sing under the baton of Susan and I look forward to many more years of her musical guidance."

Asked what she finds most rewarding about working with LCG, Susan considers several aspects.

"I find great satisfaction in helping the singers grow in the skills, musicality, understanding, and confidence to master increasingly challenging repertoire. Seeing the passion on singers' faces when they are totally immersed in the music, especially when the beauty they are achieving has been hard-won, gives me joy. It's a good feeling to know that our work is broadening the musical horizons of both the choir members and the audience."

"Over the years with LCG I've collaborated with a joyfully hard-working group of choral musicians, amateur and professional, who have discovered the pleasures of singing together. Some have sung with the LCG for only one season, most for years, one for over half a century. These people have become like a second family in Thunder Bay. The great reward is in working with the choir to create memorable moments of beauty."



Wendy Galbraith O'Connor



Canadian Orpheus Male Choir

# YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD CHOIR DOWN!: CANADIAN ORPHEUS MALE CHOIR RISES ABOVE \$50,000 FRAUD AND THEFT

by John Nelson

Can you imagine checking your choir's bank accounts one day and discovering that instead of the healthy balance you expected, all your choir's money was gone? Vanished? There's nothing left?

That's what happened to Rod Roberts, president of Canadian Orpheus Male Choir (COMC) one morning last September. "It was like being kicked in the teeth," says Roberts, a thirty-year veteran with COMC. "Earlier in the month we had noticed a couple of financial hiccups," he continued, "then the paycheques for our music director and our accompanist bounced".

Although the treasurer, a non-singer volunteer, quickly resolved that issue, it was a red flag which led to the jaw-dropping discovery that instead of the five-figure bank balance shown on the treasurer's report, only \$200 remained.

A review of the bank accounts revealed unauthorized withdrawals and suspicious cheques totaling over \$50,000 during the two and a half year period the treasurer had been volunteering for the COMC. When asked, the treasurer didn't dispute the facts, but proposed an implausible payback scheme and asked the choir for more time. Needless to say, the treasurer was immediately dismissed and the police were informed.

*"The hardest part was informing the choir at the next rehearsal," says Rod. "The board and I didn't know how the members would react."*

They needn't have worried. After an initial stunned silence, one by one the choristers expressed support.

On the spot, one tenor wrote a four-figure cheque as a loan, immediately followed by a baritone. Then one of the basses proposed a motion of full confidence in the board which passed unanimously.

And the support wasn't confined to within the choir. A GoFundMe campaign raised \$2,000 and triggered awareness throughout the wider choral community. The Grand River Chorus made a sizeable donation. The Near North Voices University-Community Choir sent a generous cheque, and London's Pro Musica dedicated donations from one of their concerts to the COMC. Individuals also made donations, all of which ensured that the COMC could make it through the next few months.

The Hamilton Spectator ran a feature story, and the local CBC web news covered it, as did CHCH-TV in a televised interview with several choristers and music director. Eventually, the former treasurer was charged with fraud and theft over \$5,000 and his court appearances have started.

Gradually, the financial situation became a bit brighter. Fraud insurance covered some of the loss, and the concert secretary re-doubled his efforts, lining up several more performances in 2019. The choir increased its grant application efforts and with careful management trimmed expenses.

"We've learned an important lesson," Rod Roberts says, "we placed too much trust in one individual and we've put better controls in place." These include stricter accounting rules, reporting requirements, and regular reviews of the actual bank statements by the president, not just the treasurer.

***"But we also learned of the warmth and generosity of our Ontario choral community," he said. "We were overwhelmed by the kindness of our fellow choirs and we can't thank them enough."***



**John Nelson started singing in four choirs after retiring from thirty-five years in business, quickly becoming Registrar of the COMC. When not singing, John is often found with wife, soprano chorister Deb, at their cottage near Parry Sound.**

# MISSISSAUGA FESTIVAL CHOIR:

# CHORAL MOSAIC 2020

by David Ambrose

Mississauga Festival Choir is excited to launch an international choral festival unlike any other – Choral Mosaic 2020! From June 25-27 2020, Choral Mosaic will welcome choirs of all skill levels from around the world to sing and learn together in an all-inclusive, collaborative, and dynamic environment.

Choristers will have unprecedented opportunities to learn and perform with each other, and with headlining musicians such as Rajaton, the a cappella sensation from Finland, who will both perform and conduct a masterclass. Mary Lou Fallis and Peter Tiefenbach will present the hilarious *Primadonna Choralis* with Mississauga Festival Choir. The keynote speaker will be Kim André Arnesen, rising star of the choral composition world. Choral Mosaic 2020 has also commissioned Mr. Arnesen to write a brand-new choral work which will be premiered by all choristers in a massed choir premiere performance on the last day of the festival with the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra.

The Choral Mosaic 2020 theme is “Beneath the Surface: Exploring Identity Through Choral Music”. All choirs who attend this event will have an opportunity to perform in front of an audience, with no audition required. Choirs will also participate in a series of workshops led by renowned clinicians. Choristers not part of an attending choir are also encouraged to attend - there is room for all!

This exciting new choral festival will take place at the beautiful Living Arts Centre, a vibrant cultural meeting place boasting world-class theatres and workshop spaces in the heart of downtown Mississauga.

Since 1984, Mississauga Festival Choir (MFC) has been an integral part of the City of Mississauga’s arts scene and has represented Mississauga nationally and internationally with performances, tours, musical education, and fundraising. MFC is a true community choir, with no auditions necessary to join.

Choral Mosaic 2020 will release more information later this month about the event and how choirs can participate and collaborate with us on this new and exciting project.



David Ambrose is an award-winning conductor, singer, and director. He has served as Artistic Director for Mississauga Festival Choir since 2006.



# CHIAROSCURO...

## *from dark into light*

by Anne Mizen

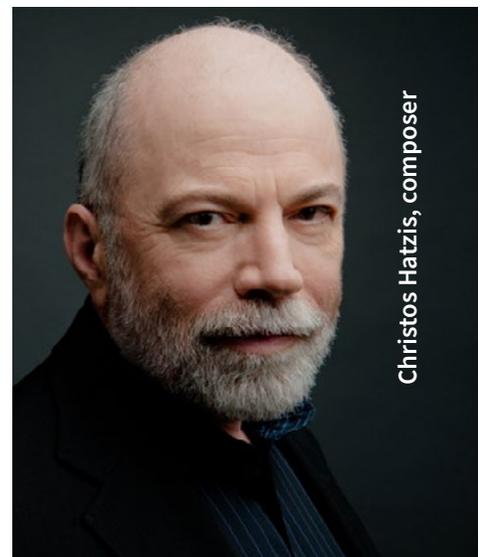
The women's choir, Monday Morning Singers, based in Uxbridge, Ontario, has started rehearsals for its spring concert. The concert is centred around an exciting new composition by renowned Canadian composer, Christos Hatzis.

For many years, Christos Hatzis and his wife, Beverley Johnston, have lived just outside the town of Uxbridge. They both have supported community choral events in their hometown. After last spring's successful Monday Morning Singers concert, Christos talked to me about the possibility of the choir performing one of his compositions. Much of his music is quite complicated, written for major orchestras and professional ensembles. But he had an idea. He would rework a piece written earlier for percussion, choir, orchestra, and bass clarinet.

The original piece had been written with virtuoso bass clarinetist, Jeff Reilly in mind, and it was essential that he be part of this revision. When I contacted him, Jeff said that he loved working with amateur choirs

and would be delighted to take part. Fortunately, we were able to arrange all the details so that Jeff can join us for this exciting event. Also joining us is internationally known percussionist, Beverley Johnston.

Christos Hatzis says that "Agnus Dei" is "a dark composition for our dark times". He goes on to say, "the only effective antidote to...dark times that I consider viable and powerful is community". This piece is "a musical exercise in community". It involves two choirs, Monday Morning Singers and The Uxbridge Chamber Choir, percussion and bass clarinet. It also calls for an ambient electronic



Christos Hatzis, composer

soundscape and encourages audience participation.

This concert also includes the music of J.S. Bach, William Byrd, and several Canadian composers, including Imant Raminsh, Ruth Watson Henderson, and Mark Sirett. All this happens on Saturday, April 13 at St Paul's Anglican Church, Toronto St., Uxbridge,

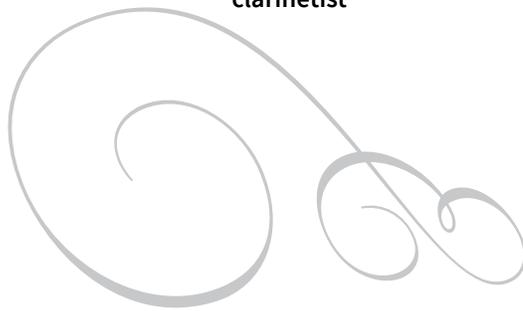


Jeff Reilly, bass clarinetist

Ontario. We invite singer/musician friends and all other friends to join us for this musical community event.

For more information, please visit: [www.mondaymorningsingers.com](http://www.mondaymorningsingers.com)

Anne Mizen is the director of Monday Morning Singers.



## Lake Field Music camp



August 11 - 18, 2019

[www.lakefieldmusic.ca](http://www.lakefieldmusic.ca)

# NIAGARA CHILDREN'S HONOUR CHOIR:

Massed choir under the direction of Zimfira Poloz.  
Photo credit Jeff Baker.



## *A collaborative choral outreach program*

by Amanda Nelli

Chorus Niagara Children's Choir (CNCC) and Artistic Director Amanda Nelli, in collaboration with Brock University and Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music Education Dr. Rachel Rensink-Hoff, with The District School Board of Niagara were thrilled to present the Second Annual Niagara Children's Honour Choir on February 1, 2019 at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines.

Eight teachers, from eight different elementary schools, invited ten students who have demonstrated an interest in music to participate. The program was divided into two outreach days. On January 19, 80 students had the opportunity to participate in a full day of choral workshops with Amanda Nelli and Dr. Rachel Rensink-Hoff, where they developed their choral singing techniques and learned three choral pieces: "The Skylark and the Nightingale" by Audrey Snyder, "Donkey Riding" by Thomas Bell and "Kusimama" by Jim Pa-

poulis. The students were provided with original sheet music, a custom t-shirt for the event, and practice tracks to assist with their practicing at home.

Two weeks following this introduction to choral singing, the students participated in a full day of choral workshops with internationally recognized expert in choral artistry for young voices, Zimfira Poloz. Zimfira spent the morning focusing on building their sound: vowel shape, creating good breath support, and ensemble singing. The children were fascinated with her "tickle trunk" of toys and manipulatives that gave them the perfect visual for the concepts she was referencing. By the time the children began to work on the repertoire, their sound had transformed into something that sounded like the

choir had been rehearsing together for months. The young singers connected immediately to Zimfira's nurturing and loving disposition and her effective coaching



Honour students at work. Photo credit Jeff Baker.

techniques. It was clear that she was honoured to be a part of the experience, and the children's performance reflected that.

The outreach day concluded with a concert for friends and families in the Recital Hall at FirstOntario

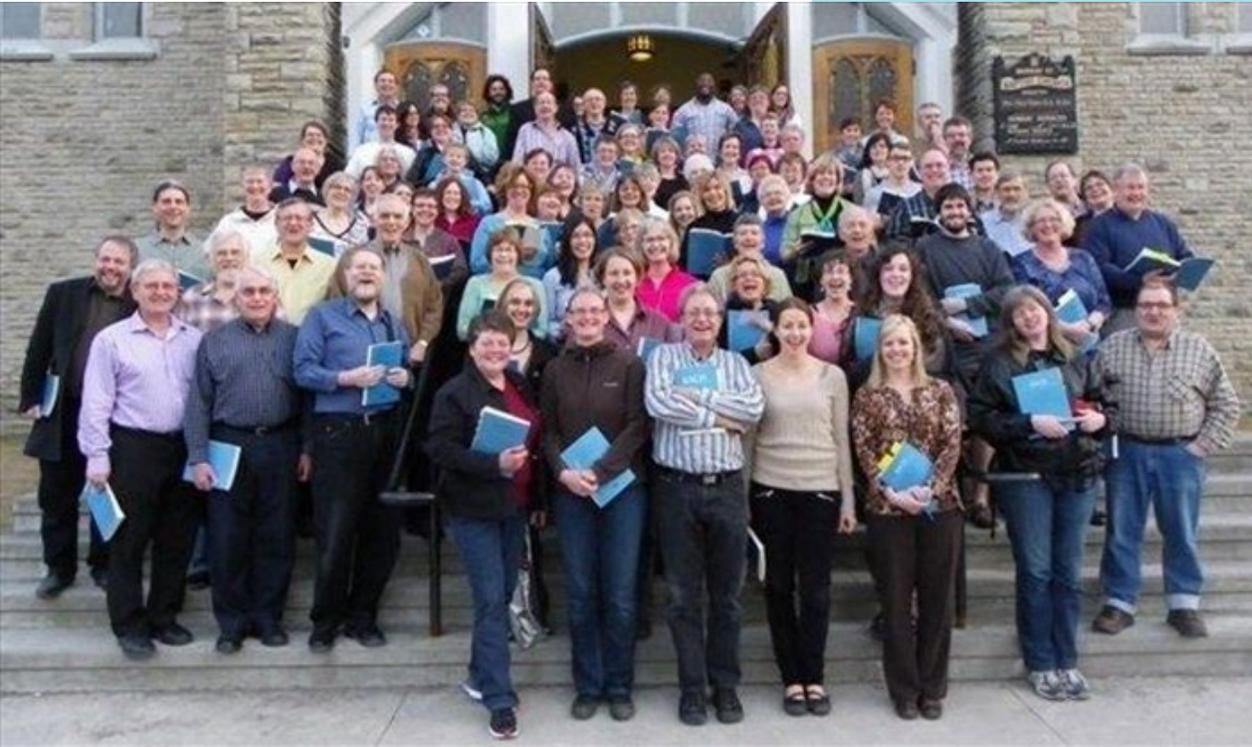
Performing Arts Centre in St. Catharines, along with performances by Brock University Choirs and Chorus Niagara Children's Concert and Chamber Choirs. All choirs sang together in a massed choir finale conducted by Zimfira Poloz to

the delight of a packed house. Chorus Niagara Artistic Director Robert Cooper, who, with his wife, Megan personally sponsored the concert noted, "CNCC is a superb advocate for the benefits and the joy of children singing! It is a sincere pleasure for us to support this

year's clinician, the remarkable Zimfira Poloz, a choral musician of international renown. This year's Honour Choir was a truly unforgettable experience for all!"



**Amanda Nelli is the Artistic Director of the Chorus Niagara Children's Choir and is the Elementary Music Specialist at Fern Hill Private School in Oakville.**



*This article first appeared in The Peterborough Examiner.*

*by Rosemary Ganley*

# PETERBOROUGH SINGERS OFFER *a Relaxed,* NEW MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

Would you agree that each one of us is disabled in some respect? Something physical, or a mental or emotional wound or weakness? Some immobility, discomfort or pain which we have to live with? How then can we participate fully in all the cultural offerings in our community? How shall we get there? What accommodations will have to be made so that we too

can benefit from the arts? What subtle, if unintended, exclusionary practices have up to now rendered us somewhat undesirable as an audience member?

Look now at the Peterborough Singers. It is an acclaimed choir of 120 members, now 27 years old, directed by the gifted Syd Birrell, which stages four sold-out concerts a year, two classical, one seasonal oratorio at Christmas, and one in mid-winter from the popular genre. Recently a creative idea, some stellar collaborations, and a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough have come together to do what we do best: work together to bring about something new, something valuable, and something inclusive. All with a kind of modesty.

Meet the visionary Peg McCracken, the manager of the Peterborough Singers since 2011, and a member since 1990. First off, we swap personal music stories. When she took piano lessons, the cost was \$2 for a half-hour. Years earlier when I did, it was only 75 cents. Peg had heard of a movement started in the U.K. about five years ago called “relaxed performance” and attended a workshop presented in Peterborough by Public Energy and EC3. Through the “relaxed” principle, modifications are made to

several aspects of a concert — the communications to the public, the education of performers and musicians, the transportation and parking availability for attendees, the sound and light arrangements in the hall, and the personal support offered by volunteers at a concert for the comfort and reassurance, should it be required, for everyone of any disability.

“We seek to share cultural experiences with all in our community,” Peg says, “while maintaining the authenticity of the full concert-going experience. Our goal is that a friendly and positive welcome exist at every concert for everyone: the hard of hearing or the deaf, the sighted, the blind and the visually impaired, the wheelchair-assisted people, and people on the autistic spectrum.” It is the very opposite of any notion that art is exclusive or elitist.

Undertaking an expansion of mindset such as this takes some planning. So Peg arranged a well-attended, two-hour training session at Calvary Church, led by Jason King, outreach co-ordinator for the Council of Persons with Disabilities, for singers, church staff, and volunteers.

Calvary Church and its facilities director, Melle Jong-sma, were well on their way to having achieved an

inclusive setting. Built in 2002, the church has many well-thought-out features: ramps, washrooms, handicapped parking at a rate of two spaces for every 50, good sound equipment, and a spaciousness in the 1,250-seat main auditorium that make it ideal. But even Calvary staff learned from King that the height of soap dispensers and paper towels is not quite right.

There will be ushers with large, lighted nametags, well-lit areas, and even a “chill-out” room for anyone who finds the sensory stimulation overwhelming. Two large display screens will show pictures of people who wrote the songs or sang the songs when they were popular. A detailed written guide explaining the new features of a “relaxed” concert, and the motivation behind them is now on the Singers’ website. It even contains information on bus service along Lansdowne.

The program is ideal for such an initial concert. Called “Roots and Rights,” it will include twelve songs from the early African-American gospel repertoire, and then move into twelve rousing liberation songs of the 1960s, when civil rights were top of mind and music motivated change. “Roots and Rights” will be performed on Saturday, Feb. 23 at 2 p.m. at Calvary Church.

I can only imagine that everyone will gain knowledge, understanding and delight at this initiative of the Peterborough Singers in February.

*Rosemary Ganley is a writer, teacher and activist. Reach her at [rganley2016@gmail.com](mailto:rganley2016@gmail.com)*

Stephanie  
Martin,  
composer



*Helping church musicians to flourish*

# TURNING 50 AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE OF THE SICM

by Kimberley  
Allen-McGill

While I was looking forward to turning 50, I sure wasn't looking forward to my first experience as a long-time chorister, and newly minted church musician at the Summer Institute of Church Music (SICM). Terrified was more like it, accompanied by that sinking feeling that I'm out of my league, and will be humiliated in front of all the other talented musicians who had registered.

At the time, I had been hired as a part-time paid church musician working in a small Ottawa United church. While I'd served in the rural church that I grew up in, and as a volunteer music director for many years, actually being paid to work as a musician meant I was now in a different gig entirely. I needed to up my game and look for some professional development. With the good wishes and

support of my employer and a national church fund grant, off I went. After all, how could I disappoint all these good people? Still, I brainstormed strategies that would get me out of there if I needed to bail. I hoped for the best.

Fifty years ago, the founder of the SICM, Dr. Stanley Llewellyn Osborne, and those assisting him committed to what might now seem an outrageous act of hope. It was a very different era when they founded an annual "Institute for Church Music" to support, train, and connect church musicians wishing better to serve their churches and the Gospel. "Churches of the western world were certainly more populated than today, and organs and choirs were more universally leading their congregations' singing. Dr. Osborne's vision of theology and famous passion

for hymn singing must have carried great enthusiasm for an art and craft every church musician had known and received as a child," writes Chris Dawes, a long-time board member of the SICM.

I needn't have worried about fitting in or having performance anxiety that first time. What a warm welcome awaited me. The program, which is geared to choristers and church musicians of all levels, was spectacular. For me, the experience was transformative, all my skills as a chorister, budding choral director and church musician were enhanced and I had met my people! It was a summer experience that I will never, ever, forget.

This year, for its 50th session, the SICM meets as usual at Trafalgar

Castle School in Whitby, Ontario in July. The choral program runs July 7–11, 2019. It seems fitting that this year, I'll have the chance to sing under the direction of one of the best Canadian composers and choral conductors in the country, Stephanie Martin. After all, turning 50 calls for a special challenge and celebration! Participants have the opportunity to sign up for a full day of workshops and master classes, and/or the choral program.

Choristers receive some of the best music education money can buy. While regular choral programs take a summer break, the SICM chorale gathers for a unique summer experience. Choristers participate in four choral rehearsals, mix and mingle over a Sunday dinner, and perform in a gala concert of sacred and secular music chosen by Martin, at St. George's Memorial Church in Oshawa.

It's not every day a milestone birthday occurs and I get to hang out at a castle. I'm looking forward to meeting new friends and colleagues. Speaking of hope, I'm thinking there has to be a birthday cake somewhere in the plans too. May your summer singing be joyful and I hope we sing together!

For more information on SICM, visit [sicm.ca](http://sicm.ca)



Kimberley Allen-McGill is a new board member with SICM and is responsible for the group's publicity materials.